

# FOOD SECURITY, SAFETY NETS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION IN ETHIOPIA

*Edited by*  
**Dessalegn Rahmato, Alula Pankhurst  
and Jan-Gerrit van Uffelen**



Since its establishment in 1998, FSS has undertaken research and published books and monographs on a wide range of development problems and policy concerns. Its publications have been distributed to decision makers, legislators, development practitioners, academics and the wider public to promote dialogue and constructive debate.

This book, which examines Ethiopia's food security strategy and the safety net program from different approaches and perspectives in the context of the development of a social protection policy, is a continuation of that tradition. While the book has been prepared primarily with an Ethiopian audience in mind, the subjects covered and, in particular, the attention given to community level experiences will have wider relevance. Ethiopia's safety net program is one of the largest and potentially most influential social protection schemes in Africa and, as noted by several authors in this volume, provides important lessons beyond the Ethiopian context.

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**Forum for Social Studies**

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Dedication: This book is dedicated to the memory of Dr Konjit Fekade who died in December 29, 2010. Dr Konjit was an active member and dedicated supporter of FSS right from its inception and served as a member of its Board of Advisors for the first six years and participated in its activities until a few months before her death.

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## **Forum for Social Studies: A Brief Institutional Profile**

The Forum for Social Studies (FSS) is a non-government, non-profit institution engaged in conducting and sponsoring policy-oriented research and promoting informed public debate on a wide range of development issues. It was established in 1998 by a group of academics and CSO activists whose aim was to help deepen and broaden a democratic tradition of public debates. Its work is guided by the conviction that enhancing the public-government decision-makers interface on key social and economic issues can promote a transparent, participatory and all-inclusive policy-making and implementation process.

Since its establishment, FSS has been engaged in policy research on a wide array of development issues, and has disseminated its findings to government decision makers, legislators and the wider public. It has organized a series of policy dialogues (workshops, seminars, panel discussions, etc.) around the themes of poverty; gender; higher education; inter-generational transfer of knowledge; good governance and democracy in Africa; culture and development; and climate change, environmental management and sustainable development in Ethiopia.

As part of its research activity, FSS has in the past successfully launched two major book projects, viz. *Ethiopia: The Challenge of Democracy from Below*, and *Democratic Assistance to Post-Conflict Ethiopia: Impact and Limitations*. Since then it has published books and monographs on a wide range of development and policy issues, including, poverty and poverty reduction, natural resource management, decentralization, the quality of higher education, culture and development, and environment and climate change. Its publications have been disseminated to decision makers, institutions of higher education, academics and researchers as well as non-government and international donor organisations to stimulate further discourse and reflection. This book titled *Food Security, Safety Nets and Social Protection in Ethiopia* is a continuation of that tradition, and is intended to examine the PSNP and broader food security and social protection issues in Ethiopia from different perspectives to promote dialogue and constructive debate.



# **Foreword**

## **Capacity Building and Research in Food Security at Bahir Dar University**

*Baylie Damtie*

Ensuring food security has been -and continues to be -one of the greatest challenges that Ethiopia has faced. The recurrent drought combined with many other factors, such as lack of technology, infrastructure and human power, have affected a substantial part of the population. The Federal Government of Ethiopia has been taking aggressive measures to ensure food security for all Ethiopians. The Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) has included several objectives with clearly stated annual targets that will ensure food security in Ethiopia. These objectives include: increasing crop production by applying more suitable agricultural practices, increasing cultivable lands, improving agricultural production and productivity, strengthening agricultural markets, increasing livestock production and productivity, and enhancing research. This ambitious but achievable plan has brought with it unprecedented research and training opportunities to higher education institutions.

Bahir Dar University has prepared its five year strategic plan in accordance with the GTP. The University has various training, research and community service programs that are directly and indirectly aimed at improving the nation's food security. It is high time to not only carry out research on food security but also to present the results in understandable and scientific manner to policy makers, researchers and the general public. Bahir Dar University has been pushing for a comprehensive publication program on the practices of food security around the world and their relevance to the Ethiopian context. Such publication would not only allow us to learn from the best global practices on ensuring food security but would also allow us to appreciate and understand the level of complexity and the associated knowledge gaps.

In this context, I congratulate the authors of this publication, which covers many important topics including the roles of the Productive Safety Net Program for achieving the GTP goals on food security. Conferences on food security, like the national conference on food security which took place in Bahir Dar in April 2010, are important to bring various stakeholders on food security together and

learn about various intervention options and the long term solutions. The university shall continue to encourage and support such efforts.

The commitment of the Federal Government of Ethiopia to eradicate poverty by ensuring food security is clearly shown in the GTP. Universities should play a leading role for the success of this plan by producing appropriate human power, creating knowledge and carrying out appropriate community services including technology transfer and agricultural extension. Creating a knowledge package has been identified as one of the basic principles that underpin research at Bahir Dar University. We need to understand the issue of food security by investigating the problem from various directions and eventually integrating all relevant research outputs into a coherent and inclusive knowledge package. I am very happy that our academic staff have contributed to the present publication and have become part of the discussion.



# Preface

## Introduction to the LEAFS Program<sup>1</sup>

*Dorothea Hilhorst and Jan-Gerrit van Uffelen*

### Background

“Dawn, and as the sun breaks through the piercing chill of night on the plain outside Korem it lights up a biblical famine, now, in the twentieth century”. With these words, journalist Michael Buerk announced in October 1984 what became known as the Great Ethiopian Famine. The BBC’s news coverage on the unfolding famine disaster in the Horn set into motion a huge response, foremost consisting of food aid for the starving people in Ethiopia.

Ever since the 1984-85 famine annual emergency appeals were addressed to the donor community for massive food aid targeting around 5 million Ethiopians annually (GoE, 2004). Ironically, throughout this period, food security in Ethiopia has been declining. The country has remained among the most food-insecure in the world with nearly half of the population being undernourished (WFP 2006). Government, donors and I/NGOs all agreed that decades of interventions have not resulted in sustainable assets at household or community level (GoE 2004, Sharp et al. 2003, Raisin 2002). The critique on this relief oriented emergency system resulted in the design of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) which was introduced as a development oriented predictable safety net in 2005. Since then the PSNP has been the key component of Ethiopia’s Food Security Programme.

In 2008 the Groups of Disaster Studies and Law & Governance of Wageningen University in the Netherlands and the Department of Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development of Bahir Dar University in Ethiopia embarked on a 4 year research programme<sup>2</sup>. The research programme, entitled Linking Emergency Aid to Food Security<sup>3</sup> (LEAFS) was designed to make a contribution to the debate on reforms in food aid systems and food security

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<sup>1</sup> LEAFS: Linking Emergency Aid to Food Security.

<sup>2</sup> The programme was funded by WOTRO Science of Global Development of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).

<sup>3</sup> The principal team members of LEAFS are Professor Thea Hilhorst, Professor Han van Dijk, Dr. Jan-Gerrit van Uffelen, Dr. Alula Pankhurst, Dr. Aschale Siyoum and Drs. Hilde Geerling.

policies. In particular the Productive Safety Net Programme as being the key component of Ethiopia's current Food Security Programme.

## **LEAFS' Rationale**

The objective of the PSNP is to assure food consumption and prevent asset depletion of food insecure households in chronically food insecure '*woredas*' (districts). The programme aims to protect household assets from distress sales and to build community assets through productive safety net public works activities through timely and reliable resource transfers. The success of the programme is built on three principles: provision of predictable transfers for six months per year for a five year period; functional links between the PSNP and the so-called Other Food Security Programmes (OFSPs) including the household package programme and resettlement, and; graduation of beneficiaries when food sufficiency is attained. During the second phase of the PSNP, 2010-14, the OFSPs have been modified with the Household Asset Building Programme (HABP) and the Complementary Community Investment (CCI) programme.

Ethiopia's Food Security Programme and the PSNP in particular form a highly relevant case for research on linking food aid and food security, or more broadly, on linking relief to development. In analysing the PSNP in relation to the other components of Ethiopia's Food Security Programme and the wider policy environment it is important to consider earlier attempts to attain food security in Ethiopia. Not only are such experiences reflected in present policy but memories of former food security programmes shape people's responses to current interventions (Hilhorst 2003). Although linking relief to development has been a major concern of humanitarian and development policies since the mid-1990s, progress to realise this aim in practice has been slow (Barrett 2006, Christoplos 2006). The LEAFS research hypothesises that lack of functioning linkages at conceptual level, between institutions and between intervening agencies and the local population form major constraints in realising these objectives.

## **Disaster Studies**

The LEAFS research has combined the disciplines of disaster studies as well as governance and development studies. Disaster Studies at Wageningen University examines situations of crisis and uses vulnerability and resilience as central concepts. Although it is generally acknowledged that disasters are generated by processes that create vulnerabilities (Wisner et al. 2004), disasters are nonetheless mostly studied as isolated events, stressing discontinuity and 'exceptionality'. Recent research, however, points out that the intricate ways in

which policies and processes culminate in disaster, and the manifold ways that people respond to crises, display a large degree of continuity and acquire a measure of ‘normality’ (White and Nooteboom 2006). In cases of recurrent drought, especially in combination with violent conflict, it has been observed that long-term institutions and livelihood strategies are moulded by crises. Institutions, far from breaking down, evolve in relation to catastrophic events and following the responses of local, regional and national actors dealing with emergency conditions. The LEAFS research programme therefore combined disaster studies with the study of Law and Governance which focuses more on the *longue durée* of institutional change as well as institutional complexity or the ways in which multiple normative (discourses) and institutional frameworks co-exist and interact in emergency conditions, at times drawing on and at other times contesting each other.

The interface between disaster studies and governance and development studies is especially pertinent in two interrelated conceptual developments. Firstly, the distinction between transitory and chronic food insecurity, addressed separately by disaster studies and development studies, is increasingly blurred (Devereux 2002). This has resulted in the development of new policies and response modalities, as well as the need for integrated academic concepts and analysis. Secondly, the disaster studies body of literature on the transition from relief to development is hampered by the assumption that development is an ongoing process, temporarily disrupted by disaster or crisis situations. Since many recipients of humanitarian aid are in a position of chronic food insecurity, it is imperative to open up the relief to development literature, by bringing in a focus on social security and informal and formal safety nets, which is an area of expertise of the Law and Governance group of Wageningen University.

## **Stakeholders and Interpretation Frames**

Disasters, either natural, man-made or a combination of the two, can cause production failures leading to reduced food availability which may result in food insecurity and hunger. Food availability is thus a crucial element of food security. In 1981, Amartya Sen published ‘Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation’ in which he argued that rather than the availability of food as such, entitlement is the critical factor in maintaining or achieving food security. Sen’s idea that famine was caused by the lack of power of people to command food, or exchange entitlement was quickly adopted and incorporated as lack of access to food by vulnerable people in definitions of food insecurity.

The key stakeholders in food-insecurity are the affected population, government and the international aid community. Different frames of explaining

food insecurity have put part of the blame on these actors in terms of production failure, exchange entitlement failure or response failure.

When researching Ugandan refugees in Sudan in 1982, Barbara Harrell-Bond (1986) observed the widespread notion among aid workers of ascribing to refugees a dependency syndrome. She described this as ‘The real and apparent lack of support for each other, the refusal to co-operate under conditions where co-operation appears advantageous, and the prevalence of destructive and anti-social behaviour’ (Harrell-Bond, 1986:283). The notion of dependency syndrome has been challenged as a stereotype by Gaim Kibreab (1993) and others, whose research proved that refugees use all the means to their disposal to cope with and improve their situation (van Uffelen, 2010). Nonetheless, in Ethiopia the use of the notion of dependency theory is still widespread particularly in a context of prolonged provision of food aid to chronically food insecure people. Others talk about the aspiration failure by people since they seem to have lost hope for a better future (Bernard et al. 2011). This is considered by many a major constraint in attaining food security.

Other more political frames put the blame for food-insecurity on governments and the ‘aid-industry’. A political perspective on food insecurity starts with the analysis of its causes. It has been argued that famine is not in the first place a failure of some kind (of food-supply, development, livelihood systems or climate), but the normal outcome of economic and political processes (Duffield 1993, Keen 1994). Alex de Waal labelled famine as a crime (de Waal 1997), attributing a major role to political regimes that breached the social contract with their citizens and allowed famines or even made them happen. He also put the blame for food insecurity on the relief industry which focused on the wrong issues and often refused to work with governmental institutions, by referring to their principle of neutrality. Political analyses of food insecurity have inspired rights-based approaches (FAO 2005) that have been adopted by several INGOs in Ethiopia.

All these frames highlight a part of the reality of food insecurity, yet have at the same time contributed to poor or politicised stakeholder relations. These interpretation frames have also differentially informed the policies and resulting programmes of the different stakeholders. Interpretation frames are often embedded in organizational dynamics and policy chains at work in the struggle to combat food insecurity. Current policies that aim to bridge the gap between food aid and food security are predicated on notions of policy integration and stakeholder collaboration. Much progress has been made in Ethiopia to coordinate food security programming and incorporate a high level of participation.

The LEAFS programme focused on analysing the different linkages in addressing food insecurity as well as the frames and organizational dynamics informing the constitution and maintenance of these linkages. The research has focused on linkages that are vital to a large-scale intervention like the PSNP. These concern relations between food security interventions and surrounding processes, especially the everyday strategies people deploy to make a living. Food insecurity in Ethiopia is a long-term phenomenon caused by natural and man-made factors, such as lack of alternative income sources outside of agriculture, unreliable rainfall, land degradation, poor infrastructure, lack of agricultural inputs and limited credit facilities in rural areas (Macrae and Zwi 1994, Wisner et al. 2004). Violent conflict for long periods in the past has undermined the vitality of production systems and hampered investments in agriculture (Maxwell and Alemayehu 1994:65, Webb and Von Braun 1994:34-37). Ill-conceived land reforms have caused insecurity for millions of farmers (Sharp et al. 2003:129-139). Living in this disabling environment forces people to deploy multiple means to survive, including accessing food aid. The LEAFS programme focused on linkages and gaps between food security interventions and people's practices.

The LEAFS research has combined livelihood studies with the ethnographic study of the interfaces within and between development actors from the grassroots up to the international policy and implementation levels. The research contributes to this tradition of 'aidnography' by combining ethnography with linkage analysis (to be compared to network analysis), and with the systematic research of the influence of perceptions and attitudes, and by integrating the study of aid with the study of food security governance

## **One Programme, Two Research Projects**

In essence the LEAFS programme consisted of two research projects.

The first one focused on coping with food insecurity and food aid interventions. This project looked at linkages between people's perceptions and practices to cope with food insecurity and food security interventions, with a special focus on the PNSP programme. Food insecure people develop their own ways of dealing with food scarcity over time, embedded in local institutions and social organization. These range from agricultural production, (temporary) employment, home industries, migration to urban areas, the reliance on remittances and help from kin and neighbours. Nonetheless, many development actors attribute a dependency mentality to people (caused by prolonged aid-dependency, loss of skills or aspiration failure) as a major constraint towards food security. The research aimed to investigate these contradictory notions

about the role of local people, by analysing their strategies and attitudes in an integrated way.

Ethiopian communities are highly differentiated and stratified. People's room for manoeuvre is determined by access to resources, socio-economic conditions and positions in local hierarchies (Van Dijk et al. 2003: 173-206). In the process of outside interventions, new patterns of distribution and ways of social interaction emerge, often to the detriment of informal safety net mechanisms. One of the questions is how formal programmes contribute to increased differentiation and intensify inequality or whether they result in a positive impact on the social fabric and the restoration of informal safety net arrangements.

This first research project sought to answer questions like: what are local practices and attitudes of various groups in dealing with food insecurity? How are these related to socio-economic differentiation and power? And, what is the impact of interventions on food security and community relations?

The second research project focused on policies and programme options with regard to linking food aid to food security. This project considered the level of national and international approaches and institutions regarding the linkage between food aid and food security, or relief and development. The problem of food insecurity is framed differently in different approaches that consequently arrive at different policies and implementation practices. These range from humanitarian approaches to provide emergency relief aid to save lives, to development approaches to strengthen and diversify livelihoods and to seek an enhanced role for the market, to approaches involving social protection to safeguard people from risks and shocks and rights-based approaches that aim at the implementation of the voluntary guidelines on the right to adequate food. Often these policy frames belong to different institutional environments such as governments, multilaterals; institutions and I/NGOs which have their own organizational dynamics. The way in which experiences in Ethiopia are influenced by such institutional frames, and how these experiences find their ways into new policy thinking have been investigated.

The research started from the notion that the framing of problems and institutional arrangements to deal with them are intertwined. Humanitarian aid has long been accused of misconceiving the problem of famine as an event, which has hampered effective and timely interventions to chronic food insecurity (Raisin 2001). This conception of humanitarian crises as events is built into the response mechanisms that separate development from humanitarian aid. This is manifested in aid flows, the organisation of donor agencies, international agencies and even many implementing agencies. Aid reforms through Food-for-Work programmes in the 1990s could not overcome these obstacles. The

artificial distinction between humanitarian aid and development aid, where humanitarian aid fulfils short-term needs in situations where development aid is not feasible or politically undesirable, has proven a major obstacle for addressing chronic food insecurity. New programming on food security aiming to integrate humanitarian and development policies faces the challenge of adjusting aid modalities and institutional arrangements.

This second research project tried to seek answers to questions such as: how do international stakeholders frame the problem of food insecurity and food aid and how do they analyse realities on the ground? What is the relation between problem frames and the institutional environment in which these partners are functioning? And, what is the influence of institutional dynamics at national and international level on the ways in which various partners engage in food security programmes?

## **Contributions of the LEAFS Programme**

LEAFS has also made a contribution to a better understanding of the developmental impact of the PSNP by providing insights on patterns of interaction and collaboration, information flows and capacities, and stakeholder perceptions and attitudes. The LEAFS programme organized a national conference on food security in Bahir Dar in April 2010 which involved various stakeholders including government, donors, implementing agencies and researchers. The conference has been instrumental in creating more space for debate and research to inform food security programming. The LEAFS programme has also organized panels at the World Conference of Humanitarian Studies Association in Groningen in 2009 and in Boston in 2011.

Another important contribution of the LEAFS programme has been to build the capacity of the Department of Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, a relative new department at Bahir Dar University. As an integral part of the programme LEAFS has been investing in curriculum development, in particular the design of a MSc 'From Food Aid to Food Security' and staff training.

The LEAFS team is also very proud and pleased that the programme has made possible this book project bringing together the work of international and Ethiopian researchers on the issue of food security. It is our wish that the book will make an useful contribution to the debate on addressing food insecurity and hunger in Ethiopia.



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# **Introduction**

## **Food Security, Safety Nets and Social Protection in Ethiopia**

*Alula Pankhurst and Dessaegn Rahmato,*

Hunger and food shortages have been endemic in rural Ethiopia for countless generations; nevertheless, it was not until the mid-1970s, following the fall of the imperial regime and its replacement by the military government, the Derg, that food security became a concern in public policy discourse, and a variety of program initiatives were put in place to tackle the problem. Since then there has been increased awareness of the complex causes of food shortages and a growing determination on the part of decision-makers to bring to an end the blight of hunger and malnutrition that has been so much a part of the daily lives of millions of poor and vulnerable people in the country. Over these years, the goal of achieving food security has been pursued in various forms, involving both short and long term programs, combining not just growth in food production but also environmental protection, water management and irrigation projects, employment creation, resettlement and credit provision – to mention only some of the main measures – costing both the government and its international development partners immense resources. Overall, public policy and program management had benefitted from the experiences learnt from other African and Asian countries as well as, domestically, the contributions of non-state actors which have been actively engaged in relief, rehabilitation and food security endeavors in many areas of rural Ethiopia from the second half of the 1970s. However, it was becoming apparent by the end of the 1990s that the programs pursued were beset with serious challenges, and that, contrary to expectations, the vulnerable population was increasing in size, and that the goal of achieving food security was becoming increasingly unachievable.

When, in 2003, the government appointed the National Coalition for Food Security (NCFSE) and its food security program (FSP) was adopted by the government and subsequently incorporated in its poverty reduction strategy, this marked a significant shift in public policy. In the first of his contributions to this volume, Jan-Gerrit van Uffelen calls this shift the “de-disasterisation” of the country’s food crisis. The FSP established a number of key interventions to tackle food insecurity, of which the main ones were the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) for chronically vulnerable households, the so-called Other

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Food Security Programme (OFSP) that involved loans and agricultural packages and was later transformed into the Household Asset Building Program (HAPB), voluntary rural resettlement for populations in land poor areas, and the Complementary Community Investment (CCI) focusing on medium-scale infrastructure development that cannot be undertaken through the PSNP public works. However, the PSNP, which is financed entirely by the country's development partners and which was launched in food deficit areas in much of the country in 2005, remains the centerpiece of the FSP, and the main focus of investigation and critical appraisal in this volume. The PSNP provides resource transfers (in kind, in cash or both) to beneficiaries in two ways: either as payment for labor in public work projects or as direct support to individuals who are unable to work for health, old age and other similar reasons. At present there are more than 8.3 million rural people in 319 *weredas* covered by the PSNP which at first was confined to the farming communities in food-insecure *weredas* in the highlands and Rift Valley areas but has recently been extended to some pastoralist communities. The PSNP is said to be one of the largest resource transfer programs in Africa, and there are those who argue, such as Rachel Slater and Anna McCord in their chapter, that it has much to offer to social protection planners elsewhere in the continent.

As explained by Dorothea Hilhorst and Jan-Gerrit van Uffelen in the preface, this book stems from the LEAFS (Linking Emergency Assistance with Food Security) project initiated in 2007 as a collaborative project between Wageningen University Disaster Studies Department and Bahir Dar University Department of Disaster Risk Management and Sustainable Development. The project sought to understand linkages between the global and local levels in food security policy and practice, and included local level research by PhD students in two *weredas* of Amhara Region. The project held a conference in Bahir Dar in 2010 and organized panels on food security at the International Humanitarian Studies Association meetings in Groningen in 2009 and Boston in 2011. These venues provided opportunities to relate findings from the project to other work on food security and social protection issues in Ethiopia. At each of these events participants expressed the view that it would be valuable if insights from the project and debates with other perspectives were not restricted to academic conferences but could be brought together in a book that could be made available to various local stakeholders including federal and regional governments, international and local non-governmental organizations, and researchers and academic institutions.

Forum for Social Studies, which has considerable experience in poverty and food security issues and has an established track record in organizing policy related debates and publishing research outcomes agreed to take on the task of

commissioning additional contributions, editing and publishing the book and organizing a workshop to discuss the draft chapters. Dessalegn Rahmato who is the founding Director of Forum for Social Studies and has devoted his career to work on agrarian issues agreed to co-edit the book with Alula Pankhurst, also a member of Forum for Social Studies and the LEAFS project, and Jan-Gerrit van Uffelen who was involved in the LEAFS project since its inception. This volume brings together a wide diversity of research works, many of which were specifically commissioned, looking at the effects of food security interventions broadly, and the PSNP in particular, on individuals households, communities, regions and the country as a whole, providing a springboard for wider public debate and reflection.

There is a clear rationale for linking research and debates on food security to social protection. Underlying the discussion on safety nets is the assumption that sustainable public sector intervention to enable the poor and vulnerable to improve their livelihoods will have to be embedded in a longer term framework of social protection that will be inclusive and predictable. The PSNP has been the most important social protection initiative in Ethiopia and has influenced thinking over how social protection can be institutionalized in the country. Food insecurity has been a historical predicament that has shaped the country's social formation, and the need to overcome seasonal hunger as well as shocks resulting from crop failure and loss of livestock are survival concerns for large sections of the rural population, especially the more vulnerable. In such a context it is clear that food security concerns are currently – and are likely to remain for the foreseeable future – a major component of social protection policy. Indeed protecting those vulnerable to food insecurity through the social safety net is a central concern and the first focus area in the recent draft National Social Protection Policy (NCP) (MoLSA 2012).

Worldwide, social protection has become a major policy concern in recent times following United Nations declarations and conventions regarding social protection as a human right. In 2009 the United Nations established the Social Protection Initiative and the World Bank instituted the Rapid Response Fund. The same year the African Union endorsed its Social Policy Framework of which Ethiopia is a signatory (Daniel 2010). The Framework suggests that social protection can contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth and calls on member states to adopt a social protection strategy in their national plans of actions.

In Ethiopia the first institutionalization of contributory social security for civil servants, the police and the armed forces dates back to 1963 following the International Labor Organization declaration on decent work and social security (Amdissa 2010, 2012). However, apart from policy development in food

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security, the concern with institutionalizing social protection is fairly recent in Ethiopia. Given the persistence of recurrent famine and its transformative role in bringing about regime change from the imperial to the Derg periods as noted by Jan-Gerrit van Uffelen in his chapter, it is not surprising that the formulation of food security policies, strategies and institutions has been the most developed aspect of social protection in Ethiopia. This began with the establishment of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission during the Derg, and has evolved with the adoption under the EPRDF of the National Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Strategy in 1993 and the Food Security Strategy in 2002 with the key role of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Food Security Directorate in coordinating food security interventions (Workneh 2008).

Social protection more generally, though, has been by and large an area left to the informal sector and community institutions that provided the bulk of support for vulnerable categories, notably destitute, orphans, older and disabled persons. The Development Social Welfare Policy (DSWP) was formulated 1996, to address the social and economic vulnerabilities of children, women, older persons and persons with disabilities. However, the focus was on welfare, most of the responsibility was left to communities rather than the state, and various draft national action plans formulated on the basis of the policy on children, the aged and people with disabilities were not finalized (Daniel 2010, Amdissa 2012). Moreover, as the draft NSPP notes, the DSWP was limited in geographical coverage, had inadequate inter-sectoral linkages and coordination, weak institutional capacity and lack of clarity regarding accountability for delivering social protection outputs (MoLSA 2012:1).

Underlying the limited policy attention and institutional and programmatic development has been a concern with focusing on economic deprivation, following the mainstream paradigm of development rather than social marginalization and cultural exclusion of various societal categories such as female-headed households, orphans, disabled and older persons, artisans, migrants and domestic workers (Freeman and Pankhurst 2003, Pankhurst 2011). As Daniel and Northcut suggest: “This has meant that psychological and social risks and vulnerabilities have been afforded little priority on the surface structure of Ethiopia’s social protection landscape” (2012:10).

Though the 1995 Constitution of the Federal Government does not use the term social protection, Article 45 provides for rehabilitation of the physically and mentally disabled, the aged and orphans. The 1996 DSWP is also framed in terms of rehabilitation and welfare. A number of policies, plans and strategies have been developed since then which are broadly pertinent to the social protection agenda. These include the Rural Development Policy and Strategy, the Disaster Risk Management Policy, the National Food Security Policy, the



National Nutrition Policy, the Social Security Policy and Framework. There are also policies and plans for women, youth, children, people living with disabilities, on urban development, and the micro and small enterprises development strategy. Sectoral plans of action notably in health and education are also relevant to social protection, as has been the promulgation of legal codes such as the Revised Family Code, the Revised Criminal Code, and proclamations on labor, social health insurance, pensions, and rights to employment of persons with disabilities.

The current Growth and Transformation Plan has a section on cross-cutting issues which, in addition to strategies for women, children and youth, has a sub-section on social welfare addressing the needs of older persons and people with disabilities. However, social protection as such is not mentioned and the formulation does not consider an integrated or comprehensive strategy for the various vulnerable categories (MoFED 2010).

A recent breakthrough in social protection policy development is the draft NSPP (2012). Following the adoption of the African Union Social Policy Framework in 2009, to which Ethiopia is a signatory, a National Platform for Social Protection was formed co-chaired by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD) with members from UN agencies, the World Bank, Inter-Governmental Agency for Development (IGAD), civil society and NGOs. A first draft was produced in 2011 and finalized by the end of 2012. The document marks a distinct shift from the previously dominant social welfare approach towards an integrated framework.

The NSPP envisages providing coverage to broad categories of society that are in need of social protection focusing on the protective, preventive, promotive and transformative actions in line with the current thinking of the forms of social protection (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2004). Protective interventions aim to provide relief from economic deprivation, abolish barriers, such as user fees, that prevent vulnerable groups from having access to basic social services or provide alternative care to vulnerable populations in need of special care. Preventive interventions aim to expand formal and informal systems of pensions, health insurance, maternity benefits, child benefits and unemployment benefits aimed at preventing risks and consequences of livelihood shocks. Promotive interventions enhance income and capabilities, skills development and provision of credits. Transformative interventions aim to protect the rights and interests of people exposed to social risks and vulnerabilities by addressing power imbalances and structural causes that perpetuate economic inequality and social exclusion and coordinate a dialogue in

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society that aims to reach a consensus on how accountabilities for social protection are to be shared (MoLSA 2012:16).

Regarding the vulnerable categories to be supported the NSPP suggests a broad-ranging coverage including the elderly, labor constrained individuals and households, people with disabilities, pregnant and lactating women, persons living with or directly affected by HIV and AIDS and other chronic debilitating diseases, vulnerable children, the unemployed, people affected by natural and manmade calamities and victims of social problems (such as drug use, beggars, victims of trafficking and commercial sex workers) and people having difficulties in accessing basic social services (MoLSA 2012:16). The earlier draft had not given much prominence to issues having to do with discrimination and abuse, gender-based violence and protection of the rights of women, youth and children; this was given more emphasis in the final draft.

The NSPP has five focal areas: 1) *Social safety net* to provide predictable transfers to deal with vulnerability to shocks, build human capital, promote public works for community assets, and introduce pensions; this involves building on the PSNP experience and expanding to other areas, establishing a core caseload of chronically vulnerable, providing micro-finance services, social pensions, and scalable instruments to respond to disasters; 2) *Livelihood and employment schemes* to promote employment and income generation and improve capacity of rural people through provision of inputs; this includes expanding off-farm income generating opportunities, public works programs, labor market information, credits and grants and encouraging micro and small enterprise schemes; 3) *Social Insurance* to expand and encourage insurance and support informal social protection mechanisms; this involves expanding pensions, introducing private health insurance, weather indexed crop and property insurance, and building the capacity of the informal sector insurance mechanisms. 4) *Addressing inequalities of access to basic services* by increasing access to health, education and other welfare services, involving fee-waivers and conditional transfers, and services for persons with special needs, education and physical rehabilitation, adapting physical infrastructure for the physically challenged, strengthening training institutions and expanding the capacity of the social welfare workforce; and 5) *Addressing violence and abuse and providing legal protection and support* to protect vulnerable groups from abuse, violence and discrimination by providing legal support, promoting community-based mechanisms, developing links to judiciary, police and providing social services for victims (MoLSA 2012).

The institutionalization of social protection policy and practices can be said to face three major challenges. The first and perhaps the most intractable challenge is broadening fiscal space to cover the needs of the vulnerable and

transition from primary dependence on external donor funding to internal resource mobilization from taxation and other means as the economy grows (Hailu 2010). It is not just that the tax base is low with currently 11.5 per cent of the GDP with a target of 15% by 2015, but also that the share that goes to issues related to social protection is limited and there is a reliance on international funding for much of this. There are valid arguments that social protection can have sound economic returns and investments in social protection can pay off in terms of increased production (Dercon 2011). However, there is no escaping the fact, as noted by Devereux and Amdissa in this volume, that social protection initiatives are likely to be extremely costly. Even beginning to address only the food security needs of vulnerable categories not just within food insecure rural *weredas*, as targeted currently by the PSNP, but throughout the country including the urban vulnerable population as suggested in the NSSP is a daunting task, about which the Ethiopian government is understandably concerned. The resources provided by the donor community to support the existing PSNP and its related food security interventions, discussed in Dessalegn Rahmato's chapter, are quite substantial, and an expanded social protection program is bound to strain the resources of the donor community. On the other hand, as noted by Devereux and Amdissa and Jan-Gerrit van Uffelen in their chapters, there are now voices within that community arguing that Ethiopia should begin to shoulder a greater burden of the program costs given the continuing growth of its economy and improvements in public sector resources (Pearson et al. 2011).

Addressing social protection beyond food security to include broader categories that require protection in particular vulnerable children, the elderly, people with disabilities, the chronically ill (notably people living with HIV/AIDS), pregnant and lactating women, the unemployed, labor constrained households, victims of shocks and social problems, and people having difficulties accessing basic services, as suggested in the NSPP, is a massive undertaking and commitment. However, ultimately the issue boils down to political will as well as the pressure of international commitments, notably the African Union Social Policy Platform. Once the draft NSPP is approved this should trigger the formulation of action plans with budgetary and programmatic implications. The NSPP suggests committing the government to allocating 2-3 percent of the GDP to finance social protection, with an incremental provision from the national budget to finance the National Social Protection Action Plan as well as involving civil society, the private sector and encouraging community-based social protection initiatives (MoLSA 2012:22)

The second challenge relates to the institutional linkages and professional capacity required to translate social protection policies into effective strategies,

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plans and programs. For social protection measures to be implemented requires a strong institution mandated to take the lead, coordinate initiatives, train and deploy workers down to the community level. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs which has been given this role has until recently had limited resources, personnel and political clout. To bring about effective change will require not just allocation of resources but also clearer definitions of mandates and negotiation and collaboration between various ministries. This is particularly the case given the disparate categorical nature of the clients of social protection involving societal categorization by type of vulnerability (food insecurity, disability, chronic illness) by age (children and the aged), and by status (lactating women, orphans, unemployed, victims of social problems, people marginalized from access to basic services). There is also a need for vertical integration of social protection services from federal, through regional to *wereda* and *kebele* levels. Recognizing the need for coordination, the NSPP proposes the establishment of a Federal Social Protection Steering Committee. The chair would be appointed by the Council of Ministers and MoLSA would serve as the secretariat responsible for coordination. Furthermore a similar institutional structure would be reproduced at regional, zonal and *wereda* levels (MoLSA 2012:24).

Historically the domain of food security has been the preserve of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, whereas concerns for women, youth and children have been recently been brought together under the new Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs. With the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs taking the lead on social protection, coordination with other ministries, as well as with non-state actors including donors, international and local NGOs and civil society organizations will be paramount to the success of institutionalizing and operationalising social protection services. In particular the involvement of civil society and non-government organizations which have played a key role in providing social protection is vital. There had been strained relations between this sector and government leading to the Charities and Societies legislation of 2009, but the recognition that their involvement is crucial in the NSPP is an important step forward.

Furthermore, there will be a need for training and deploying a vast cadre of social workers which is acknowledged in the NSPP as required at *wereda* and *kebele* levels (MoLSA 2012:14). Other sectors and line ministries have extension workers at *kebele* level, with teachers in schools, three agricultural development agents and recently or two female health extension workers per *kebele*. In contrast let alone at having local level extension workers the MoLSA presence at the *wereda* level is weak in many regions. It will also be important to reach an

appropriate balance in the design of programs to address the needs of the different societal categories of vulnerable persons.

The question of training of social workers is also a serious concern. Professional training in social work goes back to the imperial period with a School of Social Work established in Haile Selassie I University and the establishment of the Ministry of National Community Development (Seyoum 1999). However, during the Derg period the prevailing socialist ideology branded social work as a bourgeois aberration and social work only managed to survive covertly as a minor part of academic training under the umbrella of sociology in Addis Ababa University (Seyoum and Yeraswork 1989). In the past decade there has been a resurgence social work training notably with the establishment of the School of Social Work at Addis Ababa University in 2004 with a Masters program and a PhD program added in 2006. A professional association, the Ethiopian Society of Sociologists, Social Workers and Anthropologists (ESSSWA) was founded in 1999 and has held workshops with published proceedings notably on social and child protection (Gebre 2007, Melese 2011), and has attempted to establish collaborative projects involving social workers.

The third challenge involves the linkages between formal and informal social protection. Until recently, as Devereux and Amdissa note in their chapter, the bulk of social protection was left to relatives, neighbors, communities and religious institutions. There are a range of types of community-initiated institutions that play some role in social protection. These include three main types: 1) membership-based community associations, (which may be differentiated in terms of their primary function as funeral associations, rotating credit associations, socio-religious faith associations, and migrant associations), 2) customary institutions whose primary role has been dispute settlement, and 3) resource sharing institutions (Pankhurst 2000, 2008b, Pankhurst and Assefa 2008, Amdissa 2012). There is a debate as to whether community institutions have become weakened over time and if so whether this is due to globalization and the extension of state institutions. Some have argued that customary institutions may find their legitimacy undermined or tarnished by collaboration with state institutions. Others have suggested that since a major characteristic of such institutions is their informality involving community-initiated institutions could stretch their capacity to breaking point and by co-opting them there is a risk of destroying them. However, many community-initiated institutions have already been changing and evolved recently and are becoming more formalized with monetization of the economy, literacy and the use of writing, and concepts of modernization and bureaucratic structures. Moreover, certain transformations and expansion of customary functions have already been happening particularly

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in urban areas. For instance *iddir* funeral associations which emerged in an urban context and were formed by migrants to Addis Ababa and have rapidly spread to rural areas, have begun to take on roles in social protection of orphans and people living with HIV/AIDS and given their community basis there may be potentials for linkages with health care and insurance (Dercon et al. 2006, Panhurst 2008b).

A major related challenge is to build on the positive protective aspects of cultural traditions and institutions and encouraging collaboration with formal institutions while avoiding, discouraging or transforming customary practices that are harmful and thereby ensuring the protection of the rights of women, children and minorities. There has been considerable attention given to harmful traditional practices notably affecting women and children with a national committee devoted to this topic (Yayehyirad et al. 2008). There have been debates about finding ways of preventing such practices by involving communities and cultural leaders given the potential for change in cultural practices rather than imposing change through legislation and punishment which may lead to practices going underground (Pankhurst and Getachew 2008, Boyden et al 2012). The dual approach of seeking to strengthen collaboration with customary institutions while protecting minorities against harmful practices is reflected in the NSPP; whereas the third focus area of the NSPP Social Insurance seeks to support informal social protection mechanisms which are described as the “bedrock” of social protection and to facilitate their linkages to the formal system, the fifth focus area that was added recently<sup>1</sup> seeks to address violence and abuse providing legal protection and support (MoLSA 2012).

Food security clearly needs to be an important and central part of social protection and there are at least three specific challenges in strengthening the linkages between food security policies, institutions and programs and the emerging social protection approach. First, though Ethiopia has made tremendous and internationally commended progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and is believed to be on track to meet many of these, child malnutrition and maternal mortality remain serious concerns and policies and programs to provide protection of mothers and infants have been prioritized notably with an important program for sustaining community management of acute malnutrition through the health extensions workers. This is also given prominence in the draft NSPP. Second, as noted in several chapters, there are key issues to be resolved as to how to move beyond the current PSNP and, more broadly, the food security model, to incorporate these within a broader

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<sup>1</sup> The fifth focal area was included between the September 2012 and the December 2012 draft.

institutionalized and lasting social protection framework. This raises the question as to whether the PSNP be abandoned, expanded or transformed. Several contributions, notably the chapter by Jan-Gerrit van Uffelen and the one by Stephen Devereux and Amdissa Teshome argue for a transition from the safety net program which, as it is envisaged in the PSNP, will be of relatively short duration to a longer term and inclusive social protection program designed with the experiences of the current program in mind. The NSSP plans to build on the PSNP experience and expand safety nets to urban and other rural areas (MoISA 2012:18).

As Hoddinott *et al* note in this book there has been considerable positive learning and programmatic improvements from the process of managing the PSNP. However, there have been criticisms of targeting not just due to errors of exclusion and inclusion but also since the resources provided bolster power relations and networks and since there is a disconnect between the strategy of limiting transfers to beneficiaries to promote the likelihood of graduation at scale and community values and preferences to spread assistance widely. As we shall see several chapters in this book, notably that of Aschale Dagnachew, also suggest that graduation is by no means a simple matter, that the process of establishing targets than can turn into quotas may be divisive and that pressure to graduate can erode voluntariness and jeopardize sustainable food security. Some of the chapters, such as those by Pankhurst and Aschale question whether all categories of household have the potential to graduate suggesting that alternatives are needed for labor-short vulnerable categories, and others, such as the chapters by Tafesse and Gelebo, provide some evidence of ‘backsliding’ of graduated households into food insecurity. There have also been concerns that PSNP’s focus on households may not address intra-household issues to do with gender and especially the risk of promoting child labor directly or through substitution as noted in the chapter by Yisak and Tassew. Insofar as the PSNP is to be expanded to cover *weredas* that have not been included, mechanisms would need to be established to target the food insecure in *weredas* that are food secure. There is also a need to rethink the relationship between predictable multi-annual transfers, and the ability to respond to emergencies through disaster risk management.

The piloting of social protection initiatives has begun recently in Tigray with a social cash transfer program through a local level Community Care Coalition approach in which the various vulnerable categories have been assisted through *kebele* level committees and the provision of transfers. This initiative carried out by the regional government with UNICEF support is a commendable initiative that seeks to coordinate assistance for various categories and vulnerable groups from the bottom up in a participatory way. In considering the



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lessons learnt it will be important to avoid the tendency, unfortunately often seen in Ethiopia due to the zeal for bringing out change rapidly, to move quickly to a large-scale standardized uniform model carried out in a hasty campaign approach throughout the country. Moreover, it will be important to avoid a top-down imposed model which has tended to characterize relations between the state and the people. Instead, given very different regional capacities and political, social and economic conditions further piloting should enable adaptation to regional and local conditions with a flexible and scalable design which allows for variation in the types and proportion of vulnerable categories assisted and linkages with other services, NGO programs and community institutions. It is also important to appreciate differences at the community level and how not just rural-urban and regional variation but also conditions at a *kebele* level have been affected differentially by development interventions (Bevan et al. 2010, Pankhurst and Agazi 2012).

Many of the contributions to this book are based on the findings of recent research or a close reading of the available evidence on the FSP and PSNP. Most of the chapters were first presented and debated at a two-day conference organized by FSS in Addis Ababa in October 2012. The authors come from different backgrounds and experiences: from academia, government, civil society and the research community in Ethiopia and abroad, and most of them are established specialists in their field with proven track records, though young and upcoming researchers in the field in and outside academia have also been given a chance to participate in what is hoped will be an on-going debate. The subjects examined by the contributions in the volume are similarly wide-ranging.

The book consists of three parts after the foreword, the preface and this introduction. The first part comprises eight chapters dealing with a range of issues relating to food security and social protection focusing mainly on the PSNP. The chapter by Berhanu Woldmichael provides a succinct overview of the government Food Security Program and its major achievements to date.

Two chapters discuss the Ethiopian situation in a wider global perspective, the first looking at how lessons from other cases may be pertinent to the Ethiopian situation and the second at how the PSNP can be a model for social protection programs in other countries. Jan-Gerrit van Uffelen reviews social protection models in Rwanda, Zimbabwe and India in comparison with the Ethiopian case. He argues that the examples demonstrate ambitious expectations that safety nets can go beyond their role in providing social protection to enabling beneficiaries to move out of poverty. He suggests that safety nets can play a role in poverty reduction, but that on their own they may not enable the poorest and more vulnerable to improve their livelihoods, and argues that a comprehensive approach to social protection addressing the structural causes is



required. He also raises issues concerning the cost and affordability of social protection, institutional changes in addressing predictable needs, the importance of better coordination between governments, donors and civil society. The chapter also addresses issues relating to implementation capacity, targeting and the need to include labor-short households, the appropriate modalities of cash and food transfers, the social dimensions of impacts, the alignment of formal and informal systems and the need for transparency and accountability. He concludes that greater integration of food security measures within a broader pro-poor development policy under the Growth and Transformation Plan with greater emphasis on insurance mechanisms would be desirable.

In a complementary fashion, Rachel Slater and Anna McCord also present an “outward’ view, comparing the design, objectives and operations of the PSNP with social protection programs in other African countries. Their chapter focuses on two major issues. First, lessons learnt regarding public works programming, notably the challenges of combining welfare and asset creations objectives in a single program, difficulties in deciding on wage rates and target groups, and problems associated with measuring the impact of public works. Second, the challenges of graduation, and in particular the need to combine interventions in agriculture and social protection, to address shocks facing vulnerable households across domestic and productive spheres jointly, and to link poverty reduction approaches in productive and social sectors, particularly in a context of climate change and global financial instability.

The chapter by Stephen Devereux and Amdissa Teshome is concerned with the underlying implications of how to address the ongoing needs of the case load of vulnerable groups currently being assisted by the PSNP direct support and link these to broader social protection policies and programs. The authors raise two main challenges. First, from the government perspective avoiding dependency and the risk that transfers displace rather than complement informal support from relatives and communities. Second the costs involved in social protection and the options that need to be considered. In order to improve assistance to direct support beneficiaries they suggest the need to delink direct support from public works payments, to ensure that payments are adequate for achieving food sufficiency, to target defined categories (such as disabled, elderly or orphans), to ‘graduate’ suitable beneficiaries into productive activities, and to move from discretionary grants to claims-based entitlements. More broadly, they suggest the need to move towards an institutionalized social protection system led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in collaboration other ministries with the establishment of a Social Development Fund.

In his assessment of the food security challenges facing Ethiopia, Dessalegn Rahmato argues that though there have been considerable gains and

## Introduction: Food Security, Safety Nets and Social Protection in Ethiopia

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improvements in food security, nutrition, and disaster management, food security remains a predicament for millions of households and the food security program continues to be dependent on donors. The chapter raises three crucial challenges for food security: agrarian and land shortage, demographic and population pressure, and globalization with increased food prices. Dessalegn advocates an expanded and better managed PSNP, integrated with agricultural, health and other services and a shift to a longer-term and inclusive social protection program in line with the African Union framework.

The evolution of interpretation of famines and food crisis is reviewed in Jan-Gerrit van Uffelen's chapter. He contends that the quest for food security over four decades has resulted in the 'de-disasterisation' of responses. He discusses the extent to which this is driven by policies that reproduce previous approaches thereby normalizing crises, or by structural change allowing for new responses. Van Uffelen suggests that structural changes were manifest on two occasions. First, after the 1984-85 famine with the emphasis on putting food aid to productive use; and second after the food crises in 1999-2000 and 2002-3 when these were understood as a reflection of chronic poverty and thus predictable, leading to the development of an integrated food security strategy linking humanitarian and developmental discourses and implementing multi-annual programs. The key dilemma, however, is whether the PSNP should be a temporary mechanism for promoting food security and graduation at scale out of the safety net and poverty or whether it should be institutionalized to provide permanent social protection against future shocks. This would require a further structural change in food security policies and new response options such as flexible safety nets that can deal with localized and global shocks.

The review of the implementation of the PSNP by John Hoddinott et al. focuses on the roles of public structures at *wereda* and *kebele* levels responsible for program management. The chapter focuses on the issues of payments, targeting and appeals. Though there have been improvements in delivery, design and administrative capacity, there are variations in timeliness of payments across *weredas* and delays due to cumbersome administrative and institutional arrangements that could be improved. Regarding targeting there are regional variations in the effectiveness of *kebele* committees, as well as gender biases and declining communication between the PSNP and beneficiary communities. The authors suggest that there may be a tension between the desire of planners to target limited numbers with larger transfers in order to improve the chances of graduation and community preferences for broader targeting. Appeals were found to relate to partial targeting, inclusion errors, deduction of payments, and delay of transfers; however, these were very few which may result from a sense that chances of appealing successfully are minimal.

The chapter on migration and resettlement by Alula Pankhurst *et al* seeks to address the links between population movement and food security in terms of both causes and consequences. They review trends in and constraint on migration, the types and motives of migrants, the extent to which these are related to food security, and the impact of migration on the migrants themselves, on those who remain behind, and on areas of in-migration. The chapter also reviews the often tragic history of resettlement, generally leading to impoverishment rather than food security not just for settlers but also for host communities. Many of the excesses and abuses of earlier resettlement have been avoided in the recent program and short-term food security may have been achieved. However, many longer-term challenges persist, notably related to land and resource availability, conflicting claims from local people and investors and environmental concerns. The authors advocate in favor of a migration policy that would promote a less costly and more participatory model of population movement. This could create conducive conditions for positive influences of migration on food security and development through appropriate incentives and provision of infrastructure and services, while providing safeguards for the local people and environment, and promoting social ties and mutual economic relations between migrant and host populations.

The second part consists of five chapters presenting local perspectives based on urban and rural cases studies. These include a chapter on Addis Ababa, and *wereda* and community case studies from Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray.

Bamlaku Alamirew and Solomon Tsehay's contribution deals with urban vulnerability and food insecurity, based on a survey of three sub-cities in Addis Ababa. It is often assumed in Ethiopia that food insecurity is a rural problem and that the urban areas are largely unaffected by food shortages, but as this and other recent studies have shown, food insecurity is affecting a growing number of poor urban households which are covered neither by the PSNP nor by other forms of social protection. The chapter argues that vulnerable families employ a range of informal 'safety net' mechanisms to protect themselves, such as kin and other social networks and customary associations, and cope with hunger by reducing the number of daily meals, consuming lower quality food items, borrowing and taking children out of school to put them to work to support the family.

A case study from Amhara Region is provided by Tafesse Kassa's study in East Gojjam Zone based on surveys and cases studies in three *kebeles* of Enebse Sar Midir *wereda*. The research raises a number of issues relating to targeting, the timeliness and predictability of transfers, the level of payments relative to entitlements, the sense of wellbeing of PSNP beneficiaries in comparison to non-

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beneficiaries, the use of transfers, the overall impact of the PSNP and the constraints on graduation. The chapter concludes that there have been positive outcomes; however, challenges that need addressing include complaints among non-beneficiaries about the fairness of targeting, delays in payments, and views that some graduation was premature. The author suggests the need for further community involvement, improvements in the appeals process, reviewing the graduation incentives, and provision of support to graduated households.

A further case study from the SNNP by Gelebo Orkaido, based on a survey carried out in several *kebeles* in Konso *wereda*, discusses the implementation of the PSNP and points out some of the challenges faced in program management and some of the limitations and failures. The author notes that while some gains have been made, there are a number of shortfalls that have led to poor results, some of which include inadequacy of, and delays in, payment for work done by beneficiaries, conflicting work scheduling, and lack of integration of the PSNP with other food security interventions.

The third case study by Philippa Bevan et al. contrasts two villages in Tigray and Oromia and the varied impact of the PSNP and other food security interventions. The authors suggest that the PSNP support has been important, particularly for vulnerable households, in overcoming seasonal food shortage, preventing asset sales and distress migration. However, they argue that the broader community contexts explain differential outcomes and community trajectories. Whereas the core livelihood system may be unsustainable in the Geblen site in Tigray and the packages on offer failed to improve livelihoods due to repeated droughts, in Korodegaga in Oromia, irrigation and credit provided opportunities for food security and improved livelihoods. Moreover, the authors suggest that resources provided through the PSNP have boosted the power of kin and clan patron-client networks, *kebele* leaders, extension workers and mainly male household heads. Furthermore, community norms of sharing explain resistance to full family targeting, cultural disconnects between assumptions for watershed management and land use for grazing have undermined public works conservation structures, and limited graduation can be related to incentives, broader community resistance and unrealistic assumptions about the potential for rapid growth in food insecure areas.

The chapter by Charlotte Hanlon et al. examines the relation between long-term food aid and psychological morbidity based on a survey undertaken in rural settings in four different *weredas* in Amhara Region using a self-reporting questionnaire. The authors' findings are that long term food aid and support such as those through public works employment is not associated with psychological morbidity. The association of such program interventions with "aid dependency syndrome", they suggest, is ill-founded. The findings suggest that in terms of

psychological morbidity, predictable aid may be “protective” and have benefits over sporadic emergency aid. The authors conclude that food insecurity and inadequate interventions to alleviate it and poverty more generally appear to be the most important factors leading to poorer mental health in these rural Ethiopian communities.

The third part comprises five chapters addressing differential perspectives at the sub-community level, in terms of differential food security of various categories of households and individuals, especially women and children.

Aschale Dagnachew Siyoum’s first contribution deals with household labor availability. Based on his detailed case study in two villages in Ebenat *wereda* in Amhara Region, he argues that positive impacts of the PSNP along with OFSP loans was limited to a few labor-rich households, whereas competing labor claims, limited value of resource transfers and absence of full family targeting reduce the effectiveness of the interventions for the majority of labor-poor households. Time spent on public works prevented labor-short households from engaging in other productive activities, raising critical questions about the extent to which the PSNP, in tandem with credit, can enable labor-short households to achieve food security. The author calls for rethinking the effectiveness of conditionality of labor in exchange for resource transfers.

A further chapter on households by Alula Pankhurst considers how social shocks, notably death and divorce lead to changes in ideal household cycles resulting in the formation of vulnerable ‘off-cycle’ types of households. The study shows that such households, many of whom are labor-short, risk-averse and female-headed, are more likely to be among the extremely poor and are more vulnerable to a range of further shocks which can render them more food insecure. In particular illness and loss of livestock, especially when bought through loans, often lead to indebtedness and distress sale of assets. The author argues that the assumption that PSNP transfers alongside credit which tends to be used for livestock purchases may not be suited to the needs of such vulnerable households. Pankhurst suggests that, in addition to the existing twin component of resource transfer, i.e. conditional public works and unconditional direct support transfers, there should be a third component addressing the particular needs of vulnerable households, involving appropriate forms of credit and health and livestock insurance.

Aschale Dagnachew’s second chapter addresses the contentious issue of ‘graduation’ from the PSNP, based on a study of households that had already been graduated in his case study villages. A household is said to be ready for graduation if it is able to feed itself for a year without program support, and capable of withstanding modest shocks. Initially, it was thought that graduation

would occur after five years of program participation, however, both at the national and Regional level, the number of households that have graduated so far is far below expectations. There is now recognition both by donors and the government that achieving food security takes far longer than originally assumed. Aschale's chapter examines the procedures and benchmarks employed by local official to determine who may or may not graduate, and the experiences of a group of households which graduated from the PSNP after the first phase of the program in 2009. The author shows that the majority of the graduated households were unable to support themselves afterwards and argues that they should not have graduated in the first place. He maintains that the graduation process employed was inappropriate and that the local authorities at the time lacked management competence and a clear understanding of the requirements for graduation. The program itself, he notes, does not provide enough income to enable households which leave the program to have access to food on a regular basis, nor help them gain sufficient assets to withstand periodic shocks. Despite the best intentions, the author suggests, the PSNP has increased households' dependency on external support.

The final two chapters focus on specific societal categories: women and children, and the implication of food security interventions for them. The chapter by Kidist Gebreselassie and Hirut Bekele examines the gender dimensions of food insecurity and the implementation of food security interventions, including the PSNP. The work considers food security policies and the limited integration of gender issues. The authors consider the reasons why food insecurity among women continues to be high and assess the extent to which the needs of rural women have been addressed by the safety net program. The authors contend that there are still serious gaps in the implementation of the program insofar as women are concerned, despite the fact that encouraging results have been achieved in recent years. Not only do they show that female headed households are generally more food-insecure than male-headed households, but they argue that intra-household gender differences are often ignored in program design and implementation.

The PSNP does not employ a differential targeting approach: it does not, in other words, purposefully target population groups or categories with special needs such as, for example, children, vulnerable women, and people with disabilities, but only households that are found to be *chronically* food insecure. Dessalegn has raised the question whether in the circumstances of rural Ethiopia the distinction, made in the safety net discourse, between the chronically poor and those defined as the transitory food insecure serves a useful purpose in the long term. The final chapter in this book by Yisak Tafere and Tassew Woldehanna deals with the impact of the PSNP on children's wellbeing in

beneficiary households. The authors argue that the contribution of the program to poverty reduction is questionable, and that since the payment earned for employment in public works is inadequate, parents are forced to send their children to work, or to substitute working at home instead of them when they go to the public works . This has had the effect of reducing the time spent by children in school and doing their school work, and, in some cases, aggravating the dropout rate. The authors recommend the formulation of a child-focused social protection program going beyond the existing PSNP.

We believe this book will be of interest to decision-makers, academics and students, donor organizations, rural development practitioners within government and civil society, and others. While the book has been prepared primarily with an Ethiopian audience in mind, the subjects covered and, in particular, the attention given to community level experiences will have wider relevance. The PSNP is one of the largest and potentially most influential social protection schemes in Africa, and as noted by Rachel Salter and Anna McCord, provides important potential lessons beyond the Ethiopian context.

The efforts to build on the experience of the PSNP and complementary FSP interventions and to link this experiment to broader, more comprehensive and institutionalized forms of social protection culminated in the draft National Social Protection Policy which was finalized as this book goes to press. As Jan-Gerrit van Uffelen suggests this represents a potential structural transformation and a new leap in the elusive quest to attain sustainable food security. We hope that the perspectives offered in this volume will be useful in stimulating dialogue and debate about how best to design and implement effective interventions that anchor food security within social protection in ways that promote Ethiopia's goals of growth and transformation.

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# The Government's Food Security Program<sup>1</sup>

*Berhanu Woldemichael*

Food insecurity has become one of the defining features of poverty, in Ethiopia. Poverty is widespread in both rural and urban areas. However, the magnitude is much greater in drought prone rural areas than in urban areas. There are millions of people who have been facing food insecurity that can be explained as either chronic or transitory in nature.

Cognizant of the level of vulnerability in the country, to address the issue the Government, in close collaboration with development partners, has developed the New Coalition for Food Security in Ethiopia and since 2003; the program has been under implementation in 319 chronically food insecure *woredas*.

The core objectives of the Food Security program were: to enable chronically food insecure people attain food security, and to improve significantly the food security situation of the transitory food insecure people.

The Food Security Program has four components, namely the Resettlement program; the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), the Household Asset Building Program (HABP); and the Complementary Community Investment Program (CCI).

A remarkable progress has been achieved through the implementation of the Food Security Program in the country. The main achievements in each of the components can be outlined as follows:

The ***resettlement program*** started in 2003 (1995 EC), and in the last nine years, the regions have been making concerted efforts to ensure that the settlers attain food security in the shortest possible time. So far about 228,343 households have been resettled, and out of these 224,192 households or nearly 98.2% of those settled have attained food self sufficiency, many of whom have exceeded this level.

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based on the keynote address presented by the author to the workshop on *Food Security, Safety Nets and Social Protection in Ethiopia* organized by Forum for Social Studies held on 18-19 October 2012 in Addis Ababa.

## The Government's Food Security Program

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The *Productive Safety net Program* has demonstrated the value of a shift away from a humanitarian response to more development oriented approach to addressing food gap. More than seven million people have received PSNP transfers which enables them to meet their consumption needs, reducing the risk they face and providing them with alternative options to protect them from selling their productive asset. So far measurable changes have been recorded in the livelihoods of the program beneficiaries because of the implementation of the Safety net program. Countless worthwhile public work projects have been undertaken that have built community infrastructure, social services and protected the natural environment.

Through the *Household Asset Building Program*, the program beneficiaries received household packages. Most of the household packages delivered have been agricultural packages. However, limited non agricultural packages have also been delivered. Credit has also been provided to the program beneficiaries. The credit is managed on a revolving fund basis, and a household which repays its debt IS encouraged to borrow again. Up to 2012 (the end of 2004 EC) more than two million beneficiaries have received more than 4.3 billion birr for household package credit from the Government allocated budget and from other sources. The program's beneficiaries have been able to earn additional income, build assets and increasingly cover their consumption needs from own resources. As a result of credit provision, up to now more than 496,438 household heads have graduated from the PSNP.

The *Complementary Community Investment* Component of the FSP is a program of capital intensive community infrastructure development aimed at benefiting groups of food insecure populations living in selected chronically food insecure *woredas*. So far considerable progress has been made in the implementation of CCI. Access to water for both humans and animals has been enhanced in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas. Large areas of land have been developed through irrigated agriculture. Pastoral peoples have started living settled life, and the food security situation in the pastoral areas has shown an improvement.

I believe that these research findings will contribute a lot in providing better information on what is happening on the ground, as well as contributing to discussion and debate to improve the design and implementation of Food Security and Social Protection programs in the future.

# **Social Protection in Situations of Chronic Food Insecurity and Poverty: Lessons from Different Models and Implications for Ethiopia**

*Jan-Gerrit van Uffelen<sup>1</sup>*

## **Introduction**

### ***1.1. Background***

Ending hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition is a key challenge facing today's world. Recently local crises in food and nutritional security have deepened as a result of global shocks to the food system. The 2008 food price crisis and the current financial crisis have had a devastating effect on poverty levels in developing countries (Von Braun 2010, McCord 2010).

In situations of chronic food insecurity and poverty social protection is becoming more central to food security and rural development programming. A key component of social protection in such situations are safety nets which provide a form of social assistance by re-distributing resources to food insecure and poor people to protect them from livelihood shocks and to reduce poverty. In recent years social protection has become a key issue in international policy debate and has grasped the interest of governments, donors, UN agencies and NGOs (McCord and Slater 2009). Social protection and the role of safety nets are increasingly being recognised as crucial elements in pro-poor development strategies. The role of social protection is also emphasized in achieving MDG-1 to eradicate hunger and extreme poverty and often take the form of transfer mechanisms aimed at the needs of vulnerable people. These are the people left out of traditional development instruments like agricultural investment, micro-finance, chain development and at risk of being structurally locked out of the economy

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<sup>1</sup> The research for this paper has been undertaken as part of the Linking Emergency Aid to Food Security (LEAFS) research programme which is a joint four-year research programme by Wageningen University in the Netherlands and Bahir Dar University in Ethiopia. The research is funded by WOTRO Science of Global Development of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).

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Developments in the policy domain have resulted in a broad array of programmatic responses and practices on the ground. There is however a need to increase our knowledge regarding the role and contribution of safety nets to food security and rural development. It is therefore important to review the experience with different social protection models to draw lessons for increasing knowledge and stimulating debate amongst policy makers and practitioners. This is of particular relevance in the light of the role and importance of Ethiopia's evolving social protection system. Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme is Africa's largest social protection initiative addressing the needs of over 7.5 million chronically food insecure people.

The aim of this chapter is to contribute to the exchange of knowledge and promote dialogue amongst policy makers and practitioners in Ethiopia regarding the role of social protection, and in particular the role of safety nets, in food security, poverty reduction and rural development. This is done by comparing and contrasting the experience with selected social protection models with the aim to draw important implications for Ethiopia's evolving social protection model. The chapter looks at the experience of the Protracted Relief Programme (PRP) in Zimbabwe, Rwanda's National Labour Intensive Works<sup>2</sup>(HIMO) programme and India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA). Based on the findings of these models this chapter presents key issues for Ethiopia's model in terms of policy debate, institutional change and for addressing implementation challenges.

### ***Social Protection in Contexts of Chronic Food Insecurity and Poverty***

Social protection is about social policy which is the collective of interventions in the economy to influence access to, and incidence of, adequate and secure livelihoods and incomes. Although definitions of social protection vary most underline central notions as constituted by Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004): '*All initiatives that provide income (cash) or consumption (food) transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance social status and rights of the excluded and marginalized*'.

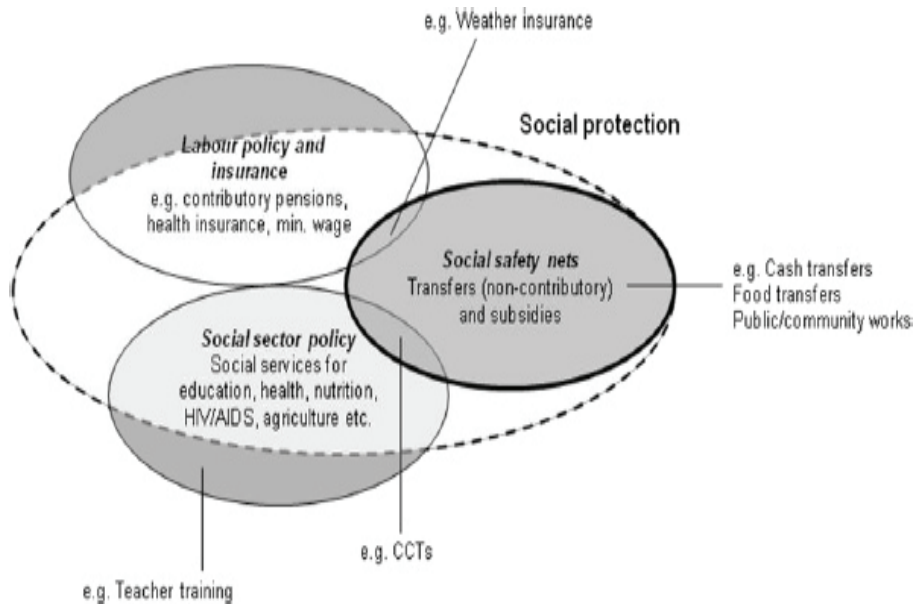
Social policy has always played a redistributive, protective and transformative or developmental role. In line with this Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004) have categorised social protection initiatives as protective (e.g. non-formal social safety nets), preventive (e.g. formal social security), promotive (e.g. minimum wages) or transformative (such as anti-discrimination campaigns).

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<sup>2</sup> HIMO stands for Programme de Développement Local a Haute Intensité de Main-d'Oeuvre.

More recently Gentilini and Omamo (2011) distinguish three components of social protection: social safety nets; social sector policies providing social services including education, health and nutrition, and; labour market interventions and insurance products (see figure 1). This chapter focuses on the role of social safety nets as a key component of social protection models. Safety net programme options include a wide array of options including cash transfers and conditional transfers, free food distributions, direct feeding programs, school-based feeding programs, food stamps, price subsidies, subsidized agricultural inputs, public works programs, social health insurance and microfinance (IFPRI 2004).

Figure 1. Components of social protection (taken from Gentilini and Omamo, 2011).



In brief, social protection is nowadays seen as an important policy option for reducing chronic food insecurity and poverty amongst vulnerable groups. Safety nets, as an important component of social protection, are increasingly recognised as crucial elements in pro-poor development strategies often alongside other socio-economic policies and programmes. A key question, however, is if safety nets live up to such expectations in situations characterised by chronic poverty and food insecurity. This is a highly relevant question as social protection is known to face challenges in chronically poor, shock prone countries where the distinction between the chronic and transitory food insecure

## **Social Protection in Situations of Chronic Food Insecurity and Poverty: Lessons from Different Models and Implications for Ethiopia**

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is often blurred (Gentilini 2005), such as in Ethiopia. In trying to answer this question this chapter looks at the experience with social protection initiatives in various contexts as relevant to the Ethiopian situation. This chapter reflects on lessons learned and draws implications for the evolving social protection model in Ethiopia.

The next section introduces the framework and methods used for this study. A typology of different social protection models is presented based on which the case studies have been selected. Section 3 describes the evolution of Ethiopia's social protection model and introduces the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) which is the major component of Ethiopia's current model. In section 4 the findings of the case studies are presented and implications drawn for the Ethiopian model. The last section, section 5, presents the summary and conclusions.

### **Framework and Methods**

Safety nets, as a major component of social protection, are often perceived to be of temporarily nature even in protracted food crises. Reasons for this are several and include issues of affordability and expectations of agricultural as well as pro-poor inclusive growth and overall economic development. A key reason why social protection is often associated with the idea of providing a short term buffer is that safety nets were first promoted in the 1980s to address what at the time were thought to be the short-term effects of structural adjustment (IFPRI 2004). Recent experience with safety nets in contexts of chronic food insecurity and poverty indicates that social protection initiatives should be embedded into longer term policy frameworks to have development impact (FAO 2010). In reality however the social protection response to, for example, the 2008 food price crisis and the current financial crisis has been limited as a result of weak systems, low-coverage of pre-existing provision and with developing countries struggling to even maintain pre-crisis social protection policy commitments due to declining revenues (McCord 2010). This raises fundamental questions regarding the perceived need and role of social protection in addressing food insecurity and poverty. Sharing lessons from models in various countries is seen as instrumental to innovate and advance knowledge and practice on social protection initiatives (Gentilini and Omamo 2011). This study is interested in the experience with social protection in contexts of chronic food security and poverty as relevant to the Ethiopian context and social protection model.



## ***Research Questions and Methods***

***The following research questions have been defined:***

1. What is the impact of safety nets, as the major component of social protection, on food security and poverty reduction in situations of chronic food insecurity and poverty?
2. What lessons are relevant to innovate and advance knowledge and practice on safety nets in Ethiopia?
3. What are the implications of this in terms of the evolution of Ethiopia's social protection model?

In order to answer these questions a number of case studies were selected based on their relevance for the model in Ethiopia by reflecting the dynamics of Ethiopia's emerging social protection model. The selected case studies should therefore fit within a typology of social protection models that span from limited social protection measures or programmes to consolidated social protection systems. The findings of the case studies as relevant to the Ethiopian situation are organised in three domains that are seen as crucial for innovation and development of social protection models: the policy domain, the institutional domain and the implementation domain (Gentilini and Omamo 2011). Based on the case study findings, the in depth knowledge of Ethiopia's PSNP by the author and discussions with senior staff of international agencies<sup>3</sup>the relevance of the findings and their implications for the development of Ethiopia's social protection model are discussed.

### ***Social Protection Typology and the Ethiopian model***

In selecting a set of representative case studies this study adopts the typology of social protection models as suggested by Gentilini and Omamo (2011). They distinguish between 'limited' social protection measures, 'emerging' programmes and 'consolidated' social protection systems. In all three models innovations in knowledge and practice emerge although the objectives of the models may differ as they are informed by specific sets of administrative, financing and political factors. Figure 2 illustrates these different models on the basis of their level of integration and co-ordination at policy and institutional

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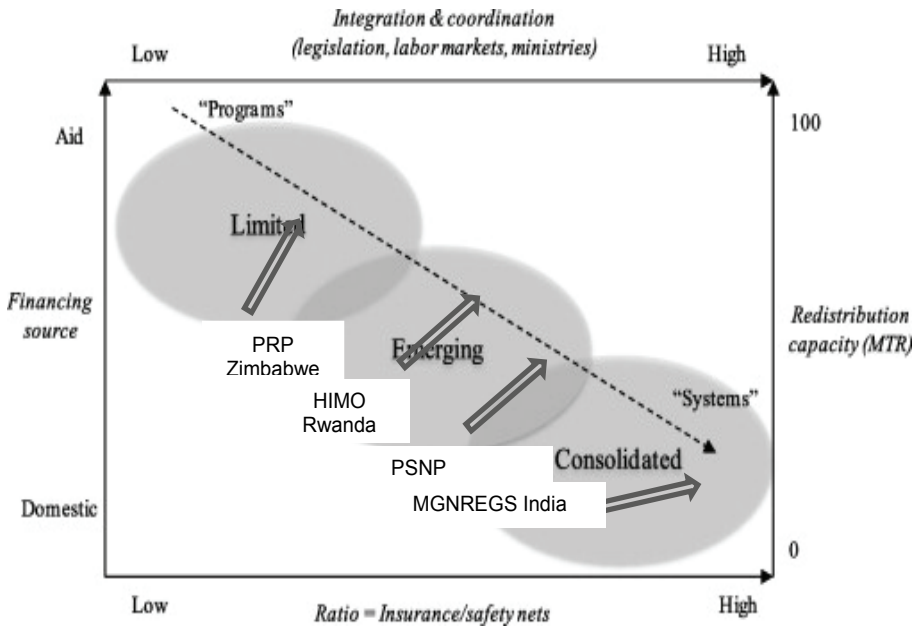
<sup>3</sup> Interviews were held in February 2009 in Rome with WFP, FAO and IFAD and in Washington with IFPRI and the WB in June 2011. Meetings in Addis with the WFP, FAO, WB and IFPRI were held twice a year in the period 2009-2011. During the same period Ethiopian government officials at federal level were met once a year in Addis and twice a year at regional level in Bahir Dar.

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level, financing source and the balance of safety nets versus insurance instruments<sup>4</sup>.

Figure 2. Illustrative typology of social protection models (adapted from Gentilini and Omamo 2011)



Adopting this typology Ethiopia’s PSNP can be situated as an ‘emerging’ social protection model. This is so as the central programme component of the country’s Food Security Strategy, the Productive Safety Net Programme, does not represent a ‘limited’ measure nor a ‘consolidated’ social protection system.

In terms of integration and co-ordination (see the top bar of the figure) the PSNP is not part of a longer-term legislative framework, not integrated with labour market policies or fully co-ordinated between various ministries. Integration is sought with other policies, in particular financial and agricultural policies in the form of the so-called Other Food Security Programmes (OFSPs) as part of the first phase of the programme (2005-9). As part of the second phase

<sup>4</sup> In their typology of social protection models Gentilini and Omamo included a country’s domestic redistribution and financing capacity (expressed as the Marginal Tax Rate on the rich to close the poverty gap at two US Dollar per day). For the purpose of this study this is less relevant and therefore emitted from the typology.

(2009-14) the OFSPs have been modified with the Household Asset Building Programme (HABP) and the Complementary Community Investment programme (CCI). For the PSNP to promote graduation from the safety net and social transformation the programme must, in combination with HAB and CCI as complementary interventions, be instrumental in creating assets and enable people to diversify their livelihoods.

In terms of the funding source (left bar of the figure) most of the fund needed for the PSNP is paid for by international aid with the government making significant contributions to the HABP and CCI from its domestic budget. The PSNP is a safety net that transfers resources, predominantly in the form of food and cash, to chronically food insecure people for six months per year over a five year period. The PSNP is not an insurance system (bottom bar of figure 2). Weather insurance schemes to trigger early disaster response and advance financing are being piloted in Ethiopia but such initiatives are still small in scale and not (yet) mainstreamed in the model.

### ***Case study selection***

To draw lessons for Ethiopia's evolving social protection model it is important to select case studies that represent a limited, emerging and consolidated model. The selected case studies must be relevant to the Ethiopian situation and reflect the origins of the country's initial limited programme (relief oriented emergency programming based on annual needs assessments) which characterised the Ethiopian model up to 2005), the current emerging model (which started with the introduction of the PSNP in 2005) and aspirations of a consolidated system. The case studies have been carefully selected and reviewed based on project evaluations that looked at the impact of safety nets on food security and poverty reduction<sup>5</sup>.

The Protracted Relief Programme (PRP) in Zimbabwe has been selected as representing a limited model as relevant to Ethiopia's past assistance model (see box 1). Prior to the PSNP in 2005 Ethiopia's safety net was in essence a relief oriented emergency system based on unpredictable international aid appeals. The rationale of Zimbabwe's PRP is to deliver, under conditions of severe vulnerability and poor governance, targeted relief interventions not unlike Ethiopia in the period following the Great Ethiopian Famine of 1984-85. The PRP represents an effort to move away from reactive short-term emergency programmes to longer-term yet flexible assistance to maximise programme impact and tackle food insecurity and poverty. Similarly, following the 1984-85

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<sup>5</sup> The studies are taken from a briefing note by the Dutch Working Group on Social Protection, Rural Development and Food Security (van Uffelen 2010).

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famine successive Ethiopian governments tried to make food aid productive in the form of public works aimed at environmental rehabilitation to have developmental impact.

Rwanda's National Labour Intensive Works (HIMO) is an emerging model(box 2) and relevant to Ethiopia's current model. Rwanda has been developing labour intensive works since 1978 with the HIMO programme being an integral element of Rwanda's Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy. HIMO's aim is to contribute to poverty reduction by carrying out employment intensive works and making income generating investments. Likewise, Ethiopia's PSNP is based on labour intensive works that seek to sustain and enhance agricultural production and forms an integral part of the country's Food Security Programme (FSP). The FSP is an important element of the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), the country's longer term poverty reduction strategy.

In seeking an end to its protracted food crisis Ethiopia looks at developing and middle income countries as reflected by the GTP. In terms of safety nets India is seen as a possible example for Ethiopia's social protection model: the productive aspect of the PSNP and the balance between wage share and other inputs is based on experience from India<sup>6</sup>. India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is a job guaranteeing system providing a minimum number of employment days to people living below the poverty line (box 3). MGNREGS is an institutionalised scheme being enacted by legislation in August 2005. The main international partners of the Government of Ethiopia, in particular the World Bank, see Indian initiatives such as MGNREGS and other Indian initiatives focusing on public works and drought adaptation schemes as an example for Ethiopia to provide for flexible safety nets in a consolidated social protection system<sup>7</sup>.

The three models are implemented in different socio-economic and political contexts but have in common that they are implemented in situations of chronic food insecurity and poverty. In all three models safety nets are utilised to assist people with a limited asset base, people who are often socially excluded. Such people are typically highly vulnerable to livelihood shocks which risks further undermining their asset base locking them into chronic poverty.

Ethiopia's current social protection model, in which the PSNP is the major component, is an emerging model which has been predated by a decades long

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<sup>6</sup> Pers. com. World Bank staff, Washington.

<sup>7</sup> Pers. com. World Bank staff, Washington. The World Bank is also looking with interest to pilot projects in India on community based adaptation approaches to strengthen climate resilience as a way forward for Ethiopia (World Bank 2011).

limited model characterised by massive humanitarian responses to recurrent food crises.

The Productive Safety Net Programme will be introduced in the section 3. This is followed by a section 4 which presents the findings of the case studies and the implications for Ethiopia's emerging social protection model in section five.

*Box 1 The Protracted Relief Programme in Zimbabwe (PRP)*

***Delivering a flexible response in a complex crisis.***

Zimbabwe experiences a crisis as a result of poor governance, economic decline and a severe HIV/AIDS epidemic. The objective of the Protracted Relief Programme (PRP) is to reduce hunger, poverty and vulnerability for up to two million of the poorest people in Zimbabwe. The PRP is currently in its second phase (2008-2013) and builds on the first phase which was evaluated positively though the lack of focus on the poorest and most vulnerable was identified as a major challenge. The second phase therefore places greater emphasis on social protection and community based demand-led approaches. The programme is paid for by international donors and is implemented by NGOs supported by technical partners.

The PRP aims to strengthen those households that are not labour-constrained in order to lift them out of protracted poverty. At the same time the programme aims to prevent destitution amongst the poorest and most vulnerable households. In particular those households headed by elderly grandparents caring for their orphan grandchildren and households with chronically ill or disabled members.

The programme's main focus is to promote agriculture and to enhance food production and income generation. The PRP makes use of a range of social transfer options such as cash transfers, cash vouchers, food parcels and block grants. Besides this, the PRP provides food security through vouchers to vulnerable households with members suffering chronic and debilitating diseases, and supports home-based care for people living with HIV/AIDS.

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### *Box 2 National Labour Intensive Public Works in Rwanda (HIMO)*

#### ***Aiming for lasting pro-poor programme outcomes.***

Rwanda has been developing labour intensive work programmes to address food insecurity and poverty since 1978. After the 1994 war, the government intensified its commitment and involvement in labour intensive works and started the national Haute Intensité de Main d'Oeuvre (HIMO) programme. HIMO is an integral element of the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme which is a social protection programme and a cornerstone of Rwanda's Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy. Following the first phase (2002-2007) HIMO is currently in its second phase (2007-11).

HIMO's objective is to 'contribute to poverty reduction by carrying out employment-intensive and income-generating investments using local resources by reinforcing the capacities of decentralised structures and local actors'. The programme is oriented towards rural development and targets the poor in economically disadvantaged areas of Rwanda. Public works are aimed at improving marshland areas, terracing of hill sites and rehabilitating rural roads. HIMO's rationale for adopting labour intensive works is to create jobs with cash transfers contributing to the socio-economic inclusion of poor households.

### *Box 3 India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)*

#### ***Institutionalising social protection and making it inclusive and accountable to vulnerable persons.***

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is a job guarantee scheme providing a legal guarantee of a minimum number of employment days to adult members of rural households willing to work for a minimum wage. MGNREGS was introduced with the aim of improving the purchasing power of rural people in an attempt to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor by means of semi or unskilled work to people living below the poverty line. Started in 2006, MGNREGS covered all districts in India by 2008. Public work is targeted towards a set of specific rural development activities including water conservation, reforestation and rural infrastructure.

NGOs' lobby and advocacy work to securing the rights of Persons with Disabilities, in line with provisions in India's Person with Disability (PwD) Act, made the Andhra Pradesh State Government to adopt a special provision in the Andhra Pradesh Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme Act. As a result the Act guarantees to provide 150 days of employment for PwDs with less than 30% of the amount of work required as compared to able-bodied persons participating in the scheme, but with wages at par with them.

## Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net programme

Ethiopia is a Low-Income Food-Deficit country and labelled as experiencing a protracted crisis. This is because of the frequency of its recurrent food crises, the high percentage of undernourished people and the high proportion of humanitarian assistance as a share of total assistance<sup>8</sup> (FAO 2010). Ethiopia has, however, made significant progress with the Global Hunger Index (GHI)<sup>9</sup> falling by almost a third from 43.5 in 1990 to 30.8 in 2009 (IFPRI 2009). Though the fall of the GHI measure over the 1990-2009 period has been impressive the measure of 30.8 is still above 30 which is seen as extremely alarming<sup>10</sup>.

Following the Great Ethiopian Famine of 1984/85 annual emergency appeals have called for massive food aid interventions targeting over 5 million Ethiopians almost every single year (GoE 2003). Irrespective of this aid a high percentage of the population in the Ethiopian highlands has remained chronically food insecure and highly vulnerable to livelihood shocks, in particular drought. In 2005 Ethiopia's Food Security Programme opened up the way to transform the relief oriented emergency system into a development oriented predictable safety net. The PSNP and the so-called Other Food Security Programmes (OFSPs) were designed to break the circle of food aid dependency while the Voluntary Resettlement Programme (VRP) sought to relocate people from the over populated highlands to agricultural areas in the less densely populated lowlands.

The objective of the PSNP is to assure food consumption and prevent asset depletion of food insecure households in chronically food insecure 'woredas' (districts). The programme aims to protect household assets and to build community assets through timely and consistent safety net resource transfers and activities. The success of the programme is built on three principles: provision of predictable transfers for 6 months per year for a five year period; functional links between the PSNP and the OFSPs (including the household package programme) and; graduation of beneficiaries when food sufficiency is attained. The annual budget of the PSNP is very substantial and has been around USD 347 million per annum for the 2005-9period.

At its inception in 2005 the Programme targeted over 5 million chronically food insecure people with the number increasing to almost 7.5 million by 2009

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<sup>8</sup> According to FAO the country has been reporting a food crisis almost every single year since the 1984-85; 41% of its population was malnourished over the period 2005-7, and; the share of humanitarian assistance as part of total assistance was 21% in 2008.

<sup>9</sup> The GHI captures three dimensions of hunger which are insufficient availability of food, shortfalls in the nutritional status of children and child mortality.

<sup>10</sup> In 2009 Ethiopia ranked 79<sup>th</sup> out of a total of 84<sup>th</sup> countries on the global hunger index country list.

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(MoARD 2009). Resource transfers in the form of food or cash are made available on the basis of people's participation in Public Works. Households lacking labour, such as the elderly and people with a handicap, receive free transfers in the form of Direct Support which accounts for around 10% of all PSNP resource transfers. Most transfers are in the form of food but following successful pilot projects cash transfers have been introduced and now constitute around five percent of overall resource transfers. The Public Works programme builds assets at community level particularly in the form of soil and water conservation, rural roads, small scale irrigation schemes and drinking water supplies as well as social service facilities such as clinics and schools.

Graduation is seen as central to the success of the Ethiopian programme and has been defined as a two-staged process. At a first level households graduate from the safety net as a result of the combined impact of the PSNP and the supplementary OFSPs when they have achieved 'food sufficiency'. This has been defined as a households' ability to meet their food needs for 12 months and withstand modest shocks (MoARD 2009). At a second level households are expected to graduate out of poverty. Graduation at scale from the safety net was envisaged at the end of the first phase of the PSNP (2005-2009) but fell short of expectations.

With the OFSPs being modified with the HABP and the CCI (second phase of the PSNP, 2009-14) the government now expects all chronically food insecure households who participate in Public Works to have achieved food sufficiency by 2014. In circles of the governments' international partners there is however serious doubt whether this is realistic. Some senior staff at the headquarters of international agencies who are involved in safety net programmes think that graduation at scale in Ethiopia by 2015 is even a naive assumption. In general the understanding of the government's international partners is that the PSNP, as the core component of Ethiopia's Food Security Programme, should be seen as an evolving model and they underline the need for a consolidated social protection system in dealing with chronic food insecurity and in managing the effects of external shocks to people's livelihoods.

Apart from a programmatic perspective the PSNP has made an important contribution in creating policy space which has helped opening up a wider debate on risk, vulnerability reduction and growth. This is instrumental as the PSNP has the potential to evolve into a comprehensive and consolidated social protection strategy in support of Ethiopia's chronically food insecure and poor.

The next section presents the main findings of the case studies and discusses the implications for Ethiopia's evolving social protection model.



## **Case Study Findings and Implications for the Ethiopian Model**

The PRP in Zimbabwe, HIMO in Rwanda and MGNREGS in India represent three models implemented in different socio-economic and political contexts. The models have in common that they are implemented in contexts of chronic food insecurity and poverty and assist people with a limited asset base. This section draws out the general findings of the case studies as relevant to Ethiopia's evolving social protection system. Findings are categorised in line with the three domains that are seen as central to innovate and advice innovation: the policy domain, the institutional domain and the implementation domain. The findings of the case studies and the implications for Ethiopia's evolving model are presented in the form of policy debates, institutional change and implementation challenges.

### ***Policy Debate***

Experience with the three different social protection models show that from a development governance perspective there are a number of key policy issues highly relevant to the Ethiopian situation. These are the high expectations by donors and governments regarding the role of social protection – safety nets in particular - in contributing to food security and poverty reduction, the cost and affordability of such interventions, and their perceived impact.

#### *The role of safety nets in addressing food security and poverty*

Recent rethinking of the humanitarian response to food insecurity and poverty has led to the development of predictable and longer term responses (McCord and Slater 2009). One of the consequences is that both donors and governments see the utilisation of resource transfers not only as a consumptive expenditure in order to smooth consumption and protect assets, but also as a productive investment to reduce poverty and promote growth. As a consequence graduation from safety nets and out of poverty is not seen as an additional and desired outcome but as the planned outcome of social protection programming.

The case studies illustrate the ambitious expectations that donors and governments have of the envisaged role and impact of safety net initiatives. Zimbabwe's PRP, a limited model, is 'to reduce hunger, poverty and vulnerability of up to two million Zimbabweans'. HIMO as an emerging model aims to contribute to poverty reduction by targeting the poor in economically disadvantaged areas. In both cases safety nets are associated with the idea of providing a short to medium term buffer as the basis for poor and vulnerable

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people to secure food security and emerge from poverty. At the same time however the PRP and HIMO are implicitly seen as having to evolve into longer-term and more consolidated models such as India's MGNREGS model (which is aimed to improve the purchasing power of rural people living below the poverty line). Donors thus perceive the PRP as the starting ground for a comprehensive future social protection programme in Zimbabwe while HIMO's labour intensive works has in fact become an almost permanent feature of addressing rural poverty in Rwanda. This indicates that while safety nets contribute to consumption smoothing the impact of safety nets on longer term poverty reduction appears to be limited, in particular for vulnerable households. This seems to suggest that on their own social protection programmes are unlikely to address underlying causes of chronic food insecurity and poverty.

In situations of chronic food insecurity and poverty it is evident that on their own safety nets are unlikely to lift people out of poverty. This is because resource transfers in such contexts are mostly utilised as consumption expenditure and less so for making investments in productive assets to secure or diversify livelihoods. It seems therefore justified in such contexts to de-link the objective of providing a level of income security and asset protection with the objective of graduation, at least in the short to medium term. For graduation to happen social protection should be an integral element of a comprehensive poverty reduction framework (a set of coherent pro-poor development policies), particularly in situations where root causes of chronic food insecurity and poverty are multi-dimensional such as in Ethiopia.

In Ethiopia a key methodological constraint is the poor integration between the PSNP and the OFSPs (and its substitutes the HABP and CCI), particularly credit. Designed as central to graduation OFSPs were absent in many areas covered by the PSNP during the first phase of the PSNP<sup>11</sup>. Participatory decision-making on the ground regarding the type of public works was poor and inclusion and exclusion of households for socio-political reasons was reported. Also the relation between the PSNP and the OFSPs at the one hand and Ethiopia's poverty reduction strategy, the Growth and Transformation Plan, at the other are functionally weakly integrated.

### *Cost and affordability of social protection*

The cost and affordability of social protection is another key issue in the policy debate on social protection. Middle income countries like India that show strong economic growth are obviously much better positioned to pay for social

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<sup>11</sup>According to World Bank officials only a quarter of the PSNP beneficiaries were covered by the OFSPs in the period 2005-2009 (pers. com. World Bank staff, February 2011).

protection initiatives from their domestic budget than low income countries. In other words middle-income countries can afford consolidated programmes while models in developing countries, where needs may be more pronounced, are typically of a limited or emerging type not in the last place for reasons of cost and affordability. The safety nets in Rwanda and Zimbabwe are paid for by donors from international aid budgets. In Rwanda there is considerable agreement between donors and the government on tackling poverty but as a low income country Rwanda lacks the resources to afford programmes like HIMO on its own. In Zimbabwe the international community fund a limited social protection initiative because there is disagreement between the donors and the government on the nature, extent and solution for the crisis.

Cost and affordability is an important issue as all three case studies suggest that a significant proportion of people may be in need of longer term safety net support. In the case of limited and emerging models there is a risk that the costs of such interventions may threaten its continuation particularly in times of economic crisis or changing donor or government spending priorities. This will have serious consequences for those in need of assistance.

In Ethiopia the cost and affordability of social protection provision is a key challenge both for donors and the Ethiopian government<sup>12</sup>. Not only are costs of the PSNP and its complementary programmes high but interviews with its international partners, in particular the World Bank, also indicate that it is likely that donor demands will require the government to commit more resources of its increasing domestic budget (as a result of the country's significant economic growth) to pay for a consolidated model.

*Impact of Safety Nets: creating dependency, smoothing consumption, promoting economic growth*

Policy makers are well aware about the impact of safety nets with opinions ranging from safety nets to contribute to creating dependency, consumption smoothing or economic growth and poverty reduction. The creation of dependency is particularly deeply engrained in donor and government circles. This is, for example, clearly demonstrated by Zimbabwe's limited PRP model which has been explicitly designed to transform the initial emergency response to the crisis by '*lifting vulnerable and needy households out of dependency on short-term food aid by providing longer-term and predictable social assistance*' (PRP 2007).

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<sup>12</sup> Gentilini and Omamo quote Pal et al. (2005) that in Ethiopia costs for basic social protection will demand a high share of domestic budgets and that even with increased government commitment to social transfers major international donor support would be required.

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The debate at policy level regarding the role and impact of social protection initiatives and its affordability are interrelated. Reflecting cost- and affordability-concerns social protection is often portrayed as a productive investment over consumptive expenditure. Investments in productive safety nets are therefore often presented as having a poverty reduction and growth affect and are thus fundamentally different from old-style emergency relief interventions to cover basic needs. The degree to which social protection can contribute to poverty reduction and economic growth is an important argument for donors and government accepting the costs in affording social protection.

In Ethiopia an inherent element of the policy debate is whether the PSNP creates dependency amongst its intended beneficiaries (reflecting so to say ‘the legacy of the past’) or contributes to consumption smoothing and economic growth. This is likely to create an inherent tension between prioritising developmental outcomes of public works (the productive nature of the safety net programme) over core welfare objectives. That is to create a tension between the objective of graduation from the safety net and rural development at the one hand, and the objective of consumption smoothing and asset protection of labour-short but poor households at the other.

### ***Institutional Change***

The case studies also yield important lessons in the institutional domain. In particular in terms of the change required in delivering resource transfers as part of a longer term safety net as compared with short-term relief oriented response. Firstly, the case studies show that needs in situations of chronic food insecurity and poverty are predictable and require forms of longer term assistance. Secondly, evidence from the case studies also show that safety nets have impact on food insecurity and poverty but that this impact may be of a temporarily nature as they often do not address the root causes of food insecurity and poverty. A third finding from the case studies is that the social protection agenda can reinforce existing systems by strengthening donor co-ordination as well as the role of governments and civil society in the management and delivery of such programmes.

### ***Addressing predictable needs: from relief oriented emergency systems to developmental oriented safety nets***

The case studies on the PRP, HIMO and MGNREGS illustrate that the needs of people in situations of chronic food insecurity and poverty are predictable. All three case studies are examples developmental oriented safety nets. In moving away from short term emergency programmes to longer term social protection

programmes they represent a fundamental break with the past when short-term emergency relief oriented assistance was often the preferred response by the international community.

The case of the PRP in Zimbabwe clearly illustrates the increased understanding by the international community that needs of people in crisis are predictable and that they require different approaches as compared with old-style emergency relief assistance. Implemented in the context of a political crisis, severe vulnerability and poor governance, the PRP has been envisaged and devised as a medium-term safety net to avoid an emergency driven food aid response. While the initial thrust of the international response to the crisis in Zimbabwe focused on short-term food aid to those in need the objective of the PRP aims for transformation by lifting beneficiary households out of dependency on short-term food aid by providing longer-term and predictable social assistance.

Ethiopia's PSNP represents this paradigm shift by transforming a decades old relief oriented emergency system into a longer-term development oriented predictable safety net. The former system was based on annual emergency appeals which, at the beginning of the third millennium, became considered an inappropriate response to what were in effect chronic and predictable needs (McCord and Slater 2009). The PSNP has managed to break this annual relief cycle with predictable and productive resource transfers within a multi-year programming framework. In other words the PSNP constitutes a move away from reactive short-term emergency programmes to a longer-term predictable social assistance to address predictable needs and protect people from chronic food insecurity and hunger.

#### *Evidence of impact on food security, poverty reduction and livelihood diversification*

Evaluations of the safety net programmes in Zimbabwe, Rwanda and India show that they have made positive contributions to food security and reducing the depth of poverty. The impact at beneficiary household level has been direct and contributed to consumption smoothing and maintaining people's asset base. At the same time however it appears that impact on households that are characterised by high dependency ratios is limited to the duration of the programme. Such households are typically those without any economically active members and they are often amongst the poorest and most marginalized within their community.

Zimbabwe's PRP aims to reduce hunger, poverty and vulnerability but does not aspire to have a longer term impact on rural development. This is

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because the policy environment limits donors to work with the Government on longer term development. The PRP is however designed to be flexible and when the situation is further improving in Zimbabwe it can be adjusted by shifting focus to have longer term sustainable impact in terms of food security and poverty reduction, for example by taking a more market based approach.

Particular relevant for Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net is the case of Rwanda's intensive labour programme. A recent HIMO evaluation found that HIMO contributed to consumption smoothing of poor households but appears to have had limited impact in terms of structural livelihood improvement (CDP 2009). While the programme was found to reduce the depth of poverty it fell short in terms of livelihood diversification and longer term poverty reduction of the poor participating in the programme. The evaluation found that a majority of the participants used the money earned to purchase food, clothing and other consumption items: little to no money was saved or invested in productive assets. The evaluation team therefore suggested raising the daily wage to enable poor households to save and make investments to diversify their livelihoods. This advice was not followed by the donors because of concerns for distorting market realities and for fear of encouraging better-off households to participate in the programme which would jeopardise the inclusion of poor households. The evaluators also advised the donors and the Rwandan government to guarantee poor households a minimum number of working days on a yearly basis. This advice was also not followed. It is interesting to note that the MGNREGS model is precisely doing that: providing a legal guarantee of a minimum number of employment days to poor households living below the poverty line.

The experience of HIMO indicates that the direct impact on poor households participating in the labour intensive works is limited to consumption smoothing and asset protection. Findings also indicated that relative better-off households that participated in the scheme find it easier to accumulate assets and diversify their livelihood strategies. This was clearly demonstrated by HIMO's efforts to open up new marshland areas for agricultural development and rehabilitate older schemes to increase food security, by direct income in the form of cash transfers to open up farmland and by access to productive farmland (food production). HIMO's income generating investments were however found to attract better-off individuals, such as employed people and people from outside the area. They benefited disproportionately from swamp area development and rehabilitation projects. This necessitated corrective measures such as reinforcing the rule that only poor households could own agricultural land reclaimed from swamp areas (with a maximum of 0,1 hectare per household either on an individual- or group-basis).

In conclusion, the case studies' findings suggest that safety nets on their own are unlikely to lift chronically poor people out of poverty. This seems to be consistent with evaluations of Ethiopia's PSNP which found that the programme's resource transfers stabilised the food security situation by smoothing consumption. For example, over the 2006 to 2008 period PSNP households did not express a decline in self-reported consumption levels nor did they report a decline in asset levels relative to non-beneficiaries (EC 2008). The impact on transformation however was disappointing with graduation at scale, as envisioned by the government and the World Bank by 2010, falling way short of expectations. By April 2009 fewer than 57.000 households had graduated or less than 10 percent of all PSNP households (MoARD 2009). This calls for strengthening the functional linkages between the PSNP and its supplementary interventions. It also seems to indicate that safety nets in situations of chronic food insecurity and poverty are to be seen as a crucial component in a wider set of coherent and consistent pro-poor development policies.

*Strengthening systems: donor co-ordination, government involvement and role of civil society*

The case studies reflect that social protection initiatives can play a supportive role in strengthening existing systems by enhancing donor co-ordination in support of aid harmonisation, seeking government involvement to make interventions more sustainable and allowing a role for civil society actors in the design and implementation of social assistance programmes.

## **Donor co-ordination**

The PRP in Zimbabwe and HIMO in Rwanda show that donor coordination is instrumental to aid harmonisation and more coherent social protection programmes. Both models also show that donor engagement with government is instrumental to put social protection higher on the political agenda and promote its adoption at government policy level. Even in situations where donors and government disagree on the root causes of the crisis and how to find solutions such as in Zimbabwe.

In Zimbabwe the multi-donor PRP steering group has been instrumental in seeking a common stand on the situation in the country. This has resulted in a harmonised aid initiative to respond in a flexible way to the transitional needs of the poorest and most needy households. The PRP works closely with UN agencies such as the World Food Programme. WFP's regional focus on social protection and special initiatives, such as cash and food vouchers, has been very helpful in this regard. The PRP is also aligned with UNICEF's National Action

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Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children. Donor co-ordination in Zimbabwe has resulted in a wider social protection coordination mechanism which includes the coordination of complementary transitional interventions such as food aid, agricultural support and cash transfer programmes. This mechanism is not only seen as instrumental to strengthen dialogue with the Government of Zimbabwe but also to inform the design of a future social protection programme once the government has gained credibility and developed capacity.

Donor engagement in Rwanda has placed the issue of social assistance higher at the political agenda and has promoted its incorporation at government policy level. HIMO is an integral element of the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme which is the corner stone of Rwanda's Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The case studies indicate that multi-donor funded programmes can enhance complementarity of interventions and enable for a much needed harmonised approach on dialogue and co-operation with national governments (the case of PRP in Zimbabwe and HIMO in Rwanda respectively).

In Ethiopia donor co-ordination has played an important role in making the PSNP possible with the programme developed by the Government of Ethiopia and its international partners, in particular the World Bank. Various donors support the PSNP and are active participants in the donor co-ordination meetings. Good donor co-ordination is acknowledged to have resulted in a more coherent programme and has facilitated debate amongst donors and the government. As mentioned before it has also enhanced policy space and stimulated dialogue on important issues like risk, vulnerability, and overall economic development.

### **Government involvement**

Government involvement in the design and implementation of social protection initiatives is important but not always feasible. In Zimbabwe government involvement is very limited as there has been little consensus between the government and donors on the nature, extent and solution for the crisis<sup>13</sup>. For political reasons the donor community has opted to implement the PRP outside the government through NGOs.

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<sup>13</sup> The formation of a Government of National Union in February 2009 has improved donor-government relations and helped to create some room for dialogue. In due time, when the government has gained credibility and developed capacity, the PRP, instead of continuing as a parallel structure, intends to hand over its social protection activities to the Department of Social Services under the Ministry of Labour and Social Services.



In Rwanda, where donors and the government do not fundamentally disagree, the programme was designed together but implemented through international NGOs for reasons of programme efficiency and effectiveness as the local government has limited capacity to do. HIMO aims to reinforce the capacity of decentralised government structures and local actors but in doing so faced various challenges. The most important one was the lack of capacity by local government actors and the resources available to them. The evaluators found that the lack of government capacity and resources at local level jeopardised the sustainability of potential longer-term rural development outcomes of public works, such as for example the maintenance of roads as created by HIMO (CDP 2009).

The case studies also highlight that bypassing government in productive safety net programmes for socio-political or programme efficiency reasons is likely to erode long term development outcomes that such programmes may have.

Ethiopia's PSNP is implemented by the government and NGOs and findings of the case studies seem to suggest that donors must invest in building the capacity of local government structures as a crucial link for public work programmes to have a lasting impact on developmental outcomes.

## **The role of civil society**

In all three case studies civil society organisations are playing an important role, either in programme design, implementation or contributing to transparency and accountability in making social protection programmes more efficient and effective. Civil society, in other words, played a critical role in the democratisation of programme management.

Zimbabwe's PRP has been able to deliver at-scale in a flexible way by working through civil society in the form of NGOs, faith based organisations, community based organisations and community interest groups such as support groups for people living with HIV/AIDS and community home-based care. Civil society has also been instrumental in developing sustainable alternatives to food aid by providing seeds, fertiliser and agricultural training on conservation farming. The use of community-based approaches to assist and empower poor people has been instrumental to reach the most vulnerable in communities and address gender inequality.

Lobby of civil society organisations in MGNREGS has been playing a crucial role for the model to adopt special provisions aimed at the inclusion of particular vulnerable groups. The Network of Persons with Disability Organisation, for example, has been playing an important role in mobilizing

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government resources and influencing policies on the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities by enacting upon India's National Rural Employment Scheme. This has resulted in special provisions for Persons with Disabilities granting them guaranteed employment with salaries at par of others participating in the scheme.

The case studies show that civil society organisations can play an instrumental role in limited models (such as the delivery of flexible yet targeted interventions in the PRP) as well as in consolidated models such as in MGNREGS (with civil society involved in lobby and advocacy work to make social protection inclusive and more accountable as to the needs of the most vulnerable). In this regard the role of civil society in Ethiopia's social assistance model has been rather limited although the current PSNP underlines the importance of adopting demand led approaches and seeks an increased role of communities in the design and implementation of activities.

### ***Implementation Challenges***

Experience with the different social protection models yields important lessons for the implementation domain that are relevant to the Ethiopian model. Key issues are the capacity to implement safety nets (including issues of targeting and the inclusion of labour short household) selection of the resource transfer type, the importance to look beyond economic impact and consider the social dimension of safety nets, alignment of formal with informal forms of social assistance provision, and the need for transparency and accountability of formal social protection initiatives.

### ***Implementation capacity***

Implementation capacity is an issue in all three social protection models and Ethiopia's safety net is no exception. The PSNP has met a number of operational constraints resulting in a high variability in performance across and within regions. These constraints formed an important contributing factor to delays in resource transfers as reported by 70% of the PSNP beneficiaries in 2007 (IFPRI 2008) while predictability and timeliness of resource transfers is seen as crucial to the success of the PSNP. Timeliness of resource transfers has improved since but remains an issue (Hoddinott et al, this volume). In this regard the low educational level of government staff and high staff turnover at field level are serious issues of concern. Poor coordination across government departments in support for PSNP public works resulted in fragmentation in oversight (World Bank 2009). Programme implementation was also compromised due to a lack of resources. This resulted for example in dropping full family targeting which is

likely to have negatively affected programme impact and potential for graduation.

In general the PSNP's Public Works were evaluated positively, for example soil and water conservation was found to contribute positively to sustained agricultural production and small-scale irrigation schemes increased farmers' income (EC 2008). The PSNP's impact on rural development in terms of improved infrastructure and natural resource management was found to be impressive in some areas while questionable in other areas<sup>14</sup>. A strong relationship was found between impact and the local level of institutional, technical and managerial expertise.

#### *Targeting and the inclusion of labour short but needy households*

The interest of policy makers and governments to emphasize the importance of social transfers as productive investment can be an important contributing factor for excluding labour-short but needy households.

Illustrative in this regard are the evaluation findings of the HIMO programme. Labour-short and poor female-headed households in Rwanda found it hard to participate in the programme. HIMO adopted a cash for work approach and used a self-targeting mechanism in promoting rural development. This meant that in practice the scheme was not attractive to poor but labour-short households, in particular female headed households. Although HIMO lacked a gender strategy in its first phase (2002-7) a large number of women participated in the scheme. The evaluation established however that by prioritising developmental impact over core welfare objectives (as per HIMO design) labour-short but needy female-headed households were excluded.

Ethiopia's PSNP targets chronically food insecure households with those able to work participating in Public Works and those households lacking labour receiving resource transfers under the Direct Support component. Around 90% of the resource transfers are invested in the Public Works component while the remaining 10% is available as a welfare mechanism in the form of Direct Support. In practice however it may well be that the percentage of vulnerable and chronically food insecure labour constrained households is over 10%. Particular in areas where there is a high percentage of female headed households. There are also indications that Ethiopia's Public Works system is very tough on households with limited labour capacity (Aschale et al. 2012), particularly in districts where PSNP staff utilise public works to maximise developmental outcomes which may contradict core welfare objectives.

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<sup>14</sup> Pers. com. with WFP officials in Addis Ababa, February 2011.

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Productive safety net programmes such as Ethiopia's PSNP carry an inherent risk to discriminate against needy but labour-short households. Particularly in areas where there is a tendency to emphasise on the public work component of social protection programmes as productive investment over core welfare objectives.

#### *Transfer selection: cash, food or a combination or both*

The use of food or cash as a social transfer has been an issue of much debate (for example Poverty in Focus 2008). In the past food transfers have often been the preferred type of transfer by donors. More recently however there is an increased realisation that cash is a viable alternative, particularly in situations where food is available on local markets and the food insecure and poor lack purchasing power.

The appropriate type of transfer, whether cash or food, depends on local context and circumstances and can vary across different household categories. India's MGNREGS pays a minimum wage on the basis of a legal guarantee for a minimum number of employment days for people living below the poverty line. Rwanda's HIMO programme provides cash transfers for those involved in the labour intensive work programme. Zimbabwe's PRP makes use of a range of transfers including cash, cash vouchers, food parcels and block grants. The PRP has been designed on the basis of empirical evidence from regional programmes that showed that resource transfers increased household food security, income security and human development of the socially excluded. By using a range of social transfers targeted at different household categories the PRP contributed to improved nutritional status, positive health outcomes and increased school enrolment. Apart from using social transfers in tackling extreme poverty the PRP also provides in kind subsidies. These are used to stimulate agricultural production and to support home based care programmes aimed at improving health care, nutrition and social support for the terminally ill and their wider family.

In Ethiopia food aid has been for long the typical response in situations of acute as well as chronic food insecurity. Cash as a resource transfer was introduced by the PSNP and evaluated positively although cash currently constitutes a mere five percent of all PSNP resource transfers. In 2008 PSNP beneficiary households receiving cash transfers saw its value being eroded as a result of high inflation rates in Ethiopia<sup>15</sup>. This means that in times of rising food

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<sup>15</sup> The international food price crisis of 2008 is believed to have had little impact on Ethiopia although it had a significant short-term price effect on Ethiopia's regional markets albeit with a great deal of heterogeneity across regions as well as between rural and urban areas (Ulimwengu et al. 2009).

prices or high inflation rates the value of cash transfers fall which demand an increase in budget to compensate for the loss in transfer value.

### *Looking beyond economic impact: the social dimension*

Social protection programmes and its evaluations tend to focus on the material aspects, in particular those related to the nature of the transfer and its economic impact. This often comes at the neglect of the social dimension and its significance for disadvantaged groups.

Evaluations of the three models look at the impact on vulnerable groups such as women, the disabled or elderly. Such evaluations, like in the case of MGNREGS, tend to highlight the participation of the vulnerable disabled from an economic perspective; that is by being economically empowered through receiving a minimum but guaranteed income.

A recent evaluation shows that participation in MGNREGS has also given the disabled confidence, self-respect and dignity (CORDAID 2010). Relative simple things like issuing disabled people with a livelihood card gave them an identity and dignity in the village. Inclusion in the scheme also contributed to their rehabilitation as it has made their families and the community at large to accept them because of their ability and power to earn income. In the case of MGNREGS economic empowerment of the disabled contributed to their social empowerment within the family and society at large. Other studies also indicate that when managed well economic empowerment of disadvantaged groups can contribute to their social empowerment. For example, a study on Older Peoples Associations in India, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Bangladesh underlines the importance of associations. Not only as a conduit for resource transfers but particularly for its social meaning and significance. Research showed that belonging to an association raised levels of self-esteem, self-confidence and has contributed to improved psychosocial health (Erb 2010).

The debate in Ethiopia on the PSNP is limited to the material nature and the amount or value of the resource transfers in relation to its impact on consumption smoothing and asset protection functions. Evaluations and impact assessments should however not overlook the social importance and implications of resource transfers particularly for vulnerable groups.

### *Alignment of formal social protection with informal systems*

Formal social assistance models provide important support to people in need, particularly in situations where the capacity of communities and households are already stretched. However, care has to be taken that formal programmes (often of a limited nature in terms of duration and the amount of resources being

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transferred to individual beneficiaries or households) do not contradict or erode the capacity of informal systems to provide social assistance to those in need. One reason why the importance to align formal with informal systems is overlooked is that formal social protection programmes tend to focus on the material nature of transfers and their economic impact (see above). By doing so they risk overlooking its social significance and implications for respecting local informal systems.

Community based demand led approaches to assist and empower poor people are important to align formal with informal forms of social assistance. The PRP in Zimbabwe has therefore adopted demand led approaches which were found instrumental in creating programme ownership by the community at large. Demand led approaches were also found instrumental in ensuring that formal social assistance do not promote inequality and grievances within the communities itself. In that sense the adoption of community-based approaches can avoid or mitigate negative impacts of donor and supply driven formal programmes. Vulnerable people, and older people in particular, tend to rely on informal sources of support such as family and friends. Declines in social structure such as the transition from extended to nuclear and smaller families can weaken these traditional sources of support underlining the need for alternatives (Biblop 2010). In situations of chronic food insecurity and poverty this presents a big challenge. Informal community based systems, such as Older Peoples Associations, can thus provide a mechanism for social support in the community as well as for facilitating activities and delivering services by local and national governments.

Formal social protection programmes risk contradicting community-based forms of social protection and can invoke feelings of inequality, tension and even conflict in communities. This has, for example, been reported in Ethiopia where in some instances the PSNP has created serious tension in communities. Findings of the case studies and the study on Older People Associations in Ethiopia underline that the fundamental importance of informal community based social protection must be respected. Particularly as formal social assistance initiatives are limited in terms of their coverage, transfer level and duration.

### *Need for transparency and accountability*

Transparency and accountability are crucial for the effective and efficient implementation of social protection programmes. It enhances local ownership and acceptance of social protection policy and practice by the community at large.

The three case studies underline that in all three models there is a need for making the provision of social protection transparent and accountable. In India the MGNREGS is enacted at national policy level and assures employment to Persons with Disabilities. Practice shows that this is not a guarantee for PwDs to have access to social transfers. The lack of awareness amongst government officials implementing the MGNREGS Act, particularly at sub-district levels, as well as amongst the community at large meant that initially few disabled people were included in the scheme. Civil society actors therefore took the lead in translating and disseminating relevant documents in the local language. They also organised a State level workshop for government officials to underline the importance of the effective implementation of the provisions of Persons with Disabilities under the MGNREGS. This resulted in a declaration in April 2010 by the government of Andhra Pradesh with the instruction to form PwDs groups with the same employment entitlements as guaranteed to other so-called Fixed Labour Groups. The government of Andhra Pradesh also appointed disabled people as district MGNREGS coordinators to focus specifically on inclusion of PwDs in the scheme.

This example illustrates two important issues. Firstly, once special conditions to include vulnerable people or disadvantaged groups in formal programmes are adopted at policy level, stakeholders at all levels (and in particular government officials) need to be sensitised and socialised with these provisions and provided with practical instructions for disadvantaged groups to participate in such programmes. And secondly, it highlights the important role that civil society can play to enhance transparency and accountability of formal safety net programmes

In Ethiopia the Government has the lead role in implementing the PSNP at all levels from federal to local government structures. The quality of implementation varies considerable across the districts<sup>16</sup>. This not only relates to the level local capacity and manpower (e.g. a high staff turnover) but also to different views regarding the aim of the programme and graduation criteria although this has improved significantly over time (Hoddinott et al. 2012– this volume). Knowledge and understanding of the PSNP’s objectives, principles and processes at local level vary significantly both across and within regions. There is thus a need to strengthen transparency and accountability of the PSNP, and its supplementary programmes, by increasing awareness about the provisions of the programme amongst all stakeholders.

The case studies illustrate that irrespective of the social protection model formal social protection policy, strategy and operational response must be made

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<sup>16</sup> Pers. com. with WFP officials in Addis Ababa, February 2011.

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transparent and accountable. It is important to raise awareness about its provisions across all stakeholders in order to enhance ownership and acceptance amongst the target constituency. The role of civil society organisations in the delivery of social protection, such as in the case of Zimbabwe's PRP, and to make such programme's inclusive of the needs of the most vulnerable suggests an enhanced role of civil society actors in Ethiopia's PSNP. This with the aim to increase transparency and accountability with regard to the needs of PSNP beneficiaries and in particular the most vulnerable amongst these. Experience with the programme in India suggests that rights based strategies may be necessary for food insecure and poor people who qualify for social assistance in line with the targeting criteria to claim the social transfers to which they are entitled. Experience from India also shows that practical support may be needed for accessing such resource transfers.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

This chapter has looked at the experience with safety nets, as an important pillar of social protection, in various countries and contexts characterised by chronic food insecurity and poverty. By studying a limited-, emerging- and a consolidated-model lessons learned as relevant to the Ethiopian context were documented. These have important implications for the policy debate, institutional changes and implementation challenges with regard to Ethiopia's evolving social protection model.

Up to 2005 Ethiopia's limited social protection model was characterised by annual emergency appeals and relief operations in address of the needs of millions of food insecure people. As the majority of these people were chronically food insecure their needs were in essence predictable requiring longer term approaches. Launched in 2005 the PSNP represents a paradigm shift as it has transformed the country's former relief oriented emergency system into a development oriented predictable safety net. As an emerging social protection model the PSNP has also been instrumental in opening up a much needed wider policy debate in Ethiopia on risk, vulnerability reduction and growth. These are important issues that need to be accounted for the country's current emerging model to develop into a consolidated social protection model.

The PSNP has been shown to contribute to consumption smoothing and preventing asset depletion for millions of chronically food insecure households. Graduation at scale, as a result of the PSNP in combination with the OFSPs, has so far however fallen short of expectations. In other words the effect of the combined programmes did not manage to lift substantial numbers of chronically food insecure households out of food insecurity and out of poverty. The current



second phase of the PSNP (2010-2014) is designed to address the major weaknesses of the first phase of the PSNP but is still in its initial phase. The government expects that by 2014 all of the chronically food insecure households who participate in the Public Works component of the PSNP have graduated from the safety net. There is however significant doubt amongst the government's international partners whether the majority of the chronically food insecure households will have achieved food sufficiency by 2014. They therefore underline the need for the current emerging model to evolve into a consolidated model or institutionalised as part of the country's development vision.

Based on the findings of safety nets in selected social protection models in Zimbabwe, Rwanda and India it is evident that for Ethiopia's current emerging model to evolve in a consolidated model it needs to address challenges in the policy-, institutional- as well as in the implementation-domain. In summary and in line with the research questions of this study the following challenges have been identified.

Research question 1 – 'What is the impact of safety nets, as a major component of social protection, on food insecurity and poverty reduction in situations of chronic food insecurity and poverty'? The case studies clearly demonstrate that chronic food insecurity and poverty can be very persistent even in countries that show strong economic growth such as in India. The case studies also illustrate that safety nets alone are not likely to reduce chronic food insecurity and poverty, particularly in contexts where households' coping mechanisms are already stretched and overwhelmed such as in the chronically food insecure parts of the Ethiopian highlands. Enhancing resilience among vulnerable households thus requires a comprehensive approach to social protection and requires addressing the structural causes that main maintain people in food insecurity and poverty. This suggests that safety nets are a fundamental element in social protection programming and an integral element of pro-poor development strategies aimed at reducing poverty and promoting economic growth.

Research question 2 – 'What lessons are relevant to innovate and advance knowledge and practice on safety nets in Ethiopia'? The main lessons from the case studies as relevant to the policy debate are related to the high expectations by donors and governments of social protection as a productive investment over consumptive expenditure, concerns about the cost and affordability of social protection, and the perceived impact or contribution towards economic growth and poverty reduction. Lessons to guide institutional change include the need to change from relief oriented emergency systems to longer term development oriented safety nets, the impact of social protection and need to make it an integral component of longer term pro-poor development strategies, and social

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protection as a means to strengthen existing delivery systems. Lessons with implications for addressing implementation challenges are related to the capacity to implement safety nets, the targeting and inclusion of needy but labour short households in productive safety nets, an appropriate combination of transfer types, the importance of the social dimension of safety nets, the need to align formal with informal social assistance provision systems, and the need for transparency and accountability.

In Ethiopia formal safety nets will need to remain a central component of Ethiopia's evolving social protection model for the foreseeable future. Scalable and flexible safety nets are needed to redistribute resources to chronically food insecure people to address food insecurity, reduce poverty and protect them against risks to their livelihoods. Social protection as an organising framework can also be seen as providing a national agenda for a shift from a collection of 'limited' programmes to an institutionalised and consolidated system. As an organising framework social protection is instrumental in creating a platform to gather actors and build synergies between approaches in order to better plan national development (Gentilini 2005). It is therefore important for the different stakeholders in Ethiopia - the government, donors, knowledge institutions and civil society organisations- to join in social protection platforms and engage in dialogue by sharing experience and insights to inform the policy debate, discuss the need for institutional changes and address implementation challenges.

The case studies show that civil society organisations can make important contributions to all three knowledge and practice domains: that is in making contributions to inclusive policies and improved design, enhancing accountability and transparency of institutionalised formal systems, and play a central role in the delivery of social assistance. This will strengthen the ability of safety nets in contributing to consumption smoothing and asset protection. In combination with other interventions, safety nets can help maximising the impact for poverty reduction and increased food security for chronically food insecure and poor households.

Research question 3 – 'What are the implications of the above lessons in terms of the evolution of Ethiopia's current emerging social protection model? There is a need for dialogue and debate to develop Ethiopia's current emerging social protection model into a consolidated model or institutionalised system as part of a longer term planning and policy process. Ethiopia's current Food Security Strategy and the PSNP are therefore to be seen as a transitional stage in the development of the country's former limited social protection measures (the provision of large humanitarian responses to recurrent emergencies prior to 2005 to protect people from food insecurity and hunger) into a future consolidated social protection system. In line with Gentilini's typology of social

protection models (see figure 2) this requires progress at three levels: at the level of integration (such as poverty reduction and labour market policies) and co-ordination (across different ministries), financing (an increase in domestic funding over external financing), and a balance between safety nets and insurance instruments.

At the level of integration and co-ordination programmatic linkages between the main elements of Ethiopia's current Food Security Strategy need to be strengthened. In particular the linkage between the PSNP at the one hand and the HABP and the CCI at the other. The main international food security actors in Ethiopia are not so much concerned about the design of the current programme but more so about the capacity of the government to implement the programme as per the design. At an international level there is also a debate amongst global food security actors like IFPRI and the World Bank whether Ethiopia's safety net programme transfers enough resources to facilitate, in combination with the supplementary programmes, graduation from the safety net and out of poverty. A second issue in terms of integration and co-ordination is situating Ethiopia's Food Security Strategy into a longer term pro-poor development policy and programmatic frameworks, in particular Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan, and other multi-sectoral linkages. While there is impressive economic growth rural growth is limited and it is not realistic to expect chronic food insecurity and poverty to be resolved in the short to medium term. Therefore the functional linkages between the GTP and future poverty reduction strategies at the one hand and Ethiopia's Food Security Strategy needs to be strengthened.

From a financing perspective there is clear anticipation by international donors that Ethiopia's strong economic growth will enable the country to assume increased ownership of its social protection programme. In other words donors anticipate that international aid financing for social protection in Ethiopia will fall in favour of domestic budgets. Donors, including the World Bank, do realise however that a consolidated social protection model cannot be sustainable without substantial international financial support. They see a consolidated model with scalable safety nets as essential to respond to acute food insecurity following major external shocks, in particular drought, while catering for the needs of the chronically food insecure. Such scalable safety nets are still seen as a necessary and vital contribution to creating a springboard for households to graduate from the safety net and out of poverty. International food security actors, including the World Bank, WFP and FAO all underline the importance of the PSNP and a future scalable safety net in dealing with internal but also with global shocks to an increasingly globalised food system.

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A third element that needs attention for Ethiopia's emerging model to develop into a consolidated system is increasing the role of insurance mechanisms over safety net functions. The government in conjunction with the WFP is currently undertaking interesting pilot projects for insuring harvest loss as a result of external shocks in particular drought. Although these trial projects are encouraging experience also shows that substantial subsidies are needed for insurance companies willing to insure the risk of harvest loss.

In conclusion, safety net programmes are an essential component of social protection models, particularly in situations of chronic food insecurity and poverty. There is both a need and urgency for Ethiopia's current model to transform into a consolidated model that can tackle vulnerability upfront by anticipating predictable shocks, and can make the response to chronic food insecurity and poverty more developmental. In addressing the challenges in the policy-, institutional- as well as in the implementation-domain Ethiopia's future social protection model can, in combination with longer term pro-poor development strategies, play an important transformative and developmental role in ending Ethiopia's protracted food crisis.

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# **Learning from the PSNP: The Influence of Ethiopia's Social Protection Experience in Sub-Saharan Africa and Beyond**

*Rachel Slater and Anna McCord*

## **Introduction**

Many of the chapters in this volume are inward looking in that they focus on the internal workings and impacts of the PSNP within Ethiopia's borders. In this chapter, the view is outward, to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa and to our understanding of how to deliver effective social protection programming more broadly.

There are good reasons for comparison with other programmes in Africa. Ethiopia's PSNP dwarfs other social protection programmes in sub-Saharan Africa, having gone to scale immediately, with the exception of South Africa's social assistance programmes. In Kenya, Malawi and Zambia, McCord (2009) draws on work by Ikiara (2009), Chinsinga (2009) and Habasonda (2009) respectively to estimate that social protection reaches less than 4% of the poor across the three countries. Elsewhere, in Ghana and Uganda, efforts to establish social protection programmes have found it difficult to establish the momentum seen in Ethiopia, due to a range of political, fiscal and administrative constraints.

There are some isolated examples of social protection systems with either high numbers of beneficiaries or reasonable coverage of the poor, for example in South Africa, but they are not held up as flagships for social protection in Africa in the same way that the PSNP is. Certainly, the principle and rationale that underpins the PSNP – that is providing a predictable response to food insecurity that is predictably resourced in order to avoid the annual 'merry-go-round' (Raisin, 2001) of emergency appeals for food aid – and the simultaneous focus on attempting to stimulate productivity and livelihoods – is a departure from models of social protection found elsewhere in Africa and the rest of the world. However, despite the uniqueness of the PSNP at its inception, the significant efforts made to learn from the PSNP experience, have meant that elements of the PSNP have been influential elsewhere in Africa. This influence of the PSNP – its design, objectives, operations and outcomes – are the subject of this chapter.

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Beyond the similarities between the PSNP and other African social protection programmes, an attempt is also made to highlight the lessons learnt from the PSNP that have been useful more broadly in improving social protection design and implementation and to highlight areas where challenges facing the PSNP and other programmes are yet to be overcome.

The potential scope of the chapter is broad: the PSNP generates numerous lessons for policy-makers, programmers and researchers – from donor roles and relationships with government, to mechanisms for targeting, to the extent to which the establishment of grievance procedures in the PSNP can contribute to transformative structural change or can be seen as part of a compact between citizens and the state. This paper focuses on two that are particularly important: lessons about public works programming and lessons about programming social protection to achieve graduation and stronger impacts on livelihoods. The rationale for this focus is the recent completion of a three-year funded research programme on linkages between agriculture and social protection that, among other objectives, sought to generate lessons about graduation in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, India, Malawi and Zambia. The research generated many lessons about the effectiveness of programmes that include combinations of protection, prevention and promotion.

### **Public Works Programming in Africa**

McCord (2008) identifies four distinct types of public works programmes (PWP): i) PWPs offering a single short term episode of employment; ii) large-scale government employment programmes which may offer some form of employment guarantee; iii) programmes promoting the labour intensification of government infrastructure spending; and iv) programmes which enhance employability. Overall she finds that in Africa the majority of PWPs fit the first type. They offer only a short term period of employment (often as little as two weeks) as a response to transient shocks (even when the shock is clearly of a more chronic and long-term nature). Ethiopia is the only place in Africa that truly transcends this general pattern of PW programming and the only place where anything approximating the second type of government employment programme can be found. Whilst the PSNP does not provide an employment guarantee of the type seen in India, under the PSNP public works activities have a credible long-term perspective, inasmuch as they are intended to provide resource transfers for a period of up to five years, thereby providing beneficiaries with some longevity and/ or certainty of participation and consumption support. Thus, public works under the PSNP look different to the rest of the continent.

The nature of public works activities under the PSNP provides an opportunity to overcome other criticisms of often levelled at short term public works programmes: namely that PWPs are rarely well-planned and often produce assets that are not sustainably maintained. Where public work programmes are short-term and poorly planned, the asset creation component of public works often does little to support the livelihoods of poor people, but rather simply provides a defence against those who object to providing ‘handouts’ to poor people in the form of cash transfers. While the quality of assets constructed in Ethiopia varies considerably, the PSNP, with its medium term perspective and focus on asset quality, has the potential to avoid employing workers in activities which are essentially ‘digging in holes and filling them in again’ (McCord and Farrington (2008), but rather contribute to future livelihoods benefits.

The PSNP illustrates the difficulties of balancing two objectives or outcomes of the public works programmes: the wage payment for work which directly reduces poverty by increasing income and supporting household consumption; and the benefits of the assets created through public works which can have an indirect impact on poverty by improving, for example, access to markets, healthcare and education or by improving productivity through soil and water conservation so households can produce more. Whilst the limitations to measuring the impact of assets created by public works reduces the scope for setting benchmarks for the balance of programme expenditure used for capital equipment versus transfers, the model in Ethiopia (where a minimum of 80% of programme costs go towards the transfers themselves), has been followed in recent programmes in many parts of Africa. In Rwanda, for example, the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP, see Box 1 *Similarities between Ethiopia’s PSNP and Rwanda’s VUP*

) is commended for achieving a high level of labour intensity in its public works activity where 88% of costs went to transfers and only 12% to capital and administration (Devereux, 2011). However, high labour intensity does not necessarily mean that supporting household consumption is prioritised within a programme: despite the high labour intensity of public works in both Rwanda and Ethiopia, there are concerns that public works programmes focus more on the public works objectives (i.e. building a road or terracing a field) than on delivering social transfers to those who need consumption support. Similarly the high labour intensity can compromise asset quality by restricting resources available for capital inputs.

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### *Box 1 Similarities between Ethiopia's PSNP and Rwanda's VUP*

The small but rapidly growing *Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme* (VUP) in Rwanda shares many notable features with the PSNP including a public works component and the inclusion of a financial services component to support graduation.

VUP has the objective of reducing extreme poverty in Rwanda using a social protection instrument with three components: Public Works, Direct Support, and Financial Services.

1. Public Works was launched first (May 2008) and offers temporary work, if available, on community infrastructure projects at a locally determined wage rate, to one member of extremely poor and land-constrained households that have adult labour capacity.
2. Direct Support was launched second (January 2009) and provides regular unconditional cash transfers, calibrated by household size, to all extremely poor land-constrained households in targeted Imirenge that have no adult member who is able to work.
3. Financial Services was launched most recently (January 2010) and offers low-interest loans to a broader category of clients, including those eligible for Public Works or Direct Support. Note also that bank accounts and savings facilities have been made available for all VUP-eligible households since the programme was launched in mid-2008.

Devereux notes that 'there are two important distinctions between Public Works and Direct Support. Firstly, Direct Support transfers unconditional grants, while Public Works requires people to work for wages. Secondly, Direct Support is an entitlement-based programme – all eligible households have a right to receive regular cash transfers until the end of the cycle for which they are registered. Conversely, Public Works is a discretionary programme that is constrained by Sector budget allocations, project cycles and the availability of workplaces, so many eligible households do not access employment at all, and no participants are employed full-time on Public Works projects.

SOURCE: Devereux 2011

More evidence for this concern is found in both countries in the limited capacity to plan, manage and ultimately deliver public works activities so that participants can then receive transfers on completion of work. In Ethiopia, there are frequent delays to payment resulting from late completion of public works activities. In Rwanda, it is noted that public works participants are not always provided with work to do. Devereux (2011) finds that public works opportunities are inadequate and so the 'average amount of work provided per participant was 70 days in 2009/10, which paid average earnings of RwF.63,000, compared to

average annual cash transfers to Direct Support beneficiaries of RwF.169,000 – almost three times higher. The low value of wages paid might explain why the World Bank concluded that Public Works has had an “insignificant impact on household consumption” (World Bank, 2010: 22) and no discernible impact on poverty reduction.’ (p. 6). In both Rwanda and Ethiopia, the tension between meeting people’s basic consumption needs and contributing to broader development objectives remains unresolved, with different actors in government, donor agencies and NGOs clearly having different views about what should be the first priority. Both programmes remain some distance from the principles found under India’s employment guarantee system, where if public works activities cannot be provided, then participants receive payment without doing the work (McCord 2008).

Linked to the challenge of balancing welfare and productivity objectives in the PSNP are questions about wage rates paid in public works programmes. A perceived benefit of public works programmes is that they are self-targeting – only the poor and unemployed will want to participate in public works, others have better paid and / or more agreeable sources of income. For this assumption to hold true, it is argued that wage rates should be below the prevailing casual / agricultural wage rate. At the inception of the PSNP, the wage rate was the subject of intense discussion. Some argued that paying a low wage rate would undermine graduation, since households would have to work so many days on the PSNP that they would have limited opportunities to invest in their own independent livelihood activities. Others argued that paying a high wage rate would increase the likelihood that beneficiaries became too dependent on the PSNP. Ultimately, a compromise was reached and the wage rate was determined based on something more tangible – the cost of a half a daily grain ration. Kenya’s Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) soon followed suite with monthly cash transfers initially based on the cash value of a WFP food ration. Notwithstanding the challenges associated with rising food prices which has serious implications for both the PSNP and HSNP, the PSNP approach has proved an important precedent for those challenging the growing practice of setting transfer values at less than 30% of the ultra poverty line. The practice based on analyses of programme performance in Latin America, tends to ignore national or local poverty profiles and income levels, and risks the resulting transfer having an insignificant impact on poverty (Pearson and Alviar, 2009). The debate remains unresolved with donors in Malawi in 2009 recommending the provision of transfers at 100% of the ultra poverty line (Chinsinga 2009). It is in this context that the Ethiopia experience of attempting to peg the transfer value to something real rather than a rule of thumb borrowed from elsewhere is especially important.

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Another important feature which is influencing dialogues and debates on social protection in Africa is the PSNP's focus on the working-age poor. Compared to other countries in Africa, where some governments and donors are increasingly focused on supporting only those without labour, the PSNP provides a critical safety net for the working age poor. Concerns about labour market distortions and dependency have frequently led to the restriction of social protection provision to those without labour – for example vulnerable children, households with high dependency ratios, or the elderly – particularly those affected by HIV/AIDS. This has led to a reworking of the notion of what constitutes the 'deserving poor' based on the assumption that households with available labour can generate income, even if there are no jobs available or they do not have access to assets to improve their own livelihoods. Such an approach fails to take into account chronic unemployment and under-employment, and the fact that many people in the labour market receive incomes so low that they remain poor (Wood, 1999).

A key difference between the PSNP and many other public works programmes in Africa is that there are no formal training programmes within the PSNP (McCord's fourth type of PWP). Many public works programmes make reference to building skills so that participants are more employable in the local labour market. In Kenya, for example, the Kazi Kwa Vijana (KKV) or 'Youth for Jobs' programme has a very explicit focus on skills training. In Ethiopia, this link is made only with the Household Asset Building Programme (HABP) where access to credit is often linked to farmer training activities. It is not clear whether this is a shortfall on the part of the PSNP or whether, given McCord's 2012 assertion that skills-focused PWPs are not effective in the context of chronic demand-deficit unemployment and concerns that social protection programmes frequently try to achieve too many things within a single programme, the lack of focus on skills training may actually be a strength of the programme.

The PSNP highlights the difficulties of evaluating the impacts of PWPs where the effects are indirect in two ways: first, the assets created don't have direct consumption effects but instead have an impact on productivity which is more difficult to measure with any certainty. Second, the assets created tend to provide benefits to all in the community, not just those who are beneficiaries of the PSNP. The significant technical difficulties associated with generating impact evaluations of public works programmes have not been overcome, in Ethiopia or elsewhere (Box 2). Evaluations of the impact of asset creation remain. However, policy-makers and programmers are increasingly looking for something more definitive than the self-reporting that characterises most assessments. Understanding the impacts of asset creation through PWPs is

becoming increasingly important: without this it is difficult (if not impossible) to get a handle on the potential role of the PSNP in, for example, disaster risk reduction or climate change adaptation.

*Box 2 Technical challenges associated with measuring the impacts of assets created in public works programmes*

The objectives associated with PWPs relate to reducing poverty, promoting livelihoods and promoting economic development. However, there is little analysis offering a robust evaluation of the medium term impact of PWPs on these outcomes on which to base assessment of the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of such programmes. This undermines prospects for evidence based policy selection (or value for money analysis) in relation to the adoption of PWPs and makes any decision to follow the PSNP model in other countries one that is based on the logical coherence of the programme design rather than empirical evidence of its effectiveness.

Most existing impact evaluations do two things. They focus on the impact on income poverty of the wage transfer made by PWPs and on self-reporting of the impacts of the assets created. Each of these elements has problems, both of which are related to the unit of analysis. First, the impact on income poverty is usually made by comparing PSNP beneficiaries (or beneficiaries of other PWPs programmes in other countries) with non-beneficiaries in the same location using something like a propensity score matching approach (see for example Gilligan et al 2009, Gilligan et al 2010). For social protection programmes that do not include the creation of assets, there is no problem with this approach. However, where assets are created they benefit the entire community. For example, soil and water conservation activities mean that there is more water available for all villagers. It requires two units of analysis – one at village level to understand the impact of the assets and one at household level to understand the impact of the wages paid to participants – otherwise it is impossible to separate out the income effect from the asset effect. The second problem is that most assessments of the impacts of assets on livelihoods and well-being depend on self reporting. In Ethiopia, for example, the evaluation of the impact of public works created through the PSNP depended on self-reporting by households in PSNP villages about the works and not on actual measures of water availability, soil depth, maternal mortality or complications during childbirth. Donors in particular are increasingly reluctant to base funding decisions on perceptions and are looking for more robust empirical evidence about the impacts of assets created through public works programmes.

The PSNP has also taught us much about the challenges of incorporating such a large public works programme into the budgeting and plan of local level authorities. First, we have learnt that when social protection programmes reach a certain size, they begin to have strong influences at the local level. In Ethiopia, the PSNP 20% budget (that is meant, in part, to cover capital works costs of implementing public works) is significantly larger than woreda budgets. This



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creates a set of perverse incentives where woreda line offices seek to capture PSNP resources in order to implement their own capital works projects. In turn, the process of planning public works takes place against a backdrop of each woreda line office (health, education, lands, water, agriculture) making a pitch for activities in their sphere of interest. Second, early experience with the PSNP demonstrated that the PSNP budget and planning cycle was not aligned with the woreda annual cycle. This undermined the planning of PSNP activities and limited the extent to which they could be integrated into a woreda planning (Slater *et al* 2006) so that PSNP activities were delinked from longer-term strategic development investments at woreda level. Those problems were quickly dealt with by aligning annual planning cycles. Whilst scale is an issue here, as programmes in other countries increase in scale, these challenges are likely to become more relevant elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Productive Safety Nets and Graduation**

Concerns about the affordability of social protection and the potential for beneficiaries to become dependent on it have led to a common focus in Africa on ways in which social protection programmes have both productive as well as protective outcomes. Governments and donors care about graduation, and often prioritise it in programming objectives, because it provides mechanisms by which beneficiaries can make positive exits from social protection programmes and it allays concerns about poor people becoming dependent on social protection and, by extension, state support.

However, expectations of graduation are often not proportional to what programmes are designed to deliver. For example, it has been assumed that providing households with food will enable them to risk indebtedness and take loans that they will have to pay back in cash. Another common assumption is that cash transfers alone will enable households to suddenly become entrepreneurial and identify business opportunities in their communities. This section describes some of the different approaches to graduation that have been adopted in a range of programmes around the world and identifies lessons from Ethiopia about what is required for households to graduate from social protection into independent and sustainable livelihoods that are resilient in the face of shocks and stresses.

#### ***Defining Graduation***

Graduation is defined in numerous ways in different agencies and among different actors (Box 3 Definitions of Graduation). The main focus is generally about breaking out of self-perpetuating, negative cycles of coping. Graduation is



about breaking out of a cycle of impoverishment and can be defined as the movement of households from a state of high vulnerability to shocks and stresses (and usually high levels of poverty) to one of an improved income and asset base, increased resilience to such shocks and stresses, and subsequent improved livelihood security. Graduation objectives differ between programmes, but they can include: i) moving households onto a different programmes; ii) moving households out of extreme poverty; iii) moving households into an independent and sustainable livelihood.

*Box 3 Definitions of Graduation*

In Ethiopia, numerous definitions of graduation have been used in relation to the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) including:

- Graduation from the PSNP programme, which requires households to achieve food security\* for one year only according to the programme implementation rules.
- Graduation into food security, which implies a more sustainable transition away from chronic food insecurity
- Graduation out of poverty, which is a more substantial objective which goes beyond food security considerations.

In Malawi's Social Protection Framework, graduation is tightly linked to livelihoods and agriculture: *'A coordinated approach to social protection requires that vulnerable people are helped to climb out of their vulnerable circumstances, so that they end up self-reliant and with the prospect of improving their livelihoods further in the future. This is sometimes called the 'graduation' role of social protection, meaning that people graduate out of requiring social protection altogether. It is therefore entirely appropriate that transfers aimed at livelihood promotion should be included within an integrated social protection framework. Such transfers include farm input provision (seed and fertilizer packages), subsidised fertilizer schemes, and direct asset-building (for example, provision of implements or livestock).'*

In Bangladesh, where there is good coverage of micro-finance programmes but not among the extreme poor, the graduation objective of some social protection programmes is for households to graduate into accessible micro-finance.

SOURCES: MoARD 2004, MoARD 2006, Slater and Tsoka, 2007; Matin et al, 2008; Malawi Social Protection Framework ([at http://www.malawiagriculture.org/](http://www.malawiagriculture.org/))

\*MOARD refer to food security as 'food sufficiency' by MoARD. This is defined as a households' ability to meet their food needs for 12 months and withstand modest shocks (MoARD 2009).

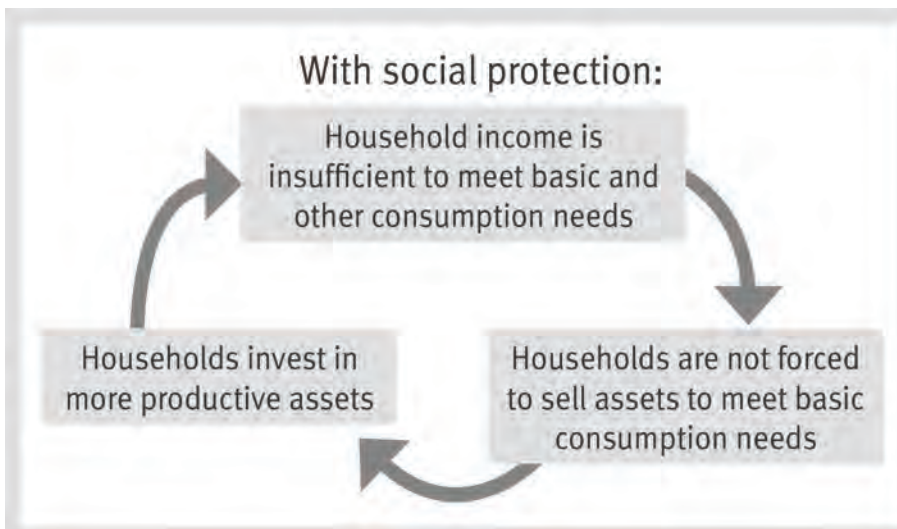
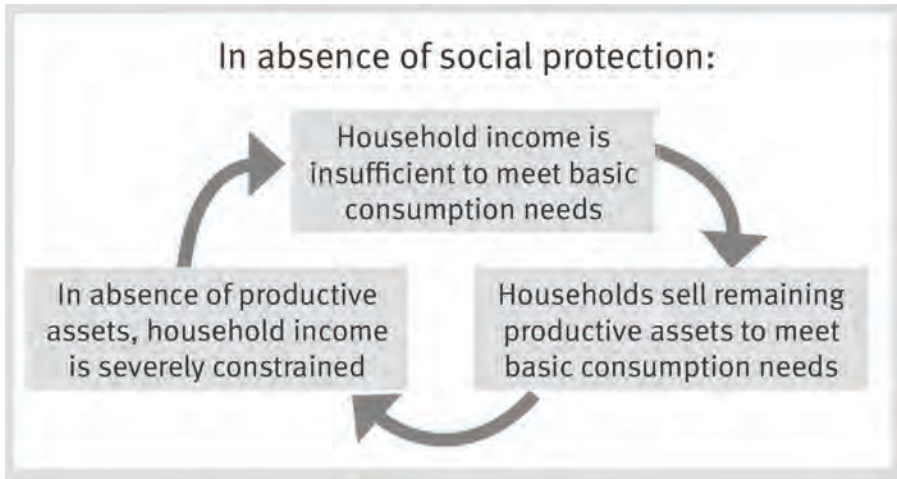
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Where governments and donors fear dependency of poor and vulnerable households on various forms of relief, they typically start to look at ways in which they can ensure going beyond contributing to basic consumption to providing a route out of poverty by increasing asset portfolios and increasing livelihoods opportunities. Governments have two main concerns: First, that households will become dependent on social protection rather than pursuing other, riskier but more remunerative, income generating opportunities; and second, that, except where social protection programmes are conceived and implemented in response to an 'emergency', once begun, social protection is difficult to withdraw. Donor agencies are similarly reluctant to make long-term commitments to funding. NGOs tend to implement through projects rather than entitlement-based approaches and so need to demonstrate the sustainability of their projects. As a result, in order for social protection programmes to be accepted, there is often an imperative to demonstrate how and when beneficiaries will graduate from social protection. Governments and donors are often explicit about their expectations of graduation, but less clear about the likely constraints.

Poor households in rural areas are frequently risk-averse and find themselves trapped in a low input - low output poverty trap. Safety nets can play a role in helping farmers to break out of this trap by turning the poverty trap into a virtuous circle (Figure 1). How does this work? First, social protection programmes that enable or smooth consumption – for example by providing cash and in-kind transfers to meet basic needs – can protect households from hunger and further impoverishment. Second, transfers or social insurance can prevent negative coping strategies such as the distress sales of productive assets (i.e. draught oxen, bicycles, farm equipment or land) to meet immediate needs – a process that undermines long-term prospects. So prevention measures can, therefore, make poor households more resilient in the face of shocks and stresses. Finally, promotion measures, such as predictable transfers or programmes linked to training can facilitate new investments by vulnerable households in productive assets or skills development, enabling them to increase their incomes and begin to reliably support their consumption needs independently. Progress in one or more of these three areas (protection – prevention – promotion) means that households are better placed to take advantage of more remunerative income earning opportunities, and be more resilient in the face of shocks and less reliant on external support..

Figure 1 Graduation – From poverty trap to virtuous circle



***Graduating from Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)***

Ethiopia's PSNP is the largest of Africa's safety net programmes and it has an explicit focus on graduation. It seeks to achieve graduation in two ways: first, by providing consumption transfers (of either cash or food) to food insecure households for six months of the year; and second, by creating assets at community level that increase productivity, or improve access to markets, or reduce household costs, so that more can be invested in livelihoods.

In the first phase of the PSNP (2005-2009), the definition of graduation and criteria for judging whether graduation had taken place was initially woolly and was more of a tool for adjusting for demographic change at household and community level. The PSNP's Programme Implementation Manual (PIM) stated that graduation was a key goal of the PSNP and described the following process:

- An annual assessment to check if beneficiary households should stay in the safety net programme or not, on the basis of its identified food insecurity by the Community Food Security Task Force.
- The re-inclusion of households excluded from the list of Safety Net beneficiaries in any given year if it becomes food insecure in subsequent years.
- Adjustments to eligibility for public works and direct support in any given year based on the needs of a household, births and deaths, and ageing of individuals but inclusion of those households, especially in the direct support component, that will never be able to graduate.
- Use of changing aggregate requirements for safety nets as an indicator of progress towards graduation.

In 2005, the first year of the PSNP, pressure to demonstrate graduation led to some perverse outcomes – including the targeting of many households who were not ranked among the poorest in each village (Sharp *et al* 2006). But the government and donor coordination team learnt quickly and in the second year of the programme (2006) made a number of changes, including much more explicit instructions to target the poorest households and the decision to overlap coverage of the PSNP with other Food Security Programmes that provide agricultural credit systems. It was hoped that this would enhance the opportunities for PSNP beneficiary households to graduate into independent and sustainable livelihoods that would support them in the absence of the PSNP.

However, expectations of graduation remained and even households receiving direct support from the PSNP (i.e. those who were not required to

complete public works because they had no or limited labour capacity) were encouraged to take agricultural credit, in order to help them generate an independent income.

Limited graduation took place during the first phase of the PSNP. There is evidence that the real incomes of PSNP beneficiaries increased by more than 50% between 2006 and 2008. At the same time the real incomes of non-beneficiaries (who had been wealthier in 2006) fell by 20% over the same time period. Analysis of panel data by Devereux *et al.* (2008) confirms that this income effect is attributable to the PSNP. Whilst the impact on income was clear, for assets the picture was less so: Values of asset-holdings increased substantially across all household categories but this change was not enough to suggest that PSNP households had broken out of the poverty trap, nor could it be attributed to the programme. In 2008, there was also evidence that some of the households that had ‘graduated’ had been removed from the programme but without reaching the prescribed graduation threshold. Devereux *et al.* 2008 noted that

- Past beneficiaries’ were worse off on several indicators than either ‘current beneficiaries’ or ‘non-beneficiaries’, suggesting that they were inappropriately removed or prematurely ‘graduated’ from the PSNP.
- Past beneficiaries had the lowest incomes and asset values, they adopted a wider range of coping strategies more intensively, and they were more likely to self-report being ‘unable to meet basic needs’ in 2008 than any other group.
- Only one in five PSNP beneficiaries surveyed have taken Livelihood Packages, which are intended to generate complementary income streams and facilitate ‘graduation’ from chronic dependence on food aid or cash transfers. It is doubtful whether any PSNP beneficiaries surveyed (past or current) have yet achieved graduation potential, in terms of building resilience against future shocks.

Significantly less graduation was achieved in the first phase of the PSNP when compared to other external programmes such as the Chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP) and Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction (CFPR) Programme in Bangladesh. The programme designs are fundamentally differential though they have similar protection, prevention and promotion objectives. The PSNP’s small monthly transfer in the form of wages is able to secure some households’ consumption and protect some households from distress sales or distress migration, so that households can start building assets.

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However, whilst there are isolated examples of saving or investments from PSNP income, these will not result in asset building unless transfers are increased substantially. In contrast, CLP and CFPR in Bangladesh transferred lump sums in the form of productive assets which were allowed to mature and start to generate income through the provision of small consumption stipends.

There is evidence that PSNP partners (government, donors and NGOs) learnt lessons about linking to other programmes very early in the first phase. The IDL group (2010) notes that *'in the initial years of the PSNP, the focus was on improving capacity and enhancing overall programme implementation. In addition, greater emphasis was put on ensuring that food security inputs, such as credit and household packages, were focused on PSNP clients in order that households might not only meet food needs but build their assets and move out of food insecurity. As programme implementation has proceeded and greater complementarity of resources been achieved, greater focus has been placed on ensuring that households which no longer require assistance in meeting consumption needs (support from the PSNP) exit the programme through graduation'* (p. 9). By securing household income, the PSNP has encouraged households that were previously very risk averse, to take credit packages under the Government Food Security Programme or other donor and NGO implemented programmes. The policy enabled the combination of the two programmes to achieve consumption smoothing, asset protection and asset building objectives. Households have reportedly made investments in productive assets including small ruminants, dairy cattle and beekeeping. Some households were able to put their PSNP income into savings, either to buy more assets or to enable them to pay back the loan. These effects have been reported to be far more prevalent in *woredas* where beneficiaries received cash than where they received food (Slater et al 2009). However, during phase 1, there were simply not enough credit packages available to cover all PSNP beneficiary households.

Furthermore, evidence from Ethiopia therefore clearly demonstrates that it is not sufficient to design programmes that address protection and prevention: 'A combination of PSNP and OFSP will enable some (but not all) households to also build assets, but whether they thereby graduate into food security will depend to a large extent on whether critical enabling elements in the wider environment are in place. The logic that the combination of PSNP and OFSP can provide the platform from which households are able to cushion risk and make productive investments to transform their livelihoods stands up to analysis, but the sustainability of this transformation, and whether it will result in food security, is not guaranteed' (Slater et al 2006: p. ix).

Phase 1 of the PSNP also helped governments, donors and NGOs to become more (although not entirely) realistic about the timeframe required for graduation to take place in phase 2, although the government still formally plans to ‘graduate’ all PSNP public works participants by 2014. In the first years of the PSNP in Ethiopia, the government expected graduation to happen very quickly. However, even with the decision to link agricultural credit and extension to the PSNP it is now recognised that widespread graduation will take decades rather than years.

The balance of objectives in the PSNP remains a concern. Some implementers tend to understand the PSNP as having developmental objectives – poverty reduction, graduation and self-reliance – and they prioritise these outcomes ahead of relief / welfare objectives. In phase 1, this view led to households with ‘graduation potential’ being registered for the PSNP ahead of chronically poor labour-constrained households. In some localities the proportion of direct support beneficiaries continues to decline as programme implementers aim to maximise ‘productive’ outputs on public works activities. In practice, focusing on public works as a means to ensure graduation threw up some perverse findings: in the early years of the PSNP, whilst the public works requirement was meant to prevent dependency on the PSNP by creating household and community assets that increased productivity, it appeared to do the opposite, especially for households with higher numbers of non-workers such as children, the disabled and the elderly. The labour requirements of the PSNP drew labour away from households’ own livelihood activities and affected their choice of packages. There was a danger that households became more, not less, dependent on the PSNP because the work requirement reduced their ability to pursue successful alternative livelihood activities, such as those provided under the Other Food Security Programmes (OFSP): the OFSP requires labour but the PSNP absorbed it. This concern was partially addressed by 2008 with caps placed on the number of days that any single household was expected to contribute to the PSNP.

All of these lessons about graduation from the PSNP are important for other countries, both in Africa and beyond.

### ***Lessons about graduation from Ethiopia and elsewhere***

Attempts to graduate, and levels of success achieved, vary widely. There are positive stories of households moving from dependence on social protection programmes to independent and resilient livelihoods. But these examples tend to be few and far between, largely because in the countries that we have studied, long-term predictable support from social protection is a new phenomenon and the benefits transferred to programme participants are often very small.



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Even in individual countries, graduation is often a programme or project objective, rather than a policy objective. As a result, programmes tend to have their own distinct approaches to achieving graduation and design and implementation features of different programmes are critical (Box 4 Graduation in Bangladesh). However, a range of lessons about graduation have been learnt through programming in a range of countries.

### *Box 4 Graduation in Bangladesh*

ODI examined evidence on the impacts of four programmes in Bangladesh for signs of graduation. Each of the programmes sought to achieve graduation in different ways, but all had an emphasis on enabling the extreme poor to access micro-finance:

The BRAC programme *Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction*(CFPR) transfers productive assets worth 8,000 to 13,000 Taka to the poorest households in northern Bangladesh. It provides intensive training and support in managing these assets and a daily stipend until income is generated from the assets (approximately 300 Taka per month). Other support includes subsidised health and legal services; the provision of water and sanitation; and the development of supportive community networks via Village Poverty Reduction Committees.

The *Chars Livelihoods Programme*(CLP) provides the poorest households in the island Chars (low lying flood- and erosion-prone areas in northern Bangladesh) with income generating assets (worth approximately 13,000 Taka). It provides livelihoods intervention support including a monthly stipend for 18 months (worth approximately 300 Taka per month); infrastructure development; social development training; seasonal cash-for-work and safety nets; and promotes enterprise to facilitate growth in agricultural and non-farm sectors.

The *Vulnerable Group Development programme*(VGD) is a national programme that integrates food security and nutrition for poor households in food insecure areas into development and income generating activities. The programme transfers monthly food rations for two years and a package of services that includes life skills and income generating skills training (Ahmed et al., 2007). The programme also links beneficiaries to micro-credit service providers.

The *Programmed Initiatives for Monga Eradication*(PRIME) is implemented by PKSF (Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation) a micro-finance institution in northern Bangladesh. It provides cash-for-work employment opportunities for one monga season; emergency credit for households slightly higher up the income ladder; consumption loans; remittance services; and specially designed flexible credit support throughout the year. It also builds and enhances beneficiaries' coping capacity, skills and resources for the future (Kabir and Haque, 2007).

Evidence from the programmes suggests that there are positive interactions between social protection and livelihoods at the household level. For example, in CLP and



CFPR, combining small regular cash stipends with asset transfers has increased the productive asset base of many households. In VGD access to credit resulted in a similar change. However, it is still the case that when programme support ends assets often either cease to grow or may contract.

Holmes et al (2008)

*Combinations of social protection instruments are required*

Social protection programme design varies significantly according to context and need. Productivity enhancing interventions where objectives include creating a sustainable rural livelihood have the most explicit linkages to agricultural growth. These types of programmes and instruments include agricultural inputs, subsidies or transfers to improve local agricultural production, asset transfers, or public works programmes which support rural infrastructure, such as irrigation channels, or roads.

A multifaceted approach helps households to address the multiple risks that keep them trapped in a vicious circle of poverty and vulnerability. Approaches which simultaneously address objectives of protection (protecting household income and consumption), prevention (prevent loss of assets and the use of negative coping strategies), promotion (enabling productive and sustainable livelihoods), and voice (supporting households' access to institutions such as markets, and information, from which they were previously excluded) have the most potential to achieve both social protection and livelihood promotion objectives (Slater *et al* 2011). In Rwanda, the VUP programme incorporates a financial services component in an attempt to help beneficiaries access savings and credit opportunities through which they can invest in productive assets (Devereux 2011).

Getting the balance right between protection, prevention, promotion and voice is crucial. Where protection is emphasised at the expense of prevention and promotion, households are likely to move out of poverty only very slowly because they do not invest in activities that offer higher productivity (Holmes and Slater 2007). They remain highly risk-averse, often sliding back down into poverty and reverting to negative coping strategies. On the other hand, evidence shows that core social protection components, combining protection, prevention, promotion and voice, appear to reduce the constraints faced by poor households engaging in productive activities (see Box 1 for evidence from Bangladesh). In Bangladesh programmes tend to transfer large assets which give a substantial boost to productive capacity. However, the beneficiaries are unlikely to be able to build future assets without additional services and programmes – the types of

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these services and programmes, and the extent they are drawn on by different households, will differ.

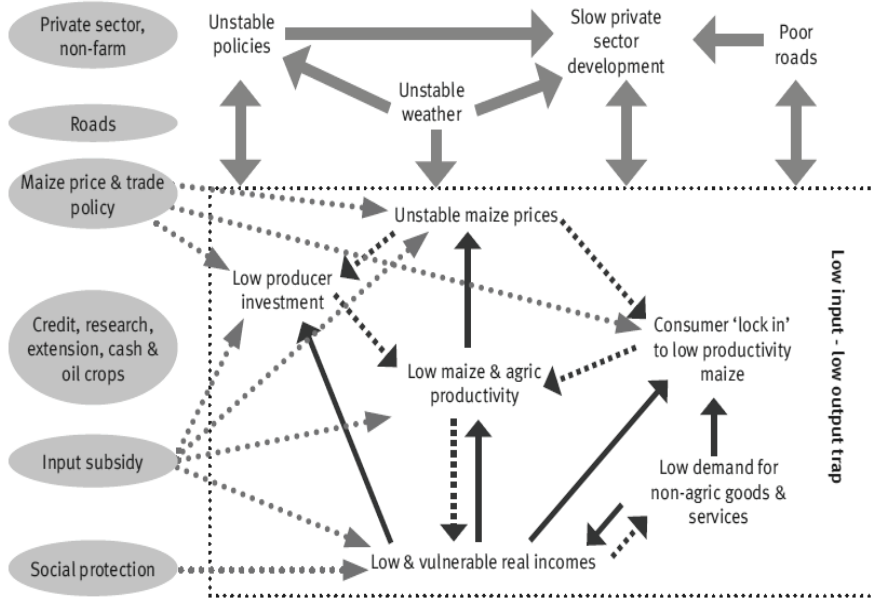
### *Links to complementary services beyond the programme are required*

Enabling greater benefits from core social protection programmes, especially in terms of agricultural livelihoods and productivity, requires other services and infrastructure in both the social and productive sectors. Investments in, for example, functioning markets, rural financial infrastructure, skills training, agricultural extension, schools and health centres, are vital for ensuring that livelihood improvements are sustainable and that beneficiaries build up skills for the longer term.

In Malawi for example, an evaluation of the Agricultural Inputs Subsidy Programme (AISP) demonstrated the complementarities between the AISP and other investments. Agricultural and rural development, notably roads, agricultural research and extension, maize price stability and other social protection programmes are all critical for addressing the various underlying causes that trap poor households in low input – low output maize production (see Figure 2) (Dorward et al 2008; 2008a).

Matin and Hulme (2003) found that for households in BRAC's Income Generation for Vulnerable Group Development (IGVGD) programme to graduate from extreme poverty, they required several interventions simultaneously and not just regular food transfers (Box 5). Also, where programmes are implemented in isolation, they can have unintended effects. Where there are constraints to the production of more crops for sale locally, cash transfer programmes can result in food price increases because increased demand does not trigger a supply response. Where assets are transferred in the absence of advice and training, they are often of little value to beneficiaries and might be sold to meet consumption needs.

Figure 2 Links between inputs vouchers and other policies and programmes in Malawi



SOURCE: Dorward (2007)

In Bangladesh, extensive investment is required to improve market functioning so that households receiving asset transfers in remote areas can sell their products in wider markets. For example, the Chars Livelihood Programme (CLP) has specific market-focused components which aim to enable better and more equal access to markets for poor and previously excluded households. CLP's Market Development Fund (MDF) for example has invested in making markets work for the poor by encouraging the introduction of improved technology, increased productive skills and the formation of new linkages with commercial service providers and buyers in the private sector, as well as encouraging the private sector to respond effectively to market development on the chars. The private sector is potentially an important stakeholder in linking poor producers and the market, to ensure both economic and agricultural growth for new extreme poor entrepreneur groups. Some initial impact evaluations of MDF pilot programmes show that the stimulation of poultry markets had positively influenced the production of chicks, and individuals from char areas have been reorganised by CLP to access the market better. Now traders move door to door in search of products or sit in a recognised place near the river and producers receive a higher net profit (Ayub 2007a). Similarly, MDF programmes have improved the dairy milk chain through workshops with market actors for

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milk marketing and input supply; cooperative/group formation for milk marketing; and cattle health and management aspects. Impacts of the pilot project have been positive, for example, producers have better milk yields and a regular market for milk, and they are receiving a higher price for their produce (Ayub 2007b).

*Box 5. Sequencing protection and promotion: the case of the BRAC Income Generation for Vulnerable Group Development (IGVGD) Programme, Bangladesh*

IGVGD was initiated by BRAC to address the needs of chronically poor households – those that could not escape poverty and were predominantly assisted with only 'protective' measures, such as food aid. IGVGD attempted to increase productive capacity as well as provide a protective base. Beneficiaries received a monthly wheat ration (for two years), plus training and credit provision by BRAC.

Average incomes rose and ownership of homestead plots, land, beds and blankets increased. After two years, when wheat distribution ends, many participants experience a drop in income and consumption but the income generating activities founded on the microcredit intervention kept many incomes above pre-programme level.

SOURCE: Matin and Hulme (2003)

### *Institutional linkages and coordination are critical for graduation*

An integrated approach and coordination between programmes normally in the domain of Social Development Departments and those in the domain of Agriculture Departments is vital for achieving the twin objectives of protection/maintaining poor people's consumption, and promoting growth and agriculture-based livelihoods. Indeed, in terms of the location of social protection within the public administration, once an overarching social protection policy statement has been made, social protection should not be implemented as a freestanding set of interventions. It needs to provide inputs to, and receive inputs from, the programmes and activities of other government departments.

Achieving effective complementarities and sequencing however is a challenge in many low income countries with limited institutional capacities and thinly spread resources. Any expectation that ministries of agriculture and of social development will work closely together may be based on unrealistic expectations of 'joined-up' government. However, ministries of finance, through their leverage on departmental budgets, can exert positive influence on collaboration. For international agencies, aid frameworks agreed with finance ministries can leverage in the same direction, possibly through Poverty

Reduction Strategies. At the same time care has to be taken to ensure that sectoral support, through, for example, Sector Wide Approaches (SWAs), does not take a narrow view that impedes cross-departmental collaboration. Furthermore, addressing capacity requirements and coordination is not only required horizontally across different ministries and departments, but also vertically at regional, district and local levels to enable effective service delivery. Mechanisms for delivery social protection at district levels should be clearly articulated (World Bank 2007).

*Governments, donors and NGOs should maintain realistic expectations*

Whilst there are some long-term programmes in low-income countries, namely social pensions targeted to the elderly, most social protection programming has low coverage of the population, transfers small benefits and is of a limited duration. In these circumstances it is unrealistic to expect to do much more than protect household consumption and prevent the distress sale of assets. Overall, expectations must be in proportion to what programmes distribute and the period over which they do so. This is a key issue in Ethiopia where there are concerns that the PSNP and its supplementary programmes are fundamentally under-resourced.

In Malawi, for example, graduation is expected from the Agricultural Inputs Subsidy Programme (AISP) which supplies vouchers for subsidised fertiliser and seed, but not from the pilot cash transfers programmes which mainly target the elderly in labour-constrained households. Whilst the AISP provides an annual source of support to productive investment, helping households break out of the low input – low output maize productivity trap, the cash transfer is meant to protect consumption by providing a small amount of income on a regular basis (Miller et al 2008). The Malawi cash transfer pilots demonstrate clearly that some people will need permanent support – and whilst households may be able to build up more assets when in receipt of social protection, they are likely to see their asset base decline once support is withdrawn (Holmes et al 2008)

Even where the benefits transferred in social protection programmes represent a significant share of household income and are complemented with additional services, graduation is still often limited (Box 5).

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*Get the broader policy framework right and look outward, rather than inward, for enablers of graduation*

The likelihood of graduation is increased where social protection is nested in a wider, comprehensive policy framework. Zambia provides a good example with its logic of graduation whereby households move from receiving transfers under the Public Welfare Assistance Scheme, to seeds and fertiliser under the Food Security Pack, to subsidised inputs under the Fertiliser Support Programme (Holmes and Slater, 2007). In Bangladesh, in the absence of a comprehensive national policy framework, programmes such as the Chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP) and the Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction (CFPR), work more or less independently to combine social transfers with extension, training and credit.

Slater et al (2006) identified a number of important enablers of livelihood improvement and economic growth. Whilst social protection programmes can push households up towards graduation, there also needs to be an enabling environment that pulls them up. Where this does not exist the opposite is also true: absence of such enablers act as inhibitors of graduation. The core enablers, many of which are linked to agricultural and related programmes are:

- Absence of drought or other crisis
- Economic growth, both rural and national
- Agricultural extension services, training, decision support, and advice
- Agricultural services and supplies (seed, disease and pest control)
- New skills
- Roads – construction and maintenance
- Water/irrigation
- Access to investment capital and saving mechanisms
- Access to quality affordable health and education services
- Housing improvement

*Develop clear conceptual and operational guidelines*

The pressure to demonstrate graduation can lead to poor choices about targeting, coverage or the inappropriate application of graduation criteria and benchmarks. Work in Ethiopia and Bangladesh suggests that graduation needs clear, context-specific and realistic guidelines that measure not only the income and assets that households have built, but also how far households are able to employ their

assets to self-protect in the face of shocks. In the next section, the development of guidelines to support the operationalisation of graduation is discussed.

## **Conclusions**

The experiences of the PSNP in Ethiopia provide important lessons for social protection programming elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. Whilst there are no replicas of the PSNP elsewhere in Africa, its influence has been far reaching.

This chapter has focused on two key elements of the programme: the use of public works and the objective of graduation. The PSNP shares many other challenges with social protection programmes in other countries: poverty or categorical targeting; coverage in the context of population growth; and grievance procedures and entitlements but limited space has prevented an in-depth discussion of all of these. The focus instead on public works and on graduation generates important findings. Lessons about public works programming highlight the challenges of combining welfare and asset creation objectives in a single programme, the difficulties of making decisions about setting wage rates or target groups, and problems associated with measurement of impact of public works. Many of these challenges remain unresolved and there is no blueprint for social protection in Africa that will be appropriate or feasible everywhere. In each country the rationale for social protection has unique features that emerge from a combination of social, political, economic and cultural effects.

The debate about whether graduation should be an objective of social protection programmes is a debate that tends to be held among donors and researchers. Beyond this, lessons about graduation for governments who implement programmes include the following:

- if made in isolation of each other, interventions in agriculture may make the poor more and not less vulnerable, and interventions in social protection may undermine the local productive economy
- over and above this basic principle of “doing no harm”, there are complementarities between production- and social protection-related interventions that need to be exploited if desired combinations of growth and poverty reduction are to be achieved more efficiently
- the more that poverty reduction can be made part of the agenda of productive sectors such as agriculture, the less burden this will impose on budgets for safety nets, and the greater the prospect that it will be sustainable

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- many of the dimensions of complementarity between growth and safety nets involve financial provision of various kinds (occasionally in-kind provision) which are amenable to government and donor support
- poor households are best conceptualised as being vulnerable not merely to investment-related risk, but to shocks and stresses more broadly
- the fungibility of money means that these shocks and stresses have to be tackled jointly across domestic and productive spheres, and not separately
- in the context of the shocks and stresses generated by climate change and global financial instability, the need for complementarities in approaches to poverty reduction between productive and social sectors will become more, not less.

Partly because regular, reliable provision of social protection is recent, as also is its integration with livelihood promotion, the cases of successful graduation remain few. And whilst there are no examples of countries directly following the PSNP graduation model, experiences with the PSNP have clearly been a critical part of policies on social protection and on programme design. From the PSNP, we have learned that concepts of graduation vary widely, and early agreement must be reached on a definition compatible with programme objectives and resourcing. It is also clear that progress towards graduation comes from a combination of protecting against deprivation, preventing negative coping strategies such as the sale of productive assets, and promoting improved livelihoods. Programmes that only focus on protection are unlikely to contribute to graduation and need to be linked to other programmes (such as Ethiopia's HABP). The Ethiopia experience also shows that clear sequences of operations and careful monitoring of programme performance, with course-corrections are required and that conditions external to a particular programme must also be right if graduation is to succeed. These include improvements in agricultural technology and infrastructure, progress in social sectors such as health and education, and freedom from adverse weather conditions.

Despite these lessons, linking social protection with productive objectives does not automatically generate a win-win situation but is it also not a zero sum game where one objective must be prioritised at the expense of the other. Ultimately, the experience with the PSNP demonstrates that social protection programme design and implementation is a balancing act, sometimes requiring trade-offs between different objectives and implementation approaches but all the time attempting to capture synergies between them.



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# **From Safety Nets to Social Protection: Options for Direct Support Beneficiaries of the Productive Safety Net Program <sup>1</sup>**

*Stephen Devereux and Amdissa Teshome*

## **Introduction**

The main mechanism for delivering social protection in Ethiopia since 2005 has been the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP). The PSNP provides predictable cash and/or food transfers for six months each year, to over seven million Ethiopians in chronically food insecure rural communities. The PSNP was initially designed as a five-year program, with the expectation that most participants would ‘graduate’ out of the PSNP and dependence on transfers within that period. The PSNP has two components – Public Works and Direct Support – that target different groups of people with different vulnerabilities and capabilities. The two components reflect a basic distinction in social protection programs, between providing ‘social assistance’ to people who are unable to work and depend entirely on support from others, and providing ‘social insurance’ and ‘livelihood promotion’ to people who are vulnerable or poor (either chronically or transitorily) despite being economically active.

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter draws on and updates a report by the authors, commissioned by DFID Ethiopia, titled ‘Options for ‘Direct Support’ in Ethiopia: From Productive Safety Net Program to Social Protection System’ (Devereux and Amdissa Teshome 2009). Many people were consulted for that study. Government officials interviewed included: Ato Berhanu Woldemichael (Director, Food Security Coordination Directorate); Ato Chala Worrdofo and Ato Taye Bekele (formerly Commissioner and Head of PSNP, Oromiya DPPC, respectively); Ato G/Egziabher Hagos and Ato Gizachew Gebru Deputy Head and Head of PSNP (Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development, Tigray), respectively; also from Tigray Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs, Ato G/Kidan Hadish (Head of Social Affairs and Senior Expert on Disability Affairs), W/ro Nigisti W/Rufael (formerly Senior Expert on the Elders) and Ato Tewelde Kibrom (Senior Expert on Children Affairs).

Key informants from donors and NGOs included: Rachel Cipryk, Wubshet Genene, Matt Hobson, Sue Lautze, Tim Robertson, and Kay Sharp. The authors also thank Direct Support beneficiaries who participated in focus group discussions in Oromiya, and Tigray regions. Gebrehiwot Hailemariam (Tigray) and Shumbash Tola (Oromiya) facilitated the respective regional discussions and also directed documentary films that informed the study. Tafesse Kassa and Teshome W/Mariam also provided some perspective from Amhara and SNNP, respectively. Notwithstanding the contributions of these informants, the opinions expressed in the chapter remain the responsibility of the authors.

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The PSNP is dominated by Public Works (over six million beneficiaries, or 85% of the total), which targets the ‘productive’ poor – mostly smallholder farmers who are able to provide labour for public works activities. A great deal of attention has focused on efforts to assist these households to graduate into ‘food sufficiency’, with the support of complementary food security interventions such as the Household Asset Building Program, which aims to generate additional income streams for poor families.

Approximately one million PSNP beneficiaries (15%) are unable to participate in Public Works – because they are elderly, disabled, or chronically ill – so they receive gratuitous transfers (‘Direct Support’) with no work requirement. Most of these people have no possibility of earning an independent livelihood, so there is no expectation that they will graduate from the PSNP. It follows that they will require social assistance indefinitely, not only for five years. On the other hand, some Direct Support beneficiaries are able to perform productive activities (e.g. home-based craft-work, administrative jobs, or child-care at Public Works project sites). They require a strategy that involves them in appropriate productive work, either under an expanded approach to Public Works or as an employment creation strategy. For instance, private companies and government agencies could be incentivised to preferentially employ people with disabilities when filling certain vacancies. This option is discussed later in this chapter.

Following its first five-year cycle (2005-2009), the PSNP was extended into a second phase that started in 2010 and is expected to end in 2014. The Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) has set a target of 80% graduation from the PSNP by 2014 (FDRE, 2010). For Direct Support beneficiaries, the prospect of the PSNP ending is especially alarming, as their livelihoods are precarious and the PSNP is providing them with essential support. There has also been important lesson-learning during implementation of the PSNP to date, which should not be lost and provides opportunities to modify it for enhanced impacts in a future phase or any long-term social protection program. Although there are long-term issues relating to Public Works participants (notably, whether or not they can graduate as planned), the scope of this chapter is limited to options for Direct Support only.

Apart from the PSNP, in Ethiopia there is a broad range of formal, semi-formal and informal social protection mechanisms (for a comprehensive review see Amdissa Teshome, 2012), as well as relevant laws, policies and programs. This chapter focuses on formal social protection and, in particular, on the potential for extending the PSNP experience into a long-term social protection system for the most vulnerable. The chapter draws on three main sources: a review of relevant academic literature and Ethiopian policy documents; key

informant interviews with Government of Ethiopia officials and staff of donor agencies and NGOs; and focus group discussions with Direct Support beneficiaries in Oromiya and Tigray.

Following this Introduction, section 2 briefly reviews alternative conceptual approaches to social protection, and recent shifts in Ethiopian government thinking. Section 3 provides the policy context for social protection based on a review of government policies, strategies and action plans in the areas of safety nets, social welfare and social security in Ethiopia, as well as the roles of key government and non-state actors in the sector. Section 4 discusses three issues that are often regarded as obstacles to the adoption of social protection programs – ‘dependency’ (on social transfers), limited graduation potential (for Direct Support beneficiaries), and cost (‘unaffordability’). Section 5 explores future options for social protection – with specific reference to PSNP Direct Support beneficiaries – under the four components of the conceptual framework: access to food (food, cash or vouchers), sufficient food (the level of transfers), all people (target groups and coverage), at all times (timeliness, frequency and predictability). Section 6 concludes and offers recommendations.

## **Conceptualising social protection**

Social protection is a multi-disciplinary knowledge domain that encompasses concepts from, among others, economics, political science, and social anthropology. Economics is primarily concerned with the effectiveness and efficiency of resource use, political science asks who are the ‘right holders’ and ‘duty bearers’, while sociology and social anthropology are concerned with social relations – reciprocity and exclusion (Amdissa Teshome, 2012). These diverse perspectives present challenges to the elaboration of an all-embracing definition of social protection. Nonetheless, there is no shortage of definitions. Brunori and O’Reilly (2010) review 27 “most influential” definitions of social protection and find that the concept has been framed (i) as a policy response to vulnerability and risk, (ii) as an agenda for building livelihoods, and (iii) as a human rights issue.

The World Bank’s ‘social risk management’ approach is the most cogent expression of a risk and vulnerability approach to social protection, linked to livelihood promotion. ‘Social risk management’ focuses on public interventions to assist individuals, households and communities to better manage risk, and to provide support to the critically poor (World Bank, 2003). This approach views social protection as a ‘spring-board’ as well as a ‘safety net’, and as an investment rather than a cost – supporting the poor to access basic social services, to avoid irreversibly damaging coping strategies during shocks, and to

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invest in livelihoods for poverty-reducing growth. The World Bank view is reflected in the poverty reduction or social protection strategies of many governments. Zambia's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, for example, states that "No meaningful and sustained economic growth can be achieved in the absence of social protection" (cited in Brunori and O'Reilly, 2010: 3).

Alternatives to 'economic' approaches that see social protection instrumentally, as targeted tools for risk management and poverty reduction, are normative approaches that focus on 'social' dimensions of vulnerability and argue for rights-based approaches to social protection.

One 'social' approach is 'transformative social protection' (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004), which asserts that social protection should address the structural causes of poverty and vulnerability, not just the symptoms – for instance by legislating and campaigning against discrimination that excludes marginalised groups (e.g. people living with HIV and AIDS) from employment opportunities. Building on Guhan's 'protection', 'prevention' and 'promotion' framework (Guhan, 1994), Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler added 'transformation', to capture interventions that transform the social conditions that generate and perpetuate poverty, complementing 'promotion' interventions that address the economic drivers of poverty, such as low-productivity livelihoods and lack of assets. Completing the 'transformative social protection' framework, 'protection' measures describe conventional social assistance such as feeding programs and disability grants, while 'preventive' measures provide social insurance against risks and shocks, analogous to the 'social risk management' toolkit.

Note that the four elements of this framework are by no means mutually exclusive. The PSNP, for example, addresses three of the four elements. It 'protects' against hunger by providing food or cash to food insecure people in the form of Direct Support transfers or Public Works wages; it 'prevents' hunger and destitution by offering seasonal employment at times to those who need an employment-based safety net; and it 'promotes' livelihoods by constructing useful infrastructure and assets through Public Works, complemented by the Household Asset Building Program. Crucially, however, the 'transformative' dimension underlines the importance of an enabling legal and policy framework for social protection, one that is based on a 'social contract' between governments and citizens, but this 'rights-based' feature is not yet well advanced in Ethiopia.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is a champion of the human rights approach. The ILO established minimum standards for social security decades ago (ILO, 1952), grounded in the principle that citizens are rights-



holders and States are duty-bearers. More recently, the ILO has led a United Nations initiative on establishing a ‘social protection floor’ as the foundation of national social protection systems. The ‘floor’ encompasses a wider set of transfers and services than is commonly delivered through social welfare or safety net programs in Africa, and includes social transfers to guarantee income, food and nutrition security, as well as guaranteed access to essential services such as education, health, water and sanitation. The ‘social protection floor’ is a rights-based approach; it “contributes to the realization of the human right to social security and essential services as defined in Articles 22, 25 and 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (ILO & WHO, 2009: 1).

The Ethiopian government should be credited for making provision for ‘social protection’ even before the term gained currency in the late 1990s, in its Constitution of 1995 and in the Developmental Social Welfare Policy (DSWP) of 1996 (see section 2). However, these early initiatives were either stronger on paper than in implementation (in the case of the Constitution) or fell significantly short of international standards that identify the State as the principal duty bearer for social protection (in the case of the DSWP). The Developmental Social Welfare Policy defined social welfare very weakly, in a way that appears to shift the responsibility for social provisioning from the State to the community.

“Social welfare refers to all the activities being undertaken by a community with a view to facilitating the economic and social conditions that are conducive to a healthy life and a sustainable development as well as activities designed to meet the common needs” (MoLSA, 1996: 51).

In 2010 the Government of Ethiopia set out to update the DSWP, which led to the drafting of the country’s first National Social Protection Policy in 2011. The Government’s new definition of social protection draws on the African Union’s definition, as set out in its Social Policy Framework of 2008 (African Union, 2008).

“Social protection is concerned with preventing, managing and overcoming situations that adversely affect people’s well-being. It consists of policies, programs and actions, designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labour markets, reducing people’s exposure to risks and improving their capacity to manage economic and social risks such as unemployment, social and economic exclusion, sickness, disability and old age” (MoLSA, 2011: 6).

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In order to get an insight into how social protection is perceived by implementers in Ethiopia, key informants from four regions were asked how they define social protection (Box 1) prior to the new policy direction. Their responses are heavily influenced by the then prevailing official position, but capture some useful features of social protection. The Amhara Region respondent mentions the instruments, target audience and purposes for which social transfers are used. In Oromiya, the types of transfers – in cash or in kind, including services – are specified. The SNNPR respondent talked mainly about community-based social protection. The informant from Tigray drew a distinction between contributory social insurance (which is partly self-financed by contributions, typically deducted from employees' salaries) and non-contributory social assistance (which is financed entirely from public resources such as general government revenues).

### *Box 1: Definitions of social protection by key informants in selected regions of Ethiopia*

**Amhara Region:** Social protection (*Maheberawi Digaf/Tibeqa*) is all social support related interventions (schemes, projects and/programs) whose focus is mainly to address the welfare of the very poor households (marginalised and most vulnerable) that are providing support (in cash or in kind) so as to help the beneficiaries spend the received resources on basic consumption goods, education and healthcare for family members.

**Oromiya Region:** Social protection (*Dhimma Gargaarsaa fi hiikkaa rakkoolee hawaasa*) is the provision of social assistance either in forms of materials or finances for marginalised groups of society. Social protection may include provision of free basic education, health services, shelter and food.

**SNNP Region:** Social protection (*Mahiberawi Wsatina*) is any arrangement to guarantee some group of a society against any social problem. For example, members of an association contribute some amount of money to get services. In addition to these contributions, the association finds additional resources from other sources to help people when they are in need of help.

**Tigray Region:** Social protection (*Halewa mahberawi dihninet*) is not only the social insurance for civil servants and old age pensioners, but also elders who have no other means of support, the poorest of the poor and other vulnerable groups like children and women, to protect them from going into deep poverty. For example, free medication, free school attendance up to grade 8 and the Direct Support component of PSNP which supports the disabled, elderly, orphans, pregnant and breast-feeding mothers.

## The social protection context in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is known for a strong traditional support system that has been and continues to be the first line of defence against shocks and vulnerabilities. It starts from the extended family, which protects the young, old, disabled and chronically ill members of the family. There are also community-based systems such as *idir* (burial societies) and *iqub* (informal saving schemes) that provide members with semi-formal insurance against unexpected risks (Amdissa Teshome, 2012). However, these systems have themselves been vulnerable to shocks such as drought and economic hardships and are increasingly unable to cope with the increased number of poor and chronically ill people. The Chairperson of an *idir* said:

“There is a plan to amend the by-law so that the poor can be paid the money when alive. The challenge is that the patients are too many and if we support all of them it will deplete the idir savings. However, we will make the criteria strict in such a way that a person must prove that he has no supporter and is seriously sick and unable to work” (interview with idir Chair in Arsi Zone, Oromiya).

The second line of defence against shocks such as droughts is the humanitarian response system that has been dominant in Ethiopia since the 1970s. An average of 5-6 million people per year benefited from humanitarian relief for almost 30 years (Degefa Tolosa, 2010). The system relied on a series of early warning assessments and negotiations with donors that often led to delays in response and sometimes human tragedy. These failures prompted the Government of Ethiopia to move away from annual appeals for emergency assistance to a more predictable resource transfer to households that have predictable needs, in the form of the Productive Safety Net Program since 2005.

Ethiopia also has a number of laws, policies, strategies, action plans and programs that commit the government to take responsibility for the welfare of its citizens. Many of these are aligned with global conventions. However, these documents also emphasise words like ‘sustainable’, ‘developmental’ and ‘self-supporting’, reflecting the government’s intention to minimise the dependency of citizens on the State. Apart from the PSNP, few government programs involve long-term social transfers to individual citizens.

The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, enacted in 1995, defines the economic, social and political rights of Ethiopian citizens, with particular attention to disadvantaged groups. Article 41.5 establishes a right to social protection for people with disabilities, older persons and vulnerable children. (“*The State shall, with available means, allocate resources to provide*

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*rehabilitation and assistance to the physically and mentally disabled, the aged, and to children who are left without parents or guardian.”)* Article 41.6 focuses on job creation and identifies a social protection instrument – public works – as one government response to unemployment. (“*The State shall pursue policies which aim to expand job opportunities for the unemployed and the poor and shall accordingly undertake programs and public works projects.*”) These two provisions in the Constitution are reflected in the two main components of the PSNP: Direct Support and Public Works, but were also evident in the rural food security programs that preceded the PSNP in the 1990s – notably Food-For-Work and Gratuitous Relief.

The Developmental Social Welfare Policy (DSWP), enacted in 1996, aimed to translate the principles of the Constitution into government programs that ensure the welfare of vulnerable Ethiopians, defined as “those with particularly difficult economic and social circumstances”. The policy has ‘preventive’, ‘rehabilitative’ and ‘developmental’ aspects which more or less correspond with the protective, preventive and promotive roles of social protection. However, the DSWP does not explicitly promote the delivery of social transfers to vulnerable groups, but focuses instead on ensuring access to social services. For instance, support for older persons includes ensuring that they “receive appropriate social security services and assistance in the communities where they live”. The welfare of persons with disabilities would be enhanced by making “residential areas, work and other public places more physically accessible to persons with disability” (MoLSA, 1996: 74-75).

In view of these limitations, the Government of Ethiopia has drafted a new social protection policy (MoLSA, 2011), which reveals a shift in its position on a number of issues. Conceptually, as noted above, the policy is more aligned with the African Union definition, and it accepts the minimum standards for social protection. Strategically, it has adopted four focus areas. First is social safety nets, which aims to scale up the safety net elements of PSNP to cover all *woredas* (and *kebeles*) nationwide, including urban areas. Second is labour market and employment promotion, which aims to contribute to economic growth through community public work programs and other employment generating interventions. Third, social insurance has contributory and non-contributory components and will be provided by the state and private insurance markets. Fourth, addressing inequality in access to basic services has been a longstanding government commitment, and is reiterated in this policy document. Overall, the government’s commitment has shifted from ‘providing rehabilitation and assistance within available means’ to ‘providing social protection to vulnerable citizens’. The protective, preventive, promotive and

even transformative roles of social protection have replaced the former rehabilitative and developmental roles of social welfare.

The National Women's Policy of 1993 pre-dates the Constitution but is consistent with its principles. Article 25 prohibits any discrimination on grounds of gender, while Article 35 establishes the principles of equality of access to economic opportunities, employment and land ownership. The Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MoWCYA) is mandated to ensure that all policies and interventions in Ethiopia are gender-sensitive, and to coordinate implementation of the National Women's Policy. The Ministry has developed a package of programs that aim to address the needs of vulnerable women and ensure equitable development for all Ethiopian women.

The Revised Family Law of 2000 is also relevant to this discussion, not because it makes direct provision for social protection, but because it illustrates the government's view that a society with high moral standards will minimise the social problems that generate social protection needs. The Family Law aims to ensure that Ethiopian children are brought up in a healthy environment with proper education, and will grow up to be responsible citizens. The family (nuclear and extended) is seen as the main provider of support to vulnerable members of society – children, older persons, persons with disabilities. However, the Law also intends to protect the wellbeing of children in the event of their parents' divorce or separation. The Revised Family Law highlights the fact that legal protection is an important part of (or complement to) social protection.

The Social Security fund – popularly known as the pension scheme – is the second largest provider of social protection after the PSNP. It has been in place since 1963 and covers formally employed persons (civil servants, police and army). It is a contributory social insurance scheme, as opposed to social assistance, which is non-contributory. The fund is administered by the Public Sector Employees Social Security Agency (PSESSA). The scheme subscribes to six of the nine ILO minimum standards (see Table 1), and the pension currently reaches about 700,000 older people. According to the revised proclamation, the total contribution for civil servants is 18% (7% employee and 11% government), and for the military and the police it is 32% (7% employee and 25% government) (Proclamation No. 714, FDRE, 2011a) (see Table 8).

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*Table 1. A comparison of Ethiopia's social security package and ILO minimum standards*

<b>ILO minimum standards of social security</b>	<b>Social security in Ethiopia</b>
i) medical care	
ii) sickness benefit	sickness allowance
iii) unemployment benefit	
iv) old-age benefit	old age benefits
v) employment injury benefit	work injury allowance
vi) family benefit	
vii) maternity benefit	maternity allowance
viii) invalidity benefit	disability allowance
ix) survivors benefit	survivors' benefits

SOURCE: Compiled from Teshome Megerssa (2010) and Brunori and O'Reilly (2010: 14-15)

New legislation is in place to extend similar benefits to the formal private sector (Proclamation No. 715, FDRE, 2011b) under a fund managed by the Private Organisation Employees Social Security Agency (POESSA). Established by the government, it is overseen by a tripartite board comprising government, private sector employers and employees. Employees of NGOs, CSOs and UN agencies have the option of joining this scheme voluntarily or to remain with provident funds managed by their respective organisations. Some categories of the self-employed are also invited to join the scheme, but the informal private sector (which employs largely women) is left out of all these initiatives. Nonetheless, these measures indicate that the Government of Ethiopia has accelerated the process of extending access to social security to excluded groups.

In 2010, the Government of Ethiopia promulgated the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), which sets out an ambitious plan to graduate 80% of the PSNP caseload by 2014. By the end of the plan period, the number of participating households would be reduced from 7.1 to 1.3 million (FDRE, 2010). By implication, the plan recognises that the remaining 20% of participants, including most of the present Direct Support beneficiaries, will continue to need some form of social assistance.

The new National Social Protection Policy, described earlier, is very much an instrumentalist agenda, with social protection seen as one set of instruments for achieving national poverty reduction targets. This orientation is also reflected in the policy’s ‘Objectives’, which include contributing to economic growth and building human capital “to stop the intergenerational cycle of poverty”, but also commit the government to providing predictable and timely social transfers to vulnerable groups, expanding social insurance coverage, and increasing “equitable access to quality health, education and other social welfare services by all Ethiopians”.

Social protection policies are multi-sectoral in nature, and need to be implemented with the collaboration of various government ministries, private sector actors and community-based organisations. Given the heavy presence of the donor community, international humanitarian and developmental NGOs and local civil society organisations in delivering assistance to poor and food insecure Ethiopians, this cannot be seen as exclusively a government function. Cognisant of this situation, in 2005 MoLSA produced a directory of formal and informal institutions providing ‘social protection’ services, which formed the basis for the mapping exercise carried out in 2011 to inform the new policy (Amdissa Teshome, 2010). Table 2 below gives a selective summary of social protection related interventions provided by state and non-state institutions, and their target groups.

Table 2. Selected institutions working on social protection related activities in Ethiopia

Institution	Social protection related operations	Target group
<b>Government</b>		
Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural safety net program (PSNP): resource transfers through (i) labour-based public works (ii) direct transfers to vulnerable groups</li> <li>Emergency response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chronically food insecure rural population</li> <li>Transitory food insecure rural population</li> </ul>
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study and document social problems of elders and persons with disabilities</li> <li>Facilitate communities to help elders to spend the rest of their lives happily and peacefully</li> <li>Ensure equal participation of persons with disabilities in the struggle to combat disability and rehabilitate these persons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elderly persons</li> <li>Persons with disabilities</li> <li>Victims of social problems</li> </ul>

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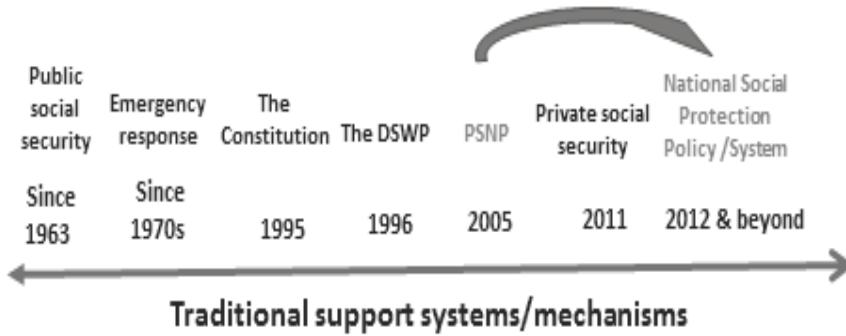
Public Employees Social Security Agency (PESSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Determine pensions of government employees</li> <li>● Collect pension contributions</li> <li>● Pay pension contributions</li> <li>● Keep register of active employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Public sector pensioners</li> </ul>
Private Organisation Employees Social Security Agency (POESSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Determine pensions of private sector employees</li> <li>● Collect pension contributions</li> <li>● Pay pension contributions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Formal private sector pensioners</li> </ul>
<b>Non-government</b>		
Save the Children UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Emergency response</li> <li>● Rural development</li> <li>● Education and health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Children</li> <li>● Persons with disabilities</li> </ul>
Action Aid Ethiopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Implement poverty reduction programs</li> <li>● Capacity building for poor communities</li> <li>● Assist efforts to control HIV and AIDS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Women</li> <li>● Children and youth with disabilities</li> </ul>
HelpAge International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Poverty reduction, food security, awareness raising on HIV and AIDS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organisations working on or with elders</li> </ul>
Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Integrated urban development projects with multiple components: education for orphans, income support for their carers, community care for AIDS patients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Children</li> <li>● Women</li> <li>● Chronically ill</li> </ul>
<b>Civic/informal organisation</b>		
Patriots Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Financial support, clothing, food, health, transportation and shelter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Patriots (male and female)</li> </ul>
National Association for Persons with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Awareness raising</li> <li>● Basic education and training</li> <li>● Saving and credit scheme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Persons with disabilities (physical and mental)</li> </ul>

SOURCE: Adapted and updated from MoLSA (2005)



Figure 1 summarises the social protection context in Ethiopia, using key dates as a point of reference.

Figure 1. A schematic representation of the social protection context in Ethiopia



Within government, MoLSA has overall responsibility for the well-being of most vulnerable groups in Ethiopia, and there was consensus among government officials interviewed for this study that MoLSA should take a leading role in coordinating social protection activities other than the PSNP, which falls under the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).

“The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is the one to take care of social protection. Regarding the safety net it should be mainstreamed in the rural development programs in such a way that it can be sustainable” (Oromiya).

“The social protection program could best be institutionalised under the Social Affairs Office, but still others could have a stake in this” (Tigray).

However, there was also a view that a separate institution should be established to assist Direct Support beneficiaries.

“Direct Support beneficiaries need a separate organisation to support them, maybe comprised of government and non-government” (Tigray).

Several non-state actors complement the PSNP by delivering parallel activities in communities not reached by the PSNP, or by expanding coverage in *woredas* where the PSNP is operational. These actors include the Relief Society of Tigray, which implements the PSNP in selected *woredas* of Tigray using USAID resources; Save the Children UK, which implemented the Meket Livelihood Development Project alongside the PSNP between 2005 and 2007 (Emebet Kebede, 2006); and CARE and its partners, which implemented the PSNP Plus project to provide credit and market access to PSNP beneficiaries

(Bogale et al., 2010). Regional and local government officials acknowledge the various contributions that non-state actors can make to delivering social protection, ranging from awareness raising and capacity building, to providing technical and financial resources.

“Awareness creation and funding might be the potential areas of involvement for the non-state actors in relation to social protection issues” (SNNPR).

“The role of non-state actors, including NGOs, in social protection will be as a source of resources, capacity building – both human and financial aspects – and assisting in program implementation and soliciting funds from donors” (Tigray).

Both government and non-government bodies acknowledge that these programs are under-resourced due to financial and personnel constraints, and reach far fewer people than those who need assistance. This under-coverage leaves a high proportion of poor and vulnerable Ethiopians exposed to livelihood shocks and life-cycle stresses, and imposes a heavy burden on informal support provided by extended families and communities. Moreover, formal interventions are fragmented with inadequate coordination mechanisms. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs recognises these problems, and called for a coherent approach to social protection in Ethiopia, which triggered the process of developing the Social Protection Policy.

“The existing social protection service in the country is fragmented, uncoordinated and the coverage is very insignificant. Therefore, developing Social Protection policies and programs is required as a solution and as an urgent response to social inequality, crisis and to combat the incidence of poverty” (MoLSA, 2008: 31).

## **Challenges to social protection in Ethiopia**

The Government of Ethiopia’s approach to social protection aims to reduce chronic food insecurity and annual food aid appeals. For this reason, the PSNP explicitly links social assistance to more productive livelihoods. Only a minority of participants receive unconditional Direct Support, because the government is nervous about creating long-term ‘dependency’ on social transfers. The majority of participants contribute their labour to Public Works and are expected to ‘graduate’ by the end of 2014. A pragmatic reason for graduating participants out of the PSNP is the high cost of transferring cash or food to millions of households for six months every year, which explains why the costs are largely underwritten by donor agencies. This section therefore explores three strategic issues which present challenges to designing and delivering social protection

programs, not only in Ethiopia but also in other countries. These issues are ‘dependency’, ‘graduation’, and ‘affordability’.

### ***Dependency***

Dependency on social assistance can be defined in one of two ways (Devereux, 2011):

1. Consumption outcomes: The recipient’s food consumption and nutritional well-being would be seriously compromised if social assistance was removed.
2. Behavioural change: Recipients adjust their behaviour (1) in order to qualify for social assistance (e.g. they avoid accumulating assets in order to remain ‘poor’ and eligible), or (2) because social transfers undermine self-reliance (by allowing beneficiaries to ‘choose leisure’ rather than work). This strategic behaviour is also known as ‘moral hazard’, or ‘dependency syndrome’.

The first form of dependency arises from genuine need. People who are unable to make a living are, by definition, dependent on others for their survival. Children, for instance, depend on their parents. If they are orphaned, they depend on their adoptive families, or the state. Supporting vulnerable children is widely accepted as a core responsibility of government. More broadly, every society has its ‘social welfare caseload’ – the (usually small) proportion of citizens who are unable to provide for themselves and require support, either temporarily or permanently. The Direct Support component of the PSNP makes an important contribution towards addressing this caseload.

The second form of dependency occurs when people who do not need assistance adopt deceptive or strategic behaviour to access social transfers, and this is what policy-makers strive to avoid, because it amounts to a ‘leakage’ of scarce public resources to the non-needy. Unfortunately, in social protection debates the ‘genuine’ and ‘strategic’ forms of dependency often get confused.

A major preoccupation of the Ethiopian government is to avoid creating ‘dependency’ on social transfers, and a number of key informants from the regions reiterated this concern. For example:

“Socially, Direct Support beneficiaries have children or other relatives and they can live under them” (government official, Oromiya).

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“PSNP Public Works participants who do not demonstrate graduation potential are victims of dependency syndrome. Government will try to make them aware to graduate from the program after some time” (government official, SNNPR).

This is one reason why public works has dominated social assistance in Ethiopia for decades – not only the PSNP, but its predecessors, including the Employment Generation Scheme (EGS), Food-For-Work (FFW), and WFP-funded Project 2488 (MERET). The reason is that the work requirement discourages ‘strategic dependency’ by imposing high access costs (time and energy expenditure) and paying low benefits (below-market wages or subsistence food rations).

Direct Support beneficiaries face negligible access costs, since cash or food transfers are provided free of any conditions or work requirement. This raises concerns about dependency in two ways. First, claimants could be trying to avoid work – but this is unlikely, because eligibility characteristics such as old age, disability and chronic illness are more difficult to falsify than poverty status, and because local communities are directly involved in identifying PSNP participants. Second, there is a concern that the introduction of public transfers simply displaces private transfers. Since ‘dependent’ community members were being cared for by their relatives and neighbours before the PSNP was introduced, won’t this simply shift the burden of care from families and communities onto the state? An obvious response is that the costs of caring for dependents are extremely challenging for poor families and communities, many of which are unable to provide adequate support due to their own chronic poverty. Social transfers that support these individuals also support their extended families and reduce income poverty at the community level.

From the beneficiary perspective, a serious concern is that the shift from private to public support sets up a relationship that is at risk of ending at any time, especially if the intervention is ‘projectised’ rather than ‘institutionalised’ in government. In this context, the PSNP is a donor-funded project with a limited timeframe, not a permanent, institutionalised government-run social welfare program. If Direct Support beneficiaries stop receiving cash or food transfers from the PSNP, they might be left even more vulnerable than before, because the social networks that provided informal support to them before the PSNP started might well have shifted to provide support to others in the meantime.

So dependency manifests itself in different ways on different levels. Among the ‘economically active’, the main risk is behavioural change or ‘dependency syndrome’ by individual beneficiaries. Among the ‘economically inactive’ (Direct Support beneficiaries), dependency could result from their

exclusion from community-level support systems following their participation in the PSNP. Although there is little empirical evidence for either of these dependency effects in the literature, there is clearly a responsibility on all government and non-government actors involved in social protection to assess these risks before launching interventions that could elevate rather than reduce the vulnerability of beneficiaries, especially if these interventions are badly designed and implemented, or abruptly terminated.

### ***Graduation***

One way of minimising ‘strategic dependency’ on social transfers is to ensure that beneficiaries ‘graduate’, by providing complementary support to livelihoods that raise their incomes above the level where social grants are needed. Graduation has been a preoccupation of the PSNP since its inception. The Government of Ethiopia’s graduation guidance note defines graduation from the PSNP as follows:

“a household has graduated when, in the absence of receiving PSNP transfers, it can meet its basic food needs for all 12 months and is able to withstand modest shocks” (GFDRE, 2007: 1).

Once again, however, it is important to differentiate between the two components of the PSNP. For economically active participants on Public Works projects, graduation is expected to be achieved through a combination of income transfers (wages), infrastructure creation and income generation through complementary Household Asset Building Packages. For Direct Support beneficiaries, the situation is very different. Most Direct Support beneficiaries have no prospect of graduating. Most are not able to earn income and they are not expected to ‘graduate’ off dependence on social assistance. Conceptually, this implies that two very different models of social assistance are embedded within a single program. Officials interviewed for this study who are engaged in implementing or monitoring the PSNP are fully aware of this distinction.

“We do not expect all Public Works beneficiaries to graduate at the end of the project. With regards to Direct Support beneficiaries, graduation is unthinkable” (Tigray).

Among most of these officials there is a consensus on the need to make provision for longer-term support to Direct Support beneficiaries.

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“Nothing is planned for the Direct Support beneficiaries when the PSNP stops. However, some sort of social security must be developed. Long-term social protection is highly required for all who cannot work – particularly the disabled, orphans and elderly” (Oromiya).

“These groups for whom graduation is not likely require long term social protection. The likelihood of graduation for Direct Support beneficiaries is low, so these groups have to be supported. Otherwise they will go to negative coping mechanisms like begging or street children, and become a burden to the society and the nation at large” (Tigray).

Some officials made an important point about the variation in capabilities among Direct Support beneficiaries, arguing that many do have the capacity to perform ‘light work’ and in this way to ‘graduate’ from unconditional grants to employment-based transfers.

“Some Direct Support beneficiaries could engage in light activities such as registering the names of participants, provision of consultation and counselling in the community, or conflict resolution. Because PSNP is a bridge from relief to producing a productive society, it is not something which stays forever – it is temporary. In this case the disabled ones feel they are recognised as productive and participating in development” (Tigray).

This argument applies to some people with physical or mental disabilities, but it does not apply to children, older people who have retired from work, and people with incapacitating disabilities. (As the same official in Tigray conceded: “Of course there are Direct Support beneficiaries who deserve free transfers”.) For these vulnerable groups, graduation is not an option and social protection is needed.

The Government of Ethiopia’s new National Social Protection Policy is a response to these and other concerns about the future of the most vulnerable groups after PSNP. However, at the time of writing this chapter, there is no clear strategy as to how these needs will be met.

### ***Affordability***

Any low-income country introducing social protection is understandably concerned about the cost of these programs – whether they are affordable and how they will be financed – especially when the intention is to introduce permanent social assistance systems, rather than projects with a defined budget, timeframe and exit strategy. As one MoLSA official we interviewed in Tigray argued:

“There are a lot of helpless elders, disabled and orphan children, both in rural and urban areas. These groups become a burden to the society, so they need continuous social protection. But considering our level of development, this might not be possible from the government budget.”

We understand the main determinants of the cost of a social protection program to be:

- (1) the number of beneficiaries;
- (2) the level of transfers;
- (3) the frequency of transfers;
- (4) administration costs (management and delivery).

Administration costs refer to all program expenditure other than direct transfers to beneficiaries themselves – such as management, disbursement, shipping and storage (in the case of food aid). The Government of Ethiopia’s 2009 proclamation governing NGOs and CSOs established a 70/30 ratio (sometimes called the ‘alpha-ratio’) of program to administration costs. This means that an organisation should spend at least 70% of its budget on activities that fulfil the project’s objectives – such as transfers to vulnerable groups – while administration costs should not exceed 30% (FDRE, 2009). This provision is more or less in line with international standards. When programs are implemented by the government (as with the PSNP), administration costs are absorbed into the recurrent costs of the relevant Ministry, so these costs cannot be isolated and analysed separately.

### ***Beneficiary numbers***

Ethiopia is a large country with a large number of candidates for social protection. The population was estimated at 75 million in 2006, almost half of whom (48%) are either under 15 or over 60 years old (MoLSA, 2008: 3). This means there are a large number of potentially vulnerable people in Ethiopia – 3.4 million older persons, 32.6 million children, up to 7.5 million people with disabilities (10% of the population) – who could qualify for social protection. An interview with the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs in Tigray revealed high level of needs for social protection in that region – several categories of vulnerable people, high numbers of people in each category, and declining capacity of families and communities to support these vulnerable individuals (see Box 1). Similar conditions are likely to prevail in all other regions of Ethiopia.

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### Box 1. Social protection needs in Tigray

*“Social protection is important in our country, from the human rights and development point of view.*

*In the Tigray region:*

- *Elders represent 6%, disabled 10% and children about 46% of the total population.*
- *Elders are those above 60 years of age and their number is increasing.*
- *Social values are decreasing over time due to modernisation, development and mobility.*
- *A lot of elders are also losing their children and grandchildren to war and HIV/AIDS, implying that they cannot depend on their extended family.*
- *There are about 69,728 destitute elderly persons in 31 woredas.*
- *Orphans and vulnerable children amount to 85,645 in 42 woredas, 46,000 of these are due to HIV/AIDS, the remaining are due to war and natural death.*
- *There are 5,879 street children.*
- *There are 2,975 child-headed households in 42 woredas (out of 47 woredas, including the urban).*
- *There are no social security activities except the PSNP which is addressing some of these groups and only 4% of the total target groups who are government employees and military.*

*The above points justify the need for long term social protection options in Ethiopia.”*

SOURCE: Interview with Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs, Tigray

The number of beneficiaries of any program is defined by its eligibility criteria – all people over 60, all people with disabilities, and so on. To control costs, beneficiary numbers can be restricted by applying multiple rather than single targeting criteria. For instance, instead of a single (age) criterion – all Ethiopian citizens over 60 years of age – a social pension could be targeted only at ‘poor’ citizens over 60 living in ‘food insecure’ *woredas*. Alternatively, eligibility criteria can be made more rigorous – e.g. the age of eligibility for social pensions could be raised to 65 or 70 (as in Lesotho). A universal social pension for all over-60s in Ethiopia would reach 4 million beneficiaries, but a pension that targets only poor people over 70 years of age would reach just over 700,000 (Annex Table 6).



### *Payment level*

The standard food aid ration on public works in Ethiopia is 3 kilograms of staple grain (e.g. wheat), usually supplemented with beans and cooking oil. Because the PSNP delivered food transfers to some beneficiaries and cash transfers to others, it was important that the two modalities were equal in value, which was achieved by calibrating the cash transfer to the cost of a food aid ration. For this reason, the PSNP cash transfer was initially set at Birr 6 per day – enough (in January 2005) to buy 3kg of staple grain plus a small quantity of beans, “on the assumption that the average consumer price for grain would be Birr 1.7 per kg” (Emebet Kebede, 2006: 584).

Prices of food and other commodities increased steadily in 2005 and 2006 but accelerated in 2007 and 2008, eroding the purchasing power of cash. This effect could have been avoided if the cash payment was adjusted regularly in line with inflation, but there was no provision in the PSNP budget – which needed to double in 3 years – for cash transfers to track food prices. One increase of 33% was made in the PSNP payment level, from Birr 6 to Birr 8 per day, but this provided inadequate protection against food price inflation, as Birr 8 could only buy 2kg of cereal (at Birr 4) by 2008, and inflation has continued to spiral ever since.

If the PSNP payment had doubled from Birr 6 to Birr 12 (or roughly from US 50c to US\$ 1) the total cost of the program would also double. The annual cost of Direct Support, for instance, would increase from US\$ 13m to US\$ 26m (for 865,000 beneficiaries in the highland regions, assuming six months of payments per annum), or from US\$ 32m to US\$ 64m (for one million beneficiaries in highland and lowland regions, assuming payments every month of the year) (see Annex Table 6).

### *Frequency of transfers*

Social transfer programs such as social pensions typically deliver cash monthly, or every second month or quarterly, to reduce administration costs. On the PSNP, monthly payments are supposed to be made for six months of the year, between January and June, and the program is then suspended until the following January. The reason is that the agricultural year in highland Ethiopia ends with the main harvest in mid-year, after which food is relatively abundant and prices are low for several months, so the need for social assistance is less than in the pre-harvest ‘hungry season’. On the other hand, the exact timing of the harvest varies across the country, and patterns of seasonality are very different in so-called *belg*-dependent areas, especially if the *belg* rains fail, as happens every few years. Also, crop farming cycles do not affect livelihoods as directly in

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lowland areas, where pastoralism is the dominant livelihood system. So the timing of PSNP disbursements does not accurately reflect the seasonality of rural livelihoods across all of Ethiopia.

As for Direct Support beneficiaries, most do not farm and they earn very little or no income. So their livelihoods are not dependent on agricultural seasonality, and they need consumption or income support continuously, all year round. The argument for paying Direct Support beneficiaries for six months rather than 12 months is partly pragmatic, to link Direct Support payments to Public Works payments, and partly based on the assumption that communities are better able to support their vulnerable members in the post-harvest months. But for destitute and socially marginalised individuals who have little or no informal support, the fact that PSNP transfers are only provided for six months leaves them extremely vulnerable for the remaining half of the year.

### *Financing arrangements*

The PSNP is implemented by the Government of Ethiopia and co-financed by the PSNP Donor Group, which includes the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the World Bank, the European Commission, USAID, the World Food Program, CIDA and DCI (FDRE, 2005). Expanding the PSNP – in terms of numbers of beneficiaries, payment level, or the duration of the program (beyond its current second five-year cycle) – will require additional resources that must be sourced from the government and development partners. Even if the PSNP in its present form is terminated in 2014, the new National Social Protection Policy will require substantial resources to implement – and institutionalised social protection is a permanent commitment to vulnerable citizens, not a five-year project. A sustainable long-term financing strategy is therefore essential.

Social protection programs in other African countries are either fully financed by the government or adopt co-financing arrangements between the national government and its development partners – international donors and NGOs. All five social pension programs in southern Africa – Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland – are entirely funded out of domestic resources, as are Disability Grants in several of these countries and the Child Support Grant in South Africa. These social pensions are underpinned by legislation and are politically irreversible. Botswana, Namibia and South Africa are middle-income countries with a sound fiscal base. Lesotho and Swaziland are poor countries, but their small populations make social pensions affordable – and Lesotho has set the age of eligibility at 70, in order to restrict the number of eligible pensioners.

Elsewhere, donors have taken the lead in designing and paying for social protection programs, usually starting with small-scale pilot projects. Examples of donor-led programs in Africa include social cash transfer projects in selected districts of Malawi and Zambia, and the Hunger Safety Net Program in northern Kenya. In these cases, the challenge is to build financial capacity and government commitment such that the government takes on a steadily increasing proportion of the cost, allowing donor support to be phased out over time. If this is not done, no ‘social contract’ is established between the government and citizens, and the risk is that donors will withdraw their funding when their project cycle ends, leaving beneficiaries with no social protection support. The PSNP differs from the ‘pilot project’ model because it was close to a national program from the outset, and it is demonstrably ‘government-owned’ even though donor agencies provide much of the financial and technical support.

## **Social protection options for Direct Support beneficiaries**

Comprehensive social protection should reach every person who needs assistance, but this raises questions about how to define ‘need’ and how many people need assistance. This section considers the coverage of social protection in Ethiopia, and considers the cost implications of delivering social protection to two target groups – social pensions for older persons, and child benefits for children.

### ***Coverage***

A simplistic distinction is typically drawn between the ‘productive’ and the ‘unproductive’ poor, or the ‘economically active’ and the ‘economically inactive’. In the former category are able-bodied adults who are either working or seeking paid employment – and the Public Works component of the PSNP is a response to unemployment or underemployment among this group. In the latter category are a number of ‘vulnerable groups’ whose inability to work is defined by their demographic or health status: older persons, people with disabilities, the chronically ill, pregnant women, young orphans. The Direct Support component of the PSNP is a response to chronic poverty among these groups. In terms of targeting criteria, Direct Support is closely related to its predecessor, ‘Gratuitous Relief’ in the 1990s. According to the Emergency Code for Ethiopia:

“The following persons will be eligible to gratuitous relief during disaster periods, provided they have no close relatives able and custom-bound to support them: (a) person who are aged over 60 years of age; (b) the infirm; (c) the blind, crippled and insane; (d) pregnant women and young children; who cannot be supported by their close relatives; and (e) persons who are required

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to attend constantly on young children and incapacitated adults. Apart from these persons, having regard to the special conditions of nomadic areas, payment of Gratuitous Relief may be authorised to nomads in a disaster area by special orders” (TGE, 1991: 25).

Reality is more complex than this, in at least two ways. Firstly, instead of two distinct groups there is a continuum of capacities. Many older persons or people with disabilities are able to work, even if they cannot perform heavy manual labour. These individuals could be employed on ‘light’ activities (as discussed above) or they could perform important social functions, such as caring for children in project crèches while the children’s parents are doing ‘heavy’ public works activities such as road construction. Accommodating this ‘continuum of capacities’ would require changing the design of the Public Works Program, to include more ‘light work’ activities for people who have limited labour capacity. As the official we interviewed in Tigray suggested: “Many Direct Support beneficiaries could engage in some light activities such as registering the names of participants, provision of consultation and counselling in the community, or conflict resolution.” Another option mentioned earlier in this chapter is to provide incentives to public agencies and private sector firms to offer preferential employment to people who have a disability that is not totally incapacitating. For instance, most Public Works projects demand heavy manual labour, but many administrative jobs could be performed by people with a physical disability.

Secondly, many adults who are economically active fall ill or pregnant and are unable to work for some time. They also need protection during this period of disruption to their work. Recently, the PSNP has relaxed the barrier between Public Works and Direct Support, allowing women employed on Public Works to stop work and receive Direct Support during their pregnancy, after which they will return to Public Works. This should be applauded as a radical innovation, since it amounts to the introduction of social insurance principles into a social assistance program. Effectively, Public Works employees have been granted paid maternity leave.

Although the PSNP is the largest safety net program in Ethiopia, significant under-coverage remains a problem. This was recognised by one official we interviewed in Hararge.

“Individuals who possess similar characteristics to Direct Support beneficiaries are found not only in PSNP implementation areas but also in non-PSNP areas. These people address their food security problems through various local cultural coping mechanisms, but they will not easily access what they need, due to the presence of food shortage within their locality. This may

lead us to ask the question – why are such people who live in non-PSNP areas not considered by support programs?”

The PSNP started operating in rural highland areas and has gradually been rolled out to lowland areas, where livelihoods are dominated by pastoralism and agro-pastoralism. The PSNP does not operate in urban areas. A national social protection system needs to reach vulnerable pastoralists and the urban poor, as well as crop farmers. For pastoralists and urban residents, agricultural seasonality is not a significant determinant of vulnerability, so a case could be made for a permanent (year-round) program rather than a seasonally restricted disbursement schedule. On the other hand, both these groups are also affected by periodic hunger when food prices rise for various reasons, including seasonality.

One response by PSNP officials to under-coverage is ‘dilution’, defined as “spreading or sharing of transfer resources among a larger number of beneficiaries than budgeted for” (Sharp *et al.*, 2006). This can be done in three ways: reducing food rations or cash transfers, registering only some household members (instead of ‘full family targeting’), or rotating participating households out of the PSNP between one program cycle and the next. Dilution expands the coverage of a program at the expense of reduced impact at the individual level – it trades off the objective of reaching all people who need assistance against the objective of transferring sufficient food or cash to each beneficiary. However, communities often prefer social assistance to be distributed more widely, perceiving benefits to everybody as being fairer than targeting a minority of ‘poorest’ households (Ellis, 2008). Following a shift to ‘full family targeting’, an assessment of the PSNP found that rotation of households and under-registration of household members both declined (Devereux *et al.*, 2008).

### ***Target groups and cost scenarios***

Social welfare programs target ‘vulnerable groups’ who are unable to earn a livelihood because of their age (too old or too young to work), ill-health or disability. These ‘categorical’ groups are not all eligible for PSNP Direct Support, although there are substantial overlaps. An alternative, more comprehensive, approach is a ‘social minimum’ or ‘social protection floor’ that would deliver several transfers and essential services to several vulnerable groups.

This section presents indicative cost estimates for two alternative social assistance programs – social pensions and child benefits – under different assumptions in terms of coverage and payment levels. Note that these calculations are based on data from 2008, when the report on which this chapter is based was written. Although the general principles and orders of magnitude

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remain broadly consistent, a rigorous costing exercise would require recalculation based on most recent population figures, poverty headcount, PSNP wage rates and foreign exchange rates.

### *Older persons: Social pensions*

Social pensions are increasingly popular in Africa (having been introduced in Lesotho and Swaziland as recently as 2004 and 2005), not only because they provide essential assistance to older citizens who have no means of support in old age, but also because older people are taking on increasing burdens of care for orphans and other vulnerable children. A universal social pension for all over-60s in Ethiopia – the official retirement age – would need to reach just over 4 million people (see Annex Table 7 for population figures by age cohort). If the payment was set at US\$ 1/day, and paid for 5 days each month (as on the PSNP) throughout the year, the transfer cost (net of administration and delivery costs) would amount to US\$ 243 million per annum.

However, expenditure on social pensions will inevitably rise over time, for three reasons:

- (1) **Population growth** means that more Ethiopians will reach 60 and become eligible every year.
- (2) **Rising life expectancy** means that people over 60 will remain in the scheme for longer.
- (3) **Rising prices** will create constant pressure to raise the payment to keep pace with inflation.

There are four ways that the cost of a social pension could be reduced:

- (1) **Lower the initial payment level:** If the payment was halved to US\$ 2.50 (Birr 30) per month the total cost would fall to US\$ 120 million per annum. If the payment was set at US\$ 1.25 (Birr 14) per month the total cost would be approximately US\$ 60 million per annum.
- (2) **Raise the age of eligibility:** The cost of Lesotho's social pension was controlled by setting the age of eligibility at 70. In Ethiopia this would limit the number of beneficiaries to 1.6 million, considerably less than the 4 million who would qualify if the age threshold is set at 60 years.
- (3) **Target the social pension on the poor:** Headcount poverty in Ethiopia was estimated at 44.2% in 2000 (GFDRE, 2004). Delivering the social pension to only 44.2% of people over the age threshold reduces the cost by more than half compared to a universal program.

- (4) **Disburse the pension only for half the year:** This is the practice on the PSNP, which pays beneficiaries for six months between January and July. If a social pension program followed this practice it would halve the costs of a social pension that runs continuously.

None of these design modifications is recommended in principle, as their consequence would be to reduce the coverage and/or impact of the intervention. The only justification for considering these ideas is pragmatic – fiscal constraints might necessitate finding creative ways to contain costs within a fixed budget. Following this logic, program costs could be further reduced if several of these design modifications were adopted simultaneously. Instead of a single figure for the cost of introducing a social pension in Ethiopia, there are a range of estimates depending on choices about the level of payment, age of eligibility, whether the program is universal or targeted on the poor, and whether payments are made every month or for only part of the year.

The estimates in Table 3 range from a minimum of US\$ 6m/year (for a social pension targeted at poor Ethiopians aged over 70 and set at Birr 14/month, paid for only six months each year) to a maximum of US\$ 243m/year (for a universal social pension to all Ethiopians over 60 paying Birr 55 every month).

Table 3. Cost scenarios for social pensions in Ethiopia (US\$ million per annum)

Social pension eligibility criteria	Beneficiaries	Payment level			
		\$1.25/month (25c x5 days) Birr 14/month (Birr 2.7/day)	\$2.50/month (50c x5 days) Birr 30/month (Birr 6/day)	\$3.75/month (75c x5 days) Birr 40/month (Birr 8/day)	\$5/month (\$1 x5 days) Birr 55/month (Birr 11/day)
Universal: age 60+	4,050,000	60	120	182	243
Universal: age 65+	2,700,000	40	80	118	162
Universal: age 70+	1,650,000	25	50	73	100
Poor only: age 60+	1,790,000	27	54	80	107
Poor only: age 65+	1,193,400	18	36	53	72
Poor only: age 70+	729,300	11	22	32	44
6 months: all 60+	4,050,000	30	61	89	122
6 months: poor 70+	729,300	6	11	16	22

Note: See Annex Table 6 for an explanation of the calculations in this table.

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*Children: Child benefits*

Child grants are less common in Africa than social pensions, mainly because the age distribution of all populations is pyramid-shaped, so there are many more children than older persons. It follows that even a poverty-targeted child grant would be considerably more expensive than a universal social pension in most African countries. Nonetheless, the largest social protection program in Africa is South Africa’s Child Support Grant, which is means tested yet reaches more than 10 million children (Department of Social Development *et al.*, 2011). In 2010, Zambia introduced a Child Grant to some of its poorest districts with the highest under-5 mortality rates, as part of a phased scale-up of the Social Cash Transfer scheme.

There are many more children in Ethiopia (34 million under 15 years of age) than older persons (4 million over 60 years) (see Annex Table 7). A universal grant of a dollar a day to all children under 15 years old would cost more than US\$ 2 billion every year. The lowest cost option, a poverty-targeted transfer of 25c/day to the 5.6 million children under 5 for only half the year, would cost US\$ 42m per annum (Table 4). Paying higher benefits, or raising the age of eligibility above 5 years, rapidly escalates the cost.

*Table 4. Cost scenarios for child benefits in Ethiopia (US\$ million per annum)*

Child benefit eligibility criteria	Beneficiaries	Payment level			
		\$1.25/ month (25c x5 days)  Birr 14/month (Birr 2.7/day)	\$2.50/month (50c x5 days)  Birr 30/ month (Birr 6/day)	\$3.75/ month (75c x5 days)  Birr 40/ month (Birr 8/day)	\$5/ month (\$1 x5 days)  Birr 55/ month (Birr 11/day)
Universal: age 0–5	12,675,000	190	380	558	761
Universal: age 0–10	24,150,000	362	725	1,063	1,449
Universal: age 0–15	34,275,000	514	1,028	1,542	2,057
Poor only: age 0-5	5,602,350	84	168	252	336
Poor only: age 0-10	10,674,300	160	320	480	641
Poor only: age 0-15	15,150,000	227	455	682	909
6 months: all 0-15	34,275,000	257	514	771	1,028
6 months: poor 0-5	5,602,350	42	84	126	168

Note: See Annex Table 6 for an explanation of the calculations in this table.



*Direct Support*

As noted above, there are approximately one million Direct Support beneficiaries on the PSNP, who received Birr 8 per day for 5 days each month for 6 months of the year in 2008, at an estimated total annual cost of US\$ 24 million. If the same beneficiaries received Direct Support payments all year round, the total cost would double to US\$ 48 million, and if the payment was raised to US\$ 1 per day the cost of a permanent program would amount to US\$ 64 million (Table 5). Approximately one in five of these beneficiaries are pastoralists living in lowland areas, most of whom started as Direct Support beneficiaries, though Public Works was introduced recently with specific pastoral guidelines.

Excluding these pastoralist and agro-pastoralist beneficiaries from the calculations leaves 865,000 Direct Support beneficiaries in the highland regions, who have been correctly targeted on the basis of their inability to work. The cost of reaching these beneficiaries increased from US\$ 13 million to US\$ 20 million when the daily payment was raised from Birr 6 to Birr 8. If the duration of the program was changed from 6 months to 12 months of the year, this would double the Direct Support budget in the highlands regions alone to US\$ 39 million (Table 5).

*Table 5. Cost scenarios for Direct Support options in Ethiopia (US\$ million per annum)*

Direct Support coverage	Beneficiaries	Payment level			
		\$7.50/month (25c/day) Birr 80/month (Birr 2.7/day)	\$15/month (50c/day) Birr 160/month (Birr 6/day)	\$22/month (75c/day) Birr 240/month (Birr 8/day)	\$30/month (\$1/day) Birr 320/month (Birr 11/day)
Highlands only (6 months/year)	865,756	6.5	13	20	26
Highland only (12 months/year)	865,756	13	26	39	52
Highlands + lowlands (6 months/year)	1,073,242	8	16	24	32
Highlands + lowlands (12 months/year)	1,073,242	16	32	48	64

*Note: See Annex Table 6 for an explanation of the calculations in this table.*

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### *A 'Social Minimum'*

Some donor agencies are building the case for introducing a 'global social minimum', arguing that: "a minimum package of essential social protection should cover: essential health care, and benefits for children, informal workers, the unemployed, older persons and persons with disabilities" (African Union 2008). Three features of this approach should be highlighted in the context of social protection in Ethiopia.

1. It implies a shift away from 'poverty targeting' (defining the eligible as the poorest 10% or 20% in each community) towards 'categorical targeting' (defining eligibility in terms of demographic characteristics such as age or disability, or economic characteristics such as being unemployed).
2. It implies a shift away from 'discretionary' benefits (where benefits can be provided one year and removed the next) towards 'entitlements' to benefits (whereby anyone who is defined as eligible is entitled to claim their benefit as a right – e.g. everyone over 60 is entitled to a social pension).
3. This comprehensive package is considerably more expensive than a narrowly targeted project with only one or two target groups – a 'social minimum' provides an extensive range of benefits to several target groups. In a very poor country with a large population, as in Ethiopia, it is doubtful whether such a comprehensive approach to social protection is affordable at this time.

Although the Food Security Task Forces have been assessed as doing a reasonably good job of identifying the poorest and most vulnerable community members, the numbers of actual Direct Support beneficiaries are lower than the numbers who are eligible in many communities, mainly because of budget quotas and the fact that PSNP resources tend to be channelled more towards the Public Works component. An early evaluation of PSNP targeting procedures found that: "In all field sites where a Direct Support quota had been set, the number of people assessed by communities as eligible was higher than the quota received" (Sharp *et al.*, 2006: 15), and there is no evidence to suggest that this has changed subsequently. For this reason, a shift towards categorical targeting is recommended for a future Direct Support program. Three priority target groups could be: (1) all people with disabilities that leave them unable to work; (2) all older persons living alone without support; and (3) all orphans identified by Food Security Task Forces as living in poor households. Any individual meeting these eligibility criteria would be entitled to Direct Support.

### ***Timeliness and frequency of payments***

The timeliness and predictability of PSNP cash payments have improved since the program started. However, delays persist, and are often caused by delays in completing Public Works projects, or in disbursing payments to Public Works participants. This is unfair on Direct Support beneficiaries. Either all PSNP payments must be made more timely and punctual, or Direct Support payments must be made independently of Public Works disbursements.

The issue of paying Direct Support beneficiaries for only part of the year has been discussed above. The PSNP operates for six months each year, effectively as a counter-seasonal employment program for underemployed farmers. Direct Support beneficiaries receive transfers for the same six months of the year. This is not related to variable needs for social assistance at different times of year, but is dictated by seasonal labour requirements in the agricultural calendar.

“it has become accepted that the transfer schedule should involve monthly transfers for the period January to June reflecting the timing of the predominant rainy season in Ethiopia’s agricultural areas which fall between June and September. The peak labour period for populations dependent on these rains falls between June-December (as does the hungry period) and therefore it is inappropriate for public works to be undertaken during this time” (SC-UK, 2008: 10).

A Direct Support program of social transfers to people who need predictable social assistance should be de-linked from the Public Works Program and should deliver transfers all year round, not only for part of the year. Alternatively, Direct Support payments should at least be made during the annual hungry season – which falls during months when the Public Works Program is not operational. This does not necessarily require disbursing transfers every month. A double payment every second month would be administratively simpler and direct delivery costs would be halved. However, it does require designing a future Direct Support program on the basis of a needs assessment that will establish precisely how much social assistance is needed and for how many months, rather than seeing Direct Support as simply an add-on to a Public Works Program that was designed for a different target group with very different needs.

## **Conclusion**

This concluding section summarises the arguments made in this chapter, and suggests some policy options for moving ‘from safety nets to social protection system’ in Ethiopia.

### ***Summary***

The Productive Safety Net Program is one of the great success stories of social protection in Africa. The PSNP delivers regular cash and/or food transfers to more than seven million rural people in Ethiopia, either with a labour requirement on Public Works, or for free, as Direct Support. Although there is an expectation that Public Works participants will graduate out of the program, there is no exit strategy for Direct Support beneficiaries. This raises an important policy question: what are the longer-term social protection options for Direct Support beneficiaries, and other vulnerable groups in Ethiopia, especially if the PSNP is phased out in 2014? Also important (but not examined in this chapter): what will happen to those Public Works participants who have not yet graduated by 2014, or have graduated prematurely but remain highly vulnerable?

There are numerous laws, policies, strategies and action plans for poor and vulnerable citizens in Ethiopia – such as children, older persons and persons with disabilities. The right to social protection for these vulnerable groups is also enshrined in the Constitution of 1995. In practice, however, there is inadequate provision for delivering social assistance in Ethiopia. The Developmental Social Welfare Policy, for instance, focused mainly on access to social services and community-based initiatives. Since 2005, the PSNP has been the main mechanism for delivering social transfers to the poorest and chronically food insecure rural households, but coverage remains limited. Moreover, the PSNP is administered by the Ministry of Agriculture, not the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which is the natural institutional home for social protection. There is a need for more collaboration and coordination between these two ministries, as well as with other increasingly influential ministries such as the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth.

Delivering effective and comprehensive social protection presents several challenges, especially in a very large, very poor country like Ethiopia. Firstly, the government is preoccupied with avoiding dependency, in the sense that beneficiaries change their behaviour, either to become eligible for social grants (e.g. selling assets to appear poor) or because grants undermine their self-reliance (e.g. beneficiaries stop working). For this reason, the PSNP is dominated by Public Works, which has a heavy work requirement that self-targets the poorest. Most Direct Support beneficiaries are physically unable to

work, so dependency is not a valid concern. From the beneficiary perspective, however, Direct Support transfers could potentially displace informal support from relatives and communities – though in many cases formal and informal transfers complement each other – so the possibility that the PSNP will end constitutes a significant threat to their future well-being.

A second challenge to social protection programs is their cost. Although the evidence suggests that social protection is affordable even in poor countries, spending decisions are political choices, and questions of how expensive social programs will be financed must be addressed. The cost of any social transfer program is a product of the number of beneficiaries, the level and frequency of transfers, and administration (management and delivery). All of these variables can be adjusted to control program costs. For instance, Direct Support currently reaches over a million beneficiaries. Introducing a universal social pension would imply four million beneficiaries if the age of eligibility was set at 60, but only 700,000 beneficiaries if the age threshold was raised to 70 (as in Lesotho). Similarly, the PSNP runs for six months each year, so converting it into a permanent year-round program would immediately double the cost – unless payments were disbursed every second month. Administration costs could also be reduced by disbursing booklets of post-dated vouchers that are valid for several months ahead, so that only one or two disbursements are required every year. These and other options would need to be carefully evaluated and costed during the design phase for any social assistance program that replaces the PNSP's Direct Support program.

### ***Policy options***

The chapter concludes by identifying two related sets of challenges: firstly, to improve the delivery of Direct Support under the PSNP (assuming it continues for the foreseeable future); and secondly, to design a comprehensive institutionalised social protection system for all vulnerable Ethiopians. Five recommendations are made to improve the performance of the Direct Support program.

1. ***De-link Direct Support payments from Public Works payments:*** (1) Separate budgets for Public Works and Direct Support should be allocated at every level, with the Direct Support budget based on the average proportion of eligible beneficiaries in the national or regional population (e.g. numbers of people with disabilities). (2) To protect Direct Support beneficiaries against the irregular disbursements that Public Works participants face (because of delays in completing work norms), a separate payment mechanism should be established. (3) Since people who are unable to work require continuous support, Direct Support beneficiaries should receive

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transfers every month of the year, or at least during the annual hungry season, not only for those six months when Public Works is operational.

2. ***Ensure that Direct Support payment levels achieve food sufficiency:*** Given the dramatic increase in food prices in Ethiopia in recent years, protecting household subsistence needs might require either (1) index-linking cash transfers; (2) disbursing a combination of cash and in-kind transfers (as is being delivered in some *woredas*); or (3) disbursing commodity-denominated vouchers rather than cash.
3. ***Target defined categories of vulnerable individuals rather than ‘quotas’:*** Exclusion errors that arise from budget quotas and selection bias that favours Public Works over Direct Support beneficiaries should be avoided, for instance by setting categorical eligibility criteria, such as (1) all people with disabilities that leave them unable to work; (2) all older persons living alone without support; and (3) all orphans in poor households. This would also signal an intention to move towards an entitlement-based system of social protection in Ethiopia.
4. ***‘Graduate’ suitable Direct Support beneficiaries into productive activities:*** A strategy should be devised to ‘graduate’ Direct Support beneficiaries who have some labour capacity into productive employment. Options include: (1) undertaking appropriate ‘light work’ to support PSNP Public Works projects (e.g. registration of PSNP participants, or providing child-care at Public Works project sites); (2) finding suitable non-manual jobs in government ministries or agencies; (3) providing incentives to private sector firms to provide preferential employment to people with disabilities; and (4) providing educational support to orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) until they acquire some qualification that enables them to secure jobs.
5. ***Upgrade Direct Support from discretionary grants to claims-based entitlements:*** Every Ethiopian citizen who meets certain pre-defined criteria of poverty and vulnerability should be entitled to receive assistance from the State, and should be empowered to claim that assistance. Also, social transfers should be underpinned by a ‘Clients Charter’ that specifies minimum standards for delivery (e.g. maximum walking distances and queuing times at pay-points), and is upheld by an independent grievance procedure.

The second challenge is to move beyond Direct Support to an institutionalised social protection system for all vulnerable Ethiopians that is permanent, administratively viable, financially affordable, politically acceptable, and has a sustainable financing strategy. Achieving this requires coordination around a political process that is dominated by the new Social Protection Policy,

led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which is also establishing a Social Development Fund for: (1) destitute older persons; (2) orphans and vulnerable children; (3) street people; (4) persons with disabilities with severe functional impairment. These initiatives provide an opportunity for MoLSA, MoA and other institutions such as MoWCY to collaborate in the design and delivery of a modified Direct Support program. Specifically, the transition from a fixed-term program (the five-year PSNP cycle) to a permanent social protection system requires coordinating the strategy for Direct Support beneficiaries with the evolving social protection strategy. This will have at least two advantages.

Firstly, the Social Protection Policy will provide a more comprehensive package of support to vulnerable individuals than just cash or food transfers – the Policy also mentions expanding social insurance and enhancing access to basic social services. Secondly, if Direct Support beneficiaries also become clients of MoLSA the risk of their being excluded from future government support when the PSNP ends is averted – because social protection will be mainstreamed rather than projectised. For Direct Support beneficiaries with no prospect of graduating, a projectised approach is entirely inappropriate. Direct Support for people who are unable to work and are dependent on others must be institutionalised and permanent – there is no time limit and no exit strategy.

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## ANNEX TABLES

Table 6. Cost scenarios for social protection options in Ethiopia, 2008 (US\$ million per annum)

Social protection intervention	Beneficiaries	Payment level			
		(a) \$1.25/ month (25c x5 days) Birr 14/month (Birr 2.7/day)	(b) \$2.50/ month (50c x5 days) Birr 30/month (Birr 6/day)	(c) \$3.75/ month (75c x5 days) Birr 40/month (Birr 8/day)	(d) \$5/month (\$1 x5 days) Birr 55/month (Birr 11/day)
<b>Direct Support</b>					
Highlands only (6 months/year)	865,756	6.5	13	20	26
Highland only (12 months/year)	865,756	13	26	39	52
Highlands + lowlands (6 months/year)	1,073,242	8	16	24	32
Highlands + lowlands (12 months/year)	1,073,242	16	32	48	64
<b>Social pension</b>					
Universal: age 60+	4,050,000	60	120	182	243
Universal: age 65+	2,700,000	40	80	118	162
Universal: age 70+	1,650,000	25	50	73	100
Poor only: age 60+	1,790,000	27	54	80	107
Poor only: age 65+	1,193,400	18	36	53	72
Poor only: age 70+	729,300	11	22	32	44
6 months: all 60+	4,050,000	30	61	89	122
6 months: poor 70+	729,300	6	11	16	22
<b>Child support grant</b>					
Universal: age 0-5	12,675,000	190	380	558	761
Universal: age 0-10	24,150,000	362	725	1,063	1,449
Universal: age 0-15	34,275,000	514	1,028	1,542	2,057
Poor only: age 0-5	5,602,350	84	168	252	336
Poor only: age 0-10	10,674,300	160	320	480	641
Poor only: age 0-15	15,150,000	227	455	682	909
6 months: all 0-15	34,275,000	257	514	771	1,028
6 months: poor 0-5	5,602,350	42	84	126	168

SOURCE: Authors' estimates

- Notes: (1) These costs cover only payments to beneficiaries. Assuming an alpha-ratio of 0.8, meaning that 80% of total budget is paid directly to beneficiaries, 20% should be added to these figures to estimate total program costs.
- (2) Exchange rate: US\$1 = Birr 11 (December 2008).
- (3) Population numbers are based on ‘Table 5.1: Age Structure of the Ethiopian Population’ (World Bank 2007: 47).
- (4) Poverty headcount = 44.2% (GFDRE 2004).
- (5) Column (a) is based on an average of US 25c/day across several transfer programs in Africa (*pers. comm.*, Michael Samson); (b) is based on the initial PSNP payment rate of Birr 6/day; (c) is based on the 2008 PSNP payment rate of Birr 8/day; (d) is based on the “dollar-a-day” poverty line.
- (6) As on the PSNP, payments are made for 5 days per person each month.
- (7) ‘Highlands’ = Amhara, Oromiya, SNNP and Tigray regions; ‘Lowlands’ = Afar and Somali regions. Beneficiaries in the ‘lowlands’ are assumed to comprise 4.4% of the rural population, the same proportion as in the ‘highlands’.

Table 7. Age structure of the Ethiopian population

Age category (years)	Share in total population (%)	Cumulative share (%)	Number of people	Cumulative number
<b>Children</b>				
0 to 1	4.3%	4.3%	3,227,881	3,227,881
2 to 4	12.6%	16.9%	9,458,442	12,686,323
5 to 9	15.3%	32.2%	11,485,251	24,171,574
10 to 14	13.5%	45.7%	10,134,045	34,305,619
<b>Adults</b>				
15 to 19	11.3%	57.0%	8,482,571	42,788,190
20 to 59	37.6%	94.6%	28,225,192	71,013,382
<b>Older persons</b>				
60 to 64	1.8%	96.4%	1,351,206	72,364,588
65 to 69	1.4%	97.8%	1,050,938	73,415,526
70 to 74	1.0%	98.8%	750,670	74,166,196
75 to 79	0.6%	99.4%	450,402	74,616,598
80+	0.6%	100.0%	450,402	75,067,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75,067,000</b>	<b>75,067,000</b>

SOURCE: Adapted from World Bank (2007: 47)

Note: Based on DHS 2000, total population updated to 75 million

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*Table 8. Social security provision in Ethiopia*

<b>Type</b>	<b>Regulatory framework</b>	<b>Coverage</b>	<b>Source of Funds</b>	<b>Qualifying condition</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
<b>Old Age, Disability, and Survivors</b>	First and current law: 1963 (public employees), with 1974, 1975, 1996, 1999, 2003, 2004, and 2006 amendments. <i>Proclamation No. 714/2011 and 715/2011</i>	Public sector employees, including military and police personnel and employees of government-owned enterprises. Formal private sector employees	Civilian insured person: 7 % of basic salary; Employer (Government): 11 % Military/police insured person: 7% of payroll. Employer (government) 25% Private sector employees' contribution the same as for the civil servants	Old-age pension: Age 60 with at least 10 years of service and contributions. Early pension: Age 55 with at least 25 years of contributions (civilian personnel); aged 45 to 55 (depending on rank) with at least 10 years of contributions (military personnel). Eligible survivors are the widow(er), children younger than age 18, and dependent parents.	The pension is equal to 30% of the insured's average monthly basic salary in the last 3 years before retirement, plus 1.125% (civilian) or 1.5% (military) of the insured's average monthly basic salary for each year of service exceeding 10 years. The minimum monthly pension is 100 birr. The maximum monthly pension is equal to 70% of the insured's average monthly basic salary. Survivor pension: 50% of the deceased's monthly pension is paid to the widow(er). The pension ceases on remarriage. Orphan's pension: Each eligible orphan receives 20% of the deceased's pension; 30% for full orphans. Dependent parent's pension: Each eligible parent receives 15% of the deceased's pension; 20% in the absence of other eligible survivors.

<b>Sickness and Maternity</b>	No statutory benefits are provided. However, the public service amendment proclamation (2002) and the labour proclamation (2003) require employers to provide paid sick leave and paid maternity leave.	Same as above	No requirement	Medical certificate for sickness and childbirth	The public service amendment proclamation (2002) and the labour proclamation (2003) require employers to provide (i) paid sick leave for up to 3 months: 100% of earnings is paid for the first month; thereafter, 50% of earnings. (ii) paid maternity leave for up to 45 days after childbirth; thereafter, paid sick leave may be paid in the event of complications arising from childbirth.
<b>Work Injury</b>	First and current law: 1963 (public employees), with 2003 amendment. The labour proclamation (2003) allows for the provision of private insurance for public-sector employees.	Same as above	See source of funds under Old Age, Disability, and Survivors, above.	There is no minimum qualifying period	Temporary disability: A lump sum is paid equal to 45% of the insured's monthly basic salary multiplied by 5 years times the assessed degree of disability. Permanent disability pension: The pension varies from 45% to 70% of the insured's monthly basic salary, according to the assessed degree of disability. Survivors benefit same as for survivors of old age.

SOURCE: Adapted and updated from SSA & ILO 2005





# **Food Security and Safety Nets: Assessment and Challenges**

*Dessalegn Rahmato*

Over the last four decades, considerable resources have been invested by government and international donor organizations to tackle the problems of food shortages and hunger in Ethiopia, but while some success has been achieved, food security for a sizeable population of rural (and increasingly urban) households still remains an elusive goal. By far the largest investment has come from the donor community, which since the 1970s has provided resources with an estimated value of over six billion US dollars in the form of famine relief, emergency assistance, rehabilitation and safety net programs. Despite this large resource inflow, however, the overall outcome leaves a lot to be desired. Indeed, the evidence, discussed further down in this work, shows that as international investment on promoting food security has grown, the size of the population vulnerable to hunger and food shortages has increased considerably, making the country ever more dependent on external support. On the other hand, Ethiopia's economy, which was badly damaged during the period of the military government and stagnant for well over a decade, has registered relatively rapid growth in the years since the late 1990s, with agriculture growing by double digit figures, according to government sources, nevertheless, and paradoxical as it may seem, it was in these years of growth that some of the worst food crises occurred in the country affecting up to 15 to 20 percent of the rural population – a sobering reminder that agricultural growth does not always translate into improved access to food by the farming population.

My purpose in this work is two-fold: it is, first, to present a brief picture of the government's food security intervention, with particular emphasis on the productive safety net program (PSNP). The PSNP is the most significant public support program in the country at the moment, but while it has had a positive impact on many beneficiaries, the gains made so far have not been adequate enough to ensure robust food security for most households. Moreover, there are a number of questions that may be raised with regard to the program's long term sustainability. Secondly, I shall focus on what I consider to be three critical challenges to food security which have not been given sufficient attention by policy makers and have not been critically examined in the debate on the subject in this country. These are what I call the agrarian challenge, the demographic

challenge, and the challenge of globalization, each of which is discussed in some detail further down. My view is that it will be difficult to achieve the goal of overcoming food insecurity in Ethiopia without addressing these challenges in a sound and effective manner.

### **Food Insecurity: A Persistent Problem**

Food insecurity and famine are deeply rooted in rural Ethiopia: they have brought severe hardships to rural people for countless generations, shaped livelihood strategies and social relationships, conditioned attitudes to the land and the environment, and regulated the rhythm of production and consumption. The country has achieved the dubious distinction of being the epicenter of humanitarian disaster since at least the 1970s: food emergencies have occurred here with greater frequency than in any other country in the world in recent history. The high profile disasters and emergencies, which have attracted worldwide attention, should not, however, obscure the grim day-to-day reality of persistent hunger and malnutrition which is part of the lives of millions of peasants and pastoralists and which in the end provide the fuel for the large-scale catastrophes.

The nutritional failures which have plagued this country may be grouped into three main categories: the first and extreme kind has been mass starvations where there has been complete consumption and asset collapse leading to high rates of human (and livestock) mortality; these are the series of famines that have occurred in the country, some of which became media events across the world. The second kind may be referred to as food emergencies which are characterized by heightened food scarcity in which the threat of high mortality has been averted by timely relief assistance. Here households may not have lost all their assets and recovery from the disaster will be relatively shorter than in the case of victims of famine. The third is day-to-day hunger where individuals are unable to secure adequate food on a regular basis and suffer the consequences, namely malnutrition, poor health and reduced ability to engage in work and physical effort. It is clear from the evidence available (see below) that while the threat of famine may have receded in recent years the country has made only limited progress in meeting the challenges of nutritional failures and food insecurity.

This is not the place to discuss the history of mass starvations in this country, but the evidence shows that there have been more frequent disasters affecting a greater number of people since the second half of the twentieth century. Since the 1960s, the country has suffered four major famines that have caused high rates of mortality, and two near-famines where the death rate was on a smaller scale. The famines in question are those of 1965/66, 1973/74, 1984/85

and 1999/2000. The near-famines occurred in 1993/94 and 2002/2003. The worst famine in living memory, that of 1984/85, affected several million people across a wide geographical area, and is said to have claimed over half a million lives (Dessalegn 1994). Does the fact that there has not been a major famine on the scale of those in the '70s and '80s in the last ten years indicate that mass starvations may have finally become a thing of the past? It is too early to make a definite prediction.

On the other hand, the annual food shortages and the emergency appeals for assistance by the government show no sign of coming to an end. Since its establishment in the closing years of the imperial regime, the government's disaster response agency<sup>1</sup> has issued annual appeals for support from the donor community to feed a hungry population the size of which varies from year to year. These appeals are still going on despite the implementation of the safety net program, and despite growth in the economy and in agricultural production. The evidence indicates that access to food continues to be a major challenge for the rural population and, indeed, vulnerability to environmental and other shocks shows an increasing trend. Table 1 below, compiled from the government's humanitarian appeal documents issued over the years, shows that the magnitude of people requiring emergency assistance is increasing steadily both in absolute numbers as well as a percentage of the rural population. The vulnerable population in the third column in the Table refers to people that are supported by either emergency food aid (for years 2000 – 2004), or both emergency aid and the PSNP (2005 – 2010).

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<sup>1</sup> It was called RRC during the imperial regime and the Derg. It was changed to DPPC, then DPPA by the present government. In 2008 DPPA was replaced by a new body under the Ministry of Agriculture called the DMFSS (later changed to DRMFSS). The meaning of acronyms is given at the end of this chapter.

## Food Security and Safety Nets: Assessment and Challenges

*Table 1 Rural Vulnerability 2000 - 2010*

Year	Rural Pop	Vulnerable Pop	Percent
2000	51.5	7.7	14.9
2001	52.9	6.2	11.7
2002	54.3	5.2	9.6
2003	55.7	11.4	20.5
2004	57.2	7.2	12.6
2005	58.7	7.4*	12.6
2006	60.3	9.8*	16.3
2007	61.9	9.2*	14.9
2008	63.5	14.7*	23.1
2009	65.1	14.5*	22.3
2010	66.8	13.0*	19.5

SOURCE: DPPC/A for vulnerable population. The 2007 census says average annual population growth was 2.6% between 1994 and 2007.

NOTE: \*Since the launch of the PSNP in 2005, DPPC/A's annual appeal for emergency support does not include populations covered by the program.. The figures marked with asterisks here include both emergency and PSNP beneficiaries. Populations covered by PSNP: 2005 =5.2 million; 2006-2007 =7.2 m; 2008 - 2009 =8.3m (PASDEP); 2010= 7.8m (GTP)

### Food Security Program

The food security strategy now in place was formulated in 2003 in a major document prepared by the National Coalition for Food Security in Ethiopia (NCFSE) and subsequently incorporated in the government's poverty reduction program, PASDEP. The following are the main components of that strategy: a) improve food availability through increased domestic production; b) provide access to food for insecure households; c) build capacity for emergency response; d) provide improved preventive and curative health services; and e) carry out a program of voluntary resettlement for 400,000 households from stressed and food deficit areas (see NCFSE 2003, MOFED 2006). Those said to be *chronically* food insecure were to benefit by the productive safety net program (PSNP), a new program designed and supported by the donor community; others, said to be transitory food insecure, were to improve their livelihood through increased agricultural production and health services. The

NCFSE document states that the goal of the food security strategy was to attain “food security of the chronically food insecure five million population and significantly improve and sustain overall food security of ten million additional food insecure people within five years” (2003:15). Under this broad strategy, the government identified what it calls three main pillars or programs on which the achievement of food security was to be constructed, namely the PSNP, Other Food Security Programs, and Resettlement (GTP 2010). In recent years other initiatives have been added to improve effectiveness and ensure program success, and these include a program of asset building for vulnerable households called Household Asset Building Program (HABP), which was designed to run in coordination with the PSNP, and a Complementary Community Investment facility (CCI), which is meant to identify and fund small-scale community infrastructure to build up essential community assets. In terms of financing, the donor community is responsible for supporting the PSNP, and provides funds to cover some of the cost of HABP, with government responsible for financing part of HABP, the CCI, and other complementary interventions.

A full assessment of the food security program is difficult at the moment because we lack sufficient and reliable information regarding some of the components of the program, in particular rural resettlement. The resettlement program, which was launched in 2003, is viewed by the government as a lasting solution to chronic hunger and food insecurity, on the one hand, and a way to meet the problem of land scarcity on the other. In the course of three years, the program was expected to settle 440,000 households or about 2.2 million people at an estimated cost of 217 million US dollars or 1.9 billion *Birr*. The program was meant to provide people in the vulnerable areas access to improved land in areas within their own *Killil* where, it was claimed, there is “considerable amounts of land currently under-utilized” and “suitable for farm activities”(NCFSE). Up until the end 2008, the government was able to relocate nearly 200,000 households, which is about half of the planned settler population, with more than 95 percent of them said to have achieved food self-sufficiency (GTP). The program has not been actively pursued since then and the reasons for this may have to do with the costliness of the program, the shortage of land suitable for low-cost settlement, and the competing demands of the large-scale investment program which the government is now actively pursuing. There has not been an independent assessment of the current state of the program so far and the government is not keen to open the program to outside scrutiny. Initial visits by researchers to the newly established settler sites and interviews with settlement officials has shown that the program was faced with a host of problems that are typical of all poorly planned and hastily executed settlement schemes, but an evaluation of the program’s impact on settlers, receiving communities and the degree of success that has been achieved to date has not

## Food Security and Safety Nets: Assessment and Challenges

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been undertaken<sup>2</sup>. It may be worth noting that resettlement in this country, both now and in the past, has consisted merely of a shift of population from one rural setting to another: it has not involved new technology, new approaches to environment management on the part of settlers, nor new livelihood endeavors.

Before turning to an examination of the PSNP, a word or two about the term *chronic* and *transitory* food insecurity frequently used in all discourses having to do both with the PSNP and the food security program in general. The distinction between the two is the following: the chronically food insecure are said to be vulnerable households which, under normal circumstances, are unable to meet their basic needs and hence require public assistance on a regular basis, while the transitory food insecure are households which are, normally, able to support themselves but become vulnerable and seek assistance due to extraneous factors such as environmental shocks and other adverse circumstances beyond their control. The basis for such a distinction have not been made clear and to the best of my knowledge there has not been a rigorous and convincing attempt to determine which family falls into one category or the other, independent of program interventions. The targeting initiative employed for purposes of program support is based on community “wealth ranking” which uses rough and ready criteria and is influenced by the limitations of program costs and other constraints. In the conditions of widespread and abject poverty such as we have in rural Ethiopia, the line dividing the so-called chronic from the transitory food insecure is frequently very fine indeed and thus it is not easy to separate one from the other. Moreover, the difference between one and the other is not often fixed but time-bound and of short duration: a household which may appear to be in the transitory category today may fall deeper into vulnerability tomorrow due to loss of assets or labor, family life-cycle events and demographic change, marital discord and personal misfortune, or other unforeseen circumstances. In communities where resources available to households are diminishing due to environmental degradation and climate change, and where non-farm employment is scarce, which is typical of most rural areas in the country, population growth is a cause of increased poverty. In most instances, both the chronic and transitory food insecure are faced with food poverty and the degree of vulnerability between the two is not wide enough to merit a rigid distinction that is so often the basis of program intervention.

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<sup>2</sup> But see the chapter on migration and resettlement by Pankhurst et al in this volume. Laura Hammond (2008), who interviewed settlers and officials in sending and receiving communities in 2003 and 2004 argues that the program was an attempt to make the poorest of the poor invisible and more vulnerable. For Ethiopia’s resettlement experience under the Imperial and Derg regimes see Dessalegn 2003.

## The Productive Safety Net Program

The PSNP, the most important social protection program in the rural areas, is examined at length by many contributors in this volume, and there is thus no need for me to go over the same ground here. What I hope to do instead is highlight what I consider to be the challenges inherent in the program, and to pose the question whether, in the long term, the program will be sustainable and will achieve its intended objectives<sup>3</sup>. The PSNP, which was planned in 2003 and launched in 2005, is not an entirely new initiative for the country: public works-based programs meant to transfer resources to vulnerable population groups and to build up community assets in the rural areas had been tried extensively in the 1970s (the Food-for-Work program) and the 1980s (the Employment Generation Schemes (EGS)), but despite the immense resource outlay by donors and the government, neither one nor the other was in the end able to achieve its intended goals. The PSNP was meant to be a replacement and improvement of these earlier programs but was implemented without sufficient assessment of past experience, and a clear grasp of lessons learnt, and was launched on a national scale without any “field testing” or piloting effort. The program is financed by a consortium of nine development partners and some of the largest donors include USAID, DFID, the World Bank, Irish Aid and WFP.

The main objective of the PSNP was to enable the government to move away from an annual appeal system to a more *predictable*, productive and development-oriented safety net program. The core element of the program, and that which makes it different from earlier initiatives, was a multi-annual commitment on the part of donors to provide resources to *chronically* food insecure rural families through conditional or unconditional transfer schemes. Chronic food insecure households were defined as those which experience a consumption shortfall for three months or more during the year. Those in the conditional transfer category are beneficiaries who are expected to engage in public works projects planned and managed by local authorities for which they are remunerated in cash or in kind, while unconditional transfer (or direct support) refers to those who are unable to work due to old age, poor health and similar other reasons, or to women who are pregnant or nursing infants. The aim in both instances is to enable families to cope with shocks, and to help their communities build up basic development assets. Public works employment includes building or maintaining access roads and bridges, working on environmental rehabilitation projects, repairing schools and health posts, and managing water and sanitation schemes. The main work period was planned to

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<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise noted the discussion that follows is based on ESSWA 2011, MOFED 2006, MOARD 2010, World Bank 2009, 2011b, c, and 2012; observations during my field work for another study in South Wollo and Wollaita in 2006 and 2007.

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fall before or during the “hungry season”. The program does not intentionally target special groups in need, such as, for example, children, women, the unemployed or the landless, but only vulnerable households. The program is managed at the grass-roots level by *kebele* authorities, who, through the committees they set up, are responsible for selecting beneficiaries, planning projects, managing resource transfers, and monitoring and oversight. Targeted beneficiaries were to “graduate” after five years participation in the program when they are expected to be food secure (i.e. able to feed themselves year round) and be sufficiently resilient to cope with moderate shocks. As initially envisioned, the program was planned to run for five years in two phases: phase one was called the transitional phase (2005-2006), and phase two, the consolidation phase (2007-2009). However, it was realized by the government and its development partners that enabling households to be food secure takes a much longer period and is more complex than was assumed initially, hence, donors agreed to extend the program for another five years through a third phase funding mechanism (called the integration phase) to run from 2010 to 2015. It is quite likely that there will be a further extension, perhaps in a new and revised form going beyond 2015, although the government’s new plan document, the GTP, suggests that the program will not be needed after 2015 as a great majority of beneficiaries will have become food secure by then, with only a small number, 1.3 million people, needing to be supported.

The donor-financed PSNP is complemented by other food security interventions (often referred to as other food security programs (OFSP), but since 2009, these interventions have been supplanted by a largely but not solely government-financed scheme called HABP, noted earlier. There is some donor input in the financing of HABP but the government shoulders a considerable portion of the program cost. HABP is aimed at enabling safety net beneficiaries to invest in and build up economic assets both as a security measure as well as a productive investment. What was called OFSP, earlier, included rural extension interventions, access to water services, and credit schemes, and other productivity enhancement initiatives, with priority given to PSNP beneficiaries. Credit provided to beneficiaries was meant to be invested not just in asset building but also in supplementary income generation ventures such as animal fattening, apiculture, craft products, petty trade, etc. The aim was to enable households to build up their assets, improve their income and enhance their resilience to shocks.

The PSNP has been and remains the centerpiece of the food security program: it provides the major resource for tackling food shortages and covers the largest number of vulnerable groups. The evidence does indicate that the PSNP has made a positive impact: it has contributed to improvements in



beneficiaries' access to food, enabled many communities to acquire or improve some basic services and to build up some essential public assets. Access to food has saved lives, income from public works has helped some households to invest in live assets, and, in a number of cases, children in beneficiary households have been able to attend or stay in school<sup>4</sup>. This is no mean achievement considering the plight of rural households before the safety net program was launched. However, it is my argument that the impact of the program is not commensurate with the costs incurred so far, that the program has not fully met some of its own stated objectives, in particular in terms of poverty reduction and livelihood diversification and transformation, and that there is a weak integration between the program and other food security and rural development initiatives in place. Some of the available evidence shows in fact that the achievement of the PSNP would have been lower if it had not been for the collateral impact of programs such as HABP and other public sector interventions. According to the findings of a study commissioned by the federal Ministry of Agriculture, the PSNP improved the food security of beneficiary households by 0.40 month (or 12 days), but if combined with HABP the improvement increased to 0.81 month (that is 24.3 days) (MOARD 2010). Another study published by IFPRI comes to similar conclusions: it notes that the PSNP alone showed mixed results but its impact became greater when combined with agricultural service programs such as OFSP (Gilligan et al 2008). In short, the program faces a number of significant challenges which taken together raise questions regarding its long-term viability. Some of the main challenges that, in my opinion, invite serious debate are the following.

### ***Limitations of Coverage***

The *woredas* targeted by the PSNP constitute less than half the total *woredas* in the country and are located in the four large and predominantly crop farming *Killils*, namely Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray. Until recently, the program was designed for farming households and excluded pastoralist and semi-pastoralist populations, but this has changed and a few areas in pastoralist *Killils* have now been included in the program. Within the *woredas* concerned vulnerable households were selected by various methods and put on the *kebele* register<sup>5</sup>. The number of beneficiaries has grown from 5 million at the launch of the program to over eight million subsequently, but despite this increase the program cannot be said to be inclusive but benefits only part of the needy, i.e

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<sup>4</sup> Donor-funded evaluations of PSNP provide a wide list of achievements; see World Bank 2009, 2011, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> There various figures on the number of *woredas* targeted: 287 according to MOFED, 300 according to MOARD, 262 to 300 (World Bank 2009, 2011b), and others ranging from 290 to 320 (ESSWA, DRMFSS).

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food-poor, population in the rural areas<sup>6</sup>. According to the PASDEP document, the initial population of chronically food insecure covered by the program was set at 5.2 million in 2005, but this figure was arrived at by taking the average of the number of relief beneficiaries during the previous ten years. The figure was scaled up in 2006 to 7.2 m, further scaled up to 8.3 million later, but despite this, not all poor households eligible for support have benefited. Data on poverty provided by the government indicates that over 20 million rural people are now considered to be living in food-poverty and consequently subject to food shortages. The rural food poverty index is said to have decreased from 39 percent in 2004/05 to 29 percent in 2009/2010 (see PASDEP and GTP 2010), however, the population subject to vulnerability remains much higher than that served by the PSNP. The program does not take into account aggravating factors such as climate change or demographic dynamics, which, as is evident in other countries in Africa as well as here, have been responsible for exacerbating poverty and food insecurity and eroding the modest gains made by economic growth. In the long run there is a danger that the PSNP will create a rift in rural communities and that those excluded from the program will nurse a grudge against those they consider unjustly favored by the state.

### *Heavy Resource Burden*

As noted above, the PSNP is supported by a group of bilateral and multilateral donor organizations, and at the time of the launch in 2005, the cost of the program was estimated by the PASDEP to be 250 million USD per year. This figure is now an underestimate because since the initial launch, the program has been scaled up, and food and other commodity prices have increased sharply both in the world and local markets. In 2009, the World Bank suggested that the PSNP has cost donors approximately 1.7 billion USD in the period between 2005 and 2009<sup>7</sup>. I believe a conservative estimate of the contribution of development partners to the PSNP and complementary interventions from 2005 to 2011 would be in the range of 2.5 to 3.0 billion USD. This cost does not include funds and resources provided by donors for emergency assistance each year (see below).

### *Relief versus Productive Safety Net*

One of the chief aims of the PSNP was to provide vulnerable households with predictable resource transfers to enable them to support themselves and protect their means of livelihood (World Bank 2009). The World Bank, one of the main

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<sup>6</sup> The program is almost exclusively rural-based and does not address the needs of vulnerable people in the urban areas.

<sup>7</sup> See World Bank 2009; also World Bank 2011b, p. 29., and 2012.

donors financing the PSNP states that its assistance to the PSNP was “designed to support the efforts of the Ethiopian Government to transition away from an ad hoc emergency appeal system to a more predictable safety net to tackle chronic and seasonal hunger.” It notes that the PSNP would enable the government to “*shift from a relief-oriented to a productive and development-oriented safety net*” (World Bank 2011b: 4; emphasis in original). The annual appeal system was considered unreliable, because of the frequency of untimely and irregular food deliveries, and unsustainable because of instability in the global food marketing regime and uncertainties regarding donor pledges following the appeals. These appeals had become fixed annual “events” during the previous Derg regime and were continued with little or no change under the present government. On each occasion, the government blamed drought and unfavorable weather conditions for the food shortages and requested assistance from the donor community to avert a humanitarian crisis. The primary aim was to save lives but on occasions resources to help victims rebuild their livelihoods were included in the appeal package. The annual appeals were increasingly becoming a cause of unease to the donor community and an embarrassment to the government. It was envisaged that a transition to a longer term safety net program with *predictable* and *timely* transfer of resources to the needy would promote not just food security but also livelihood improvements and community development.

Emergency appeals for assistance to households made vulnerable by environmental and other shocks continue side by side with the PSNP and the need for relief assistance has become an ever growing demand on the part of the government. The mobilization of humanitarian assistance and the management of its distribution remains a major responsibility of the newly set-up DMRFSS just as it was for the DPPA it replaced. Indeed, the post-PSNP period has seen a steady rise in the number of people falling victim to emergency shocks and needing humanitarian assistance as is shown in Table 1 above, but what is also noteworthy is that the cost of such assistance has often been as high or higher than the cost of the PSNP. Given below are figures showing the value of the food and other supplies requested by the government to meet the needs of people affected by emergency crises (PSNP not included) in the period 2005 to 2011<sup>8</sup>:

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<sup>8</sup> Source: DPPA and DRMFSS documents for the years 2005 – 2011. The dollar value is that given in the documents.

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- 2005: 2.2 million needy population. Fund requested 263 m USD.
- 2006: 2.6 million. Fund requested 166 m USD + 27 m for flood victims
- 2007: 1.3 million. Fund required: 179 m USD
- 2008: 6.4 million. Fund required: 440 m USD
- 2009: 6.2 million. Requested 454 m USD
- 2010: 5.2 million: Requested 457 m USD
- 2011: 2.8 million (Feb) and 181 m USD for the whole year requested; additional sum of 75 m requested for April and May; emergency pop scaled up to 4.6 m in July, and 398 m USD requested to cover July to December.

For the years shown above, the government's emergency request totaled 2.7 billion USD, and while it is true that donors did not always provide all the resources requested, the evidence shows that the government did manage to secure between 75 to 85 percent of what it had asked for on each particular occasion. Clearly, the scale of the resources channeled to the country in emergency support is quite considerable and there is no firm evidence that the government's dependence on such support and the relief appeal system will come to an end any time soon. Some may argue that the emergency appeal is to support the transitory food insecure and not the chronic food insecure. As I have noted above the distinctions made between the two is spurious and serves no useful purpose if the aim is to achieve robust food security for all.

### *Adequacy of Resource Transfers*

Resource transfers, both conditional and unconditional are provided in the form of cash transfers though in some cases commodity transfers are employed as well. Right from the beginning opinion was divided as to whether cash transfers are better than transfers in kind both among PSNP beneficiaries and *kebele* officials responsible for project administration. During field work for another project in 2006, this author had informal talks with peasants and public officials in South Wollo and Wollaita on the subject of resource transfer for labor on public works projects. Some beneficiaries preferred cash payments while others were in favor of payment in kind in both areas. *Kebele* officials on the other hand were in favor of cash payments on the grounds that it was easy to administer, did not require storage facilities, and there was no risk of damage as was the case with food assets. There is reason to believe that from 2008 on, due to price instability, and, in particular, dramatically rising food inflation (see below), a majority of beneficiaries would prefer payment in kind above anything

else. At present recipients of cash wages have seen their income severely reduced in value. Daily wage rates have increased from 6 to 8 to 10 *birr* in the period up to 2011, despite this however, wages continue to be low (lower than one USD per day which used to demarcate the poverty line some time ago), and have not kept up with inflation. Consequently, the income received by beneficiaries is inadequate to cover the cost of daily consumption needs, much less provide the means to build up assets to enable them to be resilient in the event of environmental and other shocks, which was one of the objectives of the PSNP. It is thus evident that the program's main impact appears to be to save lives and to prevent households from falling deeper into destitution. This may explain why there have so far been only a small number of households which have "graduated" from the program, as the evidence discussed elsewhere in this volume shows. There are plans to employ a variable wage rate, increasing the daily payment to 14 or 16 *birr*, but this will not be sufficient to shield households from the effects of inflation. In these circumstances, the best option would be to switch to payment in kind<sup>9</sup>.

### ***Limitations of Program Management***

The program has been criticized for a number of shortcomings which have had the effect of impeding its effectiveness and which have raised concerns among beneficiaries. The issue of beneficiary targeting and whether it has been conducted fairly or otherwise is a contentious one. Human Rights Watch (2010) has argued that the government has used the PSNP as a political weapon: inclusion or exclusion in the program has been a means of rewarding its supporters and punishing those it deems are opposed to it. Others have argued that while there are shortcomings in some localities and discontent among some who believe they should have been included but are not, targeting has by and large been fair and has met its intended objectives<sup>10</sup>. I have argued elsewhere that the PSNP has given local public officials who are responsible for program management as a whole greater powers of control over peasants and this has had the effect of discouraging dissent, stifling the voicing of discontent, and generally "dis-empowering" peasant households (Dessalegn 2010). Other shortcomings identified are that public officials do not have sufficient capacity for managing the program, that the quality of the public works undertaken are not up to standard (with often maintenance a recurrent problem), and that there is a lack of adequate linkages with other food security and development

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<sup>9</sup> The new poverty line is one and half USD per day (one USD is 18+ *birr*). Donors justify the low rate on the grounds that a high rate would distort the labor market.

<sup>10</sup> Coll-Black et al 2011, Gilligan et al 2008, ESSWA 2011, World Bank 2011b.

interventions in the rural areas (see Amdissa 2007, CANGO 2007, ESSWA 2011).

Moreover, many studies have shown that there have been frequent delays in the disbursement of payments, which was a regular problem during the earlier asset transfer programs such as FFW and EGS, and this has had a damaging impact on beneficiaries and threatens to undermine the effectiveness of the program. As inflation in the country continues to spiral, such delays have had the effect of creating severe hardships for recipients, forcing some households to sell their live assets and others to take out loans in order to meet their consumption needs (ESSWA 2011, World Bank 2009, 2001). More importantly, these delays, some of which extend from two to three months (Hoddinott et al, this volume), subvert one of the key objectives of the program, namely the need to provide chronically food insecure households *predictable and timely* transfer of resources essential to meet their needs. Additionally, Tassew et al (2011) have argued that the program has had a damaging impact on children and their schooling since children in beneficiary households have been forced to engage in labor either in the PSNP program or to cover family income. When beneficiary parents obtain work outside the PSNP or are temporarily unable to engage in public works for some reason or other, they tend to send their children to cover for them instead. Finally, it may be relevant to ask the question: has the program created dependency on the part of beneficiaries? It is too early to give a definitive answer, nevertheless, the fact that there has so far been, contrary to the expectations of program planners and decision-makers, only a small number of “graduates” suggests that dependency is a concern and will become a serious problem in the years ahead.

### Food Security Challenges

Despite the considerable investment by the government and the donor community over a period of more than four decades, food security continues to elude a great number of rural households, with periodic shocks and the threat of starvation facing millions of people. All the evidence suggests that the country will not be able to achieve food security nor will the relief intervention be brought to an end any time soon. Indeed, food insecurity, which until recently was a hardship borne largely by people living in the countryside, has now crossed into the urban areas and is becoming a growing problem among the poor and the disadvantaged in the towns and cities of the country. This expansion in the “geography of hunger” is not getting the attention it deserves from public authorities and their development partners. The challenges facing the pursuit of food security in Ethiopia are many and complex, and some of the issues concerned have been discussed in the literature on the subject, including in the

document produced in 2003 by the government-sponsored NCFSE. There is thus no need to go over the same ground, instead I shall focus on the following three challenges because I think they are significant, and, more importantly, because they have not been seriously examined in the debate so far.

### ***The Agrarian Challenge***

Smallholder agriculture is burdened by a host of institutional, structural and technical limitations, and while the government's recent rural development programs have had some success, especially in the health and education sectors, the agrarian regime in place remains a serious impediment to peasant production and an obstacle to efforts at achieving food security. The institutional limitations are a product of the land tenure legislations issued both by the Federal government and the *Killils* administrations of which the main ones for our purposes are the rigidities of the tenure regime, the residency requirements for rights to land, and restrictions on land transactions<sup>11</sup>. The land system is based on state or public ownership, and private property in land is not allowed by law. Land users have use rights over the plots they hold, and these plots cannot be sold or mortgaged. The right to land is dependent on continued residence in one *kebele*, absence from which for any period of time may jeopardize these rights. Some *Killils* have set limits for the maximum size of holdings (not more than 2 hectares, for example) as well as the minimum (half a hectare). The latest Amhara land law, for instance, lists the following four reasons for loss of rights to land: if the holder derives his/her main income from non-agricultural employment; if he/she is absent from the *kebele* for five consecutive years without justification; if he/she leaves the land unused for three years (one year if it is irrigated land); if he/she does not take "proper" care of the land. Land transfers in the form of renting and sharecropping arrangements are allowed but there are conditions imposed. Among these are: holders can only rent out a portion of their land (in some *Killils* it should not be more than half their plots); short-term rents should not exceed two years, longer ones not more than 25 years and these require the approval of local officials. The land "market" is not, in other words, open and free. Long term transfers are not quite common among land users because of the fear of losing the land. Land transfers through inheritance are similarly conditional: siblings and others have a right to inherit if they are willing to engage in agriculture, if they do not have other means of livelihood, and if they do not live in urban areas. Land registration, the first phase of which has been completed in most rural areas, has been well received by the farming community, however, the system in place at present is inadequate, not regularly updateable, and has failed to meet many of its intended

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<sup>11</sup> What follows is based on Dessalegn 2009.

objectives. In brief, the land regime now in place is inflexible, and is a barrier to enterprising endeavor, inhibiting peasant initiative and increased effort. The system does not provide robust tenure security to land users, and gives local officials undue discretionary power, allowing for frequent interventions by the state.

For a majority of rural cultivators the scarcity of land and the fact that family holdings are not just small but getting smaller and increasingly fragmented poses a real and pressing threat to their livelihoods. Many cultivators are in fact micro-farmers, operating tiny plots, often less than half a hectare in size, which even under the best of circumstances only yields harvests which are barely enough to meet the consumption needs of families for a few months in the year –not more than four to six in many cases. Such is the severity of land scarcity that lands that had been used for generations as pasture, or designated as community woodland, or land too fragile to sustain farming activity or unsuitable for farming altogether are being brought under cultivation especially in the most densely populated area, giving rise to soil erosion and other ecosystem hazards. There is what I would call the saturation of space in the northern highlands and the *enset*-complex areas of the Rift Valley. In the northern highlands, average holdings now measure less than one hectare, while in the *enset*-based Rift Valley areas a household which cultivates half a hectare is considered well-off. Moreover, demographic pressure and land scarcity has forced farmers to abandon sound land management practices which they had inherited from their ancestors and which had stood them in good stead in the past. Land fallowing and crop rotation are two of the more important practices that are no longer widely employed. Peasants in the past had employed these measures to regenerate the soil and reduce soil erosion but these useful technologies have now all but disappeared, with the land cultivated without rest all year round.

As a consequence of land scarcity, landlessness is growing to be a significant problem, indeed, in some communities, particularly in the densely settled areas, it has reached crisis levels, causing serious concern among *kebele* and *woreda* officials. While accurate figures indicating the extent of the problem are not available, case study evidence suggests that in some communities the landless make 25 percent or more of the adult population. Moreover, there is a generational factor at work here: the tenure regime in place disadvantages young peasants who, by law, should have been provided farm plots by the *kebelles* concerned but are not because there is no arable land to distribute. Invariably therefore it is this group that makes up the landless in almost all communities and the main reason why local officials are particularly concerned. There are few employment opportunities in the rural areas, and many landless peasants are



reluctant to move to the urban areas, except those living close to large towns and cities, partly because of the fear of losing the opportunity to acquire land, and partly because they feel they are ill equipped to compete for jobs with the urban unemployed. On the other hand, in more recent years, landlessness and rural unemployment is forcing an increasing number of young peasants to seek to migrate, often through illegal means, to foreign countries in search of better opportunities. This often means falling into the hands of people smugglers, facing extreme hardships, and in the end losing one's property and sometimes one's life in the attempt to enter the Gulf countries, South Africa, and occasionally Europe.

It is against this background that the large-scale land investment program now keenly promoted by the government should be viewed. What in the international media is known as "land grabbing" is proceeding at a rapid pace in the country and in the last ten years a considerable area of land has been leased out by public authorities to foreign as well as domestic investors. Moreover, the government has earmarked a further three and half million hectares to give out to investors in the GTP plan period of 2010 to 2015<sup>12</sup>. While some of this investment has been made in Gambella and Beni Shangul *Killils*, which have low population densities relative to land, some of it is taking place in Oromia and SNNP, both of which have high population concentrations. Initially, the investments did not lead to large-scale peasant evictions from their farms, though it did involve the loss of resources valuable to smallholder agriculture such as pasture, woodland and water sources. However, recent land investments in Oromia in particular are taking place in circumstances leading to increasing peasant displacement. Moreover, the relocation program launched in Gambella and Beni Shangul in the wake of the investments there can be considered as a case of massive human displacement. If the land investment program continues at the rate planned by decision-makers, it will give rise to a re-concentration of land in the hands of a few - specifically foreign capital and domestic elites- and will pave the way for a return to the high forms of rural inequality and social class formation that was such a distinctive feature of the agrarian system during the imperial regime.

Despite considerable investment in smallholder agriculture made by the government and its development partners, the rural development program pursued so far has failed to bring about the modernization farm practices and to stimulate significant improvements in agricultural productivity. Official figures show that agriculture has been growing at an average rate of 8 percent from 2005

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<sup>12</sup> The discussion is based on Dessalegn 2011. The late PM Meles is reported to have told a press conference at the World Economic Forum held in Addis in May 2012 that the country would provide up to 4 million hectares of land to investors.

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to 2010, but a careful look at the figures shows that the trend has been downward (GTP 2010). Moreover, much of the growth in crop cultivation has been due to the expansion of the crop land area and favorable weather conditions, though the increasing use of chemical fertilizer by peasants has contributed to some extent. Growth in productivity, in particular labor productivity, has been small or insignificant. The expansion of the cropland area in the period since the 1980s, shown in the Table below, has come at the expense of forest and woodlands, rangeland, wetlands, and pasture land, and consequently the damage to the environment, wildlife and biodiversity has been considerable.

*Table 2 Expansion of Cropland Area (in hectares)*

Mid-1980s	6 Million
Mid-1990s	8.5 Million
Mid-2000s	10.7 Million
2010	11.8 Million

SOURCE: CSA and GTP 2010

The countryside continues to suffer the damages of extensive natural resource loss caused by environmental degradation that has been going on for many generations. Resource degradation has been driven in large part by population growth and increasing demands for environmental resources, on the one hand, and, to some extent, by the shift away from sound farm management practices by smallholders due to the tenure regime, poverty and land scarcity, on the other. All the evidence shows that since the 1970s, when records on the subject began to be available, the rate of deforestation and forest degradation has been accelerating at an unsustainable rate<sup>13</sup>. Deforestation has been driven by the increasing need for farm land as a growing rural population has been faced with little or no opportunities for making a living outside crop cultivation and livestock. A recent government document suggests that 1.0 hectare of new land has caused the clearing of 0.7 ha of forest land (FDRE 2011), thus, using this ratio, the extent of deforestation from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s may have exceeded one and half million hectares. Similarly, forest degradation has been aggravated by the increasing demand for fuel wood both by rural households and a growing urban population. In recent years, the effect of climate change has contributed to increased land degradation, aggravated existing natural hazards

<sup>13</sup> For the debate on environmental change in Ethiopia from the 1970s see Dessalegn 2001

and created new ones. According to government sources, climate related hazards that have exacerbated rural vulnerability include increased frequencies of drought, new flood hazards, heavy rains, strong winds and heat-waves. Of these, drought, and increasingly, floods are the greatest cause of loss of lives, of livestock and farm assets<sup>14</sup>. Flood disaster has emerged as a cause of vulnerability recently because large-scale flooding is now no longer a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence, and DRMFS now provides early warning information on flood hazards. There have been five major floods in the country since the mid-1990s, and numerous small ones. In 2006 and 2010, flooding of major rivers in the south and north of the country affected several million people, and, according to local press reports, over eight hundred lives were lost, tens of thousands of people were displaced and there was significant loss of livestock and other property. Evidence compiled by OCHA shows that there have been regular floods, both large and small, in the last ten years and flooding has increasingly come to pose a major hazard to a growing number of rural people.

### ***The Demographic Challenge***

The country's population has been growing at a very rapid rate for many decades, although the growth rate appears to be slowing down in the period of the last census. The first census, conducted in 1984, established the growth rate at 3.3 percent, however, in the period of the second census (1994) the rate had gone down to 2.9, with a further reduction to 2.6 percent in the third census of 2007<sup>15</sup>. All the census figures show that the country's demographic characteristics are typical of underdevelopment especially with regard to the dependency ratio and the proportion of the work force in the population. There is however some change in both respects (the dependency ratio declined from 49.8 in 1984 to 45 percent in 2007, and the work force increased from 50.2 to 51.9 percent), though it is not clear if the change may have been in part due to improvements in data gathering and age-specific information as is implied in the last census document. But, despite these changes, Ethiopia's population remains unacceptably high and will continue to exert immense pressure on the country's limited natural resources. By 2011 the country's population had reached over 82 million, and at the current rate of growth is expected to reach 92 million by 2015, and will have doubled to 148 million by 2035, making Ethiopia the second most populous country in Africa.

My main concern here has to do not just with absolute demographic numbers and growth rates but more importantly with the spatial distribution of

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<sup>14</sup> See NAPA document (FDRE 2007) for more details. What follows is based on OCHA data base.

<sup>15</sup> Census figures available in CSA's website: [www.csa.gov.et](http://www.csa.gov.et)

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the population (or the demographic imbalance) and what this will mean in terms of resource utilization and management, rural livelihoods, and specifically food security.

Government policy on population has given greater attention to the need to reduce fertility growth, arguing, understandably, that high fertility is responsible for high population growth. The key policy paper on population was issued in 1993 and still remains the basic framework guiding government thinking on the subject (TGE 1993). In it, the government's main objective was reducing the rate of population growth in the country which was to be achieved by reducing the fertility rate from the existing 7.7 to 4.0 children per adult woman, and increasing the use of family planning technologies (mainly contraceptives) from 4.0 to 44 percent, both by the year 2015. This was to be accompanied by reductions in infant, child and maternal mortality and morbidity. Both PASDEP and the GTP retain these objectives, and emphasize the importance of "harmonization of the rate of population growth" with "sound utilization of natural resources"; they recommend greater public information and education activities to promote the goal and desirability of small families and less children. The decreasing trend in the population growth rate noted earlier is clearly a consequence of fertility decline, at least for the years between 2000 and 2011, the period for which reliable survey data is available. According to the latest demographic and health survey, the total fertility rate (the number of children a woman will have in her life time) declined from 5.5 in 2000 to 5.4 in 2005 and 4.8 in 2011. The decline is attributed to the increasing use of modern family planning methods, particularly contraceptives. However, currently, the fertility rate is nearly twice as high in the rural areas (5.5) as compared to urban areas (2.6). On the other hand, the evidence in the same survey is that child and infant mortality rates have been declining in the same period (CSA 2011).

But neither the policy instrument nor the development plans prepared in the last decade and half address, in any meaningful way, the country's long-standing demographic imbalance, which all the evidence shows will persist for many decades in the future and which should be of as much concern as population numbers and growth rates. What this imbalance consists of is the heavy concentration of population in the rural areas and the low urban population. The 2007 census found that only 16 percent of the country's population lives in urban areas, making the country one of the least urbanized in Africa. In the 22 years between the first and last census, urbanization grew by a mere two percent. CSA projections of the growth of urbanization from the mid-1990s to 2030 show that approximately 23 percent of Ethiopians will be living in urban areas by the latter date, and it may be the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century before Ethiopia will achieve the level of urbanization reached by countries in Sub-Saharan Africa *today*

(CSA 1999)<sup>16</sup>. We must note that there is a demographic imbalance within the rural areas as well, between those with high densities of settlement (such as, for example, the Rift Valley areas) and those with low densities, but in terms of long term consequences this is not as significant as the urban/rural imbalance. The rural population is, in large measure, quite stationary, i.e. we have not witnessed so far a large influx of rural people into the urban areas, nor seen large internal migration. There have been programs of population relocation undertaken by the government for economic and food security reasons as noted above but these are not of concern to us here. Among the main reasons for rural immobility are the promise of land to all who wish to live by farming contained in the land legislations, access to food during times of hardship and environmental crisis both through the safety net and emergency support programs, and ethnic federalism. Thus the countryside will continue to carry a massive demographic burden for the foreseeable future. Some have argued that the country is about to or will soon reap the “demographic bonus”: high population accompanied by low fertility will lead to a decrease in the dependency ratio, increase the work force and a combination of the two will stimulate investments and accelerated economic growth (World Bank 2007b). The available evidence suggests that this is not happening now and that is unlikely for this to happen under conditions of high demographic imbalance.

This “ruralization” of the country, that is, the continued dominance of the rural over society, has an impact on all aspects of livelihoods, on the economy and polity. I have noted earlier that population pressure has unacceptable consequences on land assets, natural resources, and environmental security. There is what I would call the saturation of agrarian space, that is, shrinkage of per capita holdings, fragmentation of plots and destruction of natural ecosystems. PASDEP and other government documents recognize that high fertility reduces per capita income, puts pressure on education, health and other essential services, and has a negative impact on agricultural production. All these factors are at play against a background of an unchanging agricultural technology and limited if any productivity growth. Moreover, all the major measures of economic and social well-being, such as per capita income, access to education, health services, and clean water, mortality rates and children’s nutritional status -all show that the rural population is far worse off than the urban population (MOFED 2006). It is thus clear that high population growth and the demographic imbalance has exacerbated food insecurity and will continue to do so for a long time to come unless significant measures are taken to address it.

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<sup>16</sup> This projection was made on the basis of the growth rate of the second census. The average rate of urbanization in SSA at present is over 30 percent.

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## *The Challenge of Globalization*

The slow but gradual integration of the country into the world economic system, proceeding intermittently since the 1960s, or arguably even earlier, has been accelerated markedly during the present government, in particular since the beginning of the new millennium. With this greater integration have come new and critical problems, induced by a sequence of global crises, whose impact has been felt by all population groups in the country but especially the poor and vulnerable. These external shocks have had the effect of pushing up the price of foodstuffs beyond the reach of the poor, creating food supply shortages in rural and urban markets, and aggravating food insecurity in general.

In the last ten years or so, globalization has been accompanied by worldwide economic, financial and market crises of unprecedented magnitude, ushering in what may very well be a long era of insecurity and turbulence in the world market and among the dominant capitalist economies of the West and Japan. There are those who argue that the capitalist system in the developed world is going through a major crisis with little prospect of coming to an end any time soon. The effects of the global turbulence has hit developing countries particularly hard, creating risks, undermining their development efforts and bringing hardships to their populations. Critical opinion has long held that the global system is a system of unequals and biased against the interests of developing countries such as Ethiopia<sup>17</sup>.

Among the global shocks that Ethiopia has recently had to cope with, the most important for our purposes was the world food crisis of the second half of the 2000s. The crisis was aggravated by increasing agricultural commodity prices and shortage of supplies in the world market, which became especially acute in 2008, and in 2010-2011. In 2008 especially, the price of food grains, oil crops, livestock products, as well as fruit/vegetables and sugar rose sharply in the world market, in some cases by more than a hundred percent within less than two years. Figures provided by some of the major donor organizations show a dramatic surge in prices posing an unprecedented threat to the lives of hundreds of millions of people in the developing countries<sup>18</sup>. According to the World Bank, the price of food grains more than doubled in the period 2006 to 2008, with over 60 percent of this increase occurring in the first quarter of 2008. These global increases were transmitted to local markets in every country, including Ethiopia, causing serious hardships to the poor and vulnerable. In the countries

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<sup>17</sup> Globalization is the elimination of all barriers to free trade and the integration of national economies (Stiglitz 2002). The world market becomes a potent force. See Oxfam 2002, and Stiglitz 2002 for a contrasting view.

<sup>18</sup> What follows is based on FAO 2008, IFPRI 2008, OECD-FAO 2008, Oxfam 2008, and World Bank 2008, 2011a

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fighting against poverty, in particular, it is said to have seriously eroded many of the hard won gains of economic growth, caused escalating food inflation, and in some cases led to civil unrest and political disorder (World Bank 2008, IFPRI 2008). Countries reliant on imports of food and thus on the global food market were relatively worse off, while, conversely, those that were net exporters of food were initially able to benefit, though as the crisis continued governments in these countries decided to ban food exports in order to protect their populations. Globally, the outcome was to swell the world's hungry population, raising the number from 800 million in 2006 to over one billion by the last quarter of 2008 (FAO 2008). The underlying causes of the crisis were varied and complex, but the following are considered by many to be the most important ones and pertinent to our discussion.

- a. *The shift of investment and land to produce bio-fuels* in the developed countries. Both the U.S and the E.U have provided heavy subsidies to support bio-fuel production, justifying the measure on the grounds that it offers an opportunity to move away from dependence on Middle East oil and to ensure energy security on the one hand, and on the other to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The financial subsidies were strong incentives for agri-business as well as farmers to employ food crops to produce bio-energy and to shift land from growing food crops to energy production. According to IFPRI, some 30 percent of American maize production went into ethanol production instead of the world food and feed markets. Large areas of agricultural land, and an increasing quantity of water and agricultural inputs were diverted away from food and feed crops to produce transport fuels. As a result of all this, less food was produced in the countries in question in the run up to the crisis in 2008.
- b. *Extreme weather affecting major food producers.* A spate of severe weather conditions and drought in the major food producing countries in the world, such as Australia (which was in the grip of drought for well over three years), the U.S. and others, caused global stocks of commodities to fall sharply. The combination of this and competition from bio-fuels led to food supply shortages in the world market. Moreover, as a result of a string of devastating natural disasters in 2007 and 2008 (hurricanes, cyclones, earthquakes, and large-scale floods) which affected millions of people in Latin America, southeast Asia, China, Burma, Pakistan, and southern Africa, large quantities of food supplies were channeled to feed disaster-hit populations thus adding to global food shortages.
- c. *Oil price volatility.* The rise in oil prices began in earnest 2005, but it was in 2008 that it actually soared. In the space of a few months in the middle

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of the year crude oil was trading at over 140 USD per barrel from a low of 40 – 50 USD in 2005. Prices then collapsed in October, though they did not return to their level in 2005, before beginning a slow rise once more. High oil prices feeds into increased costs of agricultural inputs and transportation, thus contributing to higher food prices. The factors that create oil price volatility are many and varied, but one of the most important and enduring has been political instability in the Middle East and North Africa. Instability in the region and elsewhere in the world affecting other oil producing countries will continue for a long time to come.

### *High food inflation in Ethiopia.*

Figures from CSA show that price increases of essential foods have been going on since at least 2005, but it was in 2008 and later in 2011 that they accelerated quite dramatically. Among food items, prices of cereals, which are the basic diet of most of the population, soared much more dramatically than those of other commodities. The problem was compounded by the fact that food inflation was accompanied by shortages of basic commodities in urban as well as rural markets, and part of the reason for this was that grain merchants made more profit selling the foodstuffs in the neighboring countries than selling them to local consumers. We have already noted the deleterious effects of price inflation on poor households and in particular on the efficacy of the PSNP and there is no need to repeat the arguments here.

Inflation data from CSA for the past seven years is shown in the Table below.



Table 3. General and Food Inflation 2005 - 2011

Year	General Inflation	Food Inflation
2005	6.8	7.7
2006	12.3	14.0
2007	17.7	18.8
2008	25.3	34.9
2009	36.4	44.2
[Month of Feb 2009	46.1	61.1]
March 2011	25.0	25.5
June 2011	38.1	45.3
September 2011	40.1	51.3
October 2011	39.8	51.7

SOURCE: CSA Consumer Price Index [www.csa.gov.et](http://www.csa.gov.et)

Despite government interventions to stabilize the market, there has not been any appreciable price relief for consumers during the past seven to eight years. The last quarter of 2008 and the first of 2009 were particularly hard for consumers: in the month of February 2009, for example, food inflation shot up to 61.1 percent which was an increase of nearly 50 percent over the same month in 2008. Similarly in the months from July to October 2011 food inflation rose unabated reaching nearly 52 percent in October before beginning to ease off in the following months. The data indicates in fact that the price of cereals has more than doubled in many markets in the country in the years since 2008. Food inflation has remained higher than general inflation because food accounts for the largest share of household expenditure for many households and especially for the poor.

The government has taken a number of measures to bring down the galloping inflation, but while they have gone some way to help poor households cope, they have not succeeded in fully stabilizing the market. The main factors underlying the inflationary pressure have been quite varied: they include global inflation and supply shortages, a rapid growth of the money supply, rising fuel costs, and bottlenecks in the domestic agricultural market- in short while domestic economic pressures have been significant factors, external shocks have greatly contributed to aggravate the problem. A look at the food security situation in 2008 and 2009 is instructive here.

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Figures from the government's disaster management agency<sup>19</sup> show that the number of hungry people in the country needing emergency assistance (and excluding those covered by the PSNP) had risen to 6.4 million in 2008, and 6.2 million in 2009. The high rate of vulnerability in these years is clearly a result of the impact of the global food crisis. In 2008 the government and its humanitarian partners had to revise their estimate of the needy population three times, in response to the escalating food shortages and price inflation: in April the number of people requiring emergency food aid was put at 2.2 million, in June this was raised to 4.6 million, and finally in October it was scaled up to 6.4 million. Similarly, in 2009 the estimate in January was 4.9 million but this was raised to 6.2 million in October<sup>20</sup>.

All the evidence suggests that the global food crisis of the past few years was not a product of passing circumstances, and while some of the factors driving it at the time were transient in nature, many were expected to endure for a long time. Climate change is expected to trigger extreme weather for many years to come, and this will in turn depress agricultural production and contribute to food shortages worldwide. Secondly, the bio-energy sector will continue to draw increased investments and remain attractive both to farmers and agri-business in the developed countries. It appears unlikely that either the U.S. or the E.U will remove their bio-fuel subsidies, indeed the evidence suggests that the contrary is the case (OECD 2008). On the other hand, there will be strong demand for food by the emerging Asian economies as well as by growing urbanization in Africa. What this all means in brief is that in most countries, but especially in the less developed ones, the era of cheap or affordable food is now over, and high food costs and hence hunger and malnutrition will be the new reality for the foreseeable future.

## Conclusion

The government has invested considerable resources in the food security program and in agricultural, health and other services which have a collateral impact on food security. The aim from the beginning has been to achieve national food self-sufficiency and access to food by rural households. In this, the present government has a better record than the previous two regimes. The fact that there has not been a major killer famine for about a decade, and that some of the households covered by the PSNP have improved their livelihoods to some extent by the resource transfers are important gains of the food security program. There are also some improvements in the nutritional status of children and the

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<sup>19</sup> DPPC 2008 DPPC, DMFSS 2009

<sup>20</sup> See DPPA 2008a,b and DMFSS 2009. The 2010 humanitarian document is posted in DRMFSS' website

severity of malnutrition as is indicated by the last three DHS reports. Moreover, the country's capacity for disaster management and its ability to respond to humanitarian crisis has improved considerably in the last ten years. There have been a number of measures put in place to promote rapid disaster response of which one of the important ones has been the establishment in 2000 of the Emergency Food Security Reserve (EFSR), initially with a capacity of 210,000 MT of emergency stocks expanded subsequently to over 400,000 MT. The EFSR holds buffer stocks of emergency supplies which it provides on loan to agencies, which may be government, non-government, UN or others, engaged in relief work to bridge the gap until the agencies themselves are able to procure supplies of their own ([www.dppc.gov.et](http://www.dppc.gov.et)) The Reserve has constructed seven main centers located strategically and local storage facilities in nearly 30 cities close to vulnerable populations for pre-positioning stocks for rapid and effective response. However, EFSR's stocks are often quickly exhausted when a major crisis occurs, as happened in 2008 and 2009 because of limited capacity, and this often means that in the initial phase relief activity is considerably constrained, leading not infrequently to reductions of emergency rations or worse.

On the other hand, the food security program as a whole is heavily dependent on donors and all the indications are that it will remain so for many decades to come. The expectation of the GTP that by 2015 over six million beneficiaries will have graduated out of the PSNP is highly unrealistic. Donors believe that an optimistic estimate of graduation by 2015 will not be more than 40 percent of the beneficiary population (World Bank 2012). The program is faced with serious challenges, as has been shown in the preceding pages, and I believe it is important to have an extended public debate on all aspect of the food security program.

The conclusion that should be drawn from this discussion is that food security will not be achieved without a robust safety net program, and there is therefore a need for an *expanded* and better managed PSNP that is well integrated with agricultural, health and other services provided to communities by government and no-government agencies. Some of the limitations of the existing program, discussed at some length earlier, have undermined the intended objectives. An inclusive PSNP will mean expanding the coverage by several million participants but this should not incur additional costs. Currently, donors finance not just the PSNP but also the emergency assistance, but the beneficiaries of the latter are for the most part vulnerable households that are not covered by the PSNP, and thus bringing them into the program will actually reduce the financial burden on donors. Moreover, in view of increasing vulnerability among urban households there should be an urban version of the PSNP to meet the needs of the urban poor.

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But in the final analysis it will be important to shift from PSNP, which is of limited duration, to a longer-term and inclusive social protection program enriched by the experiences and challenges of the safety net initiative. Such a program should go hand in hand with sound policies that will open up opportunities for smallholders and the poor, enabling them to improve their livelihoods, protect themselves from shocks and become resilient. Sound social protection schemes should safeguard vulnerable populations from global economic and financial shocks as recommended by the African Union's social policy framework which this country has signed. A well managed social protection program coupled with dynamic policies addressing the development challenges the country faces, such as the ones noted above, will make it possible for the rural as well as urban poor to make hunger and food insecurity a thing of the past in the not-too-distant future.

## **Acronyms**

CANGO:	Canadian Network of NGOs
CSA:	Central Statistics Agency
DFID:	Department for International Development (UK aid)
DHS:	Demographic and Health Survey
DPPA/C:	Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Agency/Commission
DRMFSS:	Disaster Risk Management Food Security Sector
EFSR:	Emergency Food Security Reserve
EGS:	Employment Generation Scheme
ESSSWA:	Ethiopian Society of Sociologists, Social Workers and Anthropologists
FAO:	Food and Agricultural Organization
FDRE:	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GTP:	Growth and Transformation Plan
HABP:	Household Asset Building Program
IFPRI:	International Food Policy Research Institute
MOA(RD):	Ministry of Agriculture (and Rural Development)
MOFED:	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
NAPA:	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NCFSE:	New Coalition for Food Security of Ethiopia
OCHA:	Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD:	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFSP:	Other Food Security Program
PASDEP:	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty
PSNP:	Productive Safety Net Program
RRC:	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
SSA:	Sub-Saharan Africa
TGE:	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
USAID:	United States Agency for International Aid
USD:	United States Dollar
WFP:	World Food Programme

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# **From Disaster Response to Predictable Food Security Interventions: Structural Change or Structural Reproduction?**

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## **Introduction**

The reduction of hunger and food insecurity is a matter of great urgency to the world. The number of hungry people today is higher than in 1996 when world leaders at the World Food Summit set the target to reduce the number of hungry by half by 2015. Though the prevalence of hunger in terms of undernourishment has declined significantly over the past decades the number of hungry people has risen to 906 million in 2010 (FAO 2010a).

Hunger is a measure of undernourishment and indicates that a person's caloric intake is below the minimum dietary energy requirement. The absence of hunger is closely related with food security which is commonly defined as a situation where 'all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life' (FAO 1996). A precise operational definition of food security is lacking. It is generally acknowledged however that food security has four dimensions relevant to food security programming: production of food, access to food (via informal or formal networks such as markets), the utilisation of food and the stability of the food system.

One of the most challenging contexts for the international community to address hunger and food insecurity is in protracted crises situations. These have been defined as environments in which 'a significant proportion of the population is acutely vulnerable to death, disease and disruption of livelihoods over a prolonged period of time' (Harmer and Macrae 2004). Protracted crises differ across various contexts but share some of the following characteristics: duration or longevity of the crisis, conflict, weak governance or public

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administration, unsustainable livelihood systems and poor food-security outcomes, and a breakdown of local institutions (FAO 2010b). Positive food security outcomes in such situations often require improvements in all four dimensions of food security. This requires a balance between relief and development oriented activities; however linking the divided relief and development domains has been a persistent challenge for decades (Maxwell et al. 2008).

Crises, both at a global as well as local level, pose significant risks to poor and vulnerable households often with serious consequences for their food security. Particularly in countries characterised by protracted food crisis local shocks to the food system may turn into catastrophic famines when a shortage of food or purchasing power leads to excess mortality from starvation or hunger-related diseases. Traditionally the provision of food aid has been central in addressing hunger and food insecurity. The use of food aid in humanitarian aid and development assistance has however come under increased scrutiny both from food policy makers and practitioners in the delivery of the humanitarian response (Barrett and Maxwell 2005, Maxwell et al. 2008).

Central to this debate is how positive food security outcomes in countries prone to food crises can be realised through a combination of the globalisation of relief, better food aid governance, development assistance and economic progress. The occurrence of famine and outcomes of food crises are known to be as much a function of the conditions that cause such crises as the policy response (Ó Gráda 2009: 3). This places food security policy making at the heart of the debate in efforts to effectively address hunger and food insecurity.

This chapter looks at the policy process and the resulting response options to tackle hunger and food insecurity. This is done by focusing on Ethiopia's protracted food crisis by tracing the evolution of changing interpretation frames and resulting policies and response options amongst the successive governments of the Ethiopian State and its international partners in dealing with past famines, current famine vulnerability and recurrent food crises. Ethiopia's decades' long quest to promote food security has culminated in the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) which is the key component of the country's current Food Security Programme (FSP). Both globally and in Ethiopia, the PSNP is presented as the result of a structural change in food security policy.

My interpretation, based on a review of relevant literature and interviews with senior policy makers at both national and international level, is that in essence Ethiopia's food security policy-making process has resulted in the 'de-disasterisation' of the country's famine vulnerability and recurrent food crises. With the term 'de-disasterisation' I mean the process by which structural or

recurrent crises become ‘normalised’ and are no longer framed or perceived as disasters. De-disasterisation can be positive in cases where it results in structural changes in policies resulting in programmes aimed at addressing the root causes of the disaster. In such a case de-disasterisation *de facto* means ‘doing away with’ or ending disaster. On the other hand de-disasterisation can be negative, when it leads to the *de facto* acceptance of high levels of acute or chronic food insecurity (that used to be seen and considered as disastrous) resulting in affected people not receiving the support they need for immediate survival or covering their basic food needs. In this case de-disasterisation means that the meaning of disaster is lost at policy and programme level while crisis affected communities continue to face a very difficult or even life threatening situation. The key issue is whether the policies that are institutionalising this de-disasterisation are structurally reproducing past response options, and thereby ‘normalise’ the crisis, or whether such policies reflect a structural change that enable for the emergence of new types of response options that can contribute to a lasting solution of Ethiopia’s protracted food crisis and recurrent disaster.

The following section presents the study methodology and an introduction of the response to food insecurity in protracted crises based on which a discourse typology is suggested. Section 3 provides a short overview of Ethiopia’s famine and food crises and is followed by section 4 which presents the evolution of changing perspectives and interpretation frames by successive Ethiopian governments and its international partners in dealing with hunger and food insecurity. In section 5 we focus on Ethiopia’s current Food Security Strategy which the culmination of Ethiopia’s four decades long quest to end the country’s chronic as well as acute food insecurity. Section 6 presents the main findings and conclusion.

## **Methodology**

To characterise the evolution of the food security policy-making process amongst successive Ethiopian governments and their international partners, we trace the history of the different interpretation frameworks of the major stakeholders. We do so by concentrating on Ethiopia’s key famine periods 1972-1973, 1984-5 and the food crises of 1999-2000, 2002-3, 2008 and 2011. It is particularly interesting to explore how food security response has, and still is, evolving and whether food security policies are structurally reproducing response options or constitute a fundamental break from the past that allows for new types of programmes to emerge.

Ethiopia is used as an exemplar as the country has had a long history of food crises with the international community becoming increasingly involved in

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the management of food crises and disaster response following the famines of the mid-1970s and mid-1980s. Famine disaster at the scale of the 1984-85 crisis has been averted since then but the country has remained vulnerable to famine and is chronically food insecure with an average of five million Ethiopians requiring food aid every year since the mid 1980's (IFPRI2009a and 2009b, GoE2004).

FAO labels Ethiopia as a country facing a protracted crisis because of the frequency of its recurrent food crises. The country has reported crisis almost every year since the 1984-85 famine with a high percentage of the population being undernourished (41% in the period 2005-7), humanitarian assistance as a share of total assistance since 2008 is high (21%) and the country is on the list of Low-Income Food-Deficit countries due to its poor economic and food security status (FAO 2010b).

### ***Interpreting and responding to food crises: a discourse typology***

Countries in protracted food crisis make for difficult contexts for the international community to work in. This is because of the different ways in which the relief and development community perceive and interpret protracted crises, understand its relationship to the development process, and provide aid to address such crises (FAO 2010b).

Food security policy is based on the interpretation frameworks of the major global and national food security actors: governments, donors and agencies. The frameworks reflect how they understand and respond to protracted food crises, in particular in relation to the complex interrelationship between humanitarian aid and development assistance. Such interpretation frameworks, or discourses, constitute a set of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to particular phenomena (Gasper and Apthorpe 1996: 2). Discourse is not only central to policy making (Colebatch 1998) but also determines governance and development trajectories (Booth 2011) and structuring response options by being in competition with alternative interpretation frames (Hoben 1995).

Three main discourse typologies of the response to hunger and food insecurity may be distinguished: the humanitarian discourse, the development discourse and the social protection discourse (table 1). Whereas the first is often perceived as welfarist the other two are seen as pro-poor developmentalist.

In problematizing hunger and food insecurity the humanitarian discourse explains hunger and food insecurity as a result of disaster either of man-made origin such as war and conflict or natural origin such as a drought, or a combination of the two. Disaster can cause food production failure resulting in

acute hunger and food insecurity which is often perceived as being of a transitory nature. The developmental discourse problematizes hunger and food insecurity as a result of chronic poverty which contributes to people's exchange entitlement failure which may result in chronic food insecurity. With both interpretation frames classically being presented as two extremes along a continuum there has been a longstanding dynamic competition between the relief and development discourse in dealing with protracted food crises. Effective programmatic linkages between the relief and development discourse are known to be highly problematic (e.g. Maxwell et al. 2008).

Out of a critique of the classic relief and development discourse, which has failed to result in food security for millions of people (FAO 2010b), the social protection discourse is recently emerging as an alternative interpretation framework. The social protection interpretation framework explains hunger and food insecurity as a result of people's vulnerability to external (e.g. drought) and internal (e.g. lifecycle) risks and shocks. Although definitions of social protection vary most of them underlining central notions as noted by Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004) '*.. all initiatives that provide income (cash) or consumption (food) transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance social status and rights of the excluded and marginalized*'. These different dimensions of social protection are referred to as protective, promotive and transformative respectively.

Each of these interpretation frameworks represent a different institutional domain, the humanitarian-, economic- and socio-political-domain, with each of them promoting and prescribing different solutions to end hunger and food insecurity. Humanitarian governance prescribes emergency relief assistance as a needs-based response to acute hunger with the aim to save lives by smoothing consumption (Barrett 2006, Maxwell et al. 2008). Development governance of hunger and food insecurity emphasizes the need for demand-driven interventions in agriculture and the rural economy to promote and diversify people's livelihoods (Barrett 2008, Maxwell et al. 2008). The focus of the development discourse is on promoting sustainable livelihoods by improving agricultural production or a household's ability to generate the exchange entitlement needed to avoid hunger and food insecurity. Social protection governance systems underline the need to protect people from the adverse impact of risks and shocks and promotes initiatives to protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks such as safety nets (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2004, McCord and Slater 2009, FAO 2010b).

The three discourses reflect different styles of governance that promote different solutions and response options. The discourses and the institutions that operate from them may also be in competition with one another.

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*Table 1. Discourse typology of response to hunger and food insecurity in protracted food crises.*

<b><i>Aid Architecture</i></b>			
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Welfare</b>	<b>Pro-poor Development</b>	
<b>Discourse</b>	<b>Humanitarian</b>	<b>Development</b>	<b>Social Protection</b>
<b><i>Problematizing Hunger and food insecurity</i></b>			
<b>Structural cause</b>	Disaster & Crisis	Poverty	Vulnerability
<b>Symptom</b>	Acute food insecurity	Chronic food insecurity	Acute/chronic food insecurity
<b>Duration</b>	Transitory	Chronic	Transitory/Chronic
<b><i>Seeking Solutions</i></b>			
<b>Institutional domain</b>	Humanitarian	Economic	Socio-Political
<b>Solution</b>	Relief	Development assistance	Social Protection
<b><i>Structuring response options</i></b>			
<b>Typical Programme</b>	Emergency response	Sustainable livelihoods	Safety nets
<b>Objective</b>	Saving lives (needs based approach)	Promoting livelihoods (demand driven)	Protect, Promote and transform livelihoods
<b>Aim</b>	Consumption smoothing and asset protection	Asset Building	Managing risks and shocks
<b>Programme areas</b>	Food aid and food assistance	Food assistance, livelihood promotion and diversification	Transfers and subsidies



### ***The policy response to protracted food crises: structural reproduction or change?***

My understanding is that when a particular discourse is prominent in the policy-making process, food security policy is characterised by a structural reproduction of response options as prescribed by that discourse. A structural reproduction of response options can be of a cyclical or cumulative nature. It is cyclical when merely reproducing a given response option such as, for example, provision of food relief following drought. It is cumulative when making gradual improvements in the way response options are designed or delivered such as, for example, improvements in targeting and the timely provision of emergency relief resources to beneficiaries.

The policy process is characterised by structural change when an alternative discourse gains prominence in the policy domain and promotes new types of programmatic response. Structural changes often reflect a fundamental rethinking of explanations of hunger and food insecurity and can result in additional or alternative solutions and new response options that constitute a break from the past.

### ***The research questions***

In looking at Ethiopia as a case we focus on how successive Ethiopian governments and their international partners understand and frame food crises and promote response options. This is done in the light of three research questions:

1. How have global and national food security actors framed and responded to Ethiopia's recurrent food crises?
2. Do the resulting policies promote structural reproduction of old programmatic response options or promote structural change in policy thereby producing new response options?
3. Is there a need for additional structural change in Ethiopia's food security policy to end the country's protracted food crisis?

Key policy documents of the main global and national food security actors in Ethiopia's food security policy-making process were reviewed including literature on famine and food crisis response as relevant to the Ethiopian case. Senior staff of the main agencies involved in food security policy making in Ethiopia and at their international headquarters were interviewed<sup>2</sup>. This was

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<sup>2</sup> Interviews were held in February 2009 in Rome with WFP, FAO and IFAD and in Washington with IFPRI and the World Bank in June 2011. Meetings in Addis with the WFP, FAO, World Bank and IFPRI were held

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done to solicit their views and opinions regarding the evolution of policy, the resulting response options, their impact and the implications for future policies aimed at solving Ethiopia's protracted food crisis.

### **Famine and Food Crises in Ethiopia**

Famines and food crises are not new phenomena to Ethiopia. Famine in Ethiopia was first recorded in the ninth century with ten major famines occurring in the 15th to 17th century (Pankhurst 1985, Hoben 1995). The great famine of 1888-89 caused widespread death and devastation with more localised, but no less lethal famines, occurring in 1916-1920, 1927-28, and 1934-35 (Hoben 1995). In recent times Ethiopia has experienced famine in 1972-73 and in 1984-85 causing an estimated excess mortality of 60,000 and 500,000 respectively (de Waal 1997, Devereux 2000). Recent food crises were recorded in 1999-2000 (Hammond and Maxwell 2002, White 2005, Devereux 2009), 2003 (Kehler 2004, Lautze and Raven-Roberts 2004), 2008 (OCHA 2008) and 2011. Following the famine of 1984-85 a minimum of five million Ethiopians have required food aid annually (CfFS 2003) peaking at close to thirteen million people in 2003 (GoE 2003, WFP 2004). The recent 2011 crisis in the Horn has resulted in 13.3 million people in need of humanitarian assistance of which 4.6 million<sup>3</sup> were Ethiopians (OCHA 2011).

Analysts of food insecurity in Ethiopia can be divided into two camps: the 'physical ecology cluster', which focus on population growth, declining soil fertility and drought, and the 'political economy' cluster, who blame government policies, weak markets and institutional failure (Devereux 2000). The role of conflict in the decline of food security and livelihoods has been mentioned by various authors as a contributing factor tipping local food shortages into catastrophic droughts (de Waal 1997, White 2005). Many of the major famines of the 20th century, the Ethiopian famines of 1972-73 and 1984-85 being no exception, were linked to either civil strife or warfare with human action greatly exacerbating 'acts of nature' (Ó Gráda 2009).

In Ethiopia local food crises are typically triggered by erratic weather conditions, in particular drought, with rural overpopulation and land degradation commonly being mentioned as underlying causes. People's survival strategies are forced responses to structural food deficits (Dessalegn 1991, Sharp et al. 2003). Livelihoods of Ethiopia's overwhelmingly rural population are heavily

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twice a year in the period 2009-2011. During the same period Ethiopian government officials at federal level were met once a year in Addis and twice a year at regional level in Bahir Dar.

<sup>3</sup> These 4.6 million were in addition to the millions of people covered by Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme.

reliant on peasant agriculture in the highlands and agro-pastoralism in the lowlands (Sharp et al. 2003, White 2005). Rural Ethiopia is unusually undifferentiated with small farmers accounting for 90 per cent of the total crop area and agricultural output (Bollinger et al. 1999). In much of Ethiopia's highlands, increasing population pressure has reduced landholdings that are becoming too small to provide subsistence under current farming systems. High population growth, averaging around three per cent annually, reduces landholdings to 'starvation plots' and drives agricultural expansion onto hillsides and grazing lands, thus contributing to degradation (Dessalegn 1994, White 2005). People's food and income strategies are further reduced as off-farm employment opportunities are limited in both availability and income-generating potential (Devereux 2000).

Both the 'physical ecology' as well as the 'political economy' interpretation lenses have merit as partial explanations of Ethiopia's famine vulnerability and food insecurity but neither are thought to be sufficient in themselves (Devereux 2000). In their landmark publication 'Famine and Food Insecurity in Ethiopia', Webb and von Braun (1994) stated that Ethiopia's food secure future without famine must rest on three pillars: active emergency preparedness, sound growth policies, and good governance<sup>4</sup>. This highlights the centrality of the food security policy-making process in Ethiopia and the crucial importance of appropriate programmatic response options for the country to become structurally food secure.

## **The Evolution of Response**

This section looks at how global and national food security actors have framed Ethiopia's recurrent food crises and defined policies and response options accordingly.

### ***Famine as a Disaster ~ the 1972-1973 and 1984-5 Famines and the Institutionalisation of Emergency Relief Aid***

The Sahel drought of 1968-73 caused a serious decline in food availability in parts of northern Ethiopia. Localised food shortages turned into a crisis causing mass displacement and starvation that claimed an estimated 40,000 to 80,000 deaths in 1972-1973 (Ó Gráda 2009). Authorities initially sought to suppress news of the crisis but when a BBC documentary reported on the 'unknown famine', it quickly became the focus of an international relief effort by mid-

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<sup>4</sup> Regarding good governance Webb and Braun state that it means: 1) an efficient use of resources that is accountable, 2) an allocation of resources in a transparently non-discriminatory fashion in regional and ethnic terms, and 3) participatory planning and control of resources at a decentralised, local level.

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October 1973. Ethiopia's 1972-73 famine eroded Emperor Haile Selassie's legitimacy and became one of the few famines known to have triggered regime change (Ó Gráda 2009). The Derg government (1974-1991) discredited the Imperial regime blaming responsibility for the famine on its feudal land policies and practices with the Derg's socialism presented as an anti-famine political contract. The 1972-73 famine contributed to a strong growth of UN and NGO disaster relief institutions in Ethiopia and resulted in the creation of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) in 1974.

Return of serious droughts in the Sahel during the mid-1980s caused harvest failures in northern Ethiopia particularly in Tigray and Wollo. Harvest failures in 1983 and 1984 were exacerbated by the war waged by the Derg against secessionists in Tigray resulting in famine. The situation was compounded by the Derg's ill-advised economic policies which reduced the private food trade and undermined agricultural output because of low prices and forced collectivization (Wolde Mariam 1985, Dessalegn 1991, Webb and von Braun 1994). A 1984 BBC news coverage that showed images of Ethiopians dying from starvation revealed the dimensions of the 'greatest humanitarian disaster of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century'. It caused a global public outcry which transformed the 'face of aid' (Gill 2010). The 1984-85 famine left almost one-fifth of Ethiopia's population in need of aid with an estimated mortality of 500,000 people (Ó Gráda 2009).

International news coverage of the 1972-73 and the 1984-5 food crises exposed government inaction calling upon intervention by the international community. By declaring both crises a famine disaster, the international community initiated large-scale emergency relief operations. The Imperial government's inaction and the ability of famine to trigger regime change served as 'an historical fact of which subsequent officials and politicians have remained intensely aware' (Lautze et al. 2009). It made the management of disaster response and food crises central to Ethiopian politics. The Derg's response to the 1984-85 crisis was however very late with the RRC claiming a catastrophic drought by May 1984 (RRC 1984). Its late 'early' warning was met by limited donor response as the RRC was increasingly seen as being politicised. When massive international aid in the end did arrive it was instrumental in saving lives. It was also clear however that the Derg used the international relief presence to its economic, diplomatic and military advantage (de Waal 1997).

In the aftermath of Ethiopia's 1984-85 famine, the provision of longer-term developmental aid by western donors for the Ethiopian government was not an option, particularly so on account of the Derg's Marxist ideology and with the West seeing the government to be 'violating human rights, pursuing a protracted civil war in the north, following bad economic policies and aligned with the

Soviet Union' (Hoben 2005). In order not to be blamed for merely alleviating the symptoms of the crisis by providing continued emergency food aid, donors adopted the 'physical ecology' lens, framing the underlying causes of Ethiopia's famine and famine vulnerability as environmental degradation due to population increase, poverty and poor farming practice (Hoben 2005). This structural change in policy made new programmatic response options possible in the form of large-scale land reclamation programmes, most notably in the form of soil and water conservation works. These were implemented through Food For Work (FFW) activities which were seen as the 'least bad development-oriented intervention option' (Hoben 1995: 1013). Applying the physical ecology lens meant a fundamental break from emergency food aid to putting food distributions to productive use in the form of FFW.

The effects of the large scale soil and water conservation as well as afforestation programmes have been mixed at best. According to the WFP the quality and sustainability of Food for Work activities fall short of expectations and contributed globally to a poor image of Food for Work as a developmental tool in subsequent decades (Nedessa and Wickerema 2010). Unpredictable and uncertain land ownership practice meant that farmers had no secure access to programme benefits which made them unable or unwilling to maintain the conservation and afforestation innovations induced by the programme (Yeraswork Admassie 2000). Forestry interventions also reduced the area of grazing land available to local communities restricting their livestock options (Pankhurst 2001).

While there was convergence between the government and its predominantly western donors to use food aid in a productive manner by promoting FFW there was at the same time divergence with the Derg's formal policy<sup>5</sup> on resettlement as a developmentalist approach in promoting durable solutions to famine and food insecurity (Clay and Holcomb 1986). Development theorists and practitioners never considered the government's state-sponsored and large-scale resettlement of chronically food insecure people from the highlands to less densely populated areas low-land areas with allegedly better agricultural potential as a developmentalist perspective to link relief to development as a lasting and sustainable solution to end food insecurity and hunger.

Being voluntary in nature at the initial stages the resettlement programme became highly politicised towards the end of the increasingly brutal Derg regime. Forced resettlement and the Derg's villagisation and collectivization

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<sup>5</sup> During the imperial period resettlement was ad hoc with the Derg initiating a formal resettlement policy which was facilitated by the land reform and the creation of institutions to carry out resettlement.

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programmes served political-military interests in contested areas over a developmentalist agenda aimed at increasing agricultural production (Clapham 1988). The Derg's resettlement as a form of population relocation quickly turned into a tragedy with the majority of settlers not becoming food secure (Dessalegn 2003). The resettlement of over 200,000 households, representing almost 600,000 people in 1985-86 resulted in failure due to misconceived plans and careless implementation (Pankhurst 2009: 10).

As a result of the 1972-3 and 1984-85 famines, the humanitarian discourse became central to the food security policy-making process, albeit with an important break from food aid to Food-for-Work, and contributed to the institutionalization of emergency relief aid. This saved lives and suppressed Ethiopia's famine vulnerability. Food insecurity, however, remained both widespread, as well as persistent, as clearly demonstrated by the re-occurrence of food crises in 1999-2000 and 2002-3.

### ***Famine Vulnerability as an Embarrassment & Disgrace ~ the Food Crises of 1999-2000 and 2002-3 as a key Transition Period***

Following the downfall of the Derg, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1991-1995) adopted a more liberal market model in line with its Economic Development Strategy. On the basis of its 1993 National Policy on Disaster Prevention and Management (NPDPM), the government sought a stronger co-ordination with the international community requesting NGOs to focus on Disaster Risk Reduction. The government also decided to replace all remaining free food distributions with Food for Work under the Employment Generation Scheme with the aim of rebuilding productive assets. The programme had, however, serious flaws: relief food was unreliable (often too little and coming too late) and essential complementary inputs like tools, equipment and supplies were largely unavailable (Kehler 2004).

In 1995, the government gave the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission a newer function and institutional responsibility rebranding it the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committee (DPPC) with the aim to prevent disaster, reduce its impact and ensure timely assistance to disaster victims. This institutional reform underlined a shifting emphasis from addressing the consequences of food crises to preventing such crises from happening in the first place. In 1995, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) was established and following a number of years with favourable weather conditions and good harvests, the issue of famine vulnerability and food insecurity became less salient. The government decided to reduce its disaster response capacity even though over two million Ethiopians needed food aid during the bumper harvest year of 1996. But instead of an improvement in the situation, food

shortages became more frequent in Ethiopia affecting more people. Towards the end of the millennium, Ethiopia's food security had steadily worsened despite the country being the largest recipient of emergency aid per capita in Africa and despite thirty years of food aid (Kehler 2004).

In 1999-2000, Ethiopia faced another serious drought with international donors opting for a 'food aid bias'. They focused on short-term humanitarian needs rather than longer-term support for food security in part because of serious international concerns about the 1998-2000 Ethiopian-Eritrean war (White 2005). Mass mortality of the 1999-2000 crisis in Ethiopia's Somali Region was less than that of the 'Great Ethiopian Famine' of 1984-1985 but still claimed between 72,000 and 123,000 lives (Salama et al. 2001).

The beginning of the third millennium also proved to be a key transition period with food security actors framing Ethiopia's recurrent food crises and persistent food insecurity in new ways. In 1981 Sen, in his seminal work on poverty and famines, had already shown that famine was not created by the absence of food *per se* but by the lack of people's entitlement to access food (Sen 1981). At an international level, critical rethinking of the humanitarian response to food insecurity had reconceptualised famine vulnerability as the outcome of a process rendering people vulnerable to external shocks, rather than the outcome of a sudden event. Food crises in southern and eastern Africa during the early 2000s stimulated a further radical rethinking of the humanitarian response to food insecurity and hunger in Africa. This led to the recognition that hunger and food insecurity, far from being unpredictable emergencies, were essentially a reflection of chronic poverty and vulnerability and thus, predictable (McCord and Slater 2009).

At the same time there was a recognition that food aid was no solution to Ethiopia's chronic food insecurity, as evidenced by declining per capita food production since the beginning of the 1970's (Devereux 2000). Food aid to combat chronic or acute food insecurity in Ethiopia saved lives but it did not succeed in halting a decline in people's livelihood assets, improving malnutrition or mitigating people's vulnerability to shocks (Kehler 2004). This was dramatically demonstrated by the drought of 2002-3 which required 'exceptional food assistance' for well over 13 million Ethiopians and with acute malnutrition peaking at 52% (WFP 2004, MoARD 2009). The 2002-3 crisis exposed once again the weakness of the humanitarian needs-based approach which had consistently prioritised the use of food aid in dealing with Ethiopia's recurrent food crises. It showed that in protracted crisis situations interventions that maintain food entitlement of affected populations must extend beyond ensuring immediate human survival (Flores et al. 2005). It also showed that while emergency food aid is often a necessary part of humanitarian response to acute



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food security it is not sufficient to build the foundations of longer-term food security (Barrett 2006, FAO 2010b).

The 2002-3 crisis also highlighted the fact that declaring a famine is a political act (de Waal 1997) and that who decides has implications for international vis-à-vis national responsibility in dealing with famine and its effects. While the government downplayed the scale and seriousness of the situation on the ground in 2002-3, a group of international specialists visiting the Gode area stated that, 'you have a widespread livelihood crisis leading to emergency levels of malnutrition, morbidity, mortality, with alarming implications for destitution: that for us is a famine' (Lautze and Raven-Roberts 2004). The reluctance of declaring the 2002-3 food crisis a famine was clearly associated with political vulnerability on the part of the Ethiopian government as well as its international donors, in particular the USA (Lautze and Raven-Robert 2004). The compromise, according to Lautze and Raven-Roberts, was for USAID to refer to the crisis as a 'localised famine', implying 'that the situation was serious, but not unmanageable'.

In a sense, the 2002-3 food crisis made clear that Ethiopia's famine vulnerability was perceived as a disgrace, something bad and to be ashamed of, both by national politicians as well as the international community, and something to be addressed at all cost. In the aftermath of the crisis, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Meles Zenawi declared food security a top national priority and voiced the government's commitment to break the decade-long dependency on external aid. Following the Prime Minister's declaration, humanitarian and development actors in Ethiopia joined hands as part of the New Coalition for Food Security formed in 2003. This initiative sought to find ways to 'reduce dependency on foreign emergency food aid' and to 'phase out the use of food aid altogether' (MoARD 2009). The coalition recommended a gradual transition from humanitarian assistance to a system of productive safety nets as a bridge between emergency and development in disaster-prone food-insecure areas. The WFP supported this transition in line with its new policy guidelines which promoted the use of safety nets as more central to the aid system 'to safeguard in the event of shocks, assist those in need and ensure that livelihoods are built upon' (WFP 2004). Donors and development partners also underlined the need to shift from food aid as a resource transfer to cash, which the government supported. The World Food Programme also underlined the need for complementary interventions besides cash or Food for Work as the solution to Ethiopia's chronic food insecurity. By boosting local production to replace imported food aid with purchase of locally produced crops and capacity building to enable a reliable cash transfer programme, Ethiopia would, according to the WFP in 2004, 'graduate from relief aid by 2015' (Kehler 2004).



In conclusion, the 1999-2000 and 2002-3 food crises made it clear that the institutionalised humanitarian response, albeit with food aid increasingly provided in the form of Food for Work in non-crisis years to address production failures, suppressed Ethiopia's famine vulnerability but did little to end hunger and food insecurity. This shifted the focus and interpretation frames of the major stakeholders not only to Disaster Risk Reduction (in line with the NPDPM) but even more so towards a focus on poverty reduction to address food entitlement or exchange failures.

The critique on the hegemony of the humanitarian needs-based discourse that dominated Ethiopia's food security programming during the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was that though it did save lives, it failed to save livelihoods. Ethiopia's new Food Security Strategy was designed to do both - thus representing, in theory at least, a structural and fundamental change in food security policies.

***The End of Famine Vulnerability and Food Insecurity?~ Ethiopia's current Food Security Strategy and its Productive Safety Net Programme as a Longer Term Developmental Approach***

The 'localised famine' of 2002-3 signalled a change in approach away from the humanitarian discourse towards a more development-oriented discourse. The focus broadened from the use of relief food aid and Food for Work in response to food production failures to a focus on poverty reduction and livelihood diversification to address food entitlement failure. This paved the way for Ethiopia's 2005-9 Food Security Programme (FSP) that aimed to transform the institutionalized relief-oriented emergency system into a more developmental-oriented predictable safety net.

The resulting programmes, the donor-funded Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and the government-funded so-called Other Food Security Programmes (OFSPs), were designed to break the circle of food aid dependency. The third component of the FSP, the government-funded Voluntary Resettlement Programme (VRP), is in response to the 'physical ecology' explanation of famine vulnerability, an explanation shared by the government and its development partners. However, unlike the government, its international partners never considered the government's developmentalist perspective on resettlement as a lasting and sustainable solution to end food insecurity and hunger.

The PSNP is the main component of the FSP and receives by far the largest budget allocation of the three FSP components. As such, the PSNP does not reflect a structural change in policy as its design of Public Works and Direct Support is identical to the system in the 1990's with Food-for-Work for

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chronically food-insecure households with labour capacity and Gratuities Relief for labour-constrained households. Most of the Public Works activities are also similar to the Food-for-Work activities of the 1990s.

The PSNP thus structurally reproduces response options but these do reflect an important cumulative change in nature on at least four accounts. First, resource transfers are no longer based on unpredictable annual emergency needs assessment and appeals but PSNP beneficiaries receive, at least in theory, resource transfers for a five-year period. Beneficiaries are engaged in community asset building (such as soil and water conservation works, road construction) and in return receive resource transfers for which predictability and timeliness are seen as key to the success of the programme (MoARD 2004). Also, cash has been introduced as a resource transfer and currently represents around five percent of all resource transfers. Secondly, the WFP as the main provider of resource transfers to the PSNP has started to procure food in Ethiopia (through its Purchase for Progress projects) and regionally. Thirdly, in terms of targeting, the PSNP distinguishes between the chronically food insecure and the transitory food insecure. The first group is covered by the safety net function of the PSNP and the second group by the PSNP's contingency budget for addressing acute needs following an external shock. And fourthly, the PSNP has benefitted from gradual improvements in WFP's 'Project 2488' and the MERET programme which succeeded it in 1999. MERET has adopted a community-based participatory watershed development approach by using resource transfers to pay for disaster risk reduction. Rehabilitation of degraded lands is complemented with a range of income-generating activities, such as horticulture, animal husbandry and beekeeping, and productivity improvement including low-cost soil fertility management and small-scale irrigation (Nedessa and Wickrema 2009).

The combination of the PSNP and the OFSP reflect an important structural change in policies enabling new types of programming and programmatic linkages. The PSNP and OFSPs were designed to link, in new and innovative ways, relief to development by harnessing the humanitarian and developmental discourses in a multi-annual timeframe.

In essence the PSNP and OFSP comprise three strategies: addressing acute humanitarian emergencies in the event of external weather-related shocks, in particular drought (the PSNP's emergency utility function), the provision of a safety net for consumption smoothing and asset protection, and asset building among the chronically poor as a pathway out of the safety net and poverty (graduation). The PSNP and its emergency utility thus address short-term needs aimed at consumption smoothing and asset protection and is seen as conditional for the OFSPs. The OFSPs are aimed at increasing poor people's productive

assets (both to enhance production and exchange entitlement) by increasing agricultural productivity and promoting livelihood diversification through on- and off-farm productive investments such as the provision of agricultural production packages, small-scale irrigation and rainwater harvesting projects, and the provision of credit.

### ***The de-disasterisation of Ethiopia's protracted food crisis***

The evolution of responses to Ethiopia's recurrent food crises show significant changes in the ways in which the Ethiopian State and its international partners have interpreted and framed Ethiopia's famines and food crises.

My contention is that the food security policy process in Ethiopia has in effect resulted in the de-disasterisation of Ethiopia's protracted food crisis. The 1972-3 and the 1984-5 food crisis were declared famine disasters by the international community and responded to with massive emergency food relief to save lives but with food aid becoming quickly institutionalised. Following these disasters, famine prevention became more central to food security policy. The 1999-2000 and 2002-3 food crises, however, exposed Ethiopia's continuing famine vulnerability which was perceived as a disgrace both nationally and internationally. As a result both crises were being downplayed for political reasons with the 2002-3 crisis described as a 'localised famine' to underscore that 'the situation was serious, but not unmanageable'.

The 1999-2000 and 2002-3 crises paved the way for Ethiopia's 2005-9 Food Security Strategy which aimed to transform the institutionalised relief-oriented emergency system into a development-oriented safety net. The government is of the opinion that Ethiopia's famine vulnerability and food insecurity is now under control and that its current 2010-14 FSP and highly ambitious broader growth-oriented policies will end Ethiopia's dependency on international emergency food aid and food assistance. In that sense the government regards the PSNP, the major component of the 2005-9 and the 2010-14 FSP, as a short-term mechanism for achieving rural development and graduation out of food insecurity and poverty.

So, after nearly forty years of famine relief and structural approaches to address food insecurity, Ethiopia's recurrent food crises and famine vulnerability are seen as a developmental challenge rather than an emergency. The boundaries between crisis and normality have faded with emergencies being 'normalised' in terms of policies and programmes. The question is whether the current policies that are institutionalising this de-disasterisation are 'normalising' the crisis or contribute to a lasting solution of Ethiopia's protracted food crisis. The answer

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to this question crucially depends on the success or failure of households' 'graduation' from the PSNP and OFSP.

### **The PSNP as a Lasting Solution to Ethiopia's Protracted Food Crisis?**

#### *Differential views on Resettlement as FSP component*

The government and its main international partners subscribe to the FSP but hold different views and understanding regarding the importance and impact of the three components of the FSP. The government and its international partners are in support of the PSNP and the OFSPs but the Voluntary Resettlement programme, the third pillar of the FSP, has met with ambivalence. There has been a powerful continuity in terms of the consistent divergence between successive Ethiopian governments and international donors on resettlement as a durable solution to hunger and food insecurity. The current government itself opposed resettlement initially but a gradual shift in policy made resettlement to be seen as a necessary aspect and crucial component of food security and therefore as an integral element of the FSP. As a result large-scale state-sponsored resettlement took place from 2003 onwards (Pankhurst and Piguet 2009).

The government's international partners and donors have remained sceptical. They do not see resettlement as a lasting solution to Ethiopia's food insecurity. Donors are of the opinion that resettlement as a radical measure to achieve positive food security outcomes in the short term will fall short of expectations. Worldwide experience indeed suggests that state-sponsored large-scale settlement programmes often fall short of attaining food security and sustainable livelihoods (de Wet 1995, Mc Dowell 1996, Cernea 2000). The government's current resettlement policy has also been criticised as a strategy to make the poorest of the poor invisible through their participation in the programme while in fact renders many of them needier than they were before leaving their areas of origin (Hammond 2008, Bishop and Hilhorst 2010).

#### *Programming Priorities and Impact*

There are important differences between donors on FSP programming priorities. For the World Bank, the major funder of the PSNP, the PSNP programme is the result of a long overdue paradigm shift and signifies the transition of an emergency relief oriented systems towards a longer term developmental oriented productive safety net. The fact that Ethiopia has not experienced a serious food crisis beyond its management capacity since 2003, is seen by the World Bank as

proof that the system is working. Interviewed World Bank staff do however acknowledge that the 2008 food crisis stretched the system to its very limits<sup>6</sup>.

The World Bank's internal assessment reports indicate that the combined impact of the PSNP and OFSPs, when implemented as per design, contribute to graduation. The World Bank therefore underlines the importance of the 2010-14 FSP to strengthen the linkages between the PSNP and its complimentary programmes to produce graduation at scale. Ethiopia's current 2010-2015 FSP is a continuation of the 2005-10 programme albeit with a particular focus on strengthening on- and off-farm investment and livelihood diversification options. The PSNP remains the main programme but with the OFSPs being modified with the Household Asset Building Programme (HABP) and the Complementary Community Investment programme (CCI). Another internal study by the World Bank that looked at graduation scenarios of the 2010-14 FSP found that, with implementation challenges being addressed and beneficiary households covered by both the PSNP and the OFSPs, around half of the chronically food insecure households have the potential to graduate from the safety net by 2014<sup>7</sup>. This by itself would signify a highly significant achievement but at the same time falls way short of the government's expectations that all chronically food insecure households will graduate from the PSNP by 2014.

The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) also acknowledges the importance of the PSNP and the OFSPs but is of the opinion that the FSP has an overemphasized focus on the productive aspect of both the PSNP and OFSPs and the HABP and CCI that modified the OFSPs in 2010. According to FAO<sup>8</sup> the potential for increasing agricultural production of the main staple crops in the degraded highlands is limited and comes at a very high cost. From a national food security perspective FAO is of the opinion that with the available financial resources it is far more effective and efficient to make productive investments in areas of better agricultural potential both in and outside the chronically food insecure areas. Such investments should include measures to stop natural resource degradation outside the chronically food insecure areas as degradation not only undermine the long-term production potential of such areas but has in fact contributed to the geographic expansion of the PSNP.

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<sup>6</sup> Interview World Bank staff, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (January 2011).

<sup>7</sup> These figures are consistent with estimates from senior government officials in Amhara who also estimate that around half of the households can graduate from the safety net by 2015. This forms an interesting contrast with the official policy to graduate all PSNP households from the safety net by 2015. It reflects that not only the programme is very ambitious but outweighs political considerations over technical food security programming.

<sup>8</sup> Interview FAO staff, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (January 2011).

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As a major player in the implementation of the safety net senior staff in the WFP claim that the FSP's stronger focus on the poverty dimension of food insecurity has resulted in a political drive by the government to reduce on its disaster response capacity at federal level<sup>9</sup>. WFP Ethiopia is in particular concerned because the reduction in federal disaster response capacity has not been matched by an increase in capacity at regional level. So while the federal government remains at the centre of the emergency response system the country's regional response capacity and ability to deal with sudden shocks is being undermined. The WFP regards the emergency response capacity as a fundamental asset to avoid future food crises tipping into disaster and sees international and local relief resources as essential to respond to such crises. With the emergency response system being stretched to its limits during the relative modest shock caused by the 2008 drought, the WFP is of the opinion that there is a need for a much tighter response system. This to anticipate and respond to crises such as the 2011 food crisis in Ethiopia and the wider Horn.

### ***The Impact of the Food Security Programme***

The expected results of the combined impact of the PSNP and OFSPs were very ambitious. The aim of Ethiopia's 2005-9 FSP was to 'enable the 8.29 million chronically food insecure people to attain food security within a five year period' and to 'improve significantly the food security situation of the remaining 6.71 million facing transitory food insecurity problems' (MoFED 2006). This high ambition is a reflection of the objective of the Coalition for Food Security which, when established in 2003, was to 'achieve a major turn-around of the food insecurity challenges within the timeframe of three to five years' (MoARD 2009). However, the number of chronically food insecure had increased from the estimated five million<sup>10</sup> at the design stage in 2003 to 8.29 million at the inception of the programme. A development to which the 2003 food crisis contributed significantly.

Evaluations of the PSNP and OFSPs do demonstrate significant programmatic impact. A number of evaluations found explicit evidence of the PSNP smoothing consumption and protecting assets (IDL 2006 and 2010, Devereux et al. 2008, IFPRI 2008, SCF 2009). In areas where the PSNP and OFSPs were implemented well, and where the two programmes were combined, household asset holdings increased and crop production improved (Gilligan et al.

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<sup>9</sup> Interview WFP staff, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (January 2011).

<sup>10</sup> The five million estimate being the previous ten years relief beneficiaries over the period 1994-2003 (DPPC, 2003). The proper estimate of the caseload at the beginning of the programme put the number of chronically food insecure at 8.29 million (MoFED, September 2003)

<sup>11</sup> The estimate of the new caseloads at the beginning of the programme subsequently reduced the number of transitory food insecure from around 10 million to 6.71 million.

2009). Progress towards graduation from the safety net has, however, been disappointing with only 56,895 households graduated by April 2009, that is less than 10 percent of all PSNP households (MoARD 2009). Graduation at scale as expected by the Ethiopian government did not happen.

Senior staff of the government's main international partners, both in Ethiopia and at international headquarters, expressed the view that achieving livelihood diversification proved a far more complex and time-consuming process than initially anticipated. In explaining why graduation fell short of expectations they stated capacity and implementation challenges rather than design faults. For example, only a quarter of the PSNP beneficiaries were covered by the OFSPs in the period 2005-2009 which was seen as compromising households' ability to graduate from the safety net. Concern was also expressed regarding the quality of the Public Works (the 'productive' element of the PSNP). Soil and water conservation activities, for example, were not logically sequenced but instead 'doing bits and pieces of everything with the work being rushed' and with resource transfers not made conditional on the quality of work done or the level of transformation taking place<sup>12</sup>.

As mentioned above the risk management utility of the PSNP was put to the test in 2008 when drought hit parts of northern Ethiopia. By the time additional resources were required to deal with the drought both the PSNP's contingency budget<sup>13</sup> and Ethiopia's Emergency Food Security Reserve were already depleted. This raised questions amongst agencies like the World Bank and the WFP whether the safety net was not overstretched and fundamentally under-resourced. The 2008 drought<sup>14</sup> also coincided with high inflation rates in Ethiopia which eroded the food purchasing power of those households receiving cash transfers (around five percent of all PSNP beneficiary households). Both donors and the government were confronted with dramatic budget increases to raise PSNP wages.

### ***Contestation of the graduation narrative***

With graduation seen as central to the FSP's success but falling way short of the government's expectations, differences between the government and its donors and development partners are becoming increasingly apparent. The government of Ethiopia aims to end the PSNP in 2014, arguing that after ten years of Public

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<sup>12</sup> Interview WFP staff, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (January 2011).

<sup>13</sup> 20% of the overall PSNP budget is reserved as risk management utility to deal with 'sudden disaster' and 'situations of immediate need'.

<sup>14</sup> The international food price crisis of 2008 is believed to have had little impact on Ethiopia although it had a significant short-term price effect on Ethiopia's regional markets albeit with a great deal of heterogeneity across regions as well as between rural and urban areas (Ulimwengu et al. 2009).



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Works participants should have graduated, though some Direct Support households might receive some on-going assistance. But while the government plans graduation at scale before the end of 2014, and demands regional governments such as Amhara Regional State to graduate all Public Works PSNP beneficiaries by 2013, the government's development partners expect that most PSNP beneficiaries will not achieve 'self-reliance' by 2014. They therefore think that the PSNP should continue in some form.

The graduation narrative is therefore at risk of becoming contested. International partners of the government fear that PSNP beneficiaries will be graduated for political reasons in order to achieve the government's pre-established targets to end people's dependency on aid. If true this would mean that many of the 'graduated' households have not done so on the basis of real improvement in their livelihoods. They are therefore at risk of being left as vulnerable and food insecure as before the start of the programme in 2005. If this happens it will result in the structural reproduction of the humanitarian needs-based response to addressing people's acute food needs, rather than the envisaged structural changes in policy to find a lasting solution to end Ethiopia's recurrent food crises.

The praxis of graduation is central in bridging the emerging divide between the government and its international partners. This requires a more fundamental debate about what can be regarded as the holy grail of the graduation narrative: the level of assets required for chronically food-insecure households to become food secure and graduate from the safety net.

### **Conclusion**

Based on a review of key literature, interviews with senior government officials and staff of other key food security actors, this chapter has examined how Ethiopia's famines and food crises have informed the making of food security policy.

There has been a significant change in how successive governments and its international partners have interpreted and framed Ethiopia's famines and food crises. It is my contention that in essence Ethiopia's four decades long quest for food security has resulted in the de-disasterisation of its famine vulnerability and recurrent food crises. The key issue is whether this de-disasterisation is driven by policies that structurally reproduce given or 'old' response options, resulting in the 'normalisation' of crises, or by a structural change in policy that allows for new types of response options holding a promise to end the country's famine vulnerability and recurrent food crises.



Emergency food relief as prescribed by the humanitarian discourse was the key response to the 1972-3 and the 1984-5 famines. In the wake of the 1984-85 famine however, the Derg government and its western donors initiated a structural change in policy by converging on the idea to put food aid to productive use. Policy developments by the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in the 1990's resulted in structural reproduction of the Derg's programmatic response options albeit characterised by an important cumulative change, in particular by seeking improvements in the quality of Food-for-Work activities. The food crises of 1999-2000 and 2002-3 led to the recognition that far from being unpredictable emergencies, hunger and food insecurity were also a reflection of chronic poverty and thus, predictable (McCord and Slater 2009). This resulted in a major structural change in policy in 2005 that promoted new types of programmes aimed at seeking an end to Ethiopia's recurrent food crises. In addressing food insecurity, Ethiopia's 2005-9 and 2009-14 FSPs link in new and innovative ways the humanitarian and developmental discourse. The multi-annual PSNP and OFSPs, with the OFSPs being modified with the HABP and CCI for the second phase of the PSNP (2010-14) were seen as essential and complementary for people to become food secure and to graduate from the safety net.

Graduation from the safety net, seen as central to the success of the PSNP and OFSP and the HABP and CCI which replaced the OFSPs in 2010 has so far fallen short of expectations. This has contributed to the contestation and politicisation of the graduation narrative and highlights the different perspectives and expectations between the government and its partners. The government has a 'developmental' vision and regards the PSNP as a temporary mechanism for achieving rural development and graduation-at-scale out of the safety net and out of poverty. The government's developmental partners see the PSNP as a safety net that should be institutionalised to provide permanent social protection against future external shocks. Recurrent drought in particular is seen as an inevitable shock that may push people back into poverty and food insecurity given the highly risky livelihood context in large parts of rural Ethiopia.

Experience of graduation on the basis of real improvement in people's livelihoods will tell whether there is a need for a further structural change in Ethiopia's food security policy. Evidence so far strongly suggests that there is a need to institutionalize safety nets as a core component of a longer term social protection system and that such a system should be a permanent and integral part of Ethiopia's wider policy environment. Such a development reflects an important additional structural change over current food security policies and creates space for the emergence of new types of response options, such as

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addressing people's vulnerability up front in the face of external shocks, that potentially can end Ethiopia's famine vulnerability and recurrent food crises.

As an integral part of wider pro-poor development assistance frameworks flexible safety nets, as a key element of social protection, are important in dealing with localised shocks. Increasingly so they will also be important for dealing with global shocks to the food system that render poor and marginalised people in less favoured areas vulnerable to food insecurity and hunger.

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# Implementing Large Scale Food Security Programs in Rural Ethiopia:

## Insights from the Productive Safety Net Program

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### Introduction

Historically, interventions designed to improve food security in rural Ethiopia were well-intentioned but haphazard. Often implemented in response to an emergency appeal, these were *ad hoc* interventions that did little to address the underlying causes of this food insecurity. For example, between 1993 and 2004, the Government of Ethiopia launched near-annual emergency appeals for food aid and other forms of emergency assistance.<sup>1</sup> While these succeeded in averting mass starvation, especially among the asset-less, they did not banish the threat of further famine and they did not prevent asset depletion by marginally poor households affected by adverse rainfall shocks. Further, the *ad hoc* nature of these responses meant that the provision of emergency assistance- often in the form of food-for-work programmes- was not integrated into ongoing economic development activities (Subbarao and Smith 2003). Starting in 2005, the Government of Ethiopia and a consortium of donors implemented a new response to chronic food insecurity in rural Ethiopia. Rather than annual appeals for assistance and ad hoc distributions, a new program called the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) was established.

The objective of the PSNP is "... to provide transfers to the food insecure population in chronically food insecure *woredas* in a way that prevents asset depletion at the household level and creates assets at the community level" (GFDRE, 2004, 2009a, 2010). Unlike the annual emergency appeals, it was conceived as a multi-year program so as to provide recipients with predictable

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<sup>1</sup> Aspects of the effectiveness of these appeals are assessed in Gilligan and Hoddinott (2007), Jayne, Strauss, and Yamano (2001), Jayne et al. (2002), and Lautze et al. (2003).

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and reliable transfers. In selecting these beneficiaries, geographic and community targeting is used. The program operates in the most food insecure *woredas* in rural Ethiopia defined in terms of their past history of food aid needs. Most beneficiary households do Public Works (PW): criteria for selection into these are that these households are poor (for example, they have low holdings of land and/or cattle) and food insecure but they also have able-bodied labor power. A much smaller proportion of beneficiaries receive Direct Support (DS): these households are poorer than those receiving public works employment and lack labor power; this includes those whose primary income earners are elderly or disabled. From 2005-2007, the PW component paid beneficiaries either 6 birr per day (increased to 8 birr in 2008 and 10 birr in 2010) in cash or three kilograms of cereals for work (depending on where they lived) on labor-intensive projects building community assets. Most activities occur between the months of January and June so as not to interfere with farming activities which occur in the second half of the year.

Discussions surrounding the PSNP frequently focus on its household level impacts. While these are clearly important, they neglect an important feature of the program – namely the significant investments made at the *woreda* and *kebele* level in the delivery of food security services and the implications of these investments for the capacity to deliver transfers and respond to food crises. The core components of the PSNP - the identification of public works projects, beneficiary selection, payments and appeals - are decentralized to *woredas*, *kebeles* and local communities. Citizens are supposed to have considerable voice in the operations of the program. Further, all aspects of the PSNP are intended to be gender-sensitive. As such, the PSNP represents a considerable departure from past food security interventions in Ethiopia and much of Africa. Rather than simply report how the program has affected household livelihoods and food security, we are interested, here, to take a system-wide approach to the program's impacts by focusing on how its design and inputs (such as funding, physical and human infrastructure) shape outcomes (such as, targeting, payments, the smooth functioning of institutions). This is a useful and often over-looked area of evaluation and is frequently relegated to the 'black box' of causality within technical impact evaluations. However, it is precisely these institutional design and context issues related to program delivery that mediate hypothesized impact results and lead to variation in results across communities and groups. Understanding how program inputs and context influence (and constrain) effective administration and capacity is critical in the future development of the program and in anticipation of how to respond to future shocks.

In this chapter, we assess the development of capacity to implement this large scale food security intervention in four ways: *woreda* capacity to implement the PSNP with particular attention to the payments process; the functioning of food security task forces; the extent to which targeting is truly participatory; and the mechanisms that exist for appeals and complaints. We conclude by considering the implications of these for future large scale food security interventions in Ethiopia and elsewhere.

## Data sources and methods

There are three distinguishing features of the data sources and methods used in this chapter. First, nearly all results are based on primary data collection undertaken between July and August, 2010. Second, mixed methods—data collection techniques using both qualitative and quantitative methods—have been employed. Doing so provides a richer pool of data and greater analytic power than would have been available with either of these methods used alone. Third, we adopt a “cascading” approach whereby data are collected at all levels: federal, regional, *woreda*, *kebele*, household, and individual.

Quantitative surveys were undertaken at the *woreda* level, in *kebeles*, and with households. These data were collected in Tigray, Amhara, Oromiya and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People’s Region (SNNPR). The first survey was implemented in June-August 2006 with the bulk of the interviewing conducted in July. A second round was fielded between late May and early July, 2008 and the most recent (third) round in June and July, 2010. The structure and content of the questionnaires remained largely unchanged across survey rounds.<sup>2</sup>

The sample was constructed by randomly sampling *woredas* proportional to size from a list of *woredas* where the PSNP was operating in 2006. Within each *woreda*, Enumeration Areas (EAs) were randomly selected from *kebeles* where the PSNP was active. Within each EA, 15 beneficiary and 10 non-beneficiary households were sampled from separate lists for each group. This procedure yielded a sample of 3,688 households. Across all three rounds, 3,140 households appear in all rounds yielding an attrition rate of 14.8 percent or, over five years, just under three percent per year.<sup>3</sup>In addition, in 2008 and 2010, the survey was extended to *woredas* in Amhara where USAID supports the provision of the PSNP through a High Value Food Basket (HVFB).

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<sup>2</sup> See Gilligan et al. (2007) for a complete description of the sample and 2006 survey.

<sup>3</sup> Berhane et al (2011) investigate whether potential differences in attrition rates can be attributed to differences in baseline characteristics by examining the correlation of the probability of attrition with household characteristics and region dummies. They show that being a beneficiary was not highly correlated with the probability of attrition. Older and smaller households were slightly more likely to attrite than other household types but the impact of these characteristics on attrition was small.

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The household questionnaire was complemented by a questionnaire administered at the community-level. In this questionnaire, the community is defined as the *kebele* or peasant association (PA). Enumerators were instructed to interview at least five people, perhaps together, who are knowledgeable about the community (e.g., community leaders, PA chairmen, elders, priests, teachers). They included at least one member of the *Kebele* Food Security Task Force and at least one woman and they are told that they may need to meet with other members of the *Kebele* Food Security Task Force in order to complete some sections of this questionnaire. The community questionnaire covered the following topics: location and access; water and electricity; services; education and health facilities; production and marketing; migration; wages; prices of food grains in the last year; and operational aspects of the PSNP. In addition, a price questionnaire obtained detailed information on current food prices.

A novel component of the 2010 survey was a *woreda*-level quantitative capacity survey. It provides data that clarify how the flow of funds from regions to beneficiaries works in practice. It included questions on: Staffing and resources; Planning and management of cash flow; and a flow of funds analysis—“following the money” from the region to the *woreda* to the beneficiaries. This survey instrument was implemented in all 85 *woredas* where the quantitative household survey was implemented. Interviews were completed by experienced survey supervisors who were instructed to meet with staff associated with the *Woreda* Food Security Office as well as those knowledgeable of the payment system.

In fieldwork carried out in 2010, ten *woredas* were selected for in-depth qualitative work. These were allocated across the four regions as follows: Amhara (3), Tigray (2), Oromiya (2), and SNNPR (3). These were chosen based on the following criteria: Representation of livelihood zones; Comparability of similar livelihoods across regions; Coincidence with quantitative household survey work; Extent of graduation (indicated by administrative data) and at least one *woreda* where the PSNP is supported by USAID.

Key informant interviews were held at the federal level and at all four regional levels. These were designed to deepen contextual understanding of implementation and outcomes as well as learn from institutional perspectives across different levels of administrative input and responsibility. At the *woreda*, *kebele*, and community level, a “cascading” interview approach was used involving interviews with officials and knowledgeable observers to build up a detailed understanding of issues around implementation of PSNP. Key informant interviews were also used to triangulate findings from the focus group discussions as well as add nuance and texture to these. A structured interview format was used to obtain information on a range of issues, including targeting

procedures, appeals and grievances processes; gender representation at local level.

Focus group discussions were held at the *kebele* level in all regions with households with varying levels of food security as well as separate discussions with men and women. Discussion in focus groups covered the following topics, although not all topics were covered in all groups: Gender/intrahousehold dynamics; Institutional access constraints; Appeals and grievances: Targeting and graduation procedures; and experiences with Public works and Direct Support.

### **Woreda capacity to implement the PSNP**

“The *woreda* is the key level of government that determines needs, and undertakes planning and implementation of safety net activities” (GFDRE, 2010). *Woreda* responsibilities for the PSNP include:

- The *Woreda* Office of Agriculture and Rural Development (WOARD) manages the PSNP.
- The *Woreda* Food Security Task Force (WFSTF) reviews *kebele* annual PSNP and HABP plans and budgets, ensures that contingency plans for PSNP risk financing are in place, and provides assistance to *kebeles*.
- The *Woreda* Food Security Desk (WFSD) coordinates safety net and household asset building activities.
- The *Woreda* Office of Finance and Economic Development (WOFED) ensures that the budgets for the safety net and household asset building programs are received in a timely manner at the *woreda* level and subsequent transfers to beneficiaries are undertaken on a timely basis (World Bank 2009, 25).

Given that under the PSNP, there has been a deliberate strategy to increase implementation capacity at the *woreda* level and significant resources have been dedicated to implementing this strategy, here we consider the success of this strategy in terms of improvements in measurable dimensions of capacity and whether these have resulted in more timely transfers to beneficiaries. We also consider the role played by early warning systems.

### **Woreda Resources for the PSNP**

We begin by describing the characteristics of key *woreda* staff involved in the implementation of the PSNP (Table 1).

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*Table 1: Characteristics of key woreda staff*

	<b>Head, Woreda Food Security Office</b>	<b>PSNP accountant</b>	<b>PSNP cashiers</b>
Sex (percent)			
Male	95	76	65
Female	5	24	35
Age			
Mean years	32	27	27
Schooling (percent)			
University degree	75	40	5
High school plus some post high school education	25	52	48
High school	0	8	20
Less than completed high school	0	0	27
Mean years worked in this:			
Position	2.5	3.4	3.3
Woreda	7.0	3.9	3.9
Occupation	3.2	3.1	3.2
Job status (percent)			
Full-time	94	25	18
Part-time	6	75	82
Received training specific to the PSNP			
Percent	93	95	50

SOURCE: *Woreda* quantitative questionnaire 2010.

Levels of formal education are high; these officials are predominantly male and young. They are relatively new to their positions. The Head of the *Woreda* Food Security Office (WFSO) works full-time while the PSNP accountant and cashiers generally work part-time on the PSNP. Nearly all heads of the WFSO and accountants working on the PSNP have received training. This was also apparent during the key informant interviews held at the *woreda* level. For example, knowledge and comprehension of the three types of the PSNP budget

lines (the Transfer, Capital and Administrative, and the Contingency) among the *Woreda* food security task forces (WFSTF) was high across all regions. In eight out of ten *woredas* in this study, the key actors of the program (WFSTF/OFSP coordinators) are familiar with the different budget lines of the PSNP. Training of cashiers is less common and focused on financial management.<sup>4</sup>

The quantitative *woreda* questionnaire contained a series of questions about infrastructure access and quality. Access to electricity varies widely and slightly less than 50 percent (40/85) of *woredas* had generators. There are considerable differences in phone access across these four regions. Tigray, and to a lesser extent SNNPR, had excellent (available all the time) or good (available most of the time) communications by landline, cell phones or both. Phone access in Amhara is mixed with about half the *woredas* surveyed having excellent or good access but a quarter having both landline and cell phone access that is “okay” or worse. Phone access is poorest in Oromiya. Internet access is largely absent. Seventy-two percent (61/85) have no internet access at all and of the remainder, only two *woredas* described access as either excellent or good. Access to government-owned vehicles is “rare or never available” in more than half the localities. In principle, *woreda* officials can rent private vehicles when government vehicles are not available. However, in less than 30 percent of *woredas* where access to government-owned vehicles was “sometimes available” or “rarely or never available” was a vehicle rented. On average, there are 1.84 computers available for the exclusive use of the PSNP. More than 90 percent were in working order at the time of the survey. Respondents were asked about their access to PSNP-related manuals. Generally, access is good but not perfect. Out of 85 surveyed *woredas*, 75 reported that they had the PIM, 75 had the targeting manual, 79 had the graduation manual, 72 had the financial management manual, and 67 had the manual covering watershed management. Access to manuals was most problematic in Oromiya.

One way of considering these resource data in aggregate is by assessing whether *woredas* have access to manuals, computers and printers, and vehicles—items that the program has some control over. Table 2 provides these summary data. Several features are apparent. First, relatively few *woredas* have all the resources needed to provide transfers on a timely basis. Across all surveyed *woredas*, only 17.7 percent have all manuals, at least one working computer and printer, and reasonable access to transport. Second, transport emerges as the single largest gap in capacity in many *woredas* in Tigray, Amhara, and SNNPR. Third, access to resources is—by a considerable margin—

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<sup>4</sup> During the workshops held in August 2011, regional representatives expressed some surprise about the low level of PASS training. They intimated that training is ongoing and that, given the timing of the survey, that staff turnover may have temporarily reduced the number of cashiers trained on PASS.

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poorest in Oromiya. There nearly a quarter of surveyed *woredas* lack working computers and/or printers, and have poor access to transport.

*Table 2: Aggregate PSNP resources*

Transport always available or available on short notice	At least one working computer and printer	<i>Woreda</i> has all manuals	Tigray	Amhara	Amhara-HVFB	Oromiya	SNNP	Total
Yes	Yes	Yes	7.7	30.0	10.0	9.5	23.8	17.7
Yes	Yes	No	7.7	0.0	0.0	4.8	0.0	2.4
Yes	No	Yes	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.8	1.2
Yes	No	No	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
No	Yes	Yes	46.2	55.0	40.0	19.1	52.4	42.4
No	Yes	No	23.1	10.0	10.0	28.6	14.3	17.7
No	No	Yes	7.7	5.0	30.0	14.3	0.00	9.4
No	No	No	7.7	3.3	10.0	23.8	4.8	9.4

SOURCE: *Woreda* quantitative questionnaire 2010.

### *Woreda differences in the timeliness of cash payments*

How do *woreda*-level resources affect the timeliness of payments to beneficiaries?<sup>5</sup> To answer this, we begin by describing how the cash payments system works and how long it takes for payments to be made. With this information in hand, we look at the relationship between the timeliness of cash payments and *woreda*-level resources available to support the PSNP.

#### *The cash payment system and the timeliness of payments*

The system for making cash payments consists of the following steps. *Kebeles* are responsible for forwarding public works attendance sheets and lists of individuals eligible for Direct Support to the WFSO. The WFSO enters these data using a payroll software system called PASS. Nearly all *woredas* surveyed, 90 percent, use

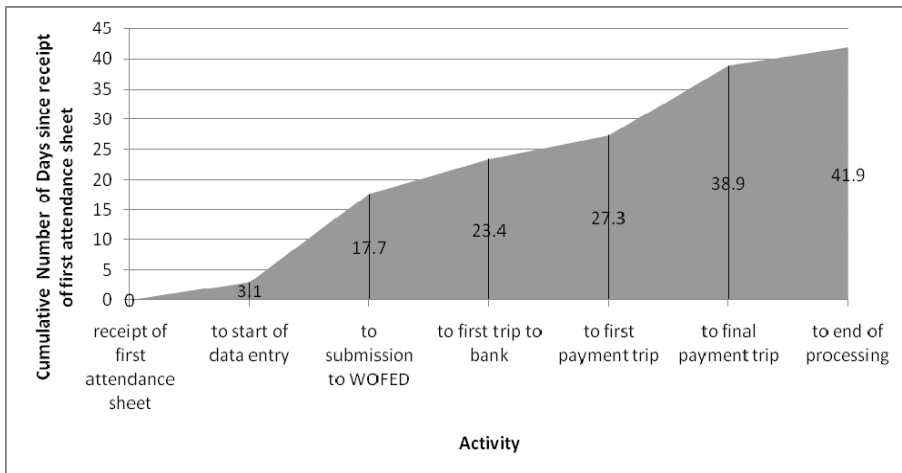
<sup>5</sup>We had intended to provide an analysis of the timeliness of food transfers similar to that provided above for cash payments. However, it proved difficult to obtain information from enough *woredas* to do so. We suspect that the principal reason for this is that responsibility for food distribution is split across a number of actors in many *woredas* and along with this makes it difficult to obtain a full picture as to how this works. For example, we have data from 49 *woredas* on who was responsible for arranging transport of food. This was handled by WFSO in 28 *woredas*, by an NGO in 15 *woredas*, by WOFED in one *woreda*, and by others (not specified) in five *woredas*.



PASS to enter these data, 6 percent use PASS only for public works participants, and 4 percent do not use PASS. When this is complete, this information is given to the WOFED. The regional Bureau Office of Finance and Economic Development (BOFED) notify WOFED when funds have been transferred to the branch of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia from which the *woreda* can withdraw funds. Once funds are withdrawn, arrangements are made to pay beneficiaries.

The *woreda* quantitative survey asked staff from WFSO and WOFED to construct a timeline listing the different dates on which these activities took place for the last month on which a cash payment was made; 71 out of the 85 *woredas* surveyed were able to provide this information.<sup>6</sup> Figure 1 summarizes this information showing the cumulative mean number of days taken to deliver payments. This shows that, on average, data entry into PASS begins 3.1 days after the receipt of the first attendance sheet. Data entry is completed 14.6 days later and so the payment information is given to WOFED 17.7 days after receipt of the first attendance sheet. On average, 5.7 days later, staff go to the Ethiopia Commercial Bank to withdraw funds for payment and 3.9 days after that, make the first payment trip. It takes 11.6 days to make all payments with result that, on average, 38.9 days elapse between the receipt of the first attendance sheet and the last day on which payments are made. There are a number of *woredas* where the process of entering data into the PASS continues after payments are made; this is described in Figure 1 as “to end of processing.”

Figure 1: Cumulative mean number of days to deliver payments, by activity



<sup>6</sup> In eight cases, the *woreda* had not made a cash transfer since January 2010 and in six cases, information was incomplete.

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Table 3 shows how the time taken to complete these activities varies by region showing the time taken by the fastest *woreda*, the *woreda* at the 25th percentile of the regional distribution of processing time, the median, the 75th percentile, and the slowest *woreda*. The rows are ordered from the fastest region-as measured by the median-to the slowest.

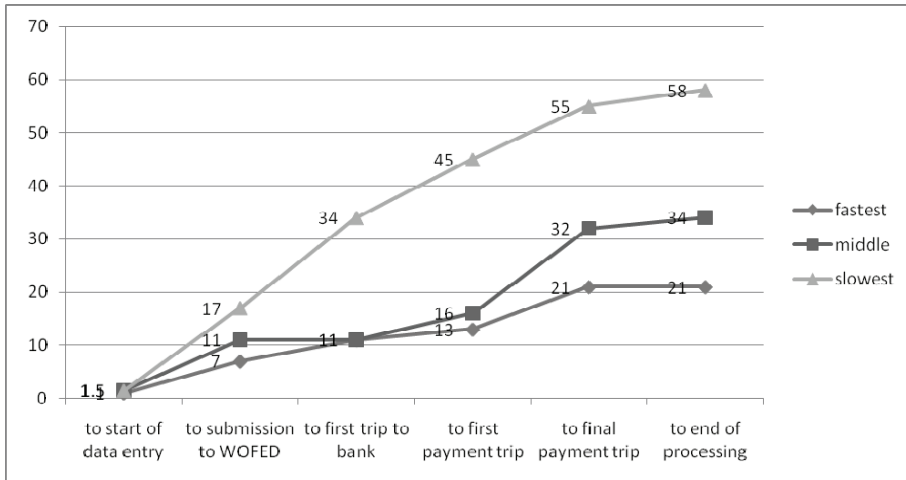
Tigray reports the fastest time between receipt of the first attendance sheet to the end of processing, the median time being 23.5 days. SNNPR and Amhara-HVFB are close behind with median times of 31 and 33 days, respectively. Median processing times in Amhara are slower at 39 days and the median in Oromiya, 50 days, lags far behind the other regions. Table 3 also shows that there is considerable variation *within* regions. If we look at the 75th percentile-which tells us that three-quarters of *woredas* processed payments at or faster than this number-we see that Tigray still outperforms the other regions but that there is now a smaller difference between Amhara and SNNPR. Generally, *Oromiya* processes payments more slowly than other regions, but while it has the *woreda* with the slowest processing time, it also has one of the fastest. This suggests that while a regional disaggregation is informative, it would be helpful to focus on additional factors that are associated with differences in processing cash payments.

*Table 3: Regional variations in number of days taken to deliver cash payments*

	Sample size	Fastest <i>woreda</i>	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile	Slowest <i>woreda</i>
Tigray	12	13	18.5	23.5	34	123
SNNP	21	14	23	31	44	78
Amhara-HVFB	6	6	30	33	34	42
Amhara	16	17	30.5	39	49	60
Oromiya	16	6	32.5	50	104.6	125

To do so, we begin with Figure 2. It divides this sample of *woredas* into three groups based on the speed at which they completed all activities and shows the median cumulative time taken from the receipt of the first attendance sheet to final payment for each group.

Figure 2: Timeliness of payments, by tertiles



Virtually all *woredas* start data entry immediately on receipt of the first attendance sheet. It is worth noting that, generally, *woredas* do not receive all attendance sheets at the same time. On average, 12 days elapsed between receipt of the first and final attendance sheets, but this hides considerable variation. In 75 percent of surveyed *woredas*, it took less than 15 days to receive all attendance sheets. In the remaining *woredas*, between 16 and 120 days passed between receipt of the first and last attendance sheets. When asked for their perceptions of what caused delays, 8 out of 13 *woredas* in Tigray and 17 out of 30 *woredas* in Amhara indicated that delays in receiving attendance sheets from *kebeles* was a problem. In both Tigray and Amhara, a number of respondents indicated that *kebeles* would not send attendance sheets until a specified amount of work had been completed. Few *woredas* wait until receipt of the last attendance sheet before beginning data entry, but in nearly all cases, this resulted in longer (than the median) processing times.

Comparing the fastest and middle group of *woredas*, the amount of time taken from the start of data entry to the first payment trip is approximately the same. The median time taken by the fastest group to complete all payments is 8 days compared to 16 days for the middle group, and this difference largely accounts for the overall difference between the fastest and middle groups. The slowest *woredas* take a long time to submit payment information to WOFED, have to wait 17 days before making the first trip to the bank to withdraw funds, and do not make their first payment for a further 10 days after that.

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BOFED notifies WOFEDs when funds have been transferred to the branch of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia from which the *woreda* can withdraw funds. About 72 percent of *woredas* call BOFED to see if funds have been sent to these branches. In nearly all cases, BOFED sends a letter verifying that funds have been deposited. On average, 16 days elapsed between attendance sheets being given to WOFED and the final trip to the bank to withdraw funds needed for payment. But variation in elapsed time across *woredas* is large. It took five days or less to obtain money for payment in half of the *woredas* surveyed but it took more than 15 days in 30 percent of *woredas* surveyed. Approximately one-third of all *woredas* reported that they were not able to withdraw the funds they needed to pay all beneficiaries.

### *Resources and payment delays*

As part of the *woreda* quantitative survey, respondents were asked to provide their views on what problems affected the timely payment of beneficiaries. These are described in Table 4.

Table 4: *Woreda perceptions of problems affecting payments*

	Sample size	Delay in receiving attendance sheets	Delay in getting funds from BOFED	Transport	PASS	Donor delays	Lack of cashiers or accountants and staff turnover	Lack of other resources	Too many beneficiaries to pay
Tigray	13	8	2	5	1	2	4	1	3
Amhara	19	8	9	5	6	0	4	3	1
Amhara-HVFB	11	4	6	5	2	0	5	0	0
Oromiya	21	1	19	16	4	0	2	0	1
SNNP	21	7	17	9	4	0	4	3	0

Source: *Woreda* quantitative questionnaire 2010.

These issues were also discussed during the qualitative key informant interviews held in 10 *woredas*. Many of these discussions highlighted significant delays in the release and transfer of budgets from regions to *woredas*. Somewhat surprisingly in light of Table 4, only two of the 10 *woredas* covered in the qualitative study reported that the front-loaded sources were insufficient to

effectively implement the program. The WFSTF in Gursum *Woreda* in Oromiya region indicated that they did not receive front-loaded resources:

We didn't receive any front-loading. The region sends us the first 40 percent PSNP resource transfer usually in March after 2-3months implementation of PSNP. This is inadequate to procure all required items for the PWs and other programs. As a result, we are forced to postpone procurement of capital items for PWs [ORO\_G/W-FG-1].

Are these concerns consistent with what we observe across all *woredas* where we have quantitative data on payment delays? To examine this, we ran regressions in which the dependent variable is the logarithm of the number of days taken by a *woreda* to complete a particular task (Table 5). Because the dependent variable is (log) days spent undertaking a task, a variable associated with this activity occurring more quickly will have a negative coefficient and a variable associated with this activity occurring more slowly will have a positive coefficient. These characteristics used as regressors are either Yes/No variables or they are expressed in logarithms. Where the characteristic is a Yes/No variable (for example, "Bank not local and more than one trip was required to obtain funds"), the reported coefficients can, to a first approximation, be interpreted as percentage changes. For example, the number 0.611 in column (2) means that, controlling for other characteristics, the time taken from the submission to WOFED to the first payment trip was 61.1 percent higher in *woredas* where PSNP staff could not use government vehicles.

Table 5: Associations between *woreda* characteristics and time spent on PSNP payment activities

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	<b>(Log) Number of days between</b>		
	<b>Receipt of first attendance sheet and WOFED submission</b>	<b>Submission to WOFED and first payment trip</b>	<b>First payment trip and last payment trip</b>
Both landline and cell phone service is excellent or good	-0.617*	-0.180	0.194
	(-1.663)	(-0.423)	(0.373)
Electricity supply is excellent or good	-0.562*		
	(-1.737)		
PSNP funds were front-loaded		-1.700***	-1.220**

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		(-3.909)	(-2.140)
Bank not local and more than one trip was required to obtain funds		0.101	-0.268
		(0.179)	(-0.473)
PSNP staff could not use government vehicles		0.611*	0.730**
		(1.710)	(1.994)
Number of cashiers working exclusively for PSNP?	-0.447*	0.066	0.108
	(-1.875)	(0.195)	(0.296)
PSNP accountant trained in PASS	-0.957***		
	(-2.916)		
Number of years PSNP accountant has worked in <i>woreda</i> (log)		-0.016	-0.042
		(-0.0537)	(-0.119)
Travel time to furthestmost <i>kebele</i> (log)	0.380		-0.071
	(1.343)		(-0.157)
Constant	2.574	2.075***	2.925
	(1.530)	(2.983)	(1.135)
Observations	50	46	46
Adjusted R-squared	0.207	0.182	0.062

NOTES: t statistics in parentheses. Standard errors robust to heteroscedasticity. \* = significant at the 10 percent level; \*\* = significant at the 5 percent level; \*\*\* = significant at the 1 percent level.

Table 5 presents a number of interesting results. Good access to communications infrastructure is associated with faster processing of the attendance sheets. Better electricity supply helps, too, as does having more staff. The most striking result in column (1), however, is the coefficient on whether the PSNP accountant was trained. Where this has occurred, processing of attendance sheets goes much faster. We explored whether other characteristics (not reported) of *woredas* affected the time spent on this task. Access to working computers and printers did not affect this, but this may be because virtually all

*woredas* now have these. Access to manuals did not seem to matter nor did the characteristics (age, sex, education) of the staff working on the PSNP.<sup>7</sup>

What accounts for the length of time it takes from the submission of information to WOFED to the first trip to pay beneficiaries? As described above, the key constraint is whether funds have been transferred from the regional BOFED to the local branch of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia. Where these funds have been front-loaded (i.e., pre-transferred), the amount of time taken to complete this step is dramatically lower (column [2]). The mean time to complete these activities in *woredas* where funds have not been front-loaded is about 20 days, while in *woredas* where front-loading occurs, it is only two days. Table 6 indicates that this difference persists even when we control for other *woreda* characteristics.

Lack of access to vehicles appears to be the most important factor when it comes to assessing what influences the amount of time it takes to make all payments. Column (3) shows that where PSNP staff did not have access to government vehicles, and hired private vehicles or walked to payment sites, it took approximately 73 percent longer to complete all transfers. Front-loading of funds was also correlated with faster payments. In these results, and in others not reported, other characteristics, such as the age, sex, and education of PSNP staff, travel times, and other *woreda* resources (such as availability of computers) did not have statistically significant associations with the time taken to complete these activities.

It should be noted that *woreda* staff expressed considerable concern about these delays. They resulted in the procurement of poor construction materials for the public works and this, in turn, led to low quality of public works. In addition, delays in transfer reduce the amount of time available to complete public works and created difficulties in managing these activities. These problems were compounded when disbursement of the capital budget was delayed.

The budget delay causes inappropriate procurement of materials that lack proper quality. Besides, it is difficult to properly administer the work [AM\_S/KI-1].

The budget is supposed to be released in January, but is usually delayed for over a quarter of the year. Even when it is released, by the time we are able to purchase materials with the capital budget, we are not in the intended fiscal

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<sup>7</sup> We considered whether *woredas* that had more experience with cash transfers processed payments more quickly. Using data collected in the *woreda* quantitative survey, we calculated the number of times in 2010 that the *woreda* had made cash payments prior to the payment cycle described here. Neither descriptive statistics nor regression analysis showed a correlation between prior experience with cash and processing times.

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year anymore due to the delay; rather, the work is postponed for the subsequent year[TIG\_S/KI-1].

If the capital budget is delayed, we will not have time to buy industry products or construct infrastructures since there is a limited time before the end of the budget year. We will not be able to buy tools on time. It prevents us from putting plans into action. The time that could be used for implementation will be shortened [SN\_D/KI-1].

How are these variations in the timeliness of payments viewed by beneficiaries? In 2008, respondents were asked a series of Yes/No questions, while in 2010, respondents could say if they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed.

*Table 6: Beneficiaries perceptions regarding the timeliness of payments (percent)*

	2008		2010			
	(% saying yes)	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Did not state
Tigray	17	8	27	34	22	8
Amhara	40	9	35	38	16	1
Amhara-HVFB	52	32	36	24	8	1
Oromiya	15	5	9	41	37	9
SNNPR	53	27	27	28	16	1

SOURCE: Household questionnaire 2008, 2010.

*Table 7: Number days notice that beneficiaries had that payments would be made (percent)*

	Tigray	Amhara	Amhara-HVFB	Oromiya	SNNPR
1 day	68	83	72	76	72
2-3 days	21	14	24	16	25
4-5 days	2	1	2	4	2
More than 5 days	8	2	2	4	1

SOURCE: Household questionnaire 2010.



In Oromiya, considerable concern was expressed about timeliness of payments. Only 14 percent of beneficiaries agree or strongly agree that they receive payments on a timely basis and 37 percent strongly disagree. While Oromiya is the worst performing region by this measure, beneficiaries clearly perceive that there is considerable scope for improvement in the timeliness of payments.<sup>8</sup> As a general rule, beneficiaries have no idea when their payments are coming (Table 7). Between 68 and 83 percent receive only one day's notice that they will be paid.<sup>9</sup>

Timeliness of payment elicited considerable comment during the qualitative fieldwork. Twenty-four out of 30 focus groups came to consensus that payments were made irregularly and often they did not know from one month to the next when to expect payment.

We got paid 3 months in cash and 3 months in food. There is a delay in time of the payments. For instance, PSNP starts in January every year but payment delays up to March [TIG\_A/FG-1].

We are paid every 2-3 months. The payment time is not predictable and timely information not given. We receive when transfer comes [ORO\_G/FG-4].

[We have] no clue [when we will receive next payment]. We are not informed when the next payment will be [ORO\_Z/FG-3].

We do not know when the payment is coming. We only know the arrival when it is announced. We prefer to be paid monthly. If the payment could have been paid without delay each month, this would have been the basis for our growth [SN\_D/FG-3].

We get our payments accidentally, in an unpredictable way [SN\_S/FG-1].

When asked, "Do you know when you will receive your next payment?" the majority of responses indicated that there was a lot of uncertainty when the next payment will arrive. Twenty-four out of 26 focus groups that answered this question said that they did not know the date. Only two groups indicated that they expected the next payment to be made on a specific date.

Table 8 shows that nearly all (93 percent) beneficiaries typically walk 12 to 16 kilometers to the place where they will be paid. Given that beneficiaries have

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<sup>8</sup> Regional level discussions indicated that there may have been some issues specifically relating to the 2010 payment cycle which affected the timeliness of payments. In Oromiya, it was indicated that payments were delayed to those *woredas* that had been tardy in the distribution of client cards. Tigrayan authorities noted that lack of grain availability led to payment delays in some localities.

<sup>9</sup> Participants in the regional workshop in Tigray provided a caveat to this finding. They noted that in Tigray, beneficiaries are given an approximate date about a week before payments are made; this date is subsequently confirmed. Where this approach is implemented, our data will understate the amount of notice that beneficiaries receive.

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to cover this same distance when they return home, and given that being paid requires long periods of standing in line, it is not surprising that many beneficiaries must sleep at the payment site. The fact that 84 percent of beneficiaries incur no costs when travelling to receive their payment, and that the average cost in all regions is usually less than one day’s wage, this must be put in context. These costs are low because (outside of SNNPR) beneficiaries are walking long distances and are sleeping in the open. Fortunately, reports of harassment or robbery during the travel to or from the payment site are quite low. This is true for both male- and female-headed households.

*Table 8: Beneficiaries experiences with travel to the payment site*

Region	Distance to payment site	Average cost incurred for travel/overnight stay at payment site	Beneficiaries had to stay overnight at the payment site	Beneficiaries were subject to harassment during the travel to/ from the payment site	Beneficiaries were robbed of food or cash during the travel to/from the payment site
	(kilometers)	(birr)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
Tigray	12.4	7.0	39.6	1.6	1.5
Amhara	14.2	12.4	26.9	2.6	2.0
Amhara–HVFB	16.6	8.5	52.5	2.7	2.9
Oromiya	11.6	15.6	27.6	2.8	1.3
SNNPR	8.4	6.7	12.3	4.1	1.6

SOURCE: Household questionnaire 2008, 2010.

***Early warning capacity***

Another topic investigated in the qualitative work was early warning and response (EWR) capacity at the regional and *woreda* level. The PSNP PIM clearly indicates that the PSNP will incorporate the information from the findings of the Early Warning System while preparing a contingency plan to effectively respond to the imminent risks in a given area. Strikingly, many of the capacity concerns raised in those discussions echo those that emerge from these quantitative data on capacity to make transfers. While the regional bureaus were generally adequately staffed, staff and capacity limitations were widely reported at the *woreda* level and this adversely affected the collection and reporting of

early warning data in an accurate and timely manner, the preparation of contingency plans, and the ability of *woreda* officials to respond to shocks.

Poor communications and lack of transport were frequently cited as significant constraints to EWR activities. The regional EWR Case Team in Amhara described the condition as follows: "...there is no transportation and logistics to immediately deliver assistances to the required locations. Even it is difficult for yourself to get public transport" [AM/ R-FG-3]. These concerns were echoed at the *woreda* level. A key informant on EWR from Saesi Tsedamba *Woreda* in Tigray stated, "Vehicles and motorbikes are nearly nonexistent" [TIG-S/ W-KI-3].

Respondents were asked whether there were any significant delays in responding shocks from the federal level. Across the ten focus groups that we conducted on this topic, eight indicated that the response was not timely, often arriving after communities have deployed negative coping strategies already. Respondents explained that the resources arrive, on average, two-to-three months after the shocks struck. However, the early warning and transfer experts in Shebedino and Tembaro *Woredas* indicated that the responses were timely. In part, this might relate to the fact that these two *woredas* are more easily reached from the regional capital.

### ***Kebele Perspectives on Implementation***

The PSNP relies heavily on the creation and use of new administrative structures at the *kebele* and community level. Do they function as envisaged? Are households aware of these Task Forces and do they understand their role in the implementation of the PSNP? How do beneficiaries perceive their experiences with the payment process? We examine these questions here

#### ***The Kebele and Community Food Security Task Forces***

All *kebeles* should have a Food Security Task Force (KFSTF). These task forces:

- Undertake community mobilization activities to identify and prioritize community needs;
- Plan prioritized activities with community members;
- Target beneficiaries and participants for public works and direct support with input from the community;
- Prepare a *Kebele* Safety Net Plan in consultation with *woreda* sectoral offices;

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- Maintain minutes of KFSTF meetings on Safety Net issues, lists of participants, and progress reports;
- Establish and training Community Food Security Task Forces; and
- Participate in the monitoring and evaluation of safety net activities (GFDRE 2010).

*Kebele* FSTFs existed in all surveyed localities. Table 9 describes their composition. Broadly speaking, these match what was set out in the PIM. In nearly all (98 percent) surveyed *kebeles*, there is at least one woman and at least one Development Agent on the KFSTF. Table 10 describes aspects of record keeping undertaken by these task forces. Participant lists and minutes of meetings are well-kept and some, but not all, keep progress reports.

*Table 9: Composition of the Kebele Food Security Task Force (KFSTF), by region*

<b>Percent of KFSTF that contain:</b>											
<b>Region</b>	<b>Survey year</b>	<b>Chairperson of kebele council</b>				<b>A member of the kebele council</b>		<b>An elected representative from elders</b>		<b>An elected representative from youth</b>	
Tigray	2010	74				83		81		89	
Amhara	2010	94				83		80		86	
Amhara–HVFB	2010	90				92		87		87	
Oromiya	2010	96				96		96		88	
SNNPR	2010	100				91		94		83	
<b>Number of elected representatives from women’s groups</b>											
<b>Number of Development Agents</b>											
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>&gt; 2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>&gt; 2</b>		
Tigray	2010	5	37	17	40	0	54	31	15		
Amhara	2010	0	37	40	23	0	51	29	20		
Amhara–HVFB	2010	0	22	42	36	0	22	8	70		
Oromiya	2010	0	13	48	39	0	39	31	30		
SNNPR	2010	0	37	34	29	3	46	14	37		

SOURCE: Community questionnaire, 2010.

Table 10: Kebele Food Security Task Force (KFSTF) record keeping, by region

Region	Does the KFSTF keep:		
	Records or minutes of meetings	Progress reports of activities	List of Participants
Tigray	83	69	89
Amhara	86	64	100
Amhara–HVFB	95	76	100
Oromiya	79	79	96
SNNPR	77	54	100

SOURCE: Community questionnaire, 2010.

### *Households' Interactions with the Community FSTF*

At the local level, Community Food Security Task Force's (CFSTF) are established to:

- Identify potential participants for the PSNP;
- Undertake needs assessments so as to identify those households who can participate in public works and those without sufficient labor or other support who will need direct support;
- Ensure that the proposed list of participants is commented on and endorsed by the general meeting of the village residents;
- Finalize the list of participants and submit it to the KFSTF;
- Prepare a pipeline of projects; and
- Monitor periodically public works projects to ensure that they are undertaken as prioritized.

Given its role as the link between the PSNP and the community, it is useful to begin by seeing whether respondents were aware of the existence and function of the CFSTF. We disaggregate the sample into three groups: households that had participated in the public works component of the PSNP, households that had received any transfers under the Direct Support component of the PSNP, and households that had received work under PSNP and Direct Support payments. Table 11 shows a consistent, but also somewhat surprising, pattern across all regions. Between 2006 and 2008, knowledge of the CFSTF has increased among

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the program beneficiaries, particularly in Tigray and Amhara. It also shows that the percentage of program beneficiaries that are aware of the CFSTF and had contact with the CFSTF increased significantly in all regions and among both kinds of beneficiaries from 2006 to 2008. However, this pattern reverses between 2008 and 2010 with awareness of and contact with CFSTFs at best remaining static and in some cases declining. One, admittedly speculative reason for this could be that the frequency with which beneficiary lists are being updated has declined, resulting in less contact between CFSTFs and beneficiaries. In general, female-headed households were 5 to 13 percentage points less likely, depending on the region, to have contact with the CFSTFs.

*Table 11: Household contact with the Community Food Security Task Force (CFSTF), by region, year, and beneficiary status*

PSNP beneficiary status, received:	Tigray			Amhara			Amhara-HVFB		
	2006	2008	2010	2006	2008	2010	2006	2008	2010
	(Percent)								
	<b>Aware that the CFSTF exists</b>								
Public Works	76	92	86	70	89	86	-	-	96
Direct Support	62	83	64	45	79	57	-	-	78
Public Works and Direct Support	64	98	88	33	-	80	-	-	93
	<b>Aware that the CFSTF exists and had contact with the CFSTF</b>								
Public Works	44	75	81	49	83	81	-	-	78
Direct Support	17	57	54	21	69	59	-	-	55
Public Works and Direct Support	34	73	71	17	-	77	-	-	76

PSNP beneficiary status, received:	Oromiya			SNNPR		
	2006	2008	2010	2006	2008	2010
	(Percent)					
	<b>Aware that CFSTF exists</b>					
Public Works	79	86	78	88	91	87
Direct Support	54	66	50	84	76	77
Public Works and Direct Support	73	-	80	93	-	85
	<b>Aware that the CFSTF exists and had contact with the CFSTF</b>					
Public Works	53	80	69	67	83	86
Direct Support	24	62	61	47	69	68
Public Works and Direct Support	46	-	89	80	-	83

SOURCE: Household questionnaire: 2006, 2008, 2010.

NOTE: Cells are left blank if there were fewer than 10 responses.

Households were also asked to identify the purpose of the CFSTF and Table 12 summarizes their responses. Gilligan et al. (2009, Table 3.4a) showed that between 2006 and 2008, there was a significant increase in the proportion of PSNP beneficiaries who could identify specific CFSTF functions. Table 12 shows the extent of this awareness using data from the 2010 household survey, disaggregated by beneficiary status and region. When compared to 2008, there is a decline in households' ability to identify CFSTF roles. Also note that respondents in Oromiya had the greatest difficulty in identifying the role of the CFSTF and Oromiya is the region where contact with CFSTFs is lowest. Female-headed households, and households headed by individuals with no formal schooling, were less likely to be able to identify these roles.

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*Table 12: Household knowledge of the role of the Community Food Security Task Force (CFSTF), by region and beneficiary status*

	<b>Tigray</b>	<b>Amhara</b>	<b>Amhara- HVFB</b>	<b>Oromiya</b>	<b>SNNPR</b>
<b>Percentage of households who indicated that one purpose of the CFSTF was to mobilize the community for public works</b>					
PSNP beneficiary	71.7	74.4	82.9	59.8	79.3
Non-beneficiary	68.2	46.9	68.4	41.6	63.0
All	70.7	59.5	74.3	49.6	70.6
<b>Percentage of households who indicated that one purpose of the CFSTF was to identify individuals to participate in public works</b>					
PSNP beneficiary	62.0	54.8	70.9	48.5	65.2
Non-beneficiary	57.3	33.8	64.6	35.7	51.4
All	60.7	43.4	67.2	41.3	57.8
<b>Percentage of households who indicated that one purpose of the CFSTF was to identify direct support beneficiaries</b>					
PSNP beneficiary	62.3	51.8	67.9	40.7	62.1
Non-beneficiary	56.9	30.5	58.8	29.5	48.6
All	60.8	40.3	62.5	34.4	54.9
<b>Percentage of households who indicated that one purpose of the CFSTF was to monitor public works activities</b>					
PSNP beneficiary	64.5	76.9	72.2	58.5	71.8
Non-beneficiary	63.6	43.7	63.6	38.6	57.7
All	64.2	58.9	67.1	47.3	64.2

The PSNP Log Frame states that beneficiaries should be able to understand how the program works. In both 2008 and 2010, PSNP beneficiaries were asked directly if they felt that they had received all information needed to understand how the program works. In 2008, this was asked as a Yes/No question, while in 2010, respondents could say if they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed. In 2008 between 55 (Oromiya) and 80 (SNNPR) percent of respondents answered “yes.” If we assume that “strongly agree” and “agree” are



equivalent to “yes,” then Table 13 shows that there have been noticeable improvements in understanding in Amhara (from 65 to 83 percent), Amhara-HVFB (74 to 84 percent), and SNNPR (from 80 to 88 percent). There are slight declines in understanding in Tigray and a considerable percentage of beneficiaries (45 in 2008 and 47 in 2010) in Oromiya who do not feel that they have sufficient information. Female-headed households and households where the head had no formal schooling were slightly less likely to strongly agree that they had sufficient information to understand how the program works.

Table 13a: Beneficiaries received all information needed to understand how the program works (percent), by region

	2008		2010			
	(Percent saying yes)	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Did not state
Tigray	74	22	47	14	7	9
Amhara	65	23	60	12	3	1
Amhara-HVFB	74	38	46	11	3	2
Oromiya	55	18	35	22	15	10
SNNPR	80	47	41	8	3	2

SOURCE: Household questionnaire 2008, 2010.

Table 13b: Beneficiaries received all information needed to understand how the program works (percent), by sex and schooling of household head

	2010				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Did not state
Sex of head					
Male	30.4	45.4	12.4	7.1	4.8
Female	26.9	46.4	15.9	4.9	5.9
Education of head					
No schooling	29.3	44.8	14.1	6.5	5.4
Any formal schooling	35.9	44.5	10.1	6.3	3.2

SOURCE: Household questionnaire 2010.

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### Targeting

Targeting under the PSNP combines both categorical and individual selection using both administrative and community mechanisms. Administrative mechanisms include the provision of a specified number of clients that can be included within a specific administrative area (*woreda, kebele*, etc.); guidance on targeting criteria to be used at the community level; and oversight to ensure transparency and accuracy. Oversight ensures upward accountability, through regional oversight of *woredas* and *woreda* oversight of *kebeles*. Accountability relations work downward as well through community targeting, which includes the identification of clients by community FSTFs and verification of the client list in a public meeting, leaving open the possibility for appeals and complaints. The PIM specifies that households who are targeted should fall into the following categories:

- be community members;
- have faced continuous food shortages (three months of food gap or more per year) in the last three years;
- be acutely food-insecure due to a shock resulting in the severe loss of assets; and,
- lack adequate family support and other means of social protection and support (GFDRE 2010, 24).

The PIM specifies supplementary criteria to assist communities in targeting:

- Status of household assets: landholding, quality of land, food stock, labor availability;
- Income from agricultural and nonagricultural activities; and,
- Specific vulnerability, such as female-headed households, households with chronically-ill members, and elderly-headed households looking after orphans.

According to the PIM (GFDRE 2010), public works participants include men and women over the age of 16 who are able-bodied. Pregnant women after four months and lactating mothers 10 months after the birth of their child are exempt from public works.

The PIM specifies a number of administrative criteria to determine individuals who should receive unconditional transfers, including the elderly, disabled, and people who are temporarily unable to work, such as those who are sick, pregnant women after four months and lactating mothers up to 10 months.

Government and donor officials have worried that direct support beneficiaries have been asked to contribute to public works, although this clearly runs against the PIM. However, in all but one *woreda*, officials indicate that direct support beneficiaries do not contribute to public works. In Gursum, Oromiya, the Public Works Focal Point explained that it is common for direct support beneficiaries to provide childcare at public works sites and prepare coffee for workers, but that they do not provide physical labor.

The revised PIM (June 2010) introduced a new targeting rule that all members of eligible PSNP households should be listed as clients of the program. This rule is known as “full family targeting” (FFT). The reasoning behind introducing the new rule was to help client households to graduate by providing a transfer for every household member and prevent dilution of transfers. Along with FFT, the targeting rules for the PSNP incorporate a “labor cap.” This covers households with labor but who have some members who are unable to work. The able-bodied household member(s) are required to work additional days on behalf of those who cannot work in order to help earn their transfer. Under the labor cap rule, the able-bodied household member cannot work more than 20 days in a month. These households are targeted for public works assistance, even though some of the household members may be unable to work.

Key informants and participants in focus groups stated that the amount of funds available for PSNP payments are governed by a quota extends all the way down to the lowest administrative level, the *kebele*. (This is disputed by regional and federal officials who state that no such quota exists.) FSTF officials and development agents in all *kebeles* visited confirmed that the *kebele* quota is divided among sub-*kebeles*, following a similar process of assessing population size, livelihoods, and wealth in different areas. Community FSTFs prepare a list of beneficiaries based on the quota they receive and Development Agents train community-level officials on targeting procedures. All focus groups confirmed that community members participate in targeting by verifying and agreeing on the list of clients. In nearly all *kebeles*, members of the community FSTF, which are elected by the community, determined the initial list of beneficiaries. A public meeting is called and the list is read and subsequently adjusted according to the feedback and views of community members. There were few indications that the process at this level was exclusive, with the exception of the women’s group in Sekota *Woreda* who insisted that “low class” women stayed away from the community targeting meeting. The beneficiary list is submitted to the *kebele* FSTF for review and approval. Any questions and concerns are referred back to the community FSTF, although few instances of this happening in practice were mentioned by *kebele* officials. *Kebele* FSTF officials gather beneficiary lists from all sub-*kebeles* and submit these to the *woreda* FSTF.

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While the quantitative data does not show systemic evidence of receipt of public works employment being influenced by a household's social or political connections (see Tables 16 and 17),<sup>10</sup> there were reported instances of favoritism and nepotism by elites at the community-level. When asked if better-off community members were targeted, a development agent in Oromiya noted:

*Aba gare* (the community headman) has the upper hand in the targeting process and this has at times undermined the transparency of targeting because of favoritism and the inclusion of individuals that are not eligible [ORO\_Z/K-KI-2].

In some areas, there were exclusion errors because of absenteeism at targeting meetings and because community members were not fully informed of the wealth status of their neighbors. When asked if better-off community members had been included on beneficiary lists, a development agent in Soyame Kebele explained:

Yes, they have. There were problems with targeting and some were excluded who should have been listed. Targeting was done without a proper wealth ranking exercise being carried out. Wealth ranking was done later (after the initial targeting), but many were not covered because of the community vote. The community voted on those to be included but they did not have reliable data on which to base their decisions. Others were excluded because they could not make it to the targeting meeting for reasons such as being ill [S\_T/K-KI-2].

Do households understand these processes? Across all regions, Table 14 presents a consistent, yet somewhat unsettling pattern. As previously discussed in Gilligan et al. (2009), between 2006 and 2008 respondents increasingly described program criteria in terms of poverty and were able to do so in increasingly specific ways. However, between 2008 and 2010, this trend reverses with fewer respondents describing poverty-related criteria. Instead, access to the program is increasingly described as random or is determined by a quota system.

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<sup>10</sup> Coll-Black et al (2011) provide further evidence consistent with this claim.

Table 14: Percentage of households reporting that the following criteria were used to select Public Works participants in their locality, by region and year

	Tigray			Amhara			Amhara-HVFB	
	2006	2008	2010	2006	2008	2010	2008	2010
Poverty								
People who are seen to be poor	42.4	62.1	24.1	55.7	75.9	22.7	86.2	25.8
People with small or no landholding	32.7	44.5	24.9	33.4	55.1	23.1	81.4	27.0
People with few or no cattle/oxen	9.6	22.1	13.3	10.6	30.2	11.2	51.2	16.2
Connections								
Religious or ethnic groups	0.3	1.3	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.0	4.1	0.0
Family friends of project staff or village leadership	3.2	3.0	1.5	5.0	2.8	1.5	8.7	2.9
Other								
Randomly	2.3	1.5	19.0	1.8	3.0	17.8	6.1	20.4
Quota for each <i>kebele</i>	11.7	17.5	26.5	11.3	7.3	20.7	24.4	21.5
People badly affected by drought	14.1	19.1	6.5	14.7	22.0	4.9	35.2	8.7
			<b>Oromiya</b>				<b>SNNPR</b>	
		<b>2006</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2010</b>	
Poverty								
People who are seen to be poor		45.3	67.3	21.4	68.0	72.4	26.5	
People with small or no landholding		42.0	40.6	20.3	44.4	54.5	29.6	
People with few or no cattle/oxen		20.4	15.4	8.7	18.0	25.3	10.6	
Connections								
Religious or ethnic groups		0.5	0.3	0.0	1.2	2.6	1.5	
Family friends of project		8.4	14.3	3.3	4.5	2.1	1.9	

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staff or village leadership						
Other						
Randomly	2.7	2.5	9.3	1.2	8.0	18.0
Quota for each <i>kebele</i>	10.6	5.4	18.7	2.5	10.8	22.4
People badly affected by drought	28.2	13.7	9.6	16.6	26.3	8.2

Perceptions of the criteria applied to allocate Direct Support are given in Table 15. These results mirror those found for identification of access to public works—namely a reduction in the percentage of households that could provide specific criteria and an increase in those who perceive that access is either random or governed by a quota.

In the focus group discussions, there is an overall understanding that the “poor” or the “poorest of the poor” are targeted under the PSNP. Again there was a tendency among the groups that were interviewed to view the “poor” as an undifferentiated category. There was little understanding of the program criteria for determining which population groups should be targeted. This could be interpreted as ignorance of the targeting criteria. A different explanation is that respondents are reluctant to over-specify who should benefit, because needs are so extensive and under-coverage is a problem. This, in turn, relates to the preference of most communities for broader targeting, including more households rather than larger transfers for a smaller segment of the population. Instead, focus groups offered their own targeting criteria of who should benefit from the program. Three of four focus groups in Shebedino *Woreda* in SNNPR stated that the “landless” are deserving of PSNP support. Elsewhere, landlessness was not mentioned consistently. Disability or the inability to work was the next most common criterion, mentioned by focus groups in all regions.

Table 15: Percentage of households reporting that the following criteria were used to select Direct Support participants in their locality, by region and year

	Tigray			Amhara			Amhara-HVFB	
	2006	2008	2010	2006	2008	2010	2008	2010
Demographic								
Old people	70.8	84.0	23.4	64.3	73.5	23.0	92.4	24.5
Disabled	55.9	75.1	23.4	54.6	72.6	19.1	88.9	23.9
Connections								
Religious or ethnic groups	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
Family friends of project staff or village leadership	1.5	1.0	0.9	1.9	1.6	1.4	4.8	1.8
Other								
Randomly	0.3	4.2	19.5	1.7	0.9	15.8	3.6	18.7
Quota for each <i>kebele</i>	4.9	7.3	23.7	1.2	0.5	22.1	16.8	22.8

	Oromiya			SNNPR		
	2006	2008	2010	2006	2008	2010
Demographics						
Old people	65.7	69.5	21.9	65.5	67.7	25.2
Disabled	59.5	59.1	20.8	69.4	74.0	21.1
Connections						
Religious or ethnic groups	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.3	2.3	0.8
Family friends of project staff or	3.0	8.5	3.1	1.1	0.9	1.4

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village leadership						
Other						
Randomly	2.0	1.2	14.6	0.4	5.7	18.5
Quota for each <i>kebele</i>	3.1	1.4	15.2	0.3	6.6	19.4

Although nearly all groups do not recall specific targeting criteria for the PSNP, nearly all expressed a basic understanding of the criteria for targeting direct support. In general, this is understood as those who are unable to work, whether because of disability, sickness, or old age. The poor who can work are regarded as those who should participate in public works. Only 3 out of 40 focus groups expressed ignorance of the criteria for receiving direct support. Further, there was broad agreement with the rules for targeting direct support.

Yet, in spite of problems with targeting, 24 of 40 focus groups that were interviewed maintained that targeting had been carried out correctly. Ten groups suggested there were problems with targeting, although in some groups members disagreed with at least some claiming that targeting had been done correctly. A further six groups gave no response. Overall, ten groups referred to a limited quota size as having contributed to the exclusion of some chronically food-insecure households.

Furthermore, there is a general understanding that the community should also be involved in agreeing on the list of direct support beneficiaries, even though none of the focus groups provided any detailed description of the precise selection process. The process for selecting those put forward to the community for agreement is slightly more varied. Some focus groups reported that it is the community who identifies the initial list of proposed direct support beneficiaries. In Tembaro and Shebedino *Woredas* of SNNPR State, all focus groups explained that the community identifies the neediest beneficiaries at a community meeting. However, in Demba Gofa *Woreda*, the third area of SNNPR covered by the assessment, and in *woredas* in all other regions, focus groups reported a slightly different process in which a *kebele* leadership committee first proposed a list of beneficiaries to the community, which then debated the list at a public meeting. Only one focus group explicitly named the community FSTF as having an acknowledged role in helping select direct support beneficiaries, although it can be assumed that what many groups referred to as “*kebele* leadership committees” were, in actual fact, community FSTFs. One women’s group expressed explicit dissatisfaction with the selection process, noting that it was male-dominated and that women did not take part in decision-making. Another complained:



“They [*kebele* officials] registered the better-off people. I complained and the village (Ganda) leader said, ‘they have the right to cancel your name.’ Nepotism is high. They accused me of insulting the *kebele* ‘Arada’ leader. The Arada people work for their kin... They do replace names of people they want to benefit. The better-off people are registered” [ORO\_G/FG-3].

## Appeals and Complaints

An important component of the PSNP is the existence of a formal system through which beneficiaries as well as those excluded from the program can appeal decisions made regarding their inclusion or exclusion from the program as well as the management of public works, timeliness and completeness of transfers and any other perceived abuses of the PSNP (PIM, p. 27). In each *kebele*, a Kebele Appeals Committee (KAC) is established. Its main role is “to hear and resolve appeals regarding Safety Net matters in a timely manner” (PIM, p95). At least one member of the KAC should be a woman. Where grievances are taken to other formal structures at community, *kebele* or *woreda* level, such as a woman raising grievances to the Women’s Affairs Office, these will be transmitted to the KAC for action and resolution.

Table 16 shows the size and composition of the KACs which have been established in 8 out of 10 *kebeles* covered in the quantitative study. Table 17 shows the gender composition of these KACs.

Table 16: Composition of the Kebele Appeals Committee

		Composition of KAC										
Region	Kebele	Kebele Chairman	Kebele Manager	Two elders/religious leaders	Women’s rep	School teacher	Health extension worker	Kebele smoke-person	Kebele Militia commander	DA	Food security secretary	Kebele secretary
SNNPR	Gurade			✓	✓							
	Furra						✓			✓		✓
	Soyame											
Oromiya	Barite											

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	DimtuRar etti	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<b>Amhara</b>	Serawudi	✓		✓	✓			
	ShengoDe far	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
	Wal			✓				
<b>Tigray</b>	Adizata			✓	✓			✓
	Sendeda			✓	✓			✓

*Table 17: The composition of the Kebele Appeals Committee, by gender in study areas*

<b>Region</b>	<b>Kebele</b>	<b>Number of the KAC members</b>	<b>Number of men in the KAC</b>	<b>Number of women in the KAC</b>
SNNPR	Gurade	5	4	1
	Furra	3	2	1
	Soyame	0	0	0
Oromiya	Barite	0	0	0
	DimtuRaretti	6	5	1
Amhara	Serawudi	3	2	1
	ShengoDefar	5	4	1
	Wal	3	2	1
Tigray	Adizata	5	3	2
	Sendeda	7	6	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>37</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>9</b>

The composition of KAC members varies from religious leaders, women, and school teachers, to health extension workers, *kebele* administrators, and *kebele* managers. As specified in the PIM, there is at least one woman in each KAC. The appeals and complaints process is supposed to be managed by individuals not involved in the targeting process but this was not always the case. In Sayint *Woreda* (Amhara) where the KAC consisted of the *Kebele* Chairman, the *Kebele* Manager, a teacher, the *Kebele* cabinet's spokesperson, and the *Kebele*'s militia/security commander. By contrast, in Tigray, however,

the KAC members were selected by community members and were seen to be independent and impartial.

Those people who are impartial, honest, and with better level of know-how than the community and elected by each sub-*kebele* and they should not be members of the *kebele* administration [TIG\_S/K-FG-1].

Exclusion from the PSNP was the principal reason for making an appeal. Among people who are not targeted in the program, there is a general perception that they were excluded from a government support package that should benefit all. This notion was eloquently captured in one focus group discussion with the KFSTF when they explained people's common perception of this issue as "the government is the father to everyone and not an uncle for some"[SN\_S/KI-1].

The second cause for appeal is partial family targeting. A significant number of respondents mentioned that one or more of their household members were not included in the program. Given the PSNP resource limitations during the first years of the PSNP, almost all regions exercised a partial family targeting approach rather than a full family targeting, meaning that fewer members within eligible households were included on beneficiary lists in order to increase the number of households overall that were included.

A third cause, found particularly in Oromiya and Amhara, related to the delay of transfer and payments. Deduction of payment has also emerged as equally important to delay of transfers in SNNPR and Oromiya regions. The focus group discussions with men, women, and KFSTF groups' respondents revealed this. One respondent said, "...40 birr are deducted from my payment. I do not know why it is being deducted. Where can I go to appeal? If we have grievances in other administrative issues, we talk to the *kebele* chairman. But there is no one to talk to about the PSNP" [SN\_S/FG-3/4]. The FGD with a women group in Amhara region indicated that different forms of payment (in cash payment instead of food) are a concern and a cause for appeals.

Do appellants make use of formal appeal structures? Table 18 summarizes information provided during the Focus Group Discussions. People make their appeals to a variety of actors: Development Agents (DAs), *kebele* cabinet, *kebele* administrator, KFSTF, *Kebele* Appeals Committee (KAC), traditional/village leaders, *kebele* Women's Affairs Office, *woreda* administration, and disaster prevention office (DPO).

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*Table 18: Who appeals to whom?*

Appeals made by (in gender)	Appeals made to							
	DA	Kebele cabinet	Kebele administrator	KFSTF	KAC	Traditional ( <i>ganda</i> ) leader	Woreda administration/ARDO/DPO	Kebele women's affair
Men's group	0	5	3	2	2	0	1	0
Women's group	4	4	4	2	2	1	0	1
Total	4	9	7	4	2	1	1	1

Men appear to prefer appealing to the *kebele* cabinet, *kebele* administrator, and KFSTF and KAC, respectively, whereas women prefer appealing to the DA, *Kebele* Cabinet, *kebele* administrator, KFSTF, and KAC. In addition, some women indicated that they felt more comfortable in appealing to the Keble Women's Affairs Office. Interestingly, none of the women mentioned that she would go up to the *woreda* level to present their appeal and complaint. The FGD with women in Gursum, Oromiya region, confirmed this:

The appeal is usually to the DA. We do not have the conviction that if we go to the *woreda*, we get justice. We do not feel that the *woreda* officials listen to us either. We believe that they listen to the peasant association and *kebele* leader rather than us. Moreover, we do not even know which office we should go to [ORO\_G/W-FG-3].

Nearly all (95 percent) of the appeals and complaints are undertaken verbally. In rare occasions, mostly for higher administrative levels, appellants are asked to present their appeal in writing.

In Tigray, the majority of respondents pointed out that the appeal process is transparent and easy to use. The FGD with a men's group in Tigray region, Ahferom *Woreda*, stated:

Yes, the process of appeals and complaints is transparent and easy for those who have cases. You can present your case at any time in any form that could be written or verbally. If you need to present your appeal in written form, they can provide you a format to be completed there. They invite the person who complains and the other party and they listen to each party's idea attentively and collect the necessary evidence from the concerned sources and finally

decide based on the data. If one of the parties does not agree on the decision, the case will be sent back to the public for approval [TIG\_A/FG-4].

However, there is a stark regional variation on the appeals and complaints case management. The discussion resulting from men’s groups in Oromiya and SNNPR indicated an opposite result about the transparency and easiness of the appeal process. Respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the appeal and complaint process and with the composition of the members of the KAC in general.

The appeal process is not transparent. People working on the appeal case management are those who have created the problem during the targeting process. The same people involved in targeting are also involved in the appeal case management. That is why the process is not transparent [ORO/SN\_G/S-FG-4].

The appeal process is difficult. This is because the committees are running to fulfil their private daily activities and do not give time to this. It would be difficult to say to them, ‘sit and listen to our complaints’ [OR\_D/K-FG-3].

Although it lacks the depth of the information gleaned from the qualitative studies, there is some information on appeals in the household quantitative survey. Specifically, respondents were asked three questions: Did you ever feel the selection made [of beneficiaries] was unfair? If you thought the process was unfair, did you or anyone in your household ever lodge a complaint/appeal/grievance about the selection? And if you did lodge a complaint, did someone respond to your complaint? Table 19a gives the numbers of responses to these questions, while Table 19b expresses these as percentages.

*Table 19a: Number of households perceiving selection process was unfair, lodging complaints, and receiving a response, by sex of household head and region*

<b>Region</b>	<b>Sex of household head</b>	<b>Sample size</b>	<b>Perceive that selection was unfair</b>	<b>Lodged a complaint</b>	<b>Perceived selection was unfair and lodged a complaint</b>	<b>Received a response</b>
Tigray	Male-headed	584	165	119	76	38
	Female-headed	252	54	27	19	6
	All	836	219	146	95	44
Amhara	Male-headed	620	191	107	89	44
	Female-headed	226	66	27	22	7

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	All	846	257	134	111	51
Amhara- HVFB	Male-headed	886	285	166	102	43
	Female-headed	261	67	18	10	2
	All	1,147	352	184	112	45
Oromiya	Male-headed	640	225	74	63	15
	Female-headed	222	67	20	18	3
	All	862	292	94	81	18
SNNPR	Male-headed	714	223	97	78	24
	Female-headed	203	56	18	13	4
	All	917	279	115	91	28

*Table 19b: Percentage of households perceiving selection process was unfair, lodging complaints, and receiving a response, by sex of household head and region*

		Percent of sample that:				
Region	Headship status	Perceived that selection was unfair	Lodged a complaint	Perceived selection was unfair and lodged a complaint	Perceived selection was unfair, lodged a complaint, and received a response	Percent of sample who received a response given that they perceived selection was unfair and had lodged a complaint
Tigray	Male-headed	28.3	20.4	13.0	6.5	50.0
	Female-headed	21.4	10.7	7.5	2.4	31.6
	All	26.2	17.5	11.4	5.3	46.3
Amhara	Male-headed	30.8	17.3	14.4	7.1	49.4
	Female-headed	29.2	11.9	9.7	3.1	31.8
	All	30.4	15.8	13.1	6.0	45.9
Amhara- HVFB	Male-headed	32.2	18.7	11.5	4.9	42.2
	Female-	25.7	6.9	3.8	0.8	20.0

		headed				
Oromiya	All	30.7	16.0	9.8	3.9	40.2
	Male-headed	35.2	11.6	9.8	2.3	23.8
	Female-headed	30.2	9.0	8.1	1.4	16.7
SNNPR	All	33.9	10.9	9.4	2.1	22.2
	Male-headed	31.2	13.6	10.9	3.4	30.8
	Female-headed	27.6	8.9	6.4	2.0	30.8
All		30.4	12.5	9.9	3.1	30.8

Some care is needed in interpreting Table 19. A household could perceive that the selection process was unfair either because they were excluded, or because they felt another household should have been included, or because they felt that another household should have been excluded. Households could lodge a complaint even though they thought the selection process was fair. Mindful of this, even when households perceive that the selection process was unfair, they are relatively unlikely to lodge a complaint. There is little regional variation. Everywhere, male-headed households are more likely to submit a complaint than female-headed households.

Understanding why there were so few appeals proved difficult. We propose that the low incidence of appeals could be attributed to (1) the historical lack of success in appeal cases; (2) the passive role the KAC members, given that the role is likely to be underfunded due to all the other PNSP responsibilities, (3) the non-independence of the KAC, or/and (4) lack of confidence in the KAC by the community. Further, it was observed that the appeal cases are presented not only to the KAC, but also to various administrative officials, village leaders, and the DAs at the *kebele* and *woreda* levels. Often these appeals are made verbally, hence it is difficult to trace how many cases were presented and resolved.

For example, the FGD with a women’s group in Gurade Kebele (SNNPR) noted, “The FGD results with communities indicated that the type of responses from the KAC is known in advance, often similar, and negative.” A women’s focus group in Tigray stated, “...when we go to KAC with complaints, they tell us that it is because of the shortage in beneficiary quota allocated to the *kebele* and sub-*kebele*. Otherwise, you could have been included among the beneficiaries” [TIG\_ A/FG-3]. Discussion results with a men’s group in Oromiya region also indicated that despite persistent appeal and complaints, the

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response was generally negative. “I have five family members. Only three of my family members were targeted. I appealed to the *Kebele* Targeting Committee to consider the remaining two family members. They said no to my appeal” [ORO-Z/FG-4].

It proved difficult to get a good sense as to how long it took for appeals to be heard. Responses to the question, “How long did it take from complaint to resolution?” tended to vary from “two weeks to two months.” But it is important to note that because most appeals appear to have been handled verbally, there is relatively little formal documentation of these appeals. It is also worth noting the perception that there were limited gains to be had by appealing as the following quotations reveal:

There are many people who appealed. They appeal to the *kebele* administration. There is nothing that they got after they have appealed. They are only moaning. The response they receive is that the included households are not any better off than they themselves, and that there is no regulation that allows to exclude them in order to include the appellant [SN\_D/K-FG-3].

They usually get a response immediately because the answer is a quota [SN\_D/FG-4].

There are also appeals related to targeting. This could be such that I am not better off than some beneficiaries, but you excluded me. You favor based on kinship or money. We complain to the chairman. The outcome is that nothing happens. They may say you will be included during the next targeting [SN\_S/K-FG-3].

Comments from a focus group with direct support beneficiaries in Tigray region suggested a lack of confidence in the KAC in resolving the appeal cases.

It is not hard to complain, but as far as we know these people are not important in solving the problem, so we prefer keeping quiet rather than shouting endlessly [TIG\_S/FG-1].

Responses to previous appeals may have also discouraged use of the appeals mechanism.<sup>11</sup> Focus group discussions with the KFSTF in Amhara and Tigray regions highlighted how the targeting errors and grievances were resolved:

The appeal committee was following an approach to ask the appellant to identify someone who is better off but included in the safety net. If he/she identified a household who was incorrectly included, then the complaint or appeal is supported. If he/she was not able to identify someone who is in the program incorrectly, his complaint will not be pursued [TIG-A/K-FG-1].

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<sup>11</sup>In fact, the quantitative household survey showed that only 185 households (out of more than 4,000) had made an appeal based on their exclusion from the PSNP.



Such an approach clearly discourages an appellant to present his/her case in front of the appeals committee. Even if they could identify the better-off who is included in the program, this would create tension and possible confrontation within the community.

## Conclusions

In this chapter, we have assessed the development of capacity to Ethiopia's largest food security intervention, the Productive Safety Net Program, in four ways: *woreda* capacity to implement the PSNP with particular attention to the payments process; the functioning of food security task forces; the extent to which targeting is truly participatory; and the mechanisms that exist for appeals and complaints. Using mixed methods, we can safely say that there have been improvements in delivery, design and administrative capacity of the structures related to the PSNP since its inception. Overall, this is a positive story that highlights the importance of investments in program inputs and institutional structure.

But there remains room for improvement. There are large variations in the timeliness of payments across *woredas*. The best performing *woredas* manage to complete all activities associated with making payments in 21 days. By contrast, the worst performers take nearly two months. These differences can be explained by lack of training on the PASS, the absence of frontloaded transfers, and a lack of transport. These factors adversely affect beneficiaries as well as the smooth operation of the PSNP. There are regional variations in the effectiveness of the CFSTFs. Where these are less active, as is the case in Oromiya, there is a poorer understanding of how the PSNP is supposed to function. There is also a gender dimension with female headed households less likely to have contact with CFSTFs and consequently have a poorer understanding of the PSNP.

There is a general understanding that the "poor" or the "poorest of the poor" are targeted under the PSNP. Again there was a tendency among the groups that were interviewed to view the "poor" as an undifferentiated category. There was little understanding of the program criteria for determining which population groups should be targeted. While it is possible that this reflects ignorance of the more targeting criteria that is supposed to guide program selection, a different explanation is that respondents are reluctant to over-specify who should benefit, because needs are so extensive and resource limited. This captures a tension between the preference of most communities for broader targeting so that more households are included and program planners who prefer larger transfers for a smaller segment of the population so as to facilitate program graduation. With regard to appeals, exclusion from the PSNP is the

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principal cause of appeals. Partial targeting, inclusion errors, deduction of payment, and delay of transfers are other reasons for appeals and complaints. It appears that, relative to concerns raised about the selection process, relatively few households appeal. There is a sense that the chances of appealing successfully are limited and this may discourage use of appeal mechanisms.

These findings highlight the large investments that need to be made when considering scaling up food security interventions so that they reach meaningful numbers of beneficiaries. The regional and *woreda* level differences observed in a number of areas emphasize the importance of avoiding generalized statements regarding the implementation of the PSNP. In turn, these have implications for program impact. Both implementers and beneficiaries emphasized that delays in payment adversely affected the implementation of public works and the benefits of program participation. On-going communications between the program and local communities are important to ensure that program objectives and how they are implemented are to be understood. Absent such information flows, both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries may call into question the legitimacy of interventions such as the PSNP. The discussion of targeting and appeals points to an underlying tension between community preferences for wider coverage and the PSNP's focus on providing higher levels of transfers to a smaller number of beneficiaries. Finally, it is important to interpret impact results of the PSNP with these types of capacity constraints in mind - impact is mediated by the capacity to implement.

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# **Migration and Resettlement: Reflections on Trends and Implications for Food Security**

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## **Introduction**

Population movement and food security in Ethiopia have been intimately linked with drought, famine and seasonal food shortage often leading to distress or anticipatory migration. Moreover, successive governments have planned and implemented resettlement primarily in an attempt to find lasting solutions to food insecurity. The consequences of migration and resettlement for short-term food security and longer term livelihood improvements have been the subject of much research and debate in which this chapter seeks to summarise.

After some conceptual considerations arguing for an integrated framework, the first part is concerned with migration and food security, starting with an overview of migration trends and motives for migration, followed by a discussion of the linkages between migration and food security. These are considered in relation to reasons for migrating; comparisons of migrants with those who stayed behind; the impact on remaining individuals, households and communities; the effect of remittances; the role of migration in minimizing risk; and the impact of migration on areas of destination.

The second part deals with resettlement and food security. We start with trends from the imperial period and follow with the Derg period and the emergency phase resettlement after the 1984 famine. We then move on to the recent resettlement under the EPRDF. In each period, after reviewing the trends, the viability of schemes and the implications for food security of settlers and 'host' communities are discussed. Finally, the case of returnees from resettlement is considered.

We conclude by reviewing the major linkages between population movement and food security arguing that if migration and resettlement are to play a useful role for not just short-term food self-reliance but longer term food security and improved livelihoods, there is a need for the formulation and implementation of an integrated migration policy, that promotes the

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development of infrastructure and services to encourage migration, while protecting the rights of local people and the local environment.

### ***Population movement and food security: Conceptual considerations***

The importance and pace of migration has increased dramatically worldwide and migration may be considered a paradigmatic condition of modern times (Castles and Miller 1993). Movement of different types may be considered usefully within a unified framework along a continuum rather than involving polar opposites for five reasons. First, rigid distinctions between voluntary and forced migration and spontaneous and organised forms may be questioned (Van Heer 1998). It is often assumed that migration is voluntary and decided upon by the migrant, whereas resettlement tends to be organised by the state often involving coercion particularly in cases of development-induced displacement resulting from agricultural irrigation and hydropower projects, the establishment of parks and urban redevelopment and expansion.<sup>1</sup> However, many kinds of ‘voluntary’ migrants face strong push factors that influence their decision-making; their individual choices are often affected by their families, peers and community contexts, as well as wider policies and practices promoting or constraining migratory flows. Settlers may migrate for a variety of reasons, some in certain contexts having no alternative and being forced to move while others seeing resettlement as an opportunity. Second, the different forms of population movement are often inter-related, affect one another and operate within common social, economic and political contexts. The availability of options of resettlement may affect whether or not people decide to migrate on their own depending on their evaluations of the advantages and disadvantages involved. Earlier experience of migrants may lead them to want to take up opportunities of resettlement. The movement of settlers to a particular area which offers opportunities often attracts additional migrants hearing about the potential to make a living. In the Ethiopian context with the increasing trend of migration from the densely populated highlands to the more sparsely populated lowlands, there is a trend of concentration of population movement towards the lowlands, including migration, resettlement and displacement, as state and private actors seek to develop these areas (Pankhurst and Piguet 2009). Third, the experiences of migrants and settlers in moving and seeking to adapt to new physical and social settings present similarities in coping and adaptation. Fourth, and most pertinently for this chapter, the food security implications in terms of motives and consequences for migrants, their households, home and host communities may be considered in similar ways. Finally, the policy implications for food

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<sup>1</sup> This paper focuses on migration and resettlement; the impacts of development-induced displacement are beyond the scope of this paper. For a review in the Ethiopian context see Pankhurst and Piguet (2009).



security suggest the need to think of a wider integrated migration policy that takes into consideration both self-initiated and external organised forms of migration and resettlement as well as the need to mainstream migration into other national policies and programs.

Linkages between migration and food security may be considered in relation to both the motives of migrants and the impact of migration. The reasons for migration can be very directly linked to food insecurity notably in cases of drought and famine shocks due to lack of rain, harvest failure or loss of livestock leading to distress migration and also in seasonal migration to overcome hunger periods. Linkages may be less immediate and direct in the case of landlessness or land shortage, youth unemployment, and migration to cope with shocks such as indebtedness, to pay for fertiliser or cover taxes. However, many such less direct forms may be linked to logics of poverty which are related to food insecurity. Nonetheless, some forms of migration are not linked to food insecurity such as distress migration of women escaping abduction, marital violence and seeking divorce, youth migrating for education, people migration for health care, to trade or take advantage of urban opportunities, to learn or use skills away from their home areas, to seek better livelihood opportunities or commute from peri-urban areas to towns. However, migrants often have multiple or mixed motives with pull and push factors interacting. Moreover, beneath overt rationales there can often be underlying reasons that are more closely linked to food insecurity, vulnerability and poverty more generally.

The impacts of migration can be considered at three levels: the individual, the household and the community. Effects can also be seen in terms of three sets of actors: first, the migrants or settlers themselves and household members who migrate together; second, the individuals and households that remain behind and cumulatively the communities from where they moved; and third the individuals, households and communities in the area to which migrants or settlers come, often referred to as the 'host' population, particularly in refugee contexts.

Though the primary concern of this chapter is in linkages with food security, it is both practically difficult and theoretically untenable to attempt to isolate food security causes and consequences of migration completely from wider livelihood and poverty issues. McDowell and de Haan (1997) argue that livelihoods and poverty clearly affect and are affected by migration. However, they suggest that migration experiences are often context specific and there are no easy generalisations. Moreover, migrants are not necessarily among the poorest, and groups can develop a tradition of migration once certain patterns

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arise.<sup>2</sup> Such perspectives suggest the need for caution in attributing migration causes and consequences primarily or exclusively to food insecurity.

## **Migration and Food Security**

This first part explores the linkages between migration and food security. The initial section outlines the background of migration trends and motives. This is followed by a discussion of the linkages between migration and food security. These are considered in relation to reasons for migrating; comparisons of migrants with those who stayed behind; the impact on remaining individuals, households and communities; the effect of remittances; the role of migration in minimizing risk; and the impact of migration on areas of in-migration.

### ***Background to migration in Ethiopia***

After the conquest of the south and the consolidation of the nation building process by Emperor Menelik, soldier-settlers from northern Ethiopia migrated to southern and western Ethiopia becoming landlords exacting tribute from tenants and encouraging followers who became settlers attracted by the prospects of available land (Donham 1886; McCann 1988). Among the ‘push’ factors were shortages of land, low agricultural productivity, high population densities and recurrent drought. The ‘pull’ factors included opportunities of gaining control of more fertile land, tribute and labor in the frontiers of the empire. The exploitation of the peasantry of the north by feudal lords and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church as well as the dispossession of lands were seen as additional causes for the emigration of the rural peasants from the north to rural areas in the south and west (Galperin, 1988).

The growth of Addis Ababa in the early twentieth century and settlements along the railway provided a stimulus for the development of urban areas attracting migrant laborers, increasing urban-rural linkages and promoting population movement (Akalu 1973; Bahru 1991). The Italian occupation between 1935 and 1941 led to the development of infrastructure and the growth of towns. The need to house and service soldiers and build up an administration broadened the economic base and encouraged the migration of non-agricultural ‘specialists’ from rural areas such as artisans, traders, bar and restaurant owners, shop-keepers and construction workers (Bjeren 1985). Thus the Italian occupation promoted urbanism based on division of labor, specialization and a cash economy (Fekadu 1972).

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<sup>2</sup> For instance, early migration trends and networks led to subsequent flows of new migrants notably among the Gurage, the Gamo, Tigrayan and Amhara migrants in Ethiopia (e.g. Worku 1995, Feleke et al. 2005).

During the late imperial period from the 1950s, the development of commercial agriculture led to further migration of laborers and peasant farmers notably into the Awash Valley (Kloos 1982). Commercial mechanized agriculture in the rest of the Rift Valley also encouraged migration and the expansion of towns such as Shashemene, Nazareth and Assela. Likewise, in the Setit-Humera lowlands in the northwest, and the plains of Jigiga in the east, irrigated schemes attracted laborers. Rural to rural migration from areas with high land pressure such as Kambata and Hadiya especially to the commercial farms became common flows (Beyene 1985). In the South-west the development of coffee production attracted seasonal and permanent labor and the development of towns such as Agaro, Jimma, Seka, Metu and Gore (Assefa 1994; Alula 1989). There was considerable circular movement of labor to these areas. During the early 1970s, Wood estimated that over 50,000 seasonal migrants migrated to the coffee regions. The majority migrated from areas of environmental degradation and natural disasters especially Amhara (Gojam, Gondar and Wello) and Tigray (Wood 1977, 1982). Migrants also included itinerant traders, women involved in services, notably drinking and eating establishments and commercial sex work (Lakech 1978).

During the Derg regime from 1975, a number of processes acted as potential dampers on migratory flows. These included the land reform, the confiscation of rural and urban private lands, the closure of private mechanized farms, de-prioritization of urban development, the introduction of official registration in urban areas, the 'encadrement' of peasants through rural cooperatives and villagization and the introduction of checkpoints along major roads (Baker 1996, Clapham 2003). The land reform and subsequent measures limited access to rural land to registered and permanent members of Peasant Associations, with the potential for confiscation of migrants' land, and redistribution of land that belonged to resettled persons. The requirement of official pass letters to go to towns, the registration requirement by urban *kebeles*, the civil war and the Red Terror further discouraged rural migrants (Berhanu and White 1999). However, state-led resettlement became important as discussed later in this chapter.

During the EPRDF period, there has been a resurgence of migration notably through the growth of cities and especially smaller towns, promoted by the development of transport and communication systems and urbanization. In recent years, the construction industry and the mushrooming of services has attracted considerable migration to urban areas, also leading to the beginnings of commuting from peri-urban areas. Rural-rural migration has been stimulated by the promotion of state and private commercial farms particularly in the lowlands, producing sugar, cotton, peanuts and sesame, and seasonal migration at harvest

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times and for coffee picking in the south-west have also increased significantly. Land pressure in the northern and central highlands has become increasingly acute with the average size of landholdings in some areas reaching a breaking point where viability to support average households is coming into question leading to further migration mainly to the lowlands (Pankhurst and Piguet 2004). There has also been renewed state organized resettlement from 2003 discussed later in this chapter.

### ***Migration trends***

Internal migration<sup>3</sup> within Ethiopia is comparatively low in international terms even by East African standards (Assefa and Aynalem 2011). The proportion of migrants<sup>4</sup> in the national censuses hardly increased from 16.4percent in the 1984 census to 16.6percent in the 2007 census.<sup>5</sup> The National Labor Force Survey (NLFS) of 1999 provided a somewhat higher figure of 19.6percent, with very significant urban-rural differences since migrants represented 49.3percent in urban areas and only 15percent in rural locations (Assefa and Aynalem 2011). The 2005 NLFS suggests that 30.8 percent of respondents did not live all their lives in the same area as they were born (CSA 2006). A study based on the Ethiopian Rural Household Survey (ERHS) found that more than a quarter of households (28percent) report having at least one household member move permanently for employment over a ten year period until 2009 (de Brauw and Mueller 2012).

In terms of spatial forms, a survey that tracked migrants who permanently moved out of the ERHS villages since 2004 calculated the rural-rural migration rate to be 43percent, the rural-urban migration rate to be 20percent; the urban-rural migration rate to be 12percent; and urban-urban migration rate to be 25percent (Dorosh et al. 2011). The authors suggest that these findings are consistent with proportions computed using the 2005 NLFS. However, Assefa and Aynalem using census data from 1884, 1994 and the NLFS of 1999 maintain that the proportion of urban-rural migrants rose sevenfold. They also suggest an increase in urban-urban migration and a decline in rural-rural and rural-urban migration (2011:150-1). Regarding the distance of migration, evidence from the 1994 census shows that most migration is short distance within the same administrative region, most migrants being from the regionally dominant ethnic group particularly in northern Ethiopia (Golini et al. 2001).

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<sup>3</sup> There is limited scope in this paper to consider the effects on international migration on food security though some discussion of the impact of remittances is included.

<sup>4</sup> Defined as having moved at least once in their lifetime.

<sup>5</sup> The 1994 census has an even lower proportion of 14.1percent reported (CSA 1999).

Countrywide, the proportion of the population living in urban areas increased from 6percent in 1960 to 10.4percent in 1980 and 15percent in 2000 (Selome and Assefa 2010). However, by the time of the 2007 census, the urban population was still only 16.2percent making Ethiopia one of the lowest urbanized countries worldwide (Assefa and Aynalem 2011). Nonetheless, migration is a major factor explaining urban growth given decreasing fertility rates in recent years in urban areas. Data from the Demographic and Health Surveys show that the total fertility rate declined by 27 percent in urban areas in the 2000-2005 period. However, the urban population grew at an average annual rate of 3.8 percent from 1994 to 2007, compared to a growth rate of 2.3 percent for the rural population (World Bank 2010). The rate of urbanization is expected to further accelerate in the coming years, averaging 3.9percent between 2015 and 2020, compared to an estimated average growth rate of 3.1percent for Africa, and the share of the urban population is expected to increase by 70percent reaching about 27percent by 2035 (UN Population Division 2009). Estimates based on the 2005 NLFS found that migrants account for slightly less than half of the urban population (49percent). Moreover, 18percent of the urban population moved to their current places of residence less than four years prior to the interview, and 57 percent came from rural areas (Guarcello et al. 2009).

The motives for migration are often linked to the type of migration as well as the social categories of migrants. Short-term and seasonal migrants may have land and migrate after the harvest to seek work in towns in construction, petty trade and services. Longer-term and more permanent migrants from rural areas are often landless. Short-term migration is often an attempt to earn supplementary income, and a form of livelihood diversification for rural people. In contrast long-term migration is often carried out in the hope for improving lives and escaping the drudgery of rural life.

Migrants are generally young though there are significant differences between types of migrants. The 1999 NFLS indicated that 63 percent of the total migrants in the country were under the age of 30. The largest group (26percent) of migrants fall in the age category of 15-19, followed by the age category of 20-24 (21percent) and 25-29 years old (16percent). This confirms that migration is heavily concentrated among younger people aged 15-30 years. The 1998 migration and health survey in five regions found that temporary migrants are on average much younger than permanent migrants and roughly half as many temporary migrants are married. There are also higher proportions of temporary migrants who are illiterate, and urban to urban migrants have higher levels of education than rural-rural or rural-urban migrants (DTRC and PSTC 2000, Assefa and Aynalem 2011). The 1999 NFLS suggests that 70percent of migrants are illiterate, with gender differences since the illiteracy rate is 58 percent for

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male migrants and 81 percent for female migrants. Only one percent of the migrants are educated beyond grade 12 (CSA 2000).

On a national level, the proportion of female migrants increased significantly between the 1994 and 2007 censuses overtaking the proportion of male migrants. The proportion of female migrants rose from 13.1 percent to 17.3 percent whereas the proportion of male migrants only increased from 15.2 percent to 15.9 percent. However, there are key differences based on the directional types of migration. The rural-rural permanent stream and the rural-urban temporary stream are disproportionately female, while the urban-urban permanent stream and the rural-rural temporary stream were disproportionately male (CSA, 2000). Bjerer (1985) noted that the pattern of female migration from rural to urban areas in Ethiopia differs from other parts of Africa. While male rural-urban migrants are more dominant in other African countries due to the employment opportunities available for men in urban areas, females in Ethiopia dominate the rural-urban migration. Belachew (1983) also states that there is a high female migration rate to urban Ethiopia despite limited employment opportunities.

Women's out-migration can be attributed to various factors. Many women living in rural areas, notably in Amhara and Tigrayan societies, consider out-migration from their place of origin as an immediate measure to escape from the distressful situation of marital dissolution or marriage breakdowns. The male-dominated traditional plough farming system, the lack of women's access to and control of resources, the lack of law enforcement of property rights for rural women, virilocal residence patterns, and the presence of forced marriage at an early age, push women to migrate out of their areas of rural origin (Eshetu 2005). There are thus strong gender differences in the types of and motives for migration, with women much more likely to migrate for family reasons, for marriage and to avoid or escape marriage or domestic violence (Feleke et al. 2006, Assefa and Aynalem 2010). Women migrating to towns tend to be involved in domestic work and services, especially in bars. A study of migration to Addis Ababa suggested that there has been a 'feminization' of migration since women account for 63 of recent migrants and 59 percent of old migrants (World Bank 2010).

There has also been an increasing trend of adolescents and children migrating. Whereas in the past students in the traditional Orthodox Church education system who were planning to become deacons migrated begging on their way, recently students in Amhara Region were found to be migrating during the rainy season when schools were closed to earn money to cover education expenses (Woldie Asfaw et al. 2010). Children are often sent to work as herders in rural areas, and to towns to work as domestic servants, resulting in

much concern about the risks notably of ‘trafficking’ which may often be strategies of survival or self-improvement for children in poor households (Kifle 2002; Erulkar et al. 2006; Guarcello et al. 2009).

### ***Constraints on Migration***

The relatively low internal migration could be explained by a range of reasons. First, the policy environment has not been conducive to migration as initially reflected in the National Population Policy of Ethiopia (1993), which aimed to discourage urban migration although no mechanisms were specified. However, there has been some evolution in the official discourse regarding migration in the country’s poverty reduction strategies. The Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP 2002/3-2004/5) focused on the negative aspects of migration portraying it as a cause of urban poverty, HIV/AIDS transmission and increasing crime rates (FDRE, 2002). The strategy argued that rural-urban migration increases the influx of people from rural areas, puts pressure on urban services and infrastructure and swells the rate of unemployment. The Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP 2005/6-2009/10) acknowledged the need for the strengthening of rural-urban linkages and a rebalancing of the growth strategy with an emphasis on the development of small towns and growth poles, and employment creation, particularly in urban areas (FDRE, 2006). However, the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP 2010/11-2014/15) has little to say about migration, apart from the desirability of creating urban-rural linkages to promote urban development and ‘ensuring spatially balanced population distribution patterns with a view to maintaining environmental security and the scope of development activities’ (MoFED 2010:74).

Regarding rural-urban migration the requirement of an urban registration card to access services and formal employment in cities and the need to establish residence through homeownership or receive a letter of support from a landlord may be a constraint. This might suggest that registration may present an obstacle to obtain urban formal employment, but not necessarily informal employment. However, a World Bank survey on rural-urban migrants to Addis Ababa found inconclusive evidence on the effect of *kebele* registration on migration (World Bank 2010). Most migrants were not registered in their present *kebele*. While a third of the migrants indicated that they were unable to meet the requirements needed for registration, many were unaware of the challenges posed by not being registered and a third did not register because they did not see any benefit (World Bank 2010).

Federal, regional and local level practices may also act as deterrents. The Migration, Gender and Health Survey conducted jointly by Addis Ababa



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University and Brown University (DTRC & PSTC 2000)<sup>6</sup> indicated that intra-regional migration is more common than inter-regional migration for both seasonal and permanent migrants in Ethiopia. The presence of limited inter-regional permanent migration might be attributed to a lack of information about other regions or the existence of ‘insecurity’ to move into a different region with different language, culture and religion. Limited inter-regional migration patterns could also be the reflection of the ethnic-based federalism which may discourage people from moving other than within their home regions where they may face difficulties to find land or permanent employment. For instance seasonal migrants coming from Amhara were seen as unwelcome in sites in Oromia (Feleke et al. 2006). At a local level too officials may seek to discourage migration. In a qualitative study of returnees from migration in Sekota and Ibenat *weredas* of the Amhara Region, *wereda* officials expressed views that migration should be discouraged, are detrimental to livelihoods, and bad for the reputation of the area. The *wereda* and Kebele officials were also against migration (Maji 2011).

Perhaps the most important potential practical deterrents to migration could be land policies and the absence of formal land markets. However, the extent to which these have acted as barriers is difficult to determine. Yang (1997) provides a theoretical model for why farmers without permanent property rights in China are less likely to migrate. Farmers may fear that fewer household members present on the land will signal to the government that the land is not being effectively used. The fear of expropriation of one’s land and the repercussions can outweigh the expected stream of income at the migrant’s destination rendering the decision to migrate costly.

In Ethiopia, the government argues that the provision for private ownership of rural lands would force peasants to sell their land out of distress jeopardising their livelihoods. Simultaneously urban centres would face an influx of landless and poor rural people. Farmers should be protected from a possible loss of their prized and perhaps irretrievable asset, which would occur if and when policies like full land ownership rights, including the right to transfer land through sales, were conferred (Berhanu and White 1999; Solomon and Mansberger 2003).

A household panel survey conducted by the Ethiopian Economics Association (2003), however, challenged the link between rural land sales and migration. The survey disclosed that 93 percent of respondents said they would not sell their land if they were given full ownership rights including the right to

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<sup>6</sup> This included data from the five most populated regional states, namely, Oromia, Amhara, SNNPR, Tigray and Addis Ababa.



transfer through sales. Most of the respondents justified their intentions of not selling by claiming that they have no other means of survival (70 percent), while others claimed their land is simply not for sale (17 percent). The authors argue that while it may be fair to have a precautionary government policy position regarding the negative aspects of migration, such a development strategy could undermine the opportunities that might have been gained from positive outcomes of migration.

A Participatory Poverty Assessment (MoFED 2005) indicated that in rural areas migration for longer than a certain duration results in revocation of the land rights. In some rural sites it was reported that engagement in non-farm activities such as trading in consumer goods could result in the forfeit of a person's rights to land. The authors suggest that this has limited the mobility of rural people since engagement in non-farm activities for longer than a year has not been permitted, as a mixed livelihood strategy was perceived to be irregular. Thus, rural people were seen to have to choose whether to stay entirely in agriculture or to change to non-farm businesses.

In addition to the lack of secure land rights, the promise of land to all rural people who wish to live by farming is affirmed in all federal and regional legislations. Under these provisions youth who come of age are entitled to land. There is evidence that landlessness is on the increase among the youth (Bevan 2010, Lefort 2012).

Recent changes in land laws at the regional level may also affect migration patterns. Dessalegn (2009) cited the newly revised land laws in Amhara Region as prohibiting peasants from moving. They may lose land rights if absent from their farms and the land is left idle for three consecutive years. There is some debate as to whether the recent promotion of land registration and certification may have also influenced perceptions of land security and hence migration patterns. Dessalegn (2009) suggests that institutional changes at the grass-roots level may have enhanced the authority of the state and have not provided peasants the trust in land security. On the other hand, laws that allow for the transfer of property through inheritance may have also influenced perceptions about land holdings and migration. A UN Habitat report looking into the impact on women in Oromia and the SNNPR suggests increased perceptions of security among wives (UN-HABITAT 2008).

De Brauw and Mueller (2012) find a negative relationship between increasing the transferability of property rights and migration overall in Ethiopia, but a positive relationship for the region of Tigray. They argue that low land holdings combined with severe land pressure potentially explain why securing land rights may raise the value of having household members migrate in Tigray

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more than it would in other regions. These findings are also somewhat consistent with the reported behavior from the Ethiopia migrant tracking study (2009). A substantial percentage of migrants overwhelmingly reported that the migrant and his family had the right to transfer land to someone else when he or she moved (77.6 percent); however, many indicated that having a shortage of land impacted the decision to move (39.9 percent).

From these studies, it also can be inferred that the migrants' choice to move may be based on a strategy that aims to reduce the loss from the migrant's departure in terms of productivity and securing land rights. For example, De Brauw and Mueller (2012) find that the effect of land rights on migration was less pronounced for male migrants. Similarly, in the Ethiopia migrant tracking study, most of the migrants were offspring of the household head (Dorosh et al. 2011). Sending young adults is incentive-compatible for both the migrant and the household. From the migrant's perspective, s/he is landless and has little prospect for acquiring additional land within the village. From the perspective of the household, there *may* be a lower opportunity cost on the productivity of the land if the young adult leaves. Moreover, the absence of dependents will not jeopardize the use right of the land as would be the case if the household head left. What remains unknown is whether these decisions are suboptimal in terms of achieving the maximum benefit from migration. For instance, the returns from migration may be greater for heads of households. If so, then weak land markets may be effectively restricting the household's earning potential by relegating children to move elsewhere rather than other household members.

Transaction costs associated with moving may also be constraints on migration and also explain why workers are inclined to move closer to their original residence than to a distant city. Financing the move and supporting higher costs of living in an urban destination may be cost-prohibitive. Even if the return to employment may be greater in urban areas, the probability of employment may be low given the migrant's skill set. In their report tracking migrants, Dorosh et al. (2011) find a strong, robust positive correlation between having access to networks outside of one's village and the probability of a household having at least one migrant and the number of migrants they send for outside employment. Detailed questions were also asked with respect to the migrants' social networks to understand the importance of these ties for facilitating moves. Assistance with housing was reported by 47percent of migrants and finding a job in the destination was mentioned by 44percent. These results are consistent with the argument that networks reduce the uncertainty associated with employment and other living expenses in migrant destinations, rendering the migration decision more desirable (Carrington, Detragiache, and Vishwanath, 1996). Other studies also emphasize the key role of networks in

facilitating migration (Feleke et al. 2005, 2006; World Bank 2010; Djamba and Teller 2011). The reliance on social networks to facilitate moves also indicates that if migration is to be adequately used as a means of minimizing income risk or attaining additional food security there are still barriers to optimizing its use for those who lack these ties.

Migration may be used only as a last resort to deal with risk because informal mechanisms and other policies to deal with risk are available to rural households. Dercon et al. (2008) have shown that informal institutions such as funeral societies have been effectively used to reduce individual-specific (not necessarily widespread) risk (Dercon et al. 2008). Historically, migration has been a major motivation for moving during immediate crises of famine and droughts (Pankhurst 1986). Distress migration was important in the 1973 and 1984 famines and as one in a range of coping strategies often when other options are no longer available (Mesfin 1984; McCann 1984; Dessalegn 1991; Web and von Braun 1994; Bevan and Pankhurst 2004). In more recent famines too distress migration has been a last resort strategy (Dessalegn 1991, Webb and von Braun 1994, Bevan and Pankhurst 2004). Recent evidence from the ERHS shows communal drought increases male labor migration which is consistent with the inability of these available mechanisms to deal with widespread risk (Gray and Mueller 2012).

There are often differentials in who migrates first prior to a crisis. According to Sen's study in the 1973 famine, some of the first to move were servants and dependants of farmers and tenants. The shrinkage of demand for non-essential services and economic decline led to the migration of craftsmen, petty traders and service sellers (Sen 1981). Young men went in search of wage labor in agricultural cash-cropping areas such as the Awash Valley and Setit Humera as well as urban areas (Wood 1976; Sen 1981). There were also close links with land tenure. Wood's interviews with famine migrants from south-west Wello suggest that wealthy tenants and small landowners migrated whereas poor tenants who were too indebted to leave and rich landowners who had more to lose remained (Wood 1976:71). Very poor or destitute individuals who are often elderly may resort to migrating to beg at harvest time at threshing floors or in towns on the streets (Feleke et al. 2006; Maji 2012).

Migration is also important as a preventive strategy to avoid food insecurity by raising income from seasonal migration to cope with hunger. However, the extent to which migration is related directly to food insecurity may be difficult to determine since it is often an integral part of livelihood strategies (Kothari, 2002). Nonetheless as a coping strategy it is often vital for survival arising from necessity rather than choice (Ellis 2003). In a study of seasonal migration from rural areas in Amhara, the most important reasons mentioned

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were lack of sufficient means of subsistence (82.4percent), followed by earning additional income (80.9percent), and land shortage 79.5percent. Other reasons such as indebtedness (54.2percent), to buy clothes (49.4percent), for festival expenditures (43.6percent), to cover children's educational expenses (41.3percent), and to pay tax (31.6percent) are not linked directly to food security concerns (Woldie et al., 2010). The cases studies in the Wellbeing in Developing (WED) Countries study of four rural communities in Amhara and Oromia and two urban sites in Addis Ababa and Shashemene found that seasonal migration was very important as a survival strategy to overcome seasonal food shortage but was not very effective for most migrants in improving their livelihoods on a more sustainable basis (Feleke et al. 2006).

Existing safety net programs and food aid provision in food insecure rural areas might further constrain the use of migration to improve household food security. In drought-prone areas, programs such as the Productive Safety Nets Program (PSNP) may effectively target households who might have used migration to reduce climate-related income risk, crowding out private coping mechanisms. Unlike in urban areas food aid of some sort has been a feature of rural areas facing food insecurity. However, arguably if financing constraints prohibit movement, then the PSNP might promote risk coping strategies like migration. Dorosh et al. (2011) graphically show using data from the Ethiopia migrant tracking study a positive correlation between PSNP direct support and migration suggesting potential positive synergies between existing cash transfer programs and the adoption of private coping strategies. Some qualitative research in two *weredas* in Amhara region suggests that some poorer households do migrate to cover food shortages despite receiving PSNP support, leaving prior or after the public works, since they have become indebted after borrowing food and need cash to repay the loans (Maji 2012).

Finally, the resettlement programme may provide an alternative to self-organised migration in areas where it is available since much of the costs are covered by the government. However, even in these areas, seasonal migration is common as noted in a qualitative study of returnees from migration and resettlement in two districts of Amhara Region (Maji 2012). Moreover, many people are wary of resettlement. Some resettlement areas have actually acted as magnets for further 'illegal' settlement of people from the settlers' home areas, upon hearing about opportunities in the settlement areas (Piguet and Dechasa 2004).

### ***Impact on migrants, remaining individuals, households and communities***

Few studies measure the direct impact of migration on the welfare of the migrant. In a study tracking individuals in Tanzania, Beegle, De Weerd, and Dercon (2011) find that individuals that moved out of Kagera between 1991 and 2004 experienced a 36 percentage-point growth in consumption, where the benefits are even greater upon disaggregating by destination. This study is particularly unique in that the authors survey individuals that move and remain in villages over a long period of time which provides a rich description of individual long-term migration patterns and allows for the measurement of the individual benefits to migration controlling for a variety of individual characteristics, and demographic and household changes over time. In Ethiopia there are few studies that compare migrants with non-migrants. The 1998 study of migration and health found some demographic and social differences between migrants and non-migrants. This included lower levels of illiteracy in all age groups of non-migrants below the age of 35 beyond which a reversal occurs with migrants showing an educational advantage over non migrants (DTRC and PSTC 2000). However, there is even more limited research on the nutritional differences. De Brauw, Mueller, and Tassew (2012) tracked individuals that moved out of and stayed in 18 ERHS villages in Ethiopia.<sup>7</sup> They found migrants consume meat more frequently (41 percent) than non-migrants (18 percent). The same results hold when comparing animal product consumption which includes meat, eggs, and milk. Sixty-eight percent of migrants reported eating animal products in the last 7 days compared to 47.5 percent of non-migrants.

An additional contribution of migration is the reallocation of existing resources to those household members left behind. There is a growing body of international work that shows migration leads to improved consumption (de Brauw and Harigaya 2007), child growth (Mansuri 2006; Carletto, Covarrubias, and Maluccio 2011), and birthweights (Hildebrandt and McKenzie 2005). Recent international studies highlight the importance of differentiating impacts by which household member migrates since the departure of key contributors to the family farm can have negative consequences on food security. Under well-functioning labor markets and in areas where access to credit is unrestricted, migrant labor may be replaced by hired labor (Zezza et al. 2011). De Brauw

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<sup>7</sup> The migrant tracking study was performed in 2009 based on the individuals that had left for employment since 2004 out of the households included in the sixth round of the Ethiopia Rural Household Survey. Migrants were tracked to their destinations and a longer survey was completed regarding their current household, employment, consumption, income, assets, and subjective welfare. Since the tracking survey is linked to the panel households, the migrants can be compared to individuals within the households and villages that did not migrate, using current and past information about the individuals and households. Dorosh et al. (2011).

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(2010) finds that households with seasonal migrants tend to shift towards land-intensive crops, and migration overall improved annual per capita consumption five percentage points (de Brauw and Harigaya 2007). In comparison, Gibson, McKenzie, and Stillman (2011) show short-term migration actually reduces the consumption of protein-rich foods of the children that stayed in Tonga. These dietary changes were consistent with the overall twenty-five percent reduction in income. The study provides evidence that family labor may not be substitutable in other contexts as shown by the losses of income. It also suggests that the reallocation of resources may not benefit all household members, and one should consider changes in nutrition since diets may adjust unfavourably to maintain caloric intake. Exploring these dimensions further in links between migration and food security in China, De Brauw and Mu (2011) find that older children who have a migrant parent are more likely to be underweight. Less time is spent on preparing and cooking food per week in migrant households, and older children are also more likely to do household chores and cooking.

In the WED study of four rural sites in Amhara and Oromia seasonal migration was found to be a key strategy in reducing the vulnerability of poor rural households to seasonal food insecurity and high risk of food shortages (Feleke et al. 2006). Most of the rural households mentioned that the seasonal migrations of household members had enabled them to benefit from non-farm jobs in the off-seasons and reduced the number of people to be fed. Furthermore, they pointed out that the presence of seasonal and permanent migration from rural to urban areas could be viewed as providing a safety net mechanism for poor individuals and rural households to cope with distress situations, pay annual taxes, buy small stocks and obtain medication. Sending households have benefited from flow of material support such as better clothes, shoes, radios and cassette players, household utensils, consumer goods and farm implements. On the other hand, the loss of labor of migrants and the lack of their presence can have detrimental economic and social consequences. For instance, the focus group participants in the Gurage site, mentioned that the long term male migration has threatened the direct male participation in family life and presence of an appropriate father figure, which, in turn, was seen as contributing to the loosening of family ties and the dissemination of HIV/AIDS to spouses. Potential negative effects of migration on home areas include higher levels of female-headed households, neglect of children, and strained family relations (Feleke et al. 2006).

### ***The effect of remittances***

Having a migrant household member can bring an additional contribution to food security through the provision of remittances, and, therefore, additional income. Few studies internationally examine this link for at least two reasons. First, available datasets may not collect remittance information or, if they do, the responses might be subject to recall bias. Mueller and Shariff (2011) explain that when self-reported measures are based on the recollection of household members of 12-month period, one might expect the lapse between the timing of the transfer and the interview of the household to affect the reporting and precision of responses.<sup>8</sup> Second, empirically, it is challenging to differentiate between the impact of the migrant's absence and the impact of remittances on food security. This is because the identification of the impact of both channels simultaneously calls for addressing two sample selection issues in a unified empirical framework.<sup>9</sup>

Taking into account these limitations, there have been different approaches to measuring the causal effect of remittances on consumption. Mansuri (2006) evaluates the impact of migration and remittances together to find long-term positive impacts on the growth of girls in Pakistan. Yang (2008) does not find any impact of remittances on household consumption in the Philippines. Quisumbing and McNiven (2010) in contrast show that the number of migrant children and the level of remittances have distinct countervailing effects on consumption per adult equivalent in the Philippines (and opposite to those found in Yang (2008)) using an empirical framework that allows for measurement of both channels on outcomes simultaneously. The paucity of work, the variety of empirical approaches, and the disparate findings suggests that there is room for

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<sup>8</sup> There are several ways to improve the documentation of remittances. More detailed individual tracking studies can be carried out similar to Quisumbing and McNiven (2010), Beegle, de Weerd and Dercon (2011), and de Brauw, Mueller, and Tassew (2012, 2011). They track households and individuals over time, whereby self-reported remittance values by the recipient household can be substantiated by the accounts of individuals that send them. Alternatively information can be collected on monetary transfers made through banks or courier services and administer supplementary surveys to collect the private information of those who send and receive the transfers. Ashraf et al. (2011) partnered with a bank in El Salvador to document international remittance flows and explore how various interventions improve migrants' control of their remittances in the destination.

<sup>9</sup> The first selection issue stems from the non-random selection of households into migration. Migrant households are often fundamentally different in demographic and wealth characteristics than non-migrant households. Therefore, it is difficult to disentangle the impacts of migration from sample differences in wealth and skills, for example, on the outcomes of interest. The second issue relates to differences in characteristics between remitting migrant and non-remitting migrant households. There are several stories to motivate these distinct differences. One can think of the remittance decision as part of a household cooperative strategy (Hoddinott 1994). A more simplified argument is that, while migrants often need to overcome the obstacles and costs to move, there are additional constraints at the destination which preclude one to remit. Being able to remit home may be conditional on one's success at the destination as it relies on individual success to both cover cost of living expenses and afford to send money back home.



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future work on building a consensus on the direct impacts of remittances on consumption.

Perhaps, a larger effort has been designated to correlating remittance flows to investments in human and physical capital, which have indirect implications on long-term food security. Studies have focused on the role of remittances to assist human capital accumulation since such investments improve household's long-term earning potential, and therefore food security indirectly. Mueller and Shariff (2011) find a positive correlation between the schooling attendance of male teens in low-caste households and remittance receipts in India. Yang (2008) also shows remittance receipts lead to increased expenditures in education, student advancement, and reductions in child labor in the Philippines. Cox-Edwards and Ureta (2003) find remittances improve child school attendance in El Salvador. Acosta (2011) emphasizes the importance of looking at impacts across household members. In El Salvador, he finds that girls in households that receive remittances have increased schooling attendance, while boys actually obtain no benefit, and the secondary school-aged children are actually worse off because they drop out of school to perform unpaid labor. By the same token, studies have also correlated remittance receipts to investments in physical capital with the same understanding that these investments may lead towards economic growth and achieving future food security. In the Philippines, remittance receipts impact investments in capital-intensive enterprises (Yang 2008).

Even if income from remittances is small, the limited amounts of additional cash can make significant differences to the options available to people to get a threshold on ladders out of disaster situations (Sharp et al. 2003). Similarly, McDowell, (1995) argues that the size of remittances for poor households can be very low but is vital to improve food security since it helps to diversify risks and ensure support in times of harvest. Remittances can also stimulate agricultural intensification where practices allow the head of household to employ labor, and use the remitted earnings for purchase of equipment, seeds, fertilizers or draught animals.

In Ethiopia remittances from international migration is an important source of foreign exchange with recorded remittances of more than \$600 million in 2010, and including informal remittances estimated to be in the range of \$1 billion to \$2 billion annually (Alemayehu and Irving 2012). At a community level international migration can be an important strategy for survival and livelihood improvement. For instance a study by Dom showed that international migration from a community in Tigray to the Gulf States and from a community in Kambata to South Africa have had an important impact on improving livelihoods of families remaining (Dom 2012). Remittance from children working in the Middle East allowed poor households in Addis Ababa to afford



the costs of condominium housing (Agazi and Pankhurst 2012). The effects of internal migration and remittances may be less significant but are still important for the livelihoods of migrants' families. Data from the rural-urban migration survey suggest that remittances from Addis Ababa, probably offering the best economic opportunities within the country, might not contribute much to reducing poverty or improving welfare in sending areas. Nonetheless for the migrants that do remit, these transfers can significantly improve livelihoods of families left behind, but these cases are relatively infrequent. Only 13 percent of recent migrants sent money or goods home over the previous 12 months and, with low variation across gender and relation with the household head. Most of the migrants (95 percent) report that the main reason for not having sent remittances was that they could not afford it. For those remitting, the level of remittances is quite remarkable, especially among migrants who are not domestic workers. On average, they sent 800 birr in a year which corresponds to 10 percent of their yearly average salary. Domestic servants and guards, instead, could afford lower level of remittances - 307 birr on average - but this is a substantial proportion of their annual average salary (25 percent). Given the low salary they usually receive, obligation to send remittances home is also likely to substantially jeopardize their personal expenses (World Bank 2010).

The 2005 Participatory Poverty Assessment analyzed rural-to-urban mobility by interviewing ten households in 14 urban research sites. Only 33 percent of respondents (45 out of the 138) sent money or goods home. One of the reasons for not remitting was that they did not make enough money to allow for remittances. For those remitting, the level of remittances was commonly 20-60 birr a year (Ellis and Tassew 2005). Qualitative data on migrants from two areas in Amhara, Sekota and Ibenat suggest that migrants do not send remittances but bring back food and cash for the hunger season and buy clothing for those who remained behind (Maji 2012)

### ***Role in minimizing risk***

Recent attention has been dedicated to understanding the role of migration to minimize income risk (Stark, 1991). Exposure to risk can have repercussions on long-term growth and food security. Poor households will under-invest, opting for low variability yet low return investment to reduce their vulnerability (Eswaran and Kotwal 1990; Rosenzweig and Binswanger 1993). Additionally, coping strategies can jeopardize growth, if for example households cannot

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recover their productive assets following the shock.<sup>10</sup> An emerging literature examines migration responses to risk by relocating individuals *ex ante* to maximize the expected income stream over a long time horizon<sup>11</sup>, and sending people elsewhere for employment *ex post*, including as a strategy to cope with climate change shocks.<sup>12</sup> However, fewer studies focus on the viability of migration as a risk management strategy.

Recent work that examines the viability of migration as a strategy to reduce variability in consumption suggests mixed effects. In the Philippines, migrant households smooth consumption better than non-migrant households (Yang and Choi 2007) and tend to invest in riskier yet higher return agricultural practices (Gonzalez-Velosa 2011). Giles (2006) demonstrates that access to off-farm labor markets reduces the variability of agricultural income caused by shocks in rural China by allowing households to reduce exposure to shocks rather than through adjustments *ex post*. Since many migration decisions are motivated by marriage or to follow family members, the role of risk pooling may be limited (Witoelar 2005; Munshi and Rosenzweig 2009). Munshi and Rosenzweig (2009) show how caste networks fill the void in the lack of formal insurance mechanisms, which explains why migration rates are low due to the lack of incentive to out-migrate and out-marry for the sake of reducing risk. There is also evidence from Ethiopia of individuals including those who are relatively well off migrating as a strategy in anticipation of food shortage during the hunger season. Many of these return during the harvest seasons. There are also some that migrate until the PSNP aid starts or because it may not be enough (Maji 2012).

### ***Impact on the areas of in-migration***

There are limited studies in Ethiopia in which discuss the impact of migrants on the areas of in-migration. Those that exist tend to consider the impact in urban areas, which seem to be more related to broader questions of access to services,

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<sup>10</sup> There are several studies that evaluate how asset sales and purchases respond to transitory shocks in developing countries (Rosenzweig and Wolpin 1993; Fafchamps, Udry, and Czukas 1998; Kazianga and Udry 2006; Quisumbing 2009). Less is known with respect to the implications of these practices on growth. Lybbert et al. (2004) find the size of the herd matters for recuperating from shocks among pastoralists in Ethiopia.

<sup>11</sup> Rosenzweig and Stark (1989) show households who face greater income variability have a greater number of migrants. Moreover, households with greater income risk place migrants where the income risk is less correlated with theirs by having them travel longer distances. Since migrants in the study were largely women moving for marriage, household consumption is smoothed in two forms: the migrant's absence increases the resources available to other household members; and the food security risk for the migrant member declines once based in a lower risk area.

<sup>12</sup> See for instance Henry, Schoumaker, and Beauchemin 2004; Halliday 2006; Gray 2009; Dillon, Mueller, and Shau 2011; Gray and Mueller, 2012).

labor and security than to food security issues per se. The WED study found both positive and negative impacts in the sites in Addis Ababa and Shashemene.

The in-migration was viewed by long-term inhabitants as a reason for the increasing shortage of houses, poor condition of toilets and sanitation facilities, exacerbated unemployment situation, increased trends of petty crime, prostitution and begging. However, the long-term inhabitants suggested that the continuous flow of rural unskilled labor serves the domestic labor needs. They argued that it would have been more expensive to afford housemaids, nannies, guards and craftsmen if there were fewer migrants (Feleke et al. 2005, 2006).

## **Resettlement and food security**

The evidence worldwide suggests that resettlement is a highly risky business and tends to result in impoverishment. In a global review, De Wett (2009) suggests that successful cases are exceptional. On the basis of considerable research starting with World Bank projects, Cernea developed his *Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction* (IRR) model (1997, 2000). He suggests that the resettlement process involves eight displacement risks namely: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, food insecurity, increased morbidity, loss of access to common property resources and community social disarticulation. The model includes food insecurity as the fifth risk and suggests the need for strategies that promote change from food insecurity to adequate nutrition. Cernea notes that forced uprooting increases the risk that people will fall into temporary or chronic under-nourishment defined as calorie-protein intake levels below the minimum necessary for normal growth and work. He suggests that food insecurity and under-nourishment are both symptoms and results of inadequate resettlement. During physical relocation, sudden drops in food crop availability and incomes are predictable. Subsequently, as rebuilding regular food production capacity may take years, hunger and under-nourishment tends to become a lingering long-term effect (Cernea 2000:20, 27). De Wett proposes an *inherent complexity* model suggesting that spatial change affects patterns of access to resources with resettlers finding themselves in larger and more heterogeneous settlements and becoming more involved in wider structures and accelerated socio-economic change. He also sees resettlement as a problematic institutional process often involving wider political agendas that are not amenable to rational planning and procedures (De Wett 2009).

Much of the debates around the problems with resettlement do not focus on food security per se, but more on the broader aspects of impoverishment, loss of access to resources, disarticulation and reconstruction of economic livelihoods and social relations. However, implicit in the notion that resettlers often end up

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poorer and consequently less resilient to shocks is that they may become potentially less food secure. Most resettlement projects worldwide are carried out in the interests of development, notably displacement to make way for dams, agricultural plantations, wildlife parks, urban and industrial expansion etc. The Ethiopian context is somewhat different in that much of the state-sponsored resettlement schemes especially since the Derg period have been specifically designed to address food security concerns. However, much of the evidence to date suggests that although short-term food security may have been attained in some cases, most of the schemes have poor records in terms of promoting longer term food security and sustainable livelihoods.

### ***The late imperial period until 1974***

Until the mid-1960s, resettlement was not part of a national centrally planned agenda and only a few schemes were set up on an ad hoc basis on the initiative of administrators such as the Governor of Sidamo, aid agencies such as Association Solidarité et Développement and religious organisations, notably the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. The first planning began with the establishment of the Ministry of Land Reform and Administration in 1966. The Third Five Year Development Plan published in 1968 raised the question of the need for settlement schemes to relieve population pressure in the northern highlands and to raise production by exploiting underdeveloped lands in the south. As Dessalegn noted, these initiatives grew out of two principal concerns, the one economic and the other implicitly political (2003:5). The concerns revolved around rationalising land use on government 'owned' land and providing resources for the hard-pressed northern peasantry in the southern regions mainly inhabited by subordinate populations. The assumption was that the government held vast properties which ought to be employed for settlement of needy peasants. The policy was therefore to involve both resettlement and a land reform measure for land-short and tenure-insecure peasants while seeking to reassure the landed elites that their rural power base was not in imminent danger. In 1972, a commission was set up to carry out feasibility studies and a number of international organisations such as the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Labor Organization provided support and consultants, and delegations were sent to tour settlement schemes in Kenya and Tanzania. The Planning Commission Office also recommended resettlement as a means of creating employment, solving the problem of the excessive labor force. However, land reform was opposed by the landed elites and proposals were considered too costly. By the time of the revolution, some 40 settlements had been established at a cost of US\$ 8 million, with some irrigated schemes costing about 15,000 Ethiopian birr per family. This represented less

than 0.2% of rural households compared with estimates of 5% that moved spontaneously (Wood 1985;Pankhurst 1992;Dessalegn 2003).

### *3.1.1. Resettlement viability and food security implications*

Many of the reviews of the early settlement schemes did not focus on food security concerns per se, but rather on the broader viability of the schemes. Simpson (1976:15) concluded that they had ‘negligible contributions to rural development’. The results were poor and viability of many schemes especially those involving high inputs and mechanisation was open to question (ILO 1970;Dessalegn 1989). Schemes involving settlers without agricultural or sedentary backgrounds established to settle pastoralists and shifting cultivators, and to rehabilitate ex-soldiers and urban unemployed showed little signs of success and had high desertion rates. However, some schemes for land-short peasants that involved low inputs seemed to be more successful, enabling settlers to become food self-sufficient in the short term, though longer term viability remained open to question (Simpson 1976, Van Santen 1980, Eshetu and Teshome 1988, Dessalegn 1989, 2003).

### ***The early Derg Period (1974-1984)***

During the Derg period, resettlement came to take on greater policy salience and there was a substantial increase in numbers moved. Within 10 years some 46,000 households, comprising about 187,000 people were resettled in 81 sites in eleven regions. Three factors explain this rapid increase. First, the 1975 nationalisation of rural land gave the state control over land and the power to move people at will. Second, two nationwide famines within the span of a decade highlighted the perceived imperative of finding radical solutions. Third, the government set up institutions charged with responsibility for resettlement, starting with the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) established in 1973 which became the implementing agency of the Inter-ministerial group on land settlement. RRC was followed in 1976 by the Settlement Authority which was established within the Ministry of Agriculture which was renamed the Ministry of Agriculture and Settlement. In 1979, the RRC merged with the Settlement Authority and the Awash Valley Authority.

Within the first decade, famine victims and land-short peasants became the dominant category of settlers. However, resettlement continued to be seen as a remedy for various economic, social and political objectives including not just dealing with famine and providing land to the landless but also increasing agricultural production, introducing new technologies, establishing cooperatives, removing urban unemployed, stopping charcoal burning, settling pastoralists and

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shifting agriculturalists, rehabilitating repatriated refugees and forming defences on the Somali border (Wood 1985). By the time of its abolition in 1979, the Settlement Authority which had planned to resettle 20,000 people annually was responsible for some 20,000 households or about 75,000 people.<sup>13</sup>

### *Resettlement viability and food security implications*

Various reports point to high social and economic costs and reliance on government inputs (Colaris 1985, Wood 1985, Dessalegn 1989). Although settlements were expected to become self-sufficient within five years, a decade after their establishment, many schemes were still receiving support, and some still required food aid. The assumption that resettlement would promote food security did not meet expectations. There was also evidence of low productivity and declining yields, particularly in high-input schemes. Once again attempts to settle urban unemployed and pastoralists often against their will led to massive desertions. The policy of settling men without their families proved so unpopular that there were suggestions that it should be abandoned (Colaris 1985) although in practice is continued to be practiced. The collectivisation imposed by the RRC was resented. High profile cooperatives showed the greatest desertion rates. The RRC came to the conclusion by 1983 that these schemes were unworkable and advocated a new approach in 1984 with small-scale projects relying on oxen and a phasing out of mechanised cooperatives (Eshetu and Teshome 1988, Dessalegn 1989).

On the eve of the 1984 famine, resettlement was estimated to contribute a mere 0.2% of to agricultural production (ONCCP 1984:162), and the programme was in crisis. In his comprehensive review, Dessalegn concluded: 'Resettlement failed to live up to its expectations. It had absolutely no impact on the unemployment problem in urban areas, and did little to ease the agricultural and environmental crises facing the country at the time. Indeed, there is reason to believe that the damage caused by resettlement far outweighs its benefits and the vast resources wasted on the various programmes would have been more profitably employed elsewhere' (2003:27).

Though there are few studies of resettlement areas in this period, we cannot assume that all of the schemes failed or were disbanded. In some cases, where there was irrigation potential, schemes have survived although they may be prone to recurrent food insecurity. For instance the Do'oma site in the Gamo

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<sup>13</sup>As Dessalegn (2003:22) notes a number of different figures were mentioned by various institutions raising questions about the accuracy of the numbers.

lowlands involved a state farm established by the RRC in the late 1970s that included settlers from the southern highlands in Gamo and Wolayta as well as from the Northern highlands from Gonder and Wello. The settlers petitioned to be relocated after a drought to another settlement in Tedelle in Shewa, where many returned due to tensions with the local people. In 1985, more people settled in Do'oma and an irrigation scheme was set up with UNICEF support, and has continued to exist to this day. The area has suffered from drought and received emergency food aid particularly after rain failure in 2008 and 2011. The site has been receiving PSNP support since 2005 with 32% of households benefiting (Bevan 2012).

### *The Emergency Phase (1984-1986)*

The emergency phase involved over 600,000 settlers moved from October 1984 to January 1986 and was one of the most ambitious and draconian projects carried by the Derg. It was launched at the height of the famine. Organized by the Workers Party of Ethiopia, resettlement was promoted in a matter of months from a minor component of agricultural policy into a national priority of the highest order despite international opposition. The state's responsibility to relate settlement to the redistribution of natural resources even became enshrined in the 1987 Constitution. Resettlement was viewed by the planners as a way of addressing the famine with durable solutions, reducing reliance on external aid, alleviating population pressure in the north, and exploiting areas assumed to be fertile and sparsely populated. It was also perceived as an opportunity to promote the socialisation of the rural economy through villagization, collectivisation in cooperatives, as well as a means of introducing modern agriculture through mechanisation (Pankhurst 1992; Dessalegn 2003).

There has been considerable research on the emergency phase resettlement including three PhD theses (Pankhurst 1989, Gebre 2001, Wolde-Sellassie 2002), several books (Alemneh 1990, Dieci and Viezzoli 1992, Pankhurst 1992, Dessalegn 2003) and many reports by government and international organisations as well as numerous published articles.<sup>14</sup> The studies have documented a host of problems that beset the programme which Dessalegn referred to as 'the tragedy of population relocation' in the sub-title of his book. The weight of evidence suggests that the programme was flawed in design, overambitious, and hasty in implementation. It involved human rights abuses and untold suffering for people living in resettlement areas who incurred grave social, economic, political, cultural and environmental costs (Council of

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<sup>14</sup> For reviews see Dessalegn 2003, and Pankhurst 2009.



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Ministers 1988, de Waal 1991, Pankhurst 1992, Dessalegn 2003, Pankhurst 2009).

As Dessalegn noted, the emergency resettlement was ‘plagued from the outset by confusion, disorganisation and mismanagement’ (2003:32). A host of problems included the following: inducements and coercion in settler selection, with targets turned into quotas and victimisation at a local level; the prioritising of hasty and misguided political decisions, such as in site selection, over more careful and cautious technical recommendations; the moving of large numbers rapidly in crowded and unhealthy collection, transit and arrival shelters leading to disease, deaths and separations; high death rates and desertions especially in the initial period; the false assumption that there is land that is not being used by local people and that the relocation would relieve population pressure in the highlands; environmental damage to areas cleared for settlement; considerable direct as well as hidden costs with diversion of resources and personnel from ongoing projects and programmes; continuing dependence on inputs; difficulties for settlers to adapt to a lowland climate and a less varied diet; enforced cooperation, political control and restricted freedoms of settlers; a range of negative effects on people living in the resettlement areas and the further marginalisation of minority groups in the borderlands who were swamped by the resettlement and lost access to crucial resources (Dessalegn 2003, Pankhurst 2009).

The overall verdict is that the experiment was a clear disaster. Politically, resettlement was unpopular, enforced, and driven by cadres often against more pragmatic and cautious approaches suggested by technical experts. It resulted in power abuses and serious conflict between settlers and local people, fuelling opposition to the government. The donor boycott of resettlement and consequent strained relations with Western countries represented severe political costs of the government’s decision to go ahead with a programme that involved heavy-handed measures and abuses. In terms of human rights, for the settlers, the process involved coercion and serious infringements of personal choice, loss of freedom of movement and of religious practice in an attempt to instil a communist ideology, and alienation of household labor for collective purposes. For the ‘host’ communities, it involved coerced labor in preparing shelters, houses, and food for the settlers on arrival, forced expropriation of land and other key resources without consultation let alone compensation, displacement, marginalisation and consequent enforced changes in livelihood. The resource conflicts fuelled grievances and led to the settlers being unwelcome and the settlements were at times attacked.



Economically, the programme poached personnel and diverted food, funds, services, aid and other resources from ministries and existing programmes and projects, and thereby further aggravated the mounting crisis in the country. Settlements absorbed resources without showing signs of becoming self-sufficient. Settlers faced imposed mechanised collectivisation which went against the deeply engrained sense of autonomy of peasant households using oxen. For the hosts, they resented the loss of resources, notably land, forests exploited for coffee and honey production, and access to rivers. The settlements did however result in more market interaction with the settlers initially purchasing grain and livestock from local people and later producing mainly cereals for sale in local markets.

Socially, the programme resulted in considerable suffering for the settlers, due to high morbidity and mortality, particularly during the transport and the initial phase, as well as family separation, disintegration of institutions, impoverishment, and difficulties in adaptation. The lowland diseases notably malaria and trypanosomiasis presented new threats and challenges. The mixing of people from different areas, ethnicities, and religions heightened tensions and social conflict. For the 'host' population, the immigration of large numbers of settlers with different values and ways of life represented a threat, although in some cases settlers provide cheap labor.

Culturally, for the settlers the changes in environment in the hot lowlands and the more monotonous maize and sorghum based diet involved a reduced quality of life, and the memory of lost cherished homelands affected their senses of identity and wellbeing. For local people, dispossession of sites of cultural importance such as sacred forests and burial grounds aggravated their grievances. In terms of the environment, the programme led to massive deforestation to build shelters, houses and facilities, and environmental degradation as a result of land clearing and intensive settlement. Serious conflicts arose between settlers and local people over resources that the latter had used and considered belonged to them and for which they had local management institutions which were being undermined.

### *Food security implications for settlers and people living in the resettlement areas*

The emergency phase resettlement largely involved settlers from the drought-prone northern highlands of Wello, Northern Shewa and Tigray and some from South Gonder, and the densely populated areas in the southern highlands of Kambata Hadiya, and Wolayta. Who the settlers were and the extent of involuntary versus voluntary resettlement has been and remains controversial.

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All the more so since willingness to resettle is complex and socially embedded, given the way in which individual decision-making is linked to that of spouse, family, other kin, peer and community pressures. The process is also politically embedded given the ways in which national and regional political and media pressures, as well as local level politics, influence decision-making. Moreover, there is a continuum between being forced at gun-point, and enthusiastic voluntary participation, with a wide range from voluntary to coerced motivations in between (Gebre 2002, 2004). Although in times of crisis, particularly of famine, a much larger number of people may be seen to express a 'willingness' to resettle, in many ways, of course, this is not a genuine willingness but one prompted by desperation and lack of choice (Pankhurst 1999, Gebre 2002). Those who had already left their villages for famine shelters had generally exhausted their assets, and had abandoned their land to others, so that they no longer had any real choice. They had 'surrendered to the State' and no longer had much say in whether they were resettled or not. There were cases in the 1984-5 famine when the camps became 'rat traps', where famished families went seeking food and found themselves encouraged or forced to resettle under the threat of food aid being withdrawn.

Most studies have focused on abuse of human rights and the numerous injustices of the involuntary resettlement. However, what needs explaining, is the voluntary end of the spectrum which has tended to be overlooked in highlighting the coercions and impositions. A significant proportion of those who joined the resettlement 'voluntarily' in 1985 tended to be the younger generation, generally men, in search of better opportunities. Many of them saw little prospect of gaining access to sufficient land to become independent producers in a context in which diminishing landholdings were controlled by the older generation. The idea of starting a new life in the 'far west' thus had a certain appeal. Despite some land redistributions, the limited options for access to land by the younger generation therefore no doubt contributed to their 'willingness' to resettle, and can be considered an underlying structural factor.

The idea that the resettlement was an effective strategy to relieve population pressure and improve food security in the highlands is questionable. Resettlement involved 1.6% of the rural population and even in Wello only represented 11% of the rural population. Given an annual growth rate of 2.9% and the high return rate of resettlers especially after the fall of the Derg, resettlement can only have had a very marginal impact on population pressure in the highlands (Pankhurst 1992:54). Moreover, the per capita holdings in the resettlement areas were less than 0.5 hectares (though with variations by region and type of settlement), suggesting that, apart from the landless and destitute, large proportions of settlers would have had better land holdings in their areas of

origin. Furthermore, in some of the integrated sites in the western highlands, densities were higher than in the areas from where the settlers came (Dessalegn 2003:38). The myth of vast expanses of arable land for resettlement has also been questioned. The lower densities in the lowlands are often related to water shortage, fragile soils, and human and livestock diseases.

Food security for the settlers was especially problematic in the early stages of the resettlement, with settlers depending on food aid that was sometimes delayed especially during the rains or was insufficient, and lacked nutritional variety. Moreover, malnutrition was compounded by endemic lowland diseases. There were high death rates; for instance Sivini (1986) suggested a crude death rate of 21.9% in the Mettekel resettlement in the first year. Moreover, many selected sites were unsuitable, some lacking water, with poor soils, or facing waterlogging. Conflicts with local people whose resources were alienated further jeopardised the prospects for food security so that large numbers left the resettlements in the early years. Dessalegn (2003:39-40) estimated that some 10 to 12% of the resettlers in Wello had returned by the end of 1986, and a study by the Council of Ministers (1988) suggested 14% desertions overall. Large numbers also left at the time of the defeat of the Derg, fearing revenge from local people whose resources had been alienated by the resettlement schemes.

Especially in the first year, large numbers of settlers left the schemes and in many sites settlers faced food insecurity until they were able to produce their first crops. However, gradually in many sites settlers began to produce a surplus. Often in many of the lowlands areas, they were producing largely maize and sorghum, with limited variety in their diet. Gradually settler production in some areas resulted in a fall of the price of maize on the local market and in the terms of trade in exchange for livestock which was the main means of saving. However, over several years, settlers who remained began to improve their diet by growing some pulses, vegetables and fruit and consuming livestock products and purchasing more varied foods. In some areas enterprising settlers began to prosper leading to resentment from local people and fuelling conflict so that at the time of the downfall of the Derg many settlers left. However, those who remained in some areas had access to more land, entered relationships with local people and even attracted some further settlers to join the areas (Pankhurst 2002).

In some areas, settler production has stimulated the development of markets and exchange with local populations, promoting market integration. The establishment of settlements had also led to improved roads and services. In other cases, the settler presence has also resulted in pressure on services. There have been serious conflicts often in the market places, and this has been a major

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reason for settlers leaving the areas, particularly at the time of the downfall of the Derg (Wolde-Sellassie 2002, Gebre 2003).

The resettlement was largely carried out in the lowlands in Gambella, Metekkel, and Assosa, though there were also so-called 'integrated' sites in the highlands of Illubabor, Kefa and Wellegga. Overall settlers represented 6% of the population though this rose to over a third in some areas (Pankhurst 1992:57). There have been a range of detrimental effects on local peoples particularly the minority ethnic groups in the borderlands in Gambella, Metekkel and Assosa, whose livelihoods included shifting cultivation, pastoralism and gathering and hunting. These effects included displacement from areas they were living in, environmental changes due to deforestation, erosion and pollution, alienation of crucial land, water and forest resources, increasing competition with settlers over dwindling resources and exacerbated health risks brought by settlers (Dessalegn 1988, WoldeSellassie 2002, Gebre 2003). Resources that were used by the local people to shift cultivation, for transhumance, hunting and gathering purposes, or fallow land were being reallocated to resettlers. The food security implications for the local populations have been serious with loss of resources due to the ploughing of large areas for the establishment of settlements, such as the reduction of access to water and forest resources, including honey and coffee, and key components of their diet from hunting and gathering. These areas were unjustly identified for resettlement without consultation or compensation, threatening the economy and habitat of indigenous peoples (Dessalegn 2003:51).

### ***The EPRDF period (2000-2010)***

The EPRDF opposed resettlement during its armed struggle and reaffirmed this position once in power. However, within a decade a gradual shift in policy took place. With increasing numbers facing food insecurity in the early 2000s, resettlement came to be considered not only a potentially viable option but even a necessary and crucial integral component of the food security strategy. Resettlement was alluded to in key policy documents, notably the Five-Year Development Plan (1999), the Federal Food Security Strategy (FDRE 2002), the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (MoFED 2002) and the Rural Development Policy and Strategy, which outlines reasons why the Derg resettlement failed suggesting that these shortcomings can be overcome if the resettlement is carried out gradually (MoFED 2003).

From mid-2002, the serious drought led the government to rethink its food security strategy. A workshop was held with donors in June 2003 and a technical committee was formed to design the New Coalition for Food Security in Ethiopia (NCFSE). Volume II was dedicated to the Voluntary Resettlement Programme. Once again, resettlement was justified on the grounds that millions

faced food insecurity and even in good years many were unable to feed their families throughout the year. The proposal suggested resettling 2.2 million people of 440,000 households in four regions over three years.

The second Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP), had a specific section on resettlement as part of the food security programme. As with earlier policy documents, resettlement was justified on the grounds that 'a large proportion of the population had lost the capacity to be productive mainly due to land degradation and population pressure while at the same time Ethiopia has a considerable amount of land currently underutilised but still suitable for farm activities' (MoFED 2006:95). The figure of 2.2 million people proposed by the NCFSE was mentioned but the period was to be extended to the end of the PASDEP period (2010) at a cost of 1.2 billion *birr*. The PASDEP acknowledged that some problems were encountered especially in the first year, but suggested that the majority of settlers had become self-sufficient with improved livelihoods. The program would therefore become expanded as it was deemed a reliable alternative to ensuring food security. Since then, resettlement has become less of a priority no doubt in part due to the problems encountered with the implementation of the programme and discussions about potentially more profitable use of land notably for investment. The GTP has only a passing reference to resettlement in a short section on food security stating that it was designed to bring food security rapidly, was carried out on a voluntary basis, and provides an alternative to households (MoFED 2010:23).

Though federal planning for resettlement began in 2003 and was to be undertaken in four regional states, there had been some earlier resettlement in Amhara region from 2000 to deal with food insecurity and resolve the problem of displacees from earlier resettlement from Wellega. Twelve thousand displacees had congregated in West Gojjam Zone in an emergency relief camp outside Bure town. Likewise, planning began in Oromia in 2000 with a feasibility study involving the University of Leeds with funding from the UK Department for International Development. The first resettlement involved victims of a landslide in North Shewas, and further resettlement was prompted by 'spontaneous' migration in Bale Zone involving 33,000 people by the end of 2002 (MoARD 2009b, Pankhurst 2009). Planning in Tigray began in 2001 with a pre-feasibility study with experts from Mekele University and a pilot project near Badime in 2002 involving about a thousand households (MoARD 2009b). The implementation initiated at the federal level, began in 2003.

From 2003 to 2010, a total number of over 230,000 new households were resettled. Table 1 shows that the number of resettled households peaked in 2004, and declined substantially from 2006. There were also important regional

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variations. In Tigray, resettlement stopped in 2005 after two years, preferring to focus on strengthening economic and social infrastructures (MoARD 2009b) suggesting the region no longer saw resettlement as a priority. In Amhara resettlement, increased rapidly in 2005, but declined thereafter apparently to reinforce existing schemes, but also probably due to high desertions and preference for using land for investment. In Oromia, the number of households that resettled was highest in 2004 and reduced thereafter. No new resettlement was carried out in 2009 apparently since the region had to move resettled households that were unfavourable sites to better ones. In SNNPR, the regions did not carry out resettlement in 2003 in order to prepare for 2004 and learn from other regions' experience (MoARD 2009; resettlement was also not carried out in the region 2009 and 2010 ostensibly since planning and implementation required much time and resources and presumably also owing to concerns about problems encountered.

*Table 1: Number of Households Resettled from 2003 to 2010*

Region	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2003-2010
Oromia	19,581	32,293	10,279	3,555	13,200	2,116	-	1,996	83,020
SNNPRS	-	23,915	4,100	4,057	6,660	7,001	-	-	45,733
Amhara	6,298	5,639	31,927	8,505	7,203	4,242	8,787	-	72,601
Tigray	6,058	23,899	-	-	-	-	-	-	29,957
Total	31,937	85,746	46,306	16,117	27,063	13,359	8,787	1,996	231,311

SOURCES: Federal and Regional MoARD Food Security Offices.

The linkage between the resettlement program and the PSNP, the latter serving as a recruitment base, has become a source of differing interpretations, particularly regarding the recruitment of settlers. Bishop and Hilhorst (2010) suggested that, during the early implementation of the PSNP in Amhara, people from the poorest wealth group were targeted for resettlement, while being excluded from the PSNP, as an 'incentive' to resettle. A MoARD report suggested that the poorest of the poor resettling would relieve pressure on the PSNP enabling the program to include most if not all potential beneficiaries (MoARD 2009) In contrast, implementers' in Oromia reported that the landless-poor are targeted for resettlement to prioritise the most needy resettlers from a large pool of eligible resettlers. This interpretation emphasizes that the selection starts from the poorest, given the large number of PSNP beneficiaries who are eligible and willing to resettle. Such differing interpretations may suggest that the selection of program participants is prone to ambiguous translation(Mengistu

2012). A study of returnees from resettlement suggested that there were differences within the Amhara region. For example, whereas in Sekota *wereda* food aid was provided to the middle strata and the poorest were expected to resettle in Ibenat *wereda*, PSNP beneficiaries were given the opportunity to go to resettlement. Some non-PSNP beneficiaries wanted to resettle but were not allowed to since they were not considered very poor (Maji 2012). Government reviews that targeting was fair and participatory apart from some ‘irregularities in a few weredas’; however, there was a small proportion of settlers who did not meet the criteria where from urban areas seeking to take advantage of the benefits.<sup>15</sup>

There has also been a shift in policy and practice since resettlement is also seen as providing cheap labour for investment in commercial farming, so that the two policies can go hand in hand with resettlement serving as a means of attracting commercial investment. This was particularly the case in the Humera area in Tigray and in Metemma and other lowland areas of Amhara. However, in some areas of Amhara there were problems due to settlers being resettled on land allocated to investors (MoARD 2009b).

### ***Resettlement viability and food security implications***

Resettlement has been seen from an official viewpoint as a rapid solution to the food security problem since settlers are believed to become food self-sufficient within a year or two, no longer requiring food aid. Thus the government considers the resettlement program as a reliable and efficient way of achieving food security (NCFSE 2003). The government considers the resettlement program as ‘the cheapest and quickest means to achieve food security at household level’ since settlers are expected to be food self-sufficient in one or two harvesting periods (MoARD 2009b:13). Resettlement is sometimes portrayed as the most successful component of the food security program. When compared to other components of the food security programs the cost incurred is considered to be minimal (MoARD 2009b:30) This is sometimes contrasted with the multi-year commitments for the PSNP and frustrations with the slow graduation from safety nets.

There are different figures provided for the number of resettlers who were said to have attained food self reliance. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Food Security Coordination Bureau’s review of food security

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<sup>15</sup> A MoARD review (2009a:16) noted that ‘at least 2% of settlers who were urban and semi-urban lumpens joined the program with the intension of snatching the expected benefits. Immediately the regions identified and carried out serious evaluations and expelled them from the program.



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produced in July 2007 noted that 88 percent of settlers had graduated (MoARD 2008a:6). A report in June 2009 suggested that 95 percent of the settlers from 2003-2008 achieved food self-sufficiency, though this varied by region, with 88% in Amhara, 91% in Oromia and 100% in Tigray and SNNP (MoARD 2009b:29). The figure mentioned in the foreword to this book is 98% of settlers, with many exceeding this level. Successes in achieving food self-sufficiency were attributed not just to fertile land, adequate rainfall and the agricultural extension program, but also employment opportunities in commercial farms, and natural resources such as gum (MoARD 2009b:29).

Official explanations for those who were not able to achieve self-sufficiency include problems to do with poor quality land, crop failures, late farming, livestock diseases, and delayed provisions of oxen and seeds. There were a few cases where settlement were found to be swampy or the land unproductive requiring resettling the settlers a second time involving extra costs and delaying food self sufficiency; there were also cases of land scarcity so that settlers received only 1 or 1.5 hectares instead of the 2 hectares specified in the Program Implementation Manual (MoARD 2008b, 2009b). However, official views also suggest that resettlement is complementary to other food security initiatives. If the poorest of the poor resettle, then the number of people who need to be included in the PSNP is reduced and then can include most if not all potential beneficiaries (MoARD 2009b:4).

Although resettlement has been portrayed as an efficient way of making use of fertile land and reliable rainfall, a Ministry of Agriculture report does raise concerns about land availability and competing claims from local people. The document states: 'Underlying the Government thinking about the potential scale of resettlement is the assumption that there was a huge amount of unused and unoccupied land available. While there were large amounts of underutilized land, the land suitable for resettlement was more limited and in recent years there has been greater competition from the necessity of making land available for investors. Furthermore, host communities have also demanded that their access to land should also be guaranteed. Overall, the regions faced challenges in properly completing and following feasibility studies and land-use planning, and have found it difficult to meet the needs of competing demands for the land available' (MoARD 2009a:52). There have also been concerns that environmental protection needs to be prioritised and that resettlement should not be carried out on a campaign approach but rather as part of a comprehensive development strategy (MoARD 2009b:33).

A government report notes that there has not been systematic monitoring and evaluation and that the evidence at hand is based on data collected by experts of the food security directorate, and some fragmented studies, suggesting



the need for 'scientific impact assessments to come up with clear and reliable conclusions' (MoARD 2009b:32). Indeed, unlike with the Derg resettlement, there have not been very many independent reviews of the current resettlement apart from a report by Hammond and Bezaeit (2004), and some rapid comparisons between resettlement in Amhara and Oromia (Abraham and Piguet 2004), Amhara and SNNP (Tranquilli 2004), and Amhara and Tigray (Kelemework 2008). However, there have been at least ten masters' theses, and a project by Forum for Social Studies carried out comparative cases studies in eleven resettlement sites in four regions (FSS 2006; Pankhurst 2009).

Given the multitude of problems associated with the earlier resettlement, the New Coalition for Food Security in Ethiopia (NCFSE 2003) set up guidelines. These included the following four pillars that resettlement should be: 1) voluntary, 2) on under-utilised land, 3) in consultation with local communities and 4) with proper preparations. Although there have been some improvements in comparison to the Derg resettlement, many problems reoccurred and the guidelines have hardly been followed. While there was no direct coercion as during the Derg resettlement, the extent of voluntariness and the ability to make real choices was constrained by desperation resulting from increased land shortage, drought and destitution, the idyllic picture presented and exaggerated, promises of support, warnings that food aid would not continue in the drought prone highlands, and social pressure from peer groups, kin, neighbours and community members affecting individual decision-making. Similarly, while assessments were made to identify available land in the Amhara and Oromia regions, plans were disregarded, far greater numbers than proposed were resettled, and the availability of under-utilised land remains questionable.

Some consultation did take place with local people but mostly in attempt to persuade local communities to accept the resettlement and mobilise them to prepare for the settlers' arrival. There was often opposition since there were already landless youth, and in one case local people tried to redistribute the land to landless youth prior to the settlers' arrival. In some cases, opposition was disregarded and overruled or 'consent' was given since local leaders felt they had no option. In no case was compensation provided, and in many cases tensions developed. Conflicts occurred in eight out of the eleven FSS study sites, leading to incidents of deaths in two sites.

Lastly, while preparations were carried out in advance, briefings to prospective settlers were idealised including promises of two hectares of fertile land, a pair of oxen, good housing, health and education services, up to three years relief aid, agricultural inputs and in some cases irrigation. Many such promises were not in the guidelines or were misinterpreted at a local level or by resettlers. Differences between expectations and the reality in the settlements

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were major factors in leading to significant numbers of desertions and dissatisfaction. In some sites, there was land shortage and conflicting claims by local people. Often, there was at best one hectare of land and one ox between two households. Shelters tended to be temporary or poor quality houses built by local people. Settlers either had to build new houses or rebuild the ones provided. Lowland diseases were rife. The difficulty of access to roads or markets in the rainy season has serious consequences with some sites becoming cut off affecting food distribution and health care, particularly in Oromia and SNNP (MoARD 2009b). There were reports of child malnutrition especially in the first year. There were also reports of many deaths in the early stages (Maji 2012). In some cases food had not been prepositioned before the settlers' arrival. There were often delays in the provisions of rations which tended to be limited to grain, with oil and supplementary feeding either not available or reduced after a short period. Settlers had to sell rations to vary and spice their diet. Rations were generally stopped after eight months before settlers had become self-sufficient in food.

Among the principles and approaches, the most important was that resettlement should be within regions to avoid the inter-ethnic problems the earlier Derg resettlement. However, in all four regions, and particularly in the SNNP ethnic, cultural and/or religious differences exist between the highlands and lowlands (FSS 2006). More significantly, greater ethnic homogeneity has not in itself avoided tensions and conflicts since these are largely over resources, notably agricultural and grazing land, forests and non-timber products, and water points. The intra-regional nature of the current resettlement has therefore not prevented the emergence of conflicts between settlers and local communities and the process has resulted in further marginalisation of lowland agro-pastoralist groups as well as earlier migrants and resettlers. A government report noted that in settlement sites in Wolayta Zone of SSNP disagreements between settlers and pastoralists led them to being moved to other areas. Moreover, in Amhara there were problems between settlers and investors who claimed the land had been allocated to them. (MoARD 2009:43). Though there is not the space in this chapter to consider the other principles including environmental concern, development process, partnership, cost-sharing and self-help, transparency, an iterative process, self-reliance, income and employment creation, community management and minimum infrastructure, a review of the existing studies suggests that many of these principles were hardly adhered to (Pankhurst 2009: 150-4).

Settlers in many sites experienced food insecurity particularly during the first year especially when food rations were late or when sites became inaccessible during the rains. Moreover food production was limited in some

sites where soils were unsuitable, infertile or prone to waterlogging, and when droughts occurred as is common in the lowlands (MoARD 2009b). Certain categories of vulnerable settlers, notably female-headed households and elderly households with less labor and those suffering from chronic or lowland diseases remained food insecure. The stoppage of rations after eight months had detrimental consequences on confidence and placed a strain on food secure households that had to support those who were food insecure (FSS 2006).

On the other hand, certain types of household have been able to succeed much better than others. They have attained food security faster than in previous resettlements. This was often due to resources brought from home areas, notably among settlers from Harerge in Eastern Oromia. Some engaged in sharecropping and land rental producing cash-crops notably sesame (Maji 2012), as well as investing savings in livestock notably plough oxen. Others became involved in trade and non-agricultural activities. A few even established grinding mills. The more successful were generally male-headed households with good social capital and linkages with the community through informal associations, as well as with administrators, local people and investors. This raises the question of whether a strategy of selecting or encouraging enterprising and resourceful settlers would be more effective than targeting famine-victims and food insecure households (FSS 2006).

### ***Returnees from resettlement***

As with the Derg resettlement, rates of desertion from resettlement have been raising questions about the viability of resettlement as a reliable food security strategy. There are no reliable figures available on returnees from resettlement. Overall the proportion of settlers who remained in the settlement in 2008 compared with those who initially settled was found to be 79%. Though the extent of death and the natural population increase are not known, without taking this into account, the figures would therefore suggest that at least 21% of settlers had left by 2008 (MoARD 2009b). However, there are significant regional variations since the proportion reported was as high as 46% in Amhara region, 15% in SNNP, 11% in Oromia, whereas no difference was reported in Tigray, suggesting that the data was not obtained. Major reasons for return according to reports and discussions with settlers included the hot weather in lowland areas, lack of willingness to work hard, misinformation and expectations due to false promises of an easy life (MoARD 2009b:34).

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*Table 2: Number of Initial settlers, existing settlers and potential returnees (2003-2008)*

<b>Region</b>	<b>‘Initial’ settlers (Total)</b>	<b>‘Existing’ settlers (Total)</b>	<b>% of Existing settlers</b>	<b>Potential Returnees (Total)</b>	<b>% of Returnees</b>
<b>Oromia</b>	77,136	68,913	89	8,223	11
<b>SNNPRS</b>	34,223	29,115	85	5,108	15
<b>Amhara</b>	63,814	34,710	54	29,104	46
<b>Tigray</b>	29,957	29,957	100	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>205,130</b>	<b>162,695</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>42,435</b>	<b>21</b>

SOURCE: MOARD Food Security Coordination Directorate (2009).

A study of returnees from resettlement in two *weredas* of Amhara region (Ibenat and Sekota) found that the local policy was for entire households to go for resettlement. Single youth were discouraged to migrate on their own as they were suspected of not wanting to stay in the resettlement areas and simply selling the oxen they would receive including those who are relatively well off. However, some youth got married just before leaving in order to be able to obtain the benefits which were provided to married household heads such as obtaining an ox. In addition to the single youth, there were households who split across origin and the resettled areas to protect rights to land and property. In some cases, wives stayed behind and sharecropped out land. There were also cases of men who left their wife behind and married a second one just before the journey or in the resettlement area, to be able to obtain the benefits of married couples.

The study also found that many settlers sold assets such as oxen in their home areas since they were expecting to receive oxen in the resettlement and took some contingency money with them. Many did not sell cows leaving them in the care of relatives to reproduce. A number of resettlers who managed to save in the resettlement area decided to return and invest in buying houses and thereby land in their home areas (Maji 2012).

To some extent, the policy of allowing settlers a period of three years during which they could reclaim their land in the areas they left may have had an influence on settlers’ deciding to return. However, despite this policy, many households were not confident that their land rights would be respected and preferred to leave family members behind to look after the land or in the case of women to sharecrop it. Some settlers travelled annually back to their home areas to ensure their land rights were being respected. A few of the more successful

settlers reinvested in their home areas including obtaining more land. The returnees required clearance letters from the areas they left in order to obtain access to PSNP and credit which they could get if they had a justifiable reason to return such as being sick (Maji 2012).

## **Conclusions**

We have argued that migration and resettlement should be seen as within a broad unified framework of population movement as part of related processes involving similar experiences, and with interlinked implications for food security and policy.

Certain forms of migration may be considered to be more closely related to food insecurity and poverty more generally. Migration has remained low in Ethiopia due to land and other policy constraints at the national, regional and local level, as well as the costs involved and the availability of alternative coping strategies. Rural-urban migration is still the dominant form and the pace of migration is increasing. Motives for migration are often related to gender-age and wealth categories and the type of migration.

Linkages with food security are clearest in the case of distress migration, after drought and famine, and seasonal migration in the off-season and hunger periods. However, indirect shocks, notably land shortages and un(der)employment are often also linked to food security. Another important factor is indebtedness. In some cases when food aid was delayed food-short households borrow from richer households, but are unable to repay the debts from selling food aid. They therefore migrate sometimes abandoning PSNP work to raise the money to repay the debts (Maji 2012)

There is limited evidence comparing migrants with those who stayed behind. However, a migrant tracking study found that migrants had much greater consumption though much of this was non-food consumption (De Brauw, Mueller and Tassew 2011).

Regarding the implications of migration for food security of those remaining behind, international evidence shows a mixed picture. Some evidence in Ethiopia suggests that seasonal migration is an important strategy for coping with food shortage providing a safety-net to deal with food and other shocks, even if it rarely leads to greatly improved livelihoods. However, the loss of labor and the presence of migrants can also have detrimental social and economic consequences (Feleke et al. 2006). Regarding remittances, international evidence on the impact on food security in a narrow sense is difficult to estimate but although there are often gender-age and wealth

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differences there is clear evidence of the positive impact on human and physical capital which can be assumed to improve livelihoods and hence food security. In Ethiopia, internal remittances are low though among those who do remit for instance from Addis Ababa this represents a high proportion of their income and even small remittances can be very important. Migration can also be a means of reducing risk particularly of shocks and variability in consumption, though the extent to which this is important in Ethiopia has not been investigated systematically. Discussions of the impact of migrants on areas of in-migration particularly urban areas has mainly stressed negative effects on housing, services, jobs and security, although there are also perceived positive effects in addressing the demand for cheap labor (Feleke et al.2006).

The experience of resettlement worldwide suggests that it tends to lead to impoverishment and that one of the risks involved is increased food insecurity. In the Ethiopian case resettlement has been carried out for a variety of reasons from the late imperial period to the present. However, promoting food security by providing land for households affected by famine and land shortage became a major preoccupation of resettlement policy particularly since the 1984 famine. The experience of resettlement schemes, however, has been plagued with a multitude of problems which have been repeated by successive regimes. Although many of the excesses and abuses of the Derg resettlement have been avoided in recent resettlement, the way the process has been organised bears similarities. Many of the pitfalls and problems with settler and site selection, consultation with local people and preparations for the move have re-emerged despite the best of intentions. The policy of limiting resettlement to intra-regional movements did not avoid tensions over scarce resources with lowland peoples in the same regions. The generous option of allowing settlers the right to retain access to their previous holdings in their home areas for three years before making a final decision may have promoted high returnee trends.

Resettlement has been portrayed by the government as a means of promoting food security and reaching food self-sufficiency rapidly at relatively low cost with food aid support restricted in principle to eight months in comparison to multi-annual commitments for the Productive Safety Net Program. Government reports suggest very high levels of settlers achieving food self-reliance. However, there are also large numbers of settlers leaving sites and returning to their home areas. Moreover, even where short-term food self-sufficiency has been attained, longer term issues remain serious concerns. These include land-shortage and resource competition with people already living in the settlement areas and potentially negative impacts on *their* food security, competing land uses notably with the promotion of investment in commercial agriculture, and environmental concerns relating to the fragile soils in the

lowlands and increasing deforestation. Ultimately the longer term viability of the existing settlements will depend on the establishment of social ties and mutual economic exchanges with peoples living in the areas.

There is notably a lack of policy regarding migration in Ethiopia. The development of a broader migration policy framework, in relation to other development strategies, could promote positive aspects of migration with respect to food security while protecting the land and resource rights of local communities. Government efforts have largely been devoted to planning and implementing ambitious, complex and costly resettlement programmes with limited support from donors. In terms of policy on food security, population, rural urban balance and inter-relations, and generally poverty reduction, more emphasis on a broader vision of migration could provide a framework that is more conducive to developing enabling, participatory and less costly approaches to migration and resettlement. Such a vision would seek a balance between two seemingly contradictory but equally important needs: on the one hand creating conducive conditions, appropriate incentives, and an enabling environment to promote appropriate migration, which can play a positive role in stimulating development. This could include an emphasis on developing roads and basic infrastructure, adequate services with an emphasis on health care addressing lowland human and cattle diseases, creating a viable economic environment for livestock marketing and providing credit services particularly for non-agricultural income-generation. On the other hand there is a need to ensure that safeguards are in place to guarantee the rights of local peoples and to ensure the preservation and rehabilitation of the environment. This would include measures to regulate the direction, size and types of migration, establishing enforceable means of protecting customary rights of local people to natural resources, and working out participatory guidelines and mechanisms for the protection and enhancement of natural resources. The key to reconciling these apparently contradictory needs is, arguably, to emphasise the linkages between hosts and migrants and settlers. At an immediate and most practical minimal level this would involve establishing or strengthening joint institutions for administration and conflict resolution. However, on a more positive note there should be promotion of joint development ventures, in which both local and migrant groups stand to gain from working together. Such initiatives should be designed in a participatory manner, such that individuals, groups and communities could apply to the local government, NGOs and donors for funding joint development projects. If the ultimate success of resettlement and migration lies in promoting sustainable development, we believe that such an approach has advantages and deserves to be given due consideration.

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# **Food Security and Household Vulnerability in Addis Ababa**

*Bamlaku Alamirew and Solomon Tsehay*

## **Introduction**

There are more than one billion undernourished people in the world, 98 percent of whom live in developing countries. Estimates indicate that almost two-third of these dwell in seven countries in South and Easter Asia (China, India Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Pakistan) and sub-Sahara Africa (the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ethiopia) (FAO, 2008). Moreover, food security in sub-Sahara Africa has worsened since 1970. Reports indicate that in this region, the proportion of the malnourished population has remained within the range of 33 to 35 percent. As far as the whole continent is concerned, the prevalence of malnutrition varies by regions, with the highest found are being in Central Africa (40 percent) and lowest in Northern Africa (4 percent), clearly showing that malnutrition is more prevalent sub-Sahara Africa.

The Ethiopian economy is among the most vulnerable in sub-Saharan Africa, as it hinges on the vagaries of nature. As such, it has suffered most from recurrent droughts and the resultant extreme fluctuations in output (Devereux, 2000). Annual agricultural production has also been growing less than the country's population. This implies that domestic food production has failed to meet the food requirements of the country. Consequently, the number of food insecure households in the country has been increasing (Demeke and Ferede, 2004).

## **Statement of the problem**

The world's population is becoming increasingly urbanized. In 1950, 30 percent of the world's population lived in urban areas, and by 2002, the figure reached 47 percent (UN Population Division, 2002). Currently, in sub-Sahara Africa, approximately 34 percent of the population lives in urban areas. By 2020, it is predicted that nearly half of the population of the region will be urban (UN-Habitat, 2001). One of the major triggering factors is migration, which is

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increasing at a rapid pace in developing countries. This rapid pace of urbanization has socio-economic ramifications. According to Sharp *et al.* (2003), urbanization is accompanied by new types of social problems and often worsening poverty.

In sub-Saharan Africa (like the situation in other urban areas), the majority of urban households rely on food purchases for most of their consumption. Studies (such as Garrett and Ruel, 1999) indicate that urban residents in Mozambique purchase 83 percent of the food they consume, while their rural counterparts purchase only 30 percent of their consumption (Garrett and Ruel, 1999). A survey in Accra, Ghana also found that, on average, families spent 54 percent of their income on food. In the lowest income category, the figure goes up to 60 percent (Maxwel *et al.*, 2000). In Ethiopia, 80 percent of urban households depend on purchased goods from different markets (FAO, 2008). The aforementioned empirical works reveal that urban households purchase much of their food.

The fact that households purchase more of their food implies that they are vulnerable to shocks related to prices, which may exacerbate their food insecurity situation. In fact, price-related shocks are not the only challenges that aggravate the food insecurity situation of urban households. Studies indicate that developing countries' weak economic base (as subsistence agriculture is most vulnerable to climatic change and other vagaries of nature) (Devereux, 2000), the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, high illiteracy rate, price-related shocks (Anriquez *et al.*, 2010) and challenges of huge population growth exacerbate the problem of food insecurity in urban areas (IFRCC, 2009). As a result of these factors and several other institutional and socio-economic factors, Ethiopia is home to over 35 million undernourished people that account for almost half of the total population of the country (FAO, 2008). Government studies (MoFED, 2002) also indicate that 44 percent of the total population lives below the national poverty line with 90 percent of the poor living in rural areas (MoFED, 2002). Similarly, FAO (2008) revealed that food insecurity is widespread and severe in Ethiopia affecting as much as 45 percent of the total population.

Food insecurity has been considered as an issue in rural areas of Ethiopia, however, urban food insecurity is as equally important as rural food insecurity if not more so given the fact that households in the latter case purchase more of their consumption and thus are susceptible to several shocks. Reports indicate that (FAO, 2008) from the total urban population in Ethiopia, one-fourth lives in Addis Ababa making food security in Addis Ababa to be an issue of great concern where the problem has been exacerbated by the current food price increase (FAO, 2008).

In order to examine the magnitude of food insecurity in urban areas and devise a mechanism of addressing the problem, studies are essential. However, empirical works have so far focused very much on assessing the magnitude of rural food insecurity (Gezahegn, 1995). Only very few studies examined urban food insecurity (Yared, 2010; Ayalneh and Abebe, 2009; Aschalew, 2006, Haile, Alemu and Kudhlande, 2005). While the article written by Yared (2010) used purely qualitative approaches, all the rest used logistic regression techniques to identify factors affecting food security situation of households in urban areas. None of these studies (except that of Yared) examine shocks and the application of PSNPs in the urban context. In view of this gap, this research seeks to examine the food insecurity and vulnerability status and their determinants as well as coping strategies of urban households in Ethiopia taking Addis Ababa as a case in point using both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

***The objectives of the study are to:***

- examine the extent of food insecurity in Addis Ababa,
- identify factors and shocks determining food insecurity level of urban households in the study area &
- identify coping strategies of urban households

***Based on this objective, the following research questions have been developed:***

- What is the food insecurity level of households in Addis Ababa?
- What specific factors determine vulnerability of households into food insecurity?
- What are the main copying strategies of food insecure households?
- Are PSNPs viable options in shielding households from food insecurity in the urban context?

## **Literature Review**

### ***Meaning and Measures of Food Security***

The definition of food security evolves over time. In the mid-1970s, food security was conceived as adequacy of food supply at global and national levels. This view focused merely on food production variables and overlooked the multiple forces that in many ways affected food access. In the 1980s, the concept of food security attained wider attention that shifted from global and national level to household and individual levels.

According to the World Bank (1996), food security means ‘*access by all people at all times to enough food, for an active and healthy life*’. FAO defines

## Food Security and Household Vulnerability in Addis Ababa

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food security as a situation ‘*when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet the dietary needs and food preferences for an active, healthy life*’ (FAO, 1983 in FAO 2003: 27).

In general, food security is a concept that integrates a number of important issues including a range of policy and program development in all aspects of the food system. Hence, the success in production and distribution plays an important role in influencing the food security status of an individual, a household or a society at large (Maxwell and Smith, 1992).

Food security, in the Ethiopian context, is an entitlement or access to balanced food basket of 550 to 800 kg wheat equivalent per capita per year, or 2,200 to 2,500 kcal per adult per day or cash equivalent of that (FDRE, 1996). Here, the essential point of food security is access to food where the poor have the lowest access to natural resources, entitlements, employment opportunities and income (ADP, 2004-2006).

### ***Determinants of Food Security***

The study of food security at household level incorporates the intensity and characteristics of households’ food insecurity which can be either chronic or transitory. The former is a case where a household encounters a constant failure to access food, while the later entails a temporary decline to access food. Chronic food insecurity is a sign of poverty and shows a long-term structural deficit in food production and lack of purchasing power. Transitory food insecurity, on the other hand, implies a short-term variability in food prices, production and income (Maxwell and Smith, 1992; NGDO-EC, 1995).

Anriquez *et al* (2010) studied the effect of rising food prices on undernourishment. They believe that households’ welfare in developing countries has been hit by dramatic food prices increases which occurred between 2005 and 2008. They adopt a partial equilibrium approach to analyze the short-time effects of a staple food price increase on nutritional attainments, as a measure of welfare. They consider access to agricultural land, price shock household demographics characteristics and regional characteristics as determinate factor for food security.

In Ethiopia, several studies were conducted using various methodologies to identify determinants of food security though most focus on rural areas. According to these studies, ownership of livestock, farmland size, family labor, farm implements, employment opportunities, market access, levels of technology application, and levels of education, health, weather conditions, crop diseases, rainfall, oxen, and family size are identified as major determinants of food security in rural areas of the country (Shiferaw, *et al.*, 2003; Yared, *et al.*, 1999).



On the other hand, Ayalneh and Abebe (2009) and Aschalew (2006) found household and demographic characteristics to be the main determinant of household food insecurity. Yared (2010) examined urban food insecurity and coping mechanisms taking Lideta sub-city (in Addis Ababa) as a case. He identified shocks (such as price rise, loss of jobs, and illness) to play significant role in lowering quality food consumption by households in the study area.

Kabbani *et al* (2005) studied the food insecurity status of households in Yemen. According to this study, demographic characteristics, employment status and education level of household heads are the key determinant factors of household food insecurity in Yemen. The study in Nigeria by IKPI *et al.* (2004) using Tobit model found that sex of the household head, educational level, dependency ratio, network, farm size, input usage, commercialization extent, being a member of cooperative, food expenditure, remittance have negative influence on food insecurity, where as age of head, household size, positively influences the problem and all the variables are significant (IKPI *et al.*, 2004).

In Ethiopia, a study by MoFED (2002) revealed that between the period 1995/1996 and 1999/2000, poverty increased in urban areas by 11 percent (MOFED, 2002). However, a study by Abdi and Mackay (2003) estimated chronic poverty in urban areas at 25.9 percent and that 23 percent of households experienced transitory poverty. The same study also indicated that access to food has deteriorated in urban areas as measured by real food expenditure per capita, which also resulted in a decline of kilocalorie consumption per adult per day.

Ayalneh and Abebe (2009) studied the dimensions and determinants of food insecurity among rural households in Dire Dawa region using logistic model. The result of the study revealed that food insecure and food secure household groups have statistically significant difference with respect to mean of the variables such as family size, total annual income, age of household head, dependency ratio, and amount of credit received. Categorical variables such as education of the household head and other variables were also found to be statistically different for the two groups of households. Girma *et al* (2008) studied the nexus among migration, HIV/AIDS and food security in urban Ethiopia taking 500 sample households. The data generated were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results revealed that 97.8 percent of respondents were subject to nutritionally inadequate diet and nearly 75 percent of households faced food shortages.

Aschalew (2006) studied the determinants and dimensions of household food insecurity in Dire Dawa city using household caloric acquisition as a measure of food insecurity in a logistic model. The study found that there was significant mean difference in daily income per adult equivalent at less than one

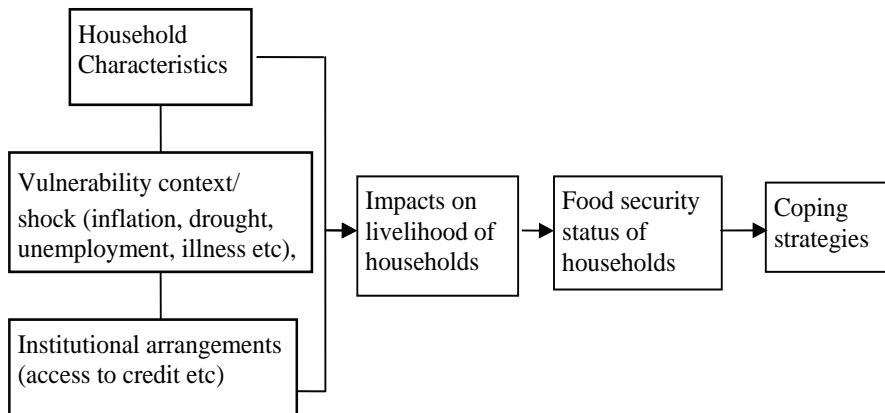
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percent probability level between food secure and insecure households. Results further revealed that household size, sex of household head, daily income per adult equivalent, proportion of food expenditure, and access to credit were found to be statistically significant with the hypothesis singled as determinants of household food insecurity in the study area.

Ramakrishna *et al* (2000) undertook an empirical study of North Wollo in the Amhara Region. The data analysis was based on food balance sheet and aggregate food security index. Results showed that North Wollo zone was a highly food insecure area. In addition, results indicated that cereal production, education, fertilizer consumption, livestock, and land size would reduce the probability of households to fall into food insecurity while, family size would increase the likelihood of households to fall into food insecurity.

### ***Conceptual Framework***

*Figure 1: Conceptual framework*



SOURCE: authors

This conceptual framework explains the interrelationship between variables of interest. It is assumed that characteristics of households (such as age composition, family size, level of education, and the like), their vulnerability context, and institutional arrangements affect livelihoods of households, which in turn determine their food insecurity status. Food insecurity level, vulnerability context, asset endowments and livelihood strategies determine the type of coping strategy households employ at times of crisis.

The vulnerability context is the external environment over which people have no control. It includes uncontrollable factors like trends (international economic trends, governance trends, and technological trends), shocks (human health shocks, natural shocks, economic shocks, livestock/crop shocks, and conflicts) and seasonality (prices, production, employment opportunities). The key attribute of these factors is that they are not susceptible to control by local people themselves, at least in the short and medium term (DFID, 1999).

Livelihood strategies and outcomes are not just dependent on capital assets or constrained by the vulnerability context; they are also determined by institutional arrangements which implies the ease accessibility of institutions which avail necessary facilities including credit to households. The availability of financial institutions such as microfinance institutions may enable households to get working capital to launch a new business venture or to get credit to settle additional demand needs. In so doing, these institutions may help increase the livelihood of households. In addition, these facilities may be a source of income at time of food insecurity.

## **Sampling, Data and Method of Analysis**

### ***Sampling Procedure and Data Collection***

In this study, a multistage sampling procedure was followed. In order to collect data from representative samples that would help reflect the situation of food insecurity at household level in Addis Ababa, the city was clustered into three taking into account distance from the center, development gap and population density. Accordingly, Arada, Addis Ketema, Lideta and Kirkos subcities fall in one category. In the second category, Yeka, Bole and Gulele were grouped. The third and final category constituted Nefas Silk Lafto, Mekanisa and Akaki-Kality. Once this was done, one sub-city was randomly selected from each category, namely; Addis Ketema, Yeka and Nefas Silk Lafto. In the third stage, a total of 400 households were randomly selected, from which 388 valid cases were obtained. Data were largely primary collected from households and key

informants using questionnaire and interview guides, respectively. The data were collected in October 2011.

### *Method of Analysis*

#### *Food Security Measurement*

Food security is a complex and multidimensional concept. As such, measuring it has been an ongoing challenge to researchers and practitioners alike. Until very recently, most household-level measures of food access, such as income and caloric adequacy, have been technically difficult, data-intensive, and costly to collect (Smith *et al.*, 2006 cited in Adugna, 2008). Some use indices of household coping strategy as a measure of food insecurity. But this approach suffers from subjectivity (Smith *et al.*, 2006). Food consumption score is the other measurement of food security, which considers variety and quality of food based on households' recall data about the previous week's information only (WFP, 2008) with the assumption that households smooth out their consumption.

Because of such pitfalls in food insecurity measurement, the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) has been adopted for this study, which is based on the idea that the experience of food insecurity (access) causes predictable reactions and responses that can be captured and quantified through a survey and summarized in a scale (Coates, Swindale and Bilinsky, 2007). Recent field validation studies of this approach to measuring food insecurity (access) more directly, by constructing measures based on households' experience of the problem, have demonstrated the feasibility and usefulness of the approach in very different contexts of the developing world (Coates *et al.*, 2003, Frongillo and Nanama, 2003).

The food security questionnaire used in this study included questions about household eating habits, and coping strategies. There are nine questions in the questionnaire with extension in each question. The HFIAS yields information on food insecurity (access) at the household level. The Household Food Insecurity Access Prevalence (HFIAP) indicator categorizes households into four levels of food insecurity (taking access into account): food secure, mildly, moderately and severely food insecure. Households are categorized as increasingly food insecure as they respond affirmatively to more severe conditions and/or experience those conditions more frequently. On the other hand, a food secure household experiences none of the food insecurity (access) conditions. Or it rarely experiences worry.

A mildly food insecure (access) household sometimes or often worries about not having enough food. Besides, it is unable to eat preferred foods, and/or

eats a more monotonous diet than desired and/or some foods considered undesirable. This happens only rarely. It does not cut back on quantity nor experiences any of three most severe conditions such as (i) running out of food, (ii) going to bed hungry, and (iii) going a whole day and night without eating (as mentioned in questions 7, 8 and 9 in Appendix A).

A moderately food insecure household sacrifices quality more frequently, by eating a monotonous diet or undesirable foods sometimes or often, and/or has started to cut back on quantity by reducing the size of meals or number of meals, rarely or sometimes. But it does not experience any of the three most severe conditions.

A severely food insecure household experiences any of the three most severe conditions (running out of food, going to bed hungry, or going a whole day and night without eating). In other words, any household that experiences one of these three conditions even once in the last four weeks (30 days) is considered severely food insecure.

### *Model Development*

The food security questionnaire included issues about household members' including children's eating habits and coping strategies. This empirical analysis is conducted at the household-level using multinomial probit regression model to identify the main determinants of the probability of being undernourished, weakly nourished, or food secure. In the case of food security status of households, we assigned discrete values of 0, 1, 2 and 3 as being food secure, mildly, moderately and severely food insecure, respectively. We analyze the determinants of food-insecure households using a multinomial probit model. This is because, more flexible models such as multinomial probit, have been suggested than multinomial logit models (Cameron and Trivedi, 2005; Woodridge, 2002). A multinomial logit model is not usually appropriate, as it assumes zero correlation in unobserved factors over alternatives (McFadden, 2000), which implies that alternatives can be substituted. However, it is not possible to always have this in reality. This assumption on substitution is usually called the Independent of Irrelevant Alternatives (IIA) property. Multinomial probit models, on the other hand, allow correlation in unobserved factors among alternatives (McFadden, 2000).

The empirical analysis is conducted at the household-level using multinomial probit regression. Households are classified into four mutually exclusive states of food security: food secure ( $S=0$ ), mildly food insecure ( $S=1$ ), moderate food insecure ( $S=2$ ), and severe food insecure ( $S=3$ ). Multinomial probit regression compares the probability of the three outcomes to the

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probability of the fourth (omitted) outcome, in this case  $S=0$ . The model estimates the following three equations:

$$\ln [ \text{Prob}(S_i=1) / \text{Prob}(S_i=0) ] = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 X_i \quad (1)$$

$$\ln [ \text{Prob}(S_i=2) / \text{Prob}(S_i=0) ] = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 X_i \quad (2)$$

$$\ln [ \text{Prob}(S_i=3) / \text{Prob}(S_i=0) ] = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 X_i \quad (3)$$

Where  $X_i$  is a vector of household characteristics that include most of the variables discussed above except household eating habits or coping strategies. The reason is that these variables are endogenous. Rather than being determinants of food insecurity, they represent actions and behaviors that households take in order to deal with or avoid food insecurity.

*Table 1: Definition of Variables used in the model*

<i>Variables Name</i>	<i>Value</i>
Sex	Male = 1 Female = 0
Sub-cities	1 = Nefas Silk 2 = Addis Ketema 3 = Yeka
per capita income	Per capita income= $Y/N$ Where $Y$ = total income of households $N$ = family size of households
Shocks	Dummy variables 1=vulnerable to shocks employee 0= otherwise
Membership in organizations	Dummy variables 1=member 0= otherwise
Cut points	$\mu_i$
Coefficients	$\beta_i$
Error terms	$\varepsilon$
Constant term	$\alpha$

## **Results and Discussion**

### *Descriptive Analysis*

#### *Food Security Status of Households*

From the total sample collected, it was found that the number of people who are food secure is only 19.6 percent while others fall under different food insecurity status categories. 34.5 percent of the respondents are mildly food insecure, 22.7 percent moderately food insecure while 23.2 percent of the sample is under severe food insecure condition. Results of the analysis further revealed that Nefas Silk with 40.43 percent food secure population is the best in food security status followed by Yeka with 29.4 percent of the respondents being food secure. Addis Ketema is the least with only 4.17 percent of respondents reporting that they were food secure. This difference in the association between sub-city and food security status is statistically significant in a Chi-Square test. The variation could be explained by income disparity across sub-cities whereby samples from Nefas Silk had the highest per capita mean monthly income (Birr 2794.44) followed by Yeka (Birr 2009.38) and Addis Ketema (Birr 1729.67). This mean monthly income difference among households across sub-cities is statistically significant at 5 percent level in F-test (ANOVA).

A more disaggregated analysis shows that in Yeka, 33.3 percent of the sample population is moderately food insecure, whereas 21.6 percent and 15.7 percent are mildly and severely food insecure, respectively. In Nefas Silk, mildly food insecure population makes up 31.9 percent, whereas moderate and severe food insecure ones make up 12.77 percent and 14.89 percent of the sample in the sub-city, respectively. On the other hand, in Addis Ketema, the corresponding figures constitute 42.71 percent, 21.88 percent, and 31.25 percent in the order of mention. These differences are statistically significant at 5 percent level in a Chi-Square test.

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*Table 2. Food security status of households across sub-cities*

<i>Sub-city</i>		<i>Severe food insecurity</i>	<i>Moderate food insecure</i>	<i>Mild food insecure</i>	<i>Food secure</i>	<i>Total</i>
Nefas Silk	Count	14	12	30	38	94
	%	14.89%	12.77%	31.90%	40.43%	100%
Addis Ketema	Count	60	42	82	8	192
	%	31.25%	21.88%	42.71%	4.17%	100%
Yeka	Count	16	34	22	30	102
	%	15.70%	33.30%	21.60%	29.40%	100%
Total	Count	90	88	134	76	388
	%	23.20%	22.70%	34.50%	19.60%	100%

Pearson Chi-Square =13.187 df = 6 & P =.040

### *Level of Education and Food insecurity*

An attempt was made to examine the association between education level of respondents with their food security status. In fact, it is very difficult to single out education level from income of households. The purpose here is to see the association between education level of household heads and their food security status in a Chi-Square test.

Results of the Chi-Square test indicate that educated households are less likely to be food insecure compared to non-educated households. From the total illiterate sample respondents considered for this study, it is observed that only 10 percent of them are food secure. The remaining 90% fall under different levels of food insecurity. For instance, 18 percent of the total illiterate sample households are mildly food insecure, 31 percent moderately food insecure, and 41 percent severely food insecure. Results further show that 37 percent of the total respondents with elementary level of education were severely food insecure followed by respondents with mild and moderately food insecurity status which make up 31.5 percent and 20.4 percent, respectively. Only 11.1 percent are found to be food secure.

On the other hand, significant portion of sampled households which have diploma and above level of education are either food secure (44 percent) or are mildly food insecure (38 percent). Only 2 percent are severely food insecure showing that there is strong association between food security status of respondents and their level of education. These differences in the association



between education level and food security status of respondents are statistically significant in a Chi-Square test at 5 percent level. The fact that education significantly determines the food security status of households is in line with findings of similar other studies (refer to Haile, Alemu and Kudhlande, 2005 and Yared, 2010).

Table 3. Association between food security status of respondents & their education level

Education level		Food security status of respondents				Total
		Severe food Insecurity	Moderate food insecure	Mild food insecure	Food secure	
Illiterate	Count	32	24	14	8	78
	%	41%	31%	18%	10%	100%
Elementary	Count	40	22	34	12	108
	%	37.0%	20.4%	31.5%	11.1%	100%
Secondary	Count	12	26	48	12	98
	%	12.2%	26.5%	49.0%	12.2%	100%
Diploma and above	Count	2	16	36	42	96
	%	2%	17%	38%	44 %	100%
Total	Count	86	88	132	74	380
	%	23%	23%	35%	19 %	100%

Pearson Chi-Square =52.066, df = 15 & P =.000

### *Income and food security status*

Chi-Square test was used to examine the relationship between income level and food security status of respondent households. Results of the analysis show that there is strong association between these variables, suggesting that the less the income level, the more is the likelihood that respondents would be food insecure. Income was categorized into four categories taking into account the mean, which was Birr 2076, whereas the standard deviation was Birr 1323. Taking these values, four categories were created. The first two categories were considered taking the mean and one standard deviation below and above it, respectively. The other two categories considered were values below and above the aforementioned categories. Once this was done, food security status of respondents was considered. Results reveal that from the total sample households, which have a monthly income of 750 and less, only 4.5 percent are mildly food insecure, while 22.7 percent and 63.4 percent are moderately and severely food insecure, in the order of mention. Surprisingly enough, only 9.1

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percent are food secure in this category. On the other hand, households with income levels between Birr 750 and Birr 2074, 30.3 percent, 27.3 percent, and 31.3 percent are mildly, moderately and severely food insecure, respectively. From a total of respondents in this income category, only 11.1 percent are food secure.

Results of the Chi-square analysis [paint an interesting picture showing that as income increases food insecurity decreases significantly. For instance, when respondents in the income category between monthly earning of Birr 2076 and Birr 3400 are considered, none of them are severely food insecure. The same thing is true for the next higher income group. Similar pattern is also observed between these income groups where 18.6 percent from the first group and 13.3 percent from the second group are moderately food insecure.

*Table 4. Food security status of households across income levels*

Income category		severe food insecurity	moderate food insecure	mild food insecure	Food secure	Total
Below 750	Count	28	10	2	4	44
	%	63.6%	22.7%	4.5%	9.1%	100%
Between 750 and 2076	Count	62	54	60	22	198
	%	31.3%	27.3%	30.3%	11.1%	100%
Between 2076 and 3400	Count	0	16	56	14	86
	%	0%	18.6%	65.1%	16.3%	100.0%
Above 3400	Count	0	8	16	36	60
	%	0%	13.3%	26.7%	60%	100%
Total	Count	90	88	134	76	388
	%	23.2%	22.7%	34.5%	19.6%	100%

Pearson Chi-Square 86.194, df = 9 & P = 0.000

### *Family size and food security*

Empirical works indicate that there is an inverse relationship between family size and food security status of households (Shiferaw, *et al*, 2003; Yared, *et al*, 1999; Webb, *et al*, 1992). One may assume that the higher the family size, the more will be the probability that members could earn more and support the family. However, this is not the case in this study. In fact, it is not uncommon to find poor households having large family size. The results of the analysis of our study show that while 17.7 percent of sample households with family size below the mean (which is 5) are severely food insecure, 40.4 percent of those with a family

size above the mean fall in the category of food insecurity indicating a significant difference between the two. On the other hand, 37.4 percent and 25.5 percent of respondents having a family size below and above the mean are mildly food insecure, respectively. Significant difference is also observed when food secure respondents are considered such that 21.1 percent from the former category and 14.9 percent from the later are food secure. These differences in the association between family size and food security status of respondents are significant at 5 percent level in a Chi-Square test (see Table 5).

Table 5. Family size and food security status of respondents

Family size		Severe food insecurity	moderate food insecure	mild food insecure	food secure	Total
Below the mean	Count	52	70	110	62	294
	%	17.7%	23.8%	37.4%	21.1%	100%
Above the mean	Count	38	18	24	14	94
	%	40.4%	19.1%	25.5%	14.9%	100%
Total	Count	90	88	134	76	388
	%	23.2%	22.7%	34.5%	19.6%	100%

Chi-Square = 10.433, df = 3 & P = 0.015

### *Shock and Food Security Status of Households*

It is quite evident that households face different shocks such as unemployment, illness or death, and inflation, to mention just a few. Respondents were asked to list the type of shocks they faced. Results of the descriptive analysis indicate that shocks related to price increment and employment are found to be the major ones respondents have been grappling with. An attempt was made to see if these have impacted on the food security status of respondents. Results show that 67.3 percent and 32.7 percent of respondents who encountered no shocks are mildly food insecure and food secure, respectively. On the other hand, 50 percent and 37.5 percent of respondents who encountered shocks related to employment are severely and moderately food insecure. Only 6.3 percent of respondents in this category are food secure. Similarly, while 37.8 percent of respondents with shocks related to price increment are severely food insecure, 39 percent of them are moderately food insecure. Only 8.6 percent of respondents in this group are food secure indicating that price is an essential component as far as food security status of household is concerned. Since 2005, in particularly, the prices of both

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oil and food have increased alarmingly at the global level in general and in developing countries including Ethiopia, in particular.

*Table 6. Types of shocks and food security status of households*

Type of shock		Food security status				Total
		severe food insecurity	moderate food insecure	mild food insecure	food secure	
no shock	Count	0	0	66	32	98
	%	0%	0%	67.3%	32.7%	100%
Unemployment	Count	16	12	2	2	32
	%	50.0%	37.5%	6.3%	6.3%	100%
illness or death	Count	10	6	10	4	30
	%	33.3%	20.0%	33.3%	13.3%	100%
price related shocks	Count	62	64	24	14	164
	%	37.8%	39%	14.6%	8.6%	100%
Total	Count	88	82	102	52	324
	%	27.2%	25.3%	31.5%	16.0%	100%

Pearson Chi-Square = 49.442 & P= 0.000

These are not the only shocks households face. In order to understand the magnitude of the effect of major shocks (food price and unemployment) on the vulnerability of households, an assessment was made in line with the propensity to consume food. This is because as the price of food increases, it affects those households which spend more of their income on food compared to those who spend less. This finding is similar to that of Yared (2010) where price rise, illness and unemployment are important shocks reducing the quality of food households consume. The discussion below (both the econometrics and case part in Box 2) also shows how important shocks are in determining the food insecurity status of households in the study sub-cities in Addis Ababa.

Results reveal that the propensity to consume food is the highest in severely food insecure households where they spent 58 percent of their income

on food followed by moderately and mildly food insecure ones, respectively, spending 51.3 percent and 46.9 percent of their mean income. While the food secure households spend 43.59 percent of their mean income. This shows that severely and moderately food insecure households are more vulnerable to price shocks than their counterparts. These differences are statistically significant in at one percent level in ANOVA test.

Table 7. Food security status versus share of food expenditure of respondents

Food security level	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max	df	F	Sig.
Severe food insecurity	0.5804	0.15731	0.28	1.00	3	8.400	0.000
Moderate food insecure	0.5132	0.16171	0.20	1.00			
Mild food insecure	0.4690	0.10506	0.23	0.80			
Food secure	0.4359	0.16189	0.00	0.83			
Total	0.4984	0.15151	0.00	1.00			

In addition to the above-mentioned analysis, a simple linear regression between expenditure on food and monthly income level of households was done. The result shows that for every additional Birr households obtain per month, their propensity to consume increases by 35 cents. This result is closer to the national average in urban areas of Ethiopia. This shows the extent to which price shocks may affect household’s level of consumption leading them into vulnerability.

Table 8. Propensity to consume (dependent variable: monthly expenditure on food)

Variables	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	192.794	60.513	3.186	.002
monthly income level	.356	.025	14.405	.000

With an adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of .677 and F value of 207.518, the independent variable correctly predicts the dependent one.

A gender disaggregated analysis was done to see who earns more and spends the same for food. The result shows that male-headed households earn more than their counterparts and this may not come as surprise given the fact that women are more disadvantaged than men in getting employment

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opportunities and getting involved in productive activities. Their triple roles (productive, reproductive and community) make them to be overburdened.

*Table 9. Mean differences between male and female-headed households on monthly income and expenditure on food*

Variable	sex of the respondent	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.
Monthly income level	Female	1632.76	975.514	-3.250	99	.002
	Male	2514.26	1729.433			
Expenditure on food	Female	737.59	413.998	-3.414	99	.001
	Male	1136.05	748.437			

Results of Independent Samples T-test show that while female-headed households spend 48.6 percent of their income for food, male-headed ones expend 55.4 percent of their monthly earnings. Though these percentage values seem to suggest male-headed households spend more of their income on food, the mean difference is not statistically significant. This suggests that women spend a great deal of their monthly income on food as much as their male counterparts. The fact that both male- and female-headed households spend nearly half of their monthly earnings on food suggests that an increase in food price would seriously affect their food habits and may even jeopardize their mere survival. Results of the descriptive analysis show that 76.5 percent of respondents were not able to eat the kind of food they preferred due to price shocks and this situation happened often for a little less than half of them. Results of the descriptive analysis further reveal that 81.4 percent of the respondents had to eat the type of food they really did not want because they could not afford prices of the former. For 35.8 percent of them this happened quite often.

### *Econometric Analysis*

#### *Determinants of Vulnerability and Food Insecurity*

Since endogeneity was expected in the data, income was instrumented using education as a very important defining variable. This implies that education cannot be treated independently from income and the underlying wealth. Results of the Durbin-Wu-Hausman Chi-Square test indicate that income is exogenous with a significant value of 0.22107.

Once this test was conducted, multinomial regression analysis was done taking food security status as a dependent variable having four categories (food

secure, mild food insecure, moderate food insecure and severe food insecure) against several demographic

and socio-economic factors as independent ones. The multinomial logistic regression model identified income per capita and shocks as important variables significantly determining the food insecurity level of respondents. Results of the analysis indicate that being a member of an organization/ community institution such as Iddir/Iqub significantly reduces the probability of households falling into severe food insecurity level at 10 percent significance level. This implies that networks and interactions may serve as safety nets at times of crisis signifying the importance of social capital in shielding extreme conditions. In fact, social capital is significant only in affecting severe food insecurity level. It does not emerge as significant in determining moderate and mild food insecurity levels. This could be because households resort to other coping mechanisms at lower severity levels of food insecurity. Box 1 below discusses the importance of social capital at times of crisis.

***Box-1: Social capital as a safety net***

She is 42 years old. She lives in Gulele sub-city. She has two children: a son and a daughter. She attended school up to grade 12, but could not manage to join college or university. To meet her daily bread, she works as a hotel security guard. She stays the whole night in the hotel every other day. During her spare time, she goes from house to house chatting with friends and neighbors during which she may get the chance to eat. The husband is a daily laborer doing several activities including carvings on gravestones. The money the couple makes per month is not enough to feed the family let alone to cover school fees for their kids. Therefore, they depend on their kinship relationship with their relatives. On weekends, they send their children to relatives where they could stay for two nights being fed relatively better. She says as far as her relatives are alive, her family will never go to bed hungry. At times of crisis, this is the most important strategy her family uses. In fact, she knows this does not bring a sustainable solution to the problem she is grappling with. Instead, she wants to be engaged in productive activities if she gets access to finance and market.

Results of the regression analysis further reveal that the higher the per capita income, the lower is the probability of households to fall into any of the food insecurity levels. The result is significant at 1% for severe food insecurity and 10% each for moderate and mild food insecurity. Another significant factor that exacerbates the food insecurity level of respondents is the occurrence of shocks significantly increasing the probability of households to fall into severe and moderate food insecurity situations at 1% confidence level each in comparison to food secure households.

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*Table 10. Parameter Estimates of Multinomial Logistic Regression Analysis*

Explanatory Variables	Severe Food Insecurity		Moderate Food Insecurity		Mild Food Insecurity	
	B	Sig.	B	Sig.	B	Sig.
Intercept	2.017 (1.631)	.216	2.680 (1.412)*	.058	3.017 (1.311)**	.021
sex of household head	-.260 (.616)	.673	.475 (.521)	.363	.550 (.446)	.218
Nefas Silk Sub-city	2.128 (1.005)**	.034	1.415 (.892)	.113	2.020 (.774)***	.009
Addis Ketema sub-city	1.270 (.743)*	.088	.990 (.649)	.127	1.300 (.583)*	.026
Membership to organizations (such as iddir/Iqub)	-1.391 (.729)*	.056	-.206 (.698)	.768	-.624 (.638)	.328
Per capita income	-4.160 (.927)***	.000	-1.153 (.635)*	.069	1.089 (.581)*	.061
shock	2.693 (.745)***	.000	2.535 (.636)***	.000	.272 (.570)	.633

Values in parentheses are standard errors, \*\*\*, \*\* and \* significant at 1%, 5% and 10% level, respectively

Model Fitting Info: -2 Log Likelihood = 290.074 & Sig. 0.000

The importance of shocks in determining household food security status is also substantiated by the case given in box 2 as follows:

***Box 2: Death of a breadwinner shakes the family***

She is a 50 years old, widow who lives in Akaki Kaliti sub-city with 6 children of hers. Her husband died some years back, who used to be the backbone of the family's economy. After his death, the burden of raising their children lies upon her. She gets a pension of only Birr 150 per month. Also, she is being engaged in petty trade buying kale, tomato, onion and the like from farmers and selling to the surrounding community members with a very tiny margin of profit. In fact, what is being considered as profit does not include transportation and labor costs. And this is not enough to feed the family. As a result, her two children quitted school-the son from grade 9 and the daughter from grade 7 to work only in a garage and cafeteria, respectively with a very small amount of monthly wage. She says she is still strong. Given opportunities and startup capital, she is capable of working. She got basic business skills through Emmanuel Association (a local NGO) but cannot put it into practice due to lack of financial capital. She says she wants to be engaged in pretty trading by expanding what she is doing now but lack of startup capital constrains her from doing so.



As mentioned so far, many households exhibit different food insecurity conditions in the study area. In addition to this, price related shocks, illness and unemployment are found to be the main forces that drive households into vulnerability. In response to these shocks, households employ different coping mechanisms. These include, among others, borrowing, reducing number and quantity of meals and shifting food items from

As noted earlier, many households exhibit different food insecurity conditions in the study area. In addition to this, price related shocks, illness and unemployment are found to be the main forces that drive households into vulnerability. In response to these shocks, households employ different coping mechanisms. These include, among others, borrowing, reducing number and quantity of meals and shifting food items from relatively high quality to relatively low quality. Results of the descriptive analysis indicate that from a total of 96 respondents who reduced the number and amount of meals during crisis, 41.7 percent each are in the severely and moderately food insecure categories, whereas 16.6 percent are in the mild food insecurity status. On the other hand, from among 157 households which responded saying borrowing is their coping strategy to shocks, 28 percent, 20.4 percent and 51.6 percent are in the severely, moderately and mildly food insecure categories, respectively. The fact that the highest percentage of households using borrowing as a coping strategy is found in the mildly food insecure category could be because institutions such as MFI and even relatives/friends lend to the active poor with the assumption that they will get their money back (Table 11).

Table 11. Coping Strategies of respondents across food insecurity status

<i>Coping strategies</i>		<i>Severe food insecurity</i>	<i>Moderate food insecure</i>	<i>Mild food insecure</i>	<i>Total</i>
Reducing number and amount of meals	Count	40	40	16	96
	%	41.7%	41.7%	16.6%	100%
Borrowing	Count	44	32	81	157
	%	28%	20.4%	51.6%	100%
Food shifting	Count	8	4	0	12
	%	66.7%	33.3%	0%	100%
Total	Count	92	76	97	265
	%	34.7%	28.7%	36.6%	100%

Pearson Chi-Square = 59.184 & P=0.000

Apart from the above-mentioned coping strategies, remittance is one of the most important safety nets for some respondents. A case story from one of the key informants from Kirkos sub-city explains this situation best (Box 3).

***Box-3: Remittance as a coping strategy***

She is 47 years old. She is widow and lives in Kirkos sub-city. She has three children and two grand children. She makes a living by selling tomatoes and vegetables. She does not know how much she sells per day, but she says she makes a very tiny margin of “profits” only enough for the day. Her children and grand children did not contribute a penny to the family. She used to be the only one responsible to bring something to eat to the whole family. She said she used to be worried as to what to do to feed many mouths. Eating less amount of food, reducing the quantity of food, resorting to less preferred food items and even sleeping hungry were common to her and including the family members. This had continued for quite some time. Finally, one of her daughters migrated to Saudi Arabia leaving her two children behind with her mom. Now the daughter begins remitting the family, which enables the mother to feed the family. The mother says she is strong. If given the chance she can work and make money. Financial problem constrains her from working. The remittance cannot be used to finance business activities. It is just enough to feed the family. In fact, the money is sort of cyclical; it comes at times of crisis. It does not come regularly.

## **Conclusion and Implications for Policy**

Urban food security has become one of the major problems of developing countries including Ethiopia. This has become more so since 2008 when an abrupt price increment of food occurred in the world. This soaring price of food has impacted on urban dwellers very much, as most of their food is purchased from the market. As such, it has driven households into worsening food insecurity. On top of that, it has exacerbated the poverty situation of households in which many have been forced to live. Our analysis showed that food insecurity is prevalent in Addis Ababa -the primate city in Ethiopia. On top of this, many of the households in our study do not have workable mechanism to withstand vulnerability to food insecurity they find themselves in. Results of this study and that of several others reviewed in this chapter indicate that shocks play an important role in determining the food security status of households suggesting that safety nets are important for future interventions.

As far as coping strategies are concerned, households opt for reduction of food intake per day, rely on remittances, and/or resort to less-preferred foods. In fact, these mechanisms do not change the status of households on a long-term basis. As regression results and descriptive (Chi-Square) analyses suggest, income is the most important determining factor of food insecurity. While most

of the poor claim that they are active, they lack financial capital and access to market to embark on small businesses. This, therefore, calls for interventions such as urban productive safety net programs that should give more emphasis to active but severe and moderate food insecure households targeting them to change their long-run food security status. Moreover, the intervention should incorporate new features such as savings and credit as well as other capacity building programs in the form of training in basic livelihood skills (some organizations prefer to call basic business skills), which would enable households to engage in a business that would help them become food self-sufficient in the long run. On the other hand, in the short run, market-stabilizing mechanisms that the government is undertaking should continue to strike a balance between the supply and demand of food. Market intervention and price regulation mechanisms should help safeguard food insecure households from crisis.

## **Acknowledgements**

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# **The Impact of the PSNP on Food Security in Selected *Kebeles* of Enebse Sar Midir District East Gojjam Zone, Amhara National Regional State <sup>1</sup>**

*Tafesse Kassa*

## **Introduction**

The study presented in this chapter seeks to assess the contribution of the Productive Safety Net Program in addressing the problem of food insecurity by reducing household vulnerability and enhancing household livelihood security. The Productive Safety Net Program was started in 2005 and initially targeted about 5 million chronically food insecure people in 260 Districts *weredas* gradually increasing to 7.8 million people living in 390 *weredas* (MoARD, 2010). In Amhara region, PSNP is targeting about 2.5 million beneficiaries living in 64 rural districts.

After an outline of the methodology, the first part deals with the vulnerability context and the incidence of shocks followed by a discussion of livelihood resources. The second part is concerned with the PSNP implementation and its impact with a focus on issues to do with targeting, timeliness and predictability of transfers, levels of payments relative to entitlements, and overall benefits of the PSNP in terms of perceptions of wellbeing, the use of transfers, overall benefits, changes in social services, and finally graduation. The conclusions draw out the major findings of the study and the implications for food security policy.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was part of my MSc. Thesis at Bahir Dar University entitled: “*Impacts of PSNP in Reducing Vulnerability and Enhancing Household Livelihood Security. The Case of Selected Kebeles in Enebse Sar Midir Woreda, East Gojjam Zone, Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia*”. The Author would like to thank the LEAFS Project, PSNP DCT and USAID for their technical and financial support to conduct the research.

## Methodology

The research utilizes a case study approach to assess the impacts of PSNP on household livelihood security and to identify the challenges of program implementation in *Enebse Sarmidir Wereda*, East Gojjam Zone, Amhara Region, Ethiopia. *Enebse* is selected for study because it is one of the 64 chronically food insecure rural districts of the region that are eligible for PSNP implementation.

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were applied at household and community levels. 24 out of 33 rural kebeles were selected for the implementation of PSNP since 2005. The primary and secondary sampling units were the *Kebeles* representing the three agro-climatic zones (*Dega*, *Weyna Dega* and *Kolla*) and household respectively. Three *Kebeles* were purposefully selected and in each selected *Kebele* based on the three livelihood zones, stratified based on the Household Economy Approach (HEA) adopted by the Livelihood Integration Unit (LIU). In each selected *Kebele*, 30 households were randomly selected representing both program beneficiaries and non beneficiary households. In total of 90 sample households were interviewed. While collecting the qualitative data, focus group discussion and key informant interviews were conducted using checklists. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) was adopted as the major analytical framework because of its comprehensive nature.

## Vulnerability and Livelihoods

### *Incidence of Shocks and Hazards*

Sample households were asked to indicate their understanding and perception about the incidence of shocks they experienced over the last five years, how severe these shocks were, what households were affected most and why. The findings show that over 90% of households have experienced different types of hazards in the five years period with only 5.6% reporting only one type of hazard (drought). Only 7.8% reported that they didn't face any disaster. The major hazards identified in the sample *Kebeles* in order of decreasing salience are drought, crop disease, livestock disease, flood, hail storm, land slide and price or economic shock.

### *Coping Strategies*

The survey results confirmed that 45% of the sample households reported a reduction in expenses on non-essential items as the main coping measure. This was followed by relying on less preferred (and therefore cheaper) foods and a reduction of the numbers of meals per day as reported by 28% and 13% of



households respectively. The study has also identified that among the nine types of coping measures mentioned by sample households, there are coping measures that are common to both PSNP and Non PSNP beneficiaries as well as some measures that are specific to each category of households. Hence, reducing expense on non-essential items, relying on less preferred /expensive food and reducing the numbers of meals in a day are the measures that common to both types of households. Coping measures that are specific to PSNP beneficiaries included borrowing food or cash, increasing working hours and consuming rather than selling crops from own production. On the other hand coping measures that are specific to Non-PSNP beneficiaries included selling non-productive assets (jewelry), selling more livestock than usual and limiting portion sizes at meals.

### ***Livelihood Resources***

Land in *Enebse Sarmidir* District is declining in size with concomitant decline in its fertility. The ever dwindling size of household land holdings with an endless redistribution to children through inheritance forces most inhabitants to envisage other options to agriculture for the generation to come. From the total sample households 87 (96.7%) reported that they own farm land while 3 (3.3%) are landless, two of whom are PSNP beneficiaries. All female headed households have reported that they own farm land. The average land holding in the sample *Kebeles* is 0.865 hectares while the maximum and minimum land holding being 1.833 and 0.333 hectares respectively. About 54% of households have up to 1 hectare landholding size while 46% having landholding size of above 1 hectare. Nearly 60% of sample households reported that their farmland is not fertile, 34.4% that it was fertile or partially fertile and only 5.6% said it was highly fertile.

Households needing additional land and landless households get access to land through sharecropping for a short period in most cases for one production year. About one fifth of the households have rented-out their farmland, most of them being elderly and female headed households. Whereas 50% of female headed households had rented out their land only 14.1% male headed households had done so. The average size of land rented out was 0.764 ha, and over 90% of the households indicated that they rented-out their land due to shortage of labour, lack of draught power and agricultural inputs. However, 44.4% of sample households have rented-in farm land from others and the average land size rented-in was identical at 0.764 ha.

**The impacts of the Productive Safety Net Program on Food Security in Selected Kebeles of Enebse Sar Midir District, East Gojjam Zone, Amhara National Regional State**

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Regarding inputs 52% of the households reported using improved seeds but only 6% reported using chemical fertilizer and 8% pesticides. Access to these inputs is constrained by high prices and unreliable supply and all respondents complain about the increasing price of fertilizers.

Livestock in the area are both vital productive assets for ploughing, threshing, transporting people and goods and producing dung for natural fertilizer and fuel and as direct source of food in the form of milk and its products. Furthermore, livestock are the only means and forms of savings in this part of the country where the economy is not largely monetized. Nearly 80% of the households reported owning livestock. However, half of female headed households as compared to 85% of male headed households, and 26% of PSNP beneficiaries as compared to 93% of non PSNP beneficiary households owned livestock. Regarding oxen 70% of the households reported owning farm oxen, (47% have one and 23% have two).

Although about 95% of the sample households have access to credit service in theory, only 30% of the respondents took credit in the last 12 months from the survey time. About 55% of the households reported having outstanding loans, and 60% emphasized facing loan repayment difficulties. Regarding the purpose of the credit, 34.2% mentioned 'purchasing agricultural inputs' as the main reason. The other reasons in their order of importance were to 'pay for health care' (17.8%), to 'buy food' (12.8%), to 'pay for education' (11.6%), to 'buy or rent farm land' (10.8%), and to 'pay for social events' (7.4%).

Farmers' associations, agricultural extension offices, schools, health posts, farmers cooperatives are among the formal institutions functional in the area. Key informants suggested that agriculture, water and education sectors offered relatively better services, whereas services from producers cooperatives, Amhara Credit and Savings Institution and *Kebele* administrators were evaluated very poor. Informal institutions include voluntary and self help groups. Households were asked to rank their participation in these local institutions. The first three with between a quarter and a fifth each were *Iddir* funeral associations (26%), *Senbete* church-based religious associations (20%) and *Wonfel* reciprocal agricultural self-help groups (19%). Less important were *Mahiber* rotating religious associations (16%), *Debo* festive work groups (13%) and *Equb* rotating credit associations (6%).

## PSNP Implementation and Its Impacts

### *Targeting*

Over 90% of PSNP beneficiaries stated that they had been chosen in a fair way and in line with the guidelines as explained to them by local government representatives. They said that they were chosen based on having infertile /no land, no animals, and no source of remittances whereas those not in the PSNP have at least better farmland or some animals. However, only 20% of non-beneficiary respondents reported that targeting was fair; of those who reported that targeting process was not fair, 44% indicated that although they forwarded their case to the concerned committees, their appeal was not successful. Therefore, this is a clear manifestation of the prevalence of targeting problem.

Beneficiary households were asked about the reasons why their household was selected for the program and about who they think has played a role in the decision making process. About 92% of the households reported that the first reason is because their 'household is very poor' followed by 'household can't get enough food to eat' (66%) and 'household has small landholding' (54%). Other reasons were 'having less quality of farm land' (25%), 'unable to produce enough food' (23%) and 'owning no /few livestock' (17%).

With regard to the opinion of sample households on responsible official bodies that had taken part in the decision making process of household selection, 74% of the respondents said it was the *Kebele* Food Security Task Force that made the decision to select households for PSNP, 59% mentioned *Kebele* Council /Administration and 42% the Development Agents while 9% said they did not know'. Furthermore, asked about other responsible bodies playing a role 32% of the sample households mentioned the *Wereda* Food Security Task Force, 29% the community all together and 11% the Community Food Security Task Force.

The qualitative information also confirmed the issue of targeting problem. According to the FGD participants, targeting problems (errors of inclusion and exclusion) were observed, particularly, during the first year of the program (2005). The main reason, according to participants, was that *Kebele* Food Security Task Force members and the *Kebele* leadership had a tendency to select their relatives for the program leaving out eligible households. Another reason was that the community was not active in the selection process and at the same time there was a widespread assumption that since it was presented as government assistance, the program resource would cover all households. Through continuous awareness, however, the community came to understand the focus of the program on the poorest.

## **The impacts of the Productive Safety Net Program on Food Security in Selected Kebeles of Enebse Sar Midir District, East Gojjam Zone, Amhara National Regional State**

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However, even after the fifth year of program implementation, there are instances of targeting problems in the study area. Currently the critical issue related to targeting problem is not exclusion of the poor and inclusion of the better-off, rather it is the issue of full family targeting. In the focus group discussions the issue of not including all family members was seen as a major threat for the realization of graduation. Some beneficiaries identified as prospective graduates by the local leadership, showed resistance claiming that they are not ready to graduate since their household was not fully targeted. In fact, this was more of a problem for households with a family size of 5 and above.

### ***Transfers: Timeliness and Predictability***

Ensuring that beneficiaries receive appropriate, timely and sufficient transfers are seen as central to the efficiency and effectiveness of PSNP implementation. Despite many tangible improvements in the overall program performance and year-on-year improvements in the timely delivery of transfers, there are documented evidences of significant gaps in the timeliness of transfers. There were significant delay in the delivery of resource transfer to beneficiary households. About 41% of sample beneficiary households reported that they received the PSNP transfer at the time of their need while the remaining 59% reported delays, with variations that seem to be related to the relative accessibility sample *Kebeles*. Even though the delay of the payment is making the lives of beneficiaries difficult, all households may not be equally affected. FGD participants confirmed that as a result of the delay of payment some households were observed selling assets such as sheep, goats, or taking credit or loans from local money lenders with the PSNP resource serving as guarantee for repayment.

### ***Levels of Payments Relative to Entitlements***

With regard to the level of payments, the calculation was done based on the responses of beneficiary households for the year 2010 (2002 E.C) as the complete (full year) data were available. In order to estimate the total payments per household, “normalized cash value” of the grain payments was calculated on the assumption that every three kilograms of grains has a worth of 10 Ethiopian birr. All cash payments were added to this “normalized cash value” to create a “normalized total payment” in 2010. Then the total amount of payment was calculated on the basis of full family targeting for all beneficiary households. Under full family targeting, each member is entitled to five work days per month for six months. Using the 2010 working wage rate of 10 birr per day, the 2010

payment per household member is 300 Ethiopian birr. So that for example, a four-person household should have received 1,200 Ethiopian birr in 2010.

Based on a mean household size of 5 persons, the normalized total payment is compared with the payment made by *Kebele*. The findings suggest that small households made up by 2 or 3 members have met the envisaged transfer levels under full family targeting (FFT). In some cases such households have received beyond FFT entitlement which is probably due to additional payments beyond six months. But as household size increases the level of payment shows a decreasing trend with households of an average family size (those with 4, 5 and 6 persons) receiving a normalized total payment in line with their projected entitlement (an average of 96% of their entitlement). Households with a large family size (7 or more members) received an average of 80% of the projected normalized total payment, though there were differences between Kebeles as well as between identically-sized households across the kebeles.

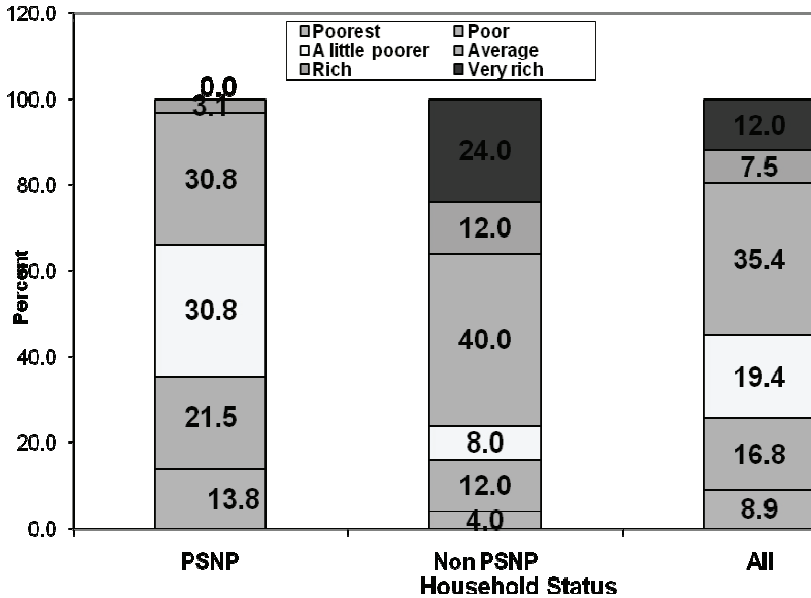
## **Impacts of Productive Safety Net Program**

### ***Well-being as Impact indicator of PSNP***

Sample households were asked to rank their current wealth status as compared to other households in the village. About a fifth considered themselves as rich, more than one-third (35%) described themselves as average while 45% considered themselves as poor. However, the responses vary in relation to PSNP status of sample households as shown in figure 1. Nearly two-thirds of the PSNP beneficiaries (66%) describe themselves as poor whereas 31% describe themselves as average and only 3% ranked themselves as rich. In contrast over one third (36%) of non-PSNP households describe themselves as rich while 40% described themselves as average and a quarter (24%) as poor.

**The impacts of the Productive Safety Net Program on Food Security in Selected Kebeles of Enebe Sar Midir District, East Gojjam Zone, Amhara National Regional State**

*Figure 1: Current Wealth Status Compared with other Households by PSNP Status*

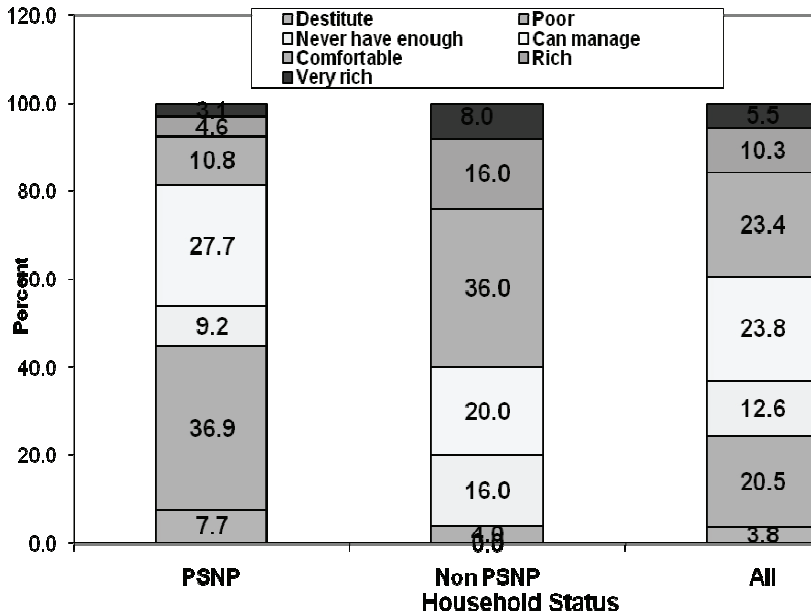


SOURCE: Household Survey, April 2011

The figure thus suggests that the very rich and rich are concentrated among the non PSNP households and the poor and poorest among the PSNP households though there are also small proportions of households that consider themselves to be poor or very poor among non PSNP households.

Furthermore households were asked about their perception of own current wealth status compared to the situation of two years before. Almost half the households (47%) considered themselves as comfortable or able to manage whereas over a third (37%) viewed themselves as poor, and only 16% felt they were rich.

Figure 2: Perception of own Current Wealth Status Compared to the Situation 2 Years before



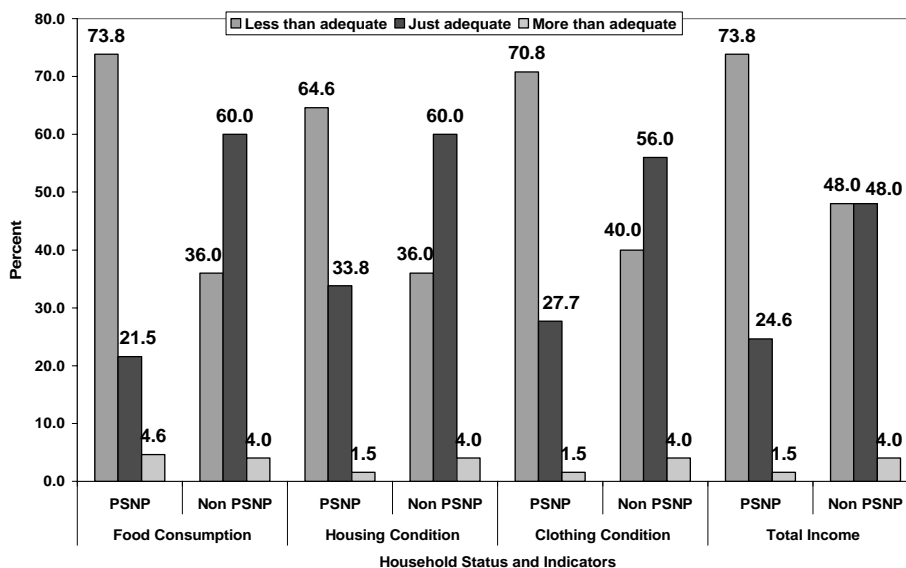
SOURCE: Household Survey, April 2011

However, the figure suggests differences between PSNP and non PSNP households. There was a greater perception of improvement among Non PSNP households in the categories considering themselves as very rich, rich and comfortable, implying that the latter has better perceptions of improvements. However, there was a much higher proportion who considered themselves as poor and destitute among the PSNP households suggesting that there was still a strong sense among a large proportion of beneficiaries that they were still facing serious difficulties.

Households were also asked to describe the condition of their food consumption, housing, clothing and total income over the year.

**The impacts of the Productive Safety Net Program on Food Security in Selected Kebeles of Enebse Sar Midir District, East Gojjam Zone, Amhara National Regional State**

*Figure 3: Perception on Food, Housing, Clothing and Total Income Condition by PSNP Status*



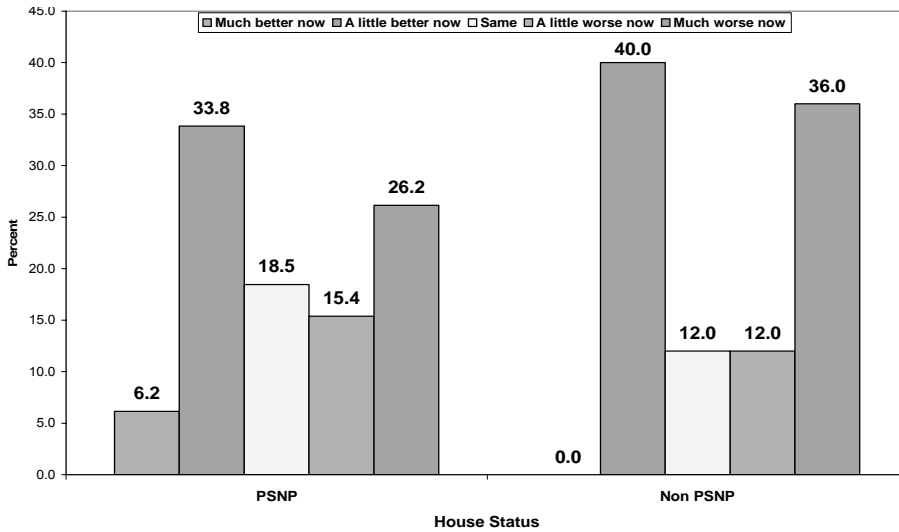
SOURCE: Household Survey, April 2011

The figure shows that almost three-quarters of PSNP households (74%) consider their food consumption to be less than adequate compared to slightly over a third of Non PSNP households (36%). Similarly, almost two-thirds of PSNP households (64%) consider their housing condition to be less than adequate compared to slightly more than a third (36%) of Non PSNP households. Likewise, there are significant differences in terms of clothing and total income in the proportion considering their status to be inadequate. However, higher proportions of Non PSNP households consider their clothing status to be just adequate, and equal proportions of Non PSNP households consider their income to be inadequate and just adequate. In all cases the proportions considering their status to be more than adequate are very small, with slightly higher proportions among Non PSNP households except interestingly regarding food consumption where the proportions are almost equal.

Households were also asked about their perception of the overall economic situation of their household as compared to the situation one year ago.



Figure 4: Perception on Overall Economic Condition by PSNP Status



SOURCE: Household Survey, April 2011

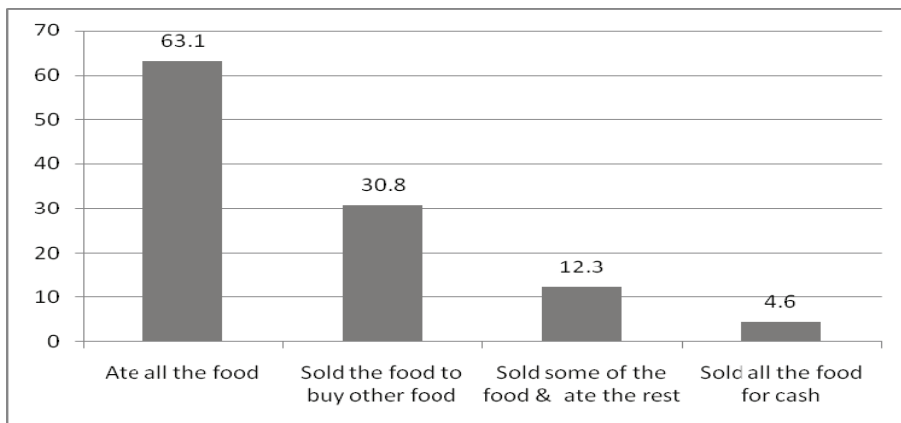
A small proportion of PSNP households (6%) considered they were much better off as compared to none of the Non PSNP households. There was also an interesting difference in terms of those who considered themselves much worse off since over a third of Non PSNP households (36%) held this view as compared to slightly over a quarter of PSNP households (26%).

### *Use of Resource Transfers from PSNP*

As with many previous studies this survey also confirmed that PSNP has achieved its primary objective by assuring food consumption and protecting asset depletion for food insecure households. As shown in the following figures the majority of the program beneficiary households reported that the predominant use of both food and cash transfers is for consumption purposes.

**The impacts of the Productive Safety Net Program on Food Security in Selected Kebeles of Enebe Sar Midir District, East Gojjam Zone, Amhara National Regional State**

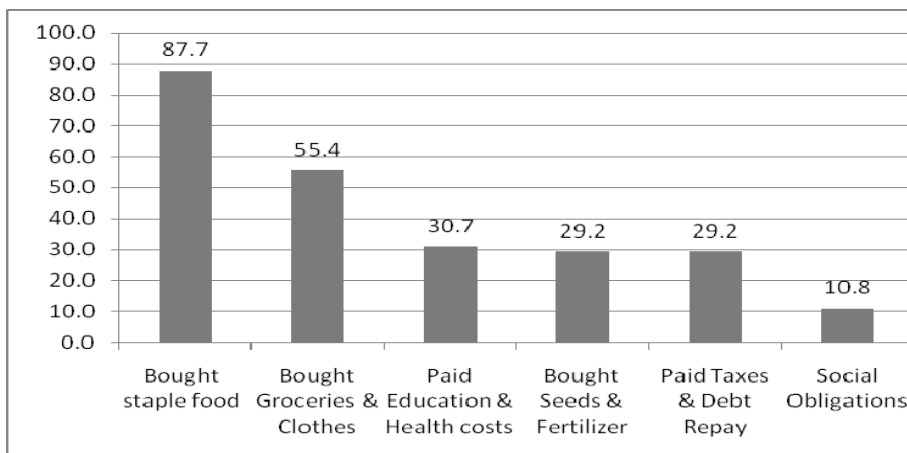
*Figure 5: Use of Food Transfer from PSNP*



SOURCE: Household Survey, April 2011

Regarding the use of food transfer, over two-thirds (63%) of the respondents said they consumed their entire ration while 31% reported that they sold the food they received to buy other staple food. A further 12% of the respondents sold some of the food and consumed the rest for themselves and only 5% sold the entire food ration for cash.

*Figure 6: Use of Cash Transfer from PSNP*



SOURCE: Household Survey, April 2011

The majority (88%) of the households said they use their cash transfer to purchase staple foods, while 55% spent it on other groceries and clothes. Nearly 30% of the households used the cash transfer to cover education and health costs, to buy agricultural inputs and to pay tax and debt repayment, and 10% said they make use of it for social obligations.

### ***Overall community and household benefits and changes***

Most of the sample households reported that their community benefited from the social services and rural infrastructures that are constructed on communal lands (soil and water conservation activities, access roads, water points, health and education facilities etc).

Recipients of PSNP were also asked about how their household benefited. The overwhelming majority (92%) reported that they retained their own production for household consumption instead of selling it, while 83% indicated that they consumed more food or better quality food, avoided the use of savings to buy food, avoided borrowing to buy food and they kept children in school for long. Similarly, about 77% reported being able to enroll more children in school and 69% used health care facilities compared to the previous years and avoided selling assets to buy food. Nearly 40% of the respondents also reported that they have acquired new assets and new skills as a result of their participation in the PSNP.

There is growing evidence that confirms the increasing role of PSNP in response to shocks or supporting additional transitory caseloads. The PSNP contingency budgets at *Wereda* and regional levels are used to address transitory needs. In this regard, as per the report from *Wereda* Agriculture Office, the *Wereda* used its contingency budget to address the transitory problem that was caused by natural hazards such as land slide and flood. The total affected people that benefited from the PSNP contingency resource were 14,010 (2,782 HH heads with 11,228 members) (WAO 2002 E.C.)

### ***Changes in Social Services since 2005***

According to the baseline information collected from AGRI-Service Ethiopia *Enebse Sar Midir* Project Office, before 2005, the district had only one health centre located at the capital, *Mertule Mariam* and there were only nine health posts in the entire district (AGRI Service, 2004). The health service coverage of the *Wereda* was estimated at 45% and the general health service was inadequate. The 2010 report from the *Wereda* Health office noted that there were 6 Health Centers and 33 Health Posts in different locations of the *Wereda* and health service coverage was said to have reached more than 95%.

## **The impacts of the Productive Safety Net Program on Food Security in Selected Kebeles of Enebse Sar Midir District, East Gojjam Zone, Amhara National Regional State**

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Concerning the education service, before 2005, the number of primary schools in the district was below 30 and at the same time they were poorly furnished. The primary education coverage (gross enrollment rate) was about 51%. currently the number of primary schools in the district reached 63 showing over 110% increase while the gross enrollment rate was said to have reached nearly 100%. Since the Productive Safety Net Program has devoted some of its resources for the construction and maintenance of health and education facilities, the program has thus contributed to these positive improvements. The survey results and FGDs suggest that people have benefited from the services, and much of the changes over the last five years may be attributed to the PSNP intervention.

### ***Graduation as Impact indicator for PSNP***

The term ‘graduation’ as used in most of the working documents, describes the movement of a household out of the PSNP. This occurs when a household has improved its food security status to a level that shifts it from being classified as chronically food insecure to food sufficient, and thus is no longer eligible for the PSNP. Graduation is a two-stage process whereby graduation from the PSNP is the 1<sup>st</sup> stage while graduation from the wider FS Program is the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage. In general graduation from the PSNP is defined as follows:

*“A household has graduated when, in the absence of receiving PSNP transfers, it can meet its food needs for all 12 months and is able to withstand modest shocks. This state is described as being ‘food sufficient’, which is a lower state than being food secure” (MOA 2010).*

Although graduation is the ultimate goal of the Food Security Programme (FSP), the success of the PSNP cannot be judged by graduation rates because graduation is not the result of the activities of PSNP alone, rather it is the combined effect of the FSP components and other development processes.

According to the graduation guidance note 2007, there are agreed benchmarks developed for each region. When households reach the regional benchmark for asset holdings, including only those assets wholly-owned for which a loan is not outstanding, they are ready to graduate. In this situation, they remain in the PSNP for a further year, and will then leave the PSNP. These benchmarks describe the level of assets a food sufficient household is likely to have in each region. When the status of a household’s assets reaches this level, the household is no longer eligible for support from the PSNP.

The benchmarks use household assets to verify and refine the eligibility of households to participate in the PSNP. This is because assets are believed to

better reflect lasting changes in chronic food insecurity status than income. Income tends to fluctuate between seasons and years, while assets are likely to remain more stable, except for periods of severe shocks. It is often difficult to accurately measure income because people are reluctant to share such information and it is challenging to estimate the value of own production whereas assets are assumed to be visible and relatively easy to count.

Table 1: Regional PSNP Graduation Benchmarks

Region	Average Asset Value
Oromia	Birr 19,187 per household
Tigray	Birr 5,600 per capita
Amhara	Birr 4,200 per capita
SNNP	Birr 2,998 per capita

SOURCE: PSNP Guidance Note, 2007

Despite the low level of progress towards graduation at the regional level in general and the study *Wereda* in particular, the exercise has been started since the year 2000 E.C. The annual report from the Regional Disaster Prevention and Food Security Coordination Office indicates that up to the year 2002 E.C, the Region was able to graduate 9% of the regional case load and 12% of the district case load.

Table 2: Number of PSNP Graduates (Region and Wereda)

Year	Amhara Region		Enebse Sarmidir	
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total
2007/08 (2000 E.C)	57357	2.3	2725	6.7
2008/09 (2001 E.C)	154021	6.1	667	1.6
2009/08 2010 (2002 E.C)	14301	0.6	1412	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>225679</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>4804</b>	<b>11.8</b>

Source: Regional DPFSCO Annual Report, 2002 E.C

A recent study on the Livelihood sustainability of graduated households, suggested that about 38% have shown less confidence about their graduation with a fear of back-sliding (CCRDA and Action Aid, 2012). Similarly this research found that 22% of the graduated households indicated that their

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graduation was premature in that they were forced to graduate without reaching the level of the benchmark. Therefore, the negative effects are likely to be most severe among households that are graduated too early from the program and in the meantime, if the process is not adequately understood and lacks transparency, graduation may have negative social effects among communities.

### **Conclusions**

The primary aim of the study was to understand the underlying causes of households' vulnerability to shocks, food shortage problem, coping and survival strategies, and to analyze the effectiveness of government food security interventions, particularly, the Productive Safety Net Program in addressing the problem based on data from rural communities in *Enebse Sar Midir* wereda of East Gojjam Zone in Amhara Region.

There are diverse and interrelated causes for household food and livelihood security problems. These include shortage of land and productive assets, population pressure, crop pests and animal diseases; increasing prices of fertilizers and other inputs, limited credit. Transport communications, water supply, and health services are also still limited.

Agricultural diversification, income-generating schemes, and informal institutions are important households' strategies. Coping strategies to cope include involvement in income generating schemes such as petty trading and handicraft activities. Sale of assets notably livestock and sale of wood are also important for poor people. However, repeated asset sales depletes households' resources making them more vulnerable to drought and other shocks. When other coping strategies are exhausted people engage in daily labor or tend to out-migrate. They also depend on support on others within the community, on informal institutions and relief food aid. There are informal institutions such as *Iddir*, *Iqub*, and *Mahiber* which involve social and economic obligations and play important role in households' ways of life in general and in times of crisis like food shortage.

The study compared PSNP and Non PSNP households and found that the very rich and rich are concentrated among the non PSNP households and the poor and poorest among the PSNP households though there are also small proportions of households that consider themselves to be poor or very poor among non PSNP households. In terms of changes since two years earlier there was a larger proportion of Non PSNP households considering themselves as very rich, rich and comfortable, implying that the latter has better perceptions of improvements. However, there was a much higher proportion who considered themselves as poor and destitute among the PNSP households suggesting that

there was still a strong sense among a large proportion of beneficiaries that they were still facing serious difficulties. Regarding food consumption, almost three-quarters of PSNP households consider their food consumption to be less than adequate compared to slightly over a third of Non PSNP households. Similarly, almost two-thirds of PSNP households considered their housing condition to be less than adequate compared to slightly more than a third of Non PSNP households. Likewise, there are significant differences in terms of clothing and total income in the proportion considering their status to be inadequate. Overall a very small proportion of PSNP households (6%) considered they were much better off as compared to none of the Non PSNP households. There was also an interesting difference in terms of those who considered themselves much worse off since over a third of Non PSNP households held this view as compared to slightly over a quarter of PSNP households.

Local level officials and experts claim that the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) of Ethiopia has achieved its objectives. Various reviews and independent studies on program outcomes and impacts suggest that when the program is properly implemented as per its design, there are significant positive benefits at household and community levels. This study found that the majority of the program beneficiary households reported that the predominant use of both food and cash transfers is for consumption purposes. Moreover, the improvements in social services notably education and health facilities for which PSNP contributed were seen to be beneficial. However, despite the various improvements in program implementation over the years, there are still major challenges identified, notably regarding targeting, timeliness of transfers and graduation.

Regarding targeting though most PSNP beneficiary households believed the targeting was appropriate and fair, most of those who were not included did not consider the process to have been fair and almost half of these had not been successful with appeals which may suggest the need to review the appeals procedure and community involvement in the decision-making. Lack of full-family targeting was also suggested by some as a reason for resisting graduation.

Regarding the timeliness of transfer although just over 40% the sample households reported receiving the PSNP transfers at the time of their need, the majority (59%) reported delays which suggests the need for improving timely delivery. Regarding the levels of payment relative to entitlements the study found that households with smaller numbers (1-3 persons) received their full entitlement, those with average size (4 to 6 persons) received almost the full entitlement (96%) whereas those with high numbers of household members

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(7 and above) received a somewhat smaller proportion of their entitlements (80%). Moreover there were differences between kebeles as well as between identically-sized households across kebeles suggesting the need to review entitlements in relation to household size.

Regarding graduation government figures show that 9% of the case load were graduated in the region by 1010, and almost 12% in Enebse Sarmidir *wereda*. However, among the sample households 22% claimed that their graduation was premature and that they were made to graduate without reaching the benchmark.

In conclusion this research and administrative data, both at *wereda* and regional levels, show that the program is being implemented effectively in many areas. However, there are significant variations between sample *Kebeles*. In some areas the minimum performance standards, particularly in terms of timeliness of transfers, the full family targeting and the low confidence of households to graduate are still under question and need further consideration. There would therefore be a need for thinking community involvement, the appeals process, and finding ways of supporting graduated household for instance through priority access to the Household Asset Building Program, allowing provision for households to reenter the program and balancing incentives for graduation.



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# **An Assessment of the PSNP in Selected *Kebeles* of Konso Special *Woreda*, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Regional State**

*Gelebo Orkaido Katane*

## **Introduction**

Food insecurity is the lack of access to sufficient food. It occurs in chronic or transitory forms. Chronic food insecurity is a continuous inadequacy of diets whereas transitory food insecurity is a temporary decline in a household's access to enough food (Reutlinger, 1988). Food insecurity is a universal problem; however, studies demonstrate that the problem largely affects developing countries. Ethiopia is among the least developed countries, where millions of households, particularly in rural areas, suffer from chronic food insecurity and depend on food aid every year (Gilligan D et al, 2008).

Development actors adopt various strategies and programs to reverse the adverse effects of food insecurity. In Ethiopia, food aid, which is a standard response to transitory food shortages, has been an institutional response to chronic food insecurity for a long period. The international community has been the main source of food aid. This dependency on food aid has undermined food security in Ethiopia (Devereux, 2000). Recently, recognizing the seriousness of food aid dependency, the Ethiopian government has adopted a comprehensive Food Security Program (FSP), which focuses on reducing vulnerability and linking relief and development. In 2005, the Government launched one of the main components of FSP initiative known as the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP).

The Productive Safety Net Program was implemented in Konso Special *Woreda* (KSW) in 2005. It has been implemented in 35 *kebeles* out of a total of 50 *kebeles*. There were 73,490 beneficiaries. Along with the Other Food Security Program (OFSP) interventions, including provision of improved seeds, agricultural implements, credit service, chicken and livestock production, modern beehives, and development of irrigation and water harvesting schemes, PSNP was aimed at enabling households to escape from food insecurity within 3-5 years through smoothing household consumption, protecting the depletion of household assets, and creating community assets. To these ends, a considerable

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amount of resources in cash and in kind have been transferred to the beneficiaries since 2005.

Despite a significant period of program implementation that lasted until 2009, both PSNP beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in Konso *Woreda* were severely affected by the 2008 food crisis that was induced by the crop failure of 2007/08 *belg* season. One could have hoped that the program beneficiaries could have withstood the problem because of the assistance they have had over the years. Nevertheless, sales of household assets and migration were observed at the time among the program beneficiaries and drought affected non-beneficiaries. In the views of the author, this might imply problems with the implementation of the PSNP.

The inability of PSNP beneficiaries to overcome food shortages despite the PSNP assistance intended to protect their consumption and household assets thus raises questions about the effectiveness of the program. This instance calls for critical analysis of the effectiveness of PSNP in smoothing household consumption, protecting the depletion of household assets, and contributing to household food security. In this connection, a critical examination of the implementation of the overall program and its challenges would be very important. The issue of whether household consumption patterns and asset possession have been improved or not among poor households in Konso *Woreda* through the PSNP, and the challenges in program implementation are the central concerns to this study.

The study has employed an evaluation research method. Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered through household surveys, focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews. The research was conducted in four selected *kebeles*. From the population of 1723 program beneficiary households residing in the four selected *kebeles*, 200 sample households were drawn and participated in the household survey. Focus group discussions were conducted in each survey *kebele* with a mixed group constituting elderly persons, women, young people, adults of working age, members of *Kebele* Food Security Task Force (KFSTF), community leaders and development agents. Key informant interviews were conducted with members of Food Security Task Force at *woreda* level, and responsible experts. Secondary data obtained from unpublished and published materials were used in the research.

### **Socio-Economic Overview of Konso *Woreda***

Konso *Woreda* is located in the southern part of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State of Ethiopia. Based on the 1999 E.C. National Population Census Commission data, the Konso Finance and Economic

Development Office (KFEDO) estimates the population of Konso *Woreda* at 243,730 in 2004 E.C. Out of this, the number of females is 126,416 and males is 117,314. Agriculture is the mainstay of Konso people and it is based on a mixed crop and livestock system employing traditional oxen-plough and hoe-culture practices. There are two crop production seasons in Konso--*belg* and *meher*. *Belg* is the main rain season, which lasts from March to May. *Meher* is a relatively short-rain season covering the period from mid-August to mid-October. Information obtained from WARDO indicates that the *belg* is the major crop production season accounting for about 75 percent of the annual crop production. Studies demonstrate that the production and productivity of crops are extremely low in Konso due to shortage and unreliability of rainfall, low soil fertility and small landholding. As stated by Norwegian Church Aid (NCA, 2006), in each of the cropping-seasons the rain usually begins either very late or quits early before the crops mature. Sometimes, unusual and intense heavy rains cause serious damage leaving no chance for farmers to salvage the losses. The NCA study has also shown that the cumulative effects of the foregoing occurrences put the *woreda* under a permanently risky area exposing the human and livestock population to suffer from drought effects.

To reduce the adverse effects of the erratic rainfall pattern, farmers in Konso have evolved a relatively complex crop management system that involves multiple and inter-cropping for both annual and perennial crops. Despite this, however, studies show that the amount of crop production cannot meet the food needs of the *woreda* population throughout the year; and this leads to food insecurity. WARDO data also indicate that the livestock population of the former KSW was estimated at 423,534 in 2005 with cattle making 70 percent of the total. The production system is smallholder, rain fed pasture, and crop residue based. Water scarcity, inadequate feed, and livestock diseases are severe constraints on livestock production (ERA, 2008). As a result, the benefit being exploited from livestock population is little and contributes insignificantly to the economy of both households and the *woreda economy* (NCA, 2006). The poor performances of these economic sectors place Konso among the highly food insecure *woredas* in SNNPR (ERA, 2008).

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*Table 1: Food insecure people and food aid deliveries to KSW from 2000-2009*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Food Insecure Population</b>	<b>Food in Metric Tons</b>
2000	164,000	16,000
2001	151,000	11,000
2002	86,000	2,000
2003	235,000	15,000
2004	90,000	8,000
2005	7,560	980
2006	50,510	4,529
2007	-	-
2008	80,000	16,000
2009	41,383	Data Unavailable
<b>Average</b>	<b>90,545</b>	<b>7,351</b>

SOURCE: 2000-2006 FDRE-DPPA, 2007-2009 WARDO

N.B. The data from 2000-2009 of food insecure population in this section constitute the food insecure population of 7 ethnic-based *kebele*. Their total population constituted 9.8% of KSW's total population. These were later relocated to a newly formed Ale *Woreda* on March 2011

Available data indicate that Konso *Woreda* is amongst the most drought-affected areas in the country where food insecurity is the persistent problem of the people. The data depicted in Table 1 about the food insecure people and the amount of food aid deliveries to the district best illustrates the situation. In comparison to the special district's total population that did not exceed quarter of a million in 2004, the annually food insecure population remained very high. In 2005, a significant number of the special *woreda's* population was included into the PSNP. As a result, the number of people who received emergency food aid in the year dropped to 7,560.

In 2006, the number of relief food beneficiaries was more than fifty thousand but fell to zero in 2007. Due the inclusion of significant number of the then *woreda* people into the PSNP, the proportion of relief food receivers declined in 2005 and 2007 implying that there was better in crop harvest during the two years. In 2008; the district was affected by drought that saw the total collapse of *belg* crops and this resulted in the raising the number of the food insecure population to 80,000. During the survey period in 2009, the district was

under a severe food shortage condition because of the same factor that affected the *belg* crops of the year. The WARDO data indicated that because of the drought, emergency food aid was delivered to 41,383 people. Similarly, due to the occurrences of *belg and meher* crop failures in 2010 and 2011, a large size of Konso *Woreda* population was affected by food shortages. According to the same WARDO report, emergency food aid has been delivered to 17,750 people beginning from March 2011, and another 36,606 people have received assistance from the PSNP contingency budget. Overall, there has been a rise and fall in the size of the food insecure population from year to year implying the recurrence of the problem of food insecurity in the district that repeatedly hit the people.

### **Sample Households' Economic Data before 2005**

The description of the pre-PSNP sample households' economic data has a paramount importance for the analysis of the impact of PSNP on the asset ownership of the beneficiary households. For the purpose of this study, the household economic analysis data of the Livelihood Integration Unit Project, which produced baseline profiles of several livelihood zones in the SNNPR, have been used. This is because the Household Economic Analysis Data of the project have been used to facilitate emergency food and non-food needs assessment and target, and interpret nutritional status data, PSNP programming and so on. More importantly, the data set provides better information and economic data on the pre-PSNP livelihood of sample households in the zone. .

The Livelihood Integration Unit Project, which is a study conducted by SNNP-Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau in 2005, classified Konso *Woreda* into 3 different livelihood zones namely: Lowland Cereal Livelihood Zone; Cereal, Enset and Root crop Livelihood Zone; and Agro-pastoral Livelihood Zone within which people share basically the same patterns of access to food. According to this study, the residence of a household and its wealth status are the factors that determine the household's options for obtaining food and generating income. Since the latter is the major factor, the SNNP-DPPB study further grouped households in each livelihood zone according to their level of wealth (wealth in this discussion is seen in relative or local standards). The SNNP-DPPB study then provides household economy baseline data of a typical household in each wealth group for the year 2003/04. The study also provided the wealth breakdown of the typical household belonging to the sample *kebeles'* Zone or Lowland Cereal Livelihood Zone that is used to examine the impacts of PSNP on asset ownership and wealth rank.

Wealth in the livelihood zone is determined primarily by area of land and number of livestock owned. The Livelihood Zonation Study of the Disaster

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Prevention and Preparedness Bureau (DPPB) report on SNNP has categorized the households of the livelihood zone into four levels of wealth rank as illustrated in Table 1.

*Table 2: Household wealth rank categorization based on land and livestock assets*

Wealth Rank	% Population					Wealth Group Information		
	0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	HH Size	Land area Cultivated	Livestock
<b>Very Poor</b>						4-6	0.25-0.5 ha	1-3 goats
<b>Poor</b>						5-7	0.5-1 ha	0-2 cattle, 2-4 goats
<b>Middle</b>						6-8	1-1.5 ha	1-2 plow oxen, 2-4 cattle, 6-10 goats, 0-1 donke
<b>Better-off</b>						7-9	1.5-2 ha	2-4 plow oxen, 5-7 cattle, 10-16 goats, 0-1 donke

SOURCE: SNNP-DPPB (2005)

The land and livestock owned by middle and better-off households enable them to produce more than poorer groups with the result that they are relatively food secure. The poor and very poor own small sizes of land and livestock as compared with the middle and better-off (SNNP-DPPB, 2005). Therefore, it appears that the poor and very poor households would face difficulty in producing enough to meet their annual food needs even in a typically good year.

## Discussion and Analysis of Data

### *Household Consumption Status before PSNP*

To gather baseline information, the survey had assessed retrospective data about the consumption patterns of the sample households. Firstly, households were asked about the capability they had to meet their annual food needs from own livelihood activities. The respondents attested that they did not meet their annual food requirement from own production before PSNP intervention. Secondly, the respondents were probed to disclose the number of consecutive years during which they had faced food shortages prior to PSNP intervention in 2005. Sample households reported the number of occurrences they experienced

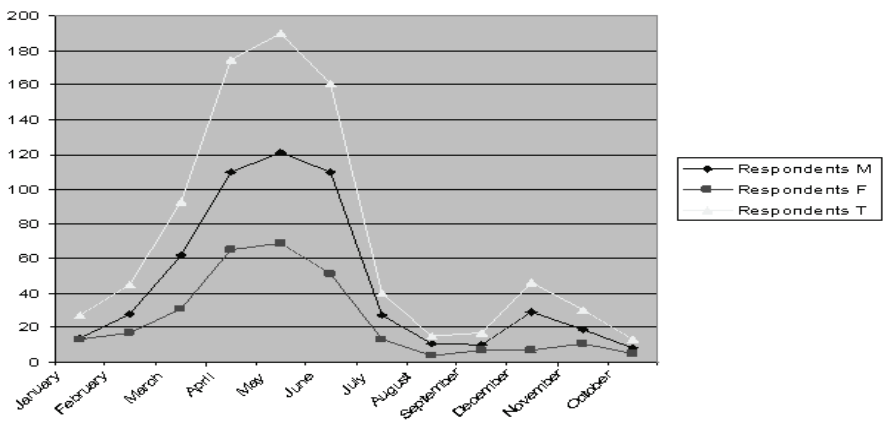


food gaps for particular minimum periods per year and the food aid received. According to field data, the number of consecutive years for which the households faced the difficulty of satisfying household food needs range from 1-12 years.

**Based on field findings, it was also known that** the households who faced food deficiency for 1-3 consecutive years were 62 (31 percent). The number of households who faced the same problem for 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12 consecutive years were 96 (48 percent), 30 (15 percent), and 12 (6 percent) respectively. The mean consecutive years for which the sample households had encountered food deficits before the start of the PSNP program are five. This shows that the sample households had experienced food insecurity for longer consecutive years. This compares with one of the parameters set by the government for PSNP targeting, i.e. facing food deficit for 3 months for about 3 years consecutively.

The survey also investigated the months during which the respondents experienced food shortages annually, and the month of May was confirmed as a hunger month by 190 (95 percent) of the survey households. In addition, the respondents also indicated that April as reported by 175 (87.5 percent) and June as reported by 161 (80.5 percent) of the survey households were hunger months. The data show that food deficit is a problem for some throughout the year and for most during the hunger months from April to July. This discussion indicates that, the consumption status of the sample households has been in a precarious condition even before the PSNP program.

Figure 1. Number of households facing food shortages against months before PSNP intervention



SOURCE: Researcher's Household Survey (2009)

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As illustrated in the graph, May is a peak hunger month of the area but shows signs of decline afterwards. This may be because of the fact that people start to feed themselves from food items such as potatoes, cassava, beans, pumpkins, vegetable foods, which tend to mature early.. In other words, people get some relief from food shortage with the consumption of early maturing food items. Although this scenario is common to both female and male respondents', there are some variations as well. For instance, there is a sharp drop from May to June in the case of female respondents while male respondents reported growth in their number in December. The variations in female and male responses may be attributable to the perception they hold on the use of early maturing foods and their primary role in feeding the household in rural Konso.

**Households Asset Ownership before PSNP**

**Farmland holding:** As displayed in Table 3, 174 households (87 percent) of the households have access to land and the rest 13 percent were landless.

*Table 3: Farmland size levels, status and the number of HHs owning the land*

Wealth level	HH farm-land in hectare	PW beneficiaries			DS beneficiaries			Grand Total		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
<b>Very poor</b>	Land less	7(3.5)	7(3.5)	14(7)	1(0.5)	11(5.5)	12(6)	8(4)	18(9)	26(13)
	0-0.5	96(48)	35(17.5)	131(65.5)	7(3.5)	17(8.5)	24(12)	103(51.5)	52(26)	155(77.5)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>103(51.5)</b>	<b>42(21)</b>	<b>145(77.5)</b>	<b>8(4)</b>	<b>28(14)</b>	<b>36(18)</b>	<b>111(55.5)</b>	<b>70(35.5)</b>	<b>181(90.5)</b>
<b>Poor</b>	0.5-1	15(7.5)	2(1)	17(8.5)	-	-	-	15(7.5)	2(1)	17(8.5)
<b>Middle</b>	1-1.5	2(1)	-	2(1)	-	-	-	2(1)	-	2(1)
<b>Better off</b>	1.5-2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Farm land fertility status</b>										
<b>a. Fertile</b>		1(0.5)	-	1(0.5)	-	-	-	1(0.5)	-	1(0.5)
<b>b. Moderate</b>		41(20.5)	9(4.5)	50(25)	2(1)	5(2.5)	7(3.5)	43(21.5)	14(7)	57(28.5)
<b>c. Poor</b>		71(35.5)	28(14)	99(49.5)	5(2.5)	12(6)	17(8.5)	76(38)	40(20)	116(58)

SOURCE: Researcher's Household Survey (2009)

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As depicted in Table 3, 155 (77.5 percent) of the sample households possess landholding whose sizes do not exceed 0.5 hectare. 17 (8.5 percent), and 2 (1 percent) of the households have farmland sizes within the range of 0.5-1 and 1-1.5 hectare respectively. In aggregate terms, the mean size of landholding of the sample households is 0.3 hectare. It should be noted here that for subsistence farmers the size of farmland is the crucial element for production. Especially in Konso, where modern cultivation techniques are almost non-existent, the amount of production largely depends on the size of the farmland. In other words, the larger the size of farmland the greater will be the harvest or vice versa. Therefore, the small landholding situation among the sample households seems an inherent cause for their food insecurity.

The experience of Ato Kalismo Kamassa, 38 years old and head of a household size of 5 from Mechallo *Kebele*, would elucidate the problem with small-size farm landholdings. He explained his situation as follows:

“I have a farm land of about 0.25 hectare, which I inherited from my old family; it is the only farm land upon which my household depends. On average, it gives 3 quintals of grain and this is not enough to satisfy the food requirements of the household a year round. It is also insufficient to serve as source of fodder to feed animals if I need to keep them at home and also does not serve to plant some important trees for construction purpose or for sale”.

To diminish the effect of small farm land adversity, Ato Kalismo Kamssa identified the diverse ways he employs to increase the productivity of his plot of land as follows:

“I repeatedly plough the land in the dry season, maintain old terraces, manure the land with cow dung and waste materials, allow the land to get enough air ahead of crop season, and then cultivate the land with numerous crops and weed it appropriately.”

Besides the size of farmland, the fertility of the land and owning irrigable land influence farmers’ productivity. In connection to this, the survey result revealed that none of the households reported using irrigation. As to the fertility of their fertility, 116 (58 percent) of the households said that their farmland was poor whereas 57 (28.5 percent) and 1 (0.5 percent) households respectively stated that the status of their farmland is moderately fertile. The data indicate that the land quality of the many sample households was poor. This in turn affects households’ productivity and results in persistent food insecurity.

*Livestock holdings.* Livestock possession is the second determinant criteria to level the wealth of rural households in Konso community. The survey has gathered the data of households' livestock possessions as presented in Table 4.

As can be clearly seen in Table 4, 105 (52.5 percent) of the households did not own any livestock prior to PSNP intervention. 66 (33 percent) of the households had about 1-3 goats/sheep. Generally, in terms of livestock ownership, 171 (85.5 percent) households were in the very poor wealth rank. The remaining 29 (14.5 percent) households can be categorized in the livestock asset level of poor wealth rank. Out of the four levels of wealth ranks, all the sample households were found in the lower two wealth rank groups. Therefore, it has been learnt that the status of livestock assets of the sample households is very small and thus reflects the prevalence of high magnitude of poverty among the households and low capacity to access enough food. Although the households' asset possession data of the sample households before PSNP have revealed some ownership of livestock, one needs to be cautious not to assume that this is true for all targeted households. This is because, as it is acknowledged in the next section of the study, the initial targeting has been done properly and this has necessitated making corrections on errors on inclusion and exclusion. Therefore, despite the sample households' asset data that indicate everybody as very poor and poor, it has to be noted that during the targeting process some relatively better-off households were included while some other households with limited asset possessions were excluded.

Table 4: Household livestock wealth status before PSNP intervention

Wealth Ranks	Livestock Wealth Groups	PW Beneficiaries				DS Beneficiaries				Grand Total			
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
<b>Very Poor</b>	HHs with no Livestock	56(28)	22(11)	78(39)	5(2.5)	22(11)	27(13.5)	61(30.5)	44(22)	105(52.5)			
	1-3 goats/sheep	37(18.5)	20(10)	57(28.5)	3(1.5)	6(3)	7(3.5)	40(20)	26(13)	66(33)			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>93(46.5)</b>	<b>42(21)</b>	<b>135(67.5)</b>	<b>8(4)</b>	<b>28(14)</b>	<b>34(17)</b>	<b>101(55.5)</b>	<b>70(35)</b>	<b>171(85.5)</b>			
<b>Poor</b>	0-2 cattle	27(13.5)	2(1)	29(14.5)	-	-	-	27(13.5)	2(1)	29(14.5)			
	2-4 goats/sheep												
<b>Middle</b>	1-2 plow oxen	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
	2-4 cattle												
	6-10 goats/sheep												
	0-1 donkey												
<b>Better-off</b>	2-4 plow oxen	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
	5-7 cattle												
	10-16 goats/sheep												
	0-1 donkey												

SOURCE: Researcher's Household Survey (2009)

## Program Activities

### *Targeting*

In order to make reliable targeting, the revised PIM of 2006 has given due recognition and has spelt out the occasions at which targeting or refinement is conducted. It has also spelt out the system and standards of targeting, parties involved and their responsibilities. Accordingly, the research informants have responded to such questions, such as the periods when targeting or refinements were undertaken, the parties involved, and how its administration and the challenges of the process were handled.

FGD and key informant responses have indicated that targeting and subsequent refinement of the program beneficiary lists were undertaken three times. As to their report, the periods were in early 2005, 2007 and 2010. Further, the informants indicated that on three occasions targeting activities have had certain distinctive features. It has been reported that the first targeting was not based on wealth ranking system; rather it was based on quotas that were allotted to each *kebele* by the district. Assistants assigned to *kebeles* from the district undertook the task, but reports indicated that the *Kebele* Food Security Task Force (KFSTF) and Community Food Security Task Force (CFSTF) have had a prime role in the targeting process.

Despite the considerable power given to the task forces, it was reported that the initial targeting was not done properly. It appears that although the main focus was chronically food insecure households, a large number of *kebele* households which did not qualify were encompassed in to the program. In other words, it was done in a way to benefit large number of households. Moreover, the informants stated that some family members were excluded, and chronically food insecure second wife's households were not registered as independent beneficiary households; rather they were grouped in the first wife households. This indicates errors in the initial targeting and as a result was later embedded with exclusion and inclusion errors. Next, the informants reported that in 2007, retargeting was done mainly to correct the problems of the first targeting. To this end, a team constituting *woreda* cabinet members and experts were assigned to each *kebele*, particularly with which the individuals were familiar. In this retargeting process, the informants' report indicated that wealth ranks were done and after both exclusion and inclusion errors were corrected. While better-off beneficiary households were dropped, initially excluded family members of the food insecure beneficiary households were included. This meant that full family were targeted, and chronically food insecure polygamies were also registered as independent beneficiaries.

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The third retargeting task was undertaken a little before the beginning of the second phase of PSNP in December 2009. It is reported that the formation and assignment of assisting teams to each *kebele* followed the earlier practice. Except the wealth rank work, the teams were instructed to refine the list of the beneficiaries after screening out those who might have permanently migrated out of the area; people who might have died; individuals who might have been married to another family; people who are employed; and those whose lives have improved. It was reported that due to the exclusion process many others were included into the program to maintain kebele quota.

With regard to targeting or retargeting beneficiaries, FGD participants have indicated that KFSTF and CFSTF were the major actors and the *woreda* provided administrative assistance. The key informants' responses indicated that *woreda* assistants have participated in targeting or retargeting particularly through the provision of administrative guidelines. As far as challenges in targeting or retargeting are concerned, informants have shown that the community's reluctance to report accurate data on possessions and inadequate time as well as other resources limitations to carry out wealth rank have been the serious challenges.

The preceding discussion demonstrated that despite the biannual retargeting work required as per the PIM, the district has managed to undertake this task only three times. Both administrative and community targeting methods have been employed but, as implied in the discussion, unwillingness of the larger community to provide accurate possession data, and inadequate time allocation and provision of logistics for the work of wealth rank have challenged the task of targeting or retargeting.

### ***Public Works***

Public works are meant to provide employment for chronically food insecure households, which provide labour and simultaneously build community assets. The program PIM provides detailed guidelines about the public works activities. Issues that relate to types of activities performed by public works program, plan execution processes and the challenges that are faced the public works activities are examined next.

Public works beneficiary households were asked about the type of activities that they performed under this PSNP component. The result of the inquiry presented in table 5 provides data on the development activities that have been performed by public works beneficiaries.



Table 5. Development activities carried out by the PSNP public work beneficiaries

No	Questionnaire Items	PW Beneficiaries		
		M	F	T
<b>1</b>	Development activities done under PSNP public works			
<b>a</b>	Road construction and maintenance	119(59.5)	43(21.5)	162(81)
<b>b</b>	Construction and maintenance of	83(41.5)	33(16.5)	116(58)
<b>c</b>	Schools	113(56.5)	39(19.5)	152(76)
<b>d</b>	Soil and water conservation practices	24(12)	10(5)	34(17)
<b>e</b>	Development of water springs/ shallow wells	79(39.5)	32(16)	111(55.5)
	Construction and maintenance of health facilities			
<b>2</b>	Effect of rural community assets on household food security			
<b>a</b>	Improved	111(55.5)	38(19)	149(74.5)
<b>b</b>	Not improved	4(2)	2(1)	6(3)
<b>c</b>	Uncertain	5(2.5)	4(2)	9(4.5)

SOURCE: Researcher's Household Survey (2009)

As indicated in the table, the majority of the public works beneficiaries have replied that they have participated in different development activities, such as construction and maintenance of roads, schools, health facilities, soil and water conservation schemes. Item 2 indicates how these community assets affected the beneficiary's food security situation. As illustrated in Table 5, 149 households or 74.5 percent of the sample households replied that the community assets have improved their life situation.

The Konso people have a remarkable indigenous knowledge and practices in the conservation of soil and water. They conserve soils, water and moisture for long time in their farmlands by terraces, and practice multiple cropping and agro-forestry. Experts point out that the implementation of soil and water conservation practices for non-farmlands have been invaluable due to the fact that soil degradation and deforestation are serious problems in the area as they are elsewhere. It has also been noted that the development of community assets has been scant in the rural Konso before the implementation of public works activities. However, this has changed thanks to the program's contribution, because road networks were improved, Farmers Training Centers (FTCs), schools, health facilities and water schemes were also constructed and/or renovated. In short, it can be understood that the public works have addressed the needs of the local community.

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The extent of public works activities implementation was also found to be important for this discussion. Hence, an attempt was made to evaluate the PSNP's first phase public works plans and performance reports. For better understanding and evaluation, the number of annual planned activities and performance percentages of the activities are presented in the following table.

*Table 6: Number of planned public works activities and performance in percentage*

Program Year	No of Planned Activities	Performance in percent									
		0 %	0≤2 5%	26- 50 %	51- 75 %	76- 100 %	101 %	126 %	151 %	176- 200%	200% >
2005	15	0	5	2	1	5	-	-	-	1	1
2006	37	3	13	8	4	1	-	1	1	1	5
2007	52	1	9	11	3	5	1	-	1	-	7
2008	49	1	11	5	5	2	1	-	2	1	5
2009	36	9	6	4	-	3	-	4	1	-	9
<b>Average</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>5</b>

SOURCE: WARDO Report (2011)

The data in the above table, which were excerpted from the PSNP first phase public works plans and reports, demonstrate a growth in the planned work volume until the third program year and then a gradual decline in the next two years. Moreover, the inclusion of diverse work activities into the plan was observed as the program progresses. Nevertheless, as illustrated in the table many of the planned activities across the program period were neither put into action nor efficiently implemented. At the other extreme, a large number of planned activities have been performed quite well. This data expose the existence of serious weaknesses in the development of practicable public works plan as well as lack of commitment to put plans into action.

Concerning the challenges of the public works component, both FGD and key informants agreed that delay of payments and weak work verification processes were the major problems for the failures in plan execution. Moreover, key informants have pointed out that neglecting a participatory planning approach was another major factor for the failures. With regard to the first case, they stated that because of late disbursement from the region, inadequate staff at

the district level and lack of assistance from the *woreda* level responsible bodies, the payment is often delayed for 2 to 3 months. This appears to be the main cause for violating work norms by the public works beneficiaries (i.e. breaking timeliness principles), reduced commitment to perform according to agreed standards, distrust and shift to other private works, sending children and pregnant women simply to fill attendance requirements, and assigning single participant from among all households.

Regarding the work verification system, the PIM has stated that wage payments are expected to be made on the basis of attendance and quality and quantity of work completed. However, as reported by informants, this has been loosely exercised and payments have been made for non-attendants, and inefficient performers without any compensation work or corrections. The informants' report indicated that such payments began in 2008. It appears that in the earlier period the beneficiaries were encouraged to provide compensation and corrections for deviation from the planned standard. Due to the very severe drought in 2008; however, the report indicated that this was disregarded and hence payments were made without due consideration for work performance.

Further, they added that the delivery of transfers without any precondition has been done such that today it is not uncommon to observe beneficiaries receiving transfer without any visible implementation of public works activities and the delivery of physical reports. As to the informants, this has subsequently resulted in the deterioration of work quality, dissatisfaction among efficient attendants, better performers and more importantly has undermined the intention of the public works component of the program.

The third main case underlined by the key informants is the neglect of participatory planning approach. The PIM states that safety net plans need to begin from the community and finally get approved at the *woreda* level before they are put into action. At all levels, the participation of concerned authorities and particularly the will of the community is of paramount importance. Signifying the limited participation of the community in the planning process, key informants argued that the safety net plans have been mostly produced by the *kebele* chairperson, manager and Development Agents (AD). Moreover, they stated that safety net plans from 2008 onwards neither begin from the community nor they get due approval by all stakeholders. FGD participants in all sample *kebeles* agreed that the activities were planned with community participation and the endorsement of the plan by the community was missing. Despite such differences over the idea of the community involvement in the planning process, both FGD and key informants agreed on the existence of serious problems in changing public works plans into action. Despite admission by FGD participants about the practice of community participation in safety net

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plans, the analysis of the five-year public works plan and performance clearly proved that the public works plans lack genuine participation of the community.

From the above discussion, it can be understood that various community assets have been built through public works and the assets have been benefiting the community in various ways. Nevertheless, delay in payments have played a deterring role to the public works activities and transfer of program benefits without realistic work verification outcome has also undermined the overall direction of and objective of public works in providing income for the chronically food insecure households in exchange for labour. Lack of participatory planning has also affected the success of public works plans.

### ***Direct Support***

Direct support is the second main component of PSNP whereby resources are delivered to the chronically food insecure households who are labour poor and do not have reliable support (MOARD, 2006). The program PIM classifies direct support eligible households into two: the first category includes disabled persons whereas the second category includes pregnant women, lactating mothers, and orphaned teenagers. According to the PIM, the latter beneficiaries are expected to participate in certain community activities defined by the PIM, such as child care in public work sites and child care centers, child nutrition and promotion classes, and adult literacy classes. In the discussion about the planning and execution of such community activities, informants reported that the stated community activities are not feasible in the rural areas of Konso and no effort was made to plan and execute such community activities.

This reveals that despite the provision of transfer for every direct support beneficiary, options were not seen for some local community activities that conform to the direct support beneficiaries of the second category.

### ***Cross-Cutting Issues***

The main cross-cutting issues incorporated into the PSNP were environment and HIV/AIDS. The planning and implementation of these issues were raised in the discussions of FGD and key informants.

The program manual gives clear guidance for safety net plans to be designed in accordance with the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). Some of the FGD members, particularly the DAs, confirmed that they had taken training on preparing plans that agree with the ESMF guidelines. The key informants have also verified that in order to incorporate ESMF principles, trainings have been annually delivered to the DAs who largely assist *kebeles* in safety net plans development. Both FGD

participants and key informants indicated that despite failures to change plan into action, safety net plans have been developed in accordance with the ESMF guidelines.

The PSNP creates both challenges and opportunities for the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, because it mobilizes large number of people in its activities. In order to mitigate and control the syndrome, the implementation of effective and participatory HIV/AIDS prevention and control measures with the program are essential. The report from FGD participants on the HIV/AIDS prevention and control indicated that in some instances the health extension workers perform such activities at public works sites. Nevertheless, the key informants including the expert in charge of the cross cutting issues, responded that except for the the development of activity plan, nothing has been turned into action in the areas of HIV/AIDS prevention and control. The reasons as stated by them are lack of attention from the local authorities that is reflected in the failure to allocate work budget, and subsequent follow up of HIV/AIDS mainstreaming activities in the program.

Thus this highlights that the cross cutting issues are not well recognized among the local authorities as the important components of the larger program.

### ***Budget Utilization***

According to the program guidelines, the total annual budget is composed of 80 % beneficiary transfer, 15 % capital budget and 5 % for administration. The budget also constitutes another 5 % contingency that is calculated based on the total amount of transfers to beneficiaries earmarked for emergency responses to the non-PSNP population. A *woreda* that faces emergency can apply and use the 5 % contingency budget and can also apply for an additional 15 % contingency budget, which is held at the regional level for such cases. This alternative is considered if the 5 % contingency budget cannot cover the emergency. In this discussion, a detailed budget analysis that shows the actual amount allocated/ and transferred, utilized, and unutilized would have been helpful. However, the scarcity and the high discrepancy within the available data have made such an exercise impossible. Therefore, the focus was shifted to the weaknesses that contributed to the effective and efficient utilization of budgets.

Discussions held on this issue with the Program Finance Management Unit and the Food Security and Early Warning Section have revealed some main problems that have resulted in weak resources utilization. The informants assertively stated that the failure to make timely consolidation of safety net plans and budget proposals and the delay in subsequent approval by the cabinet have

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hampered proper use of the program budget. In addition to the delays in the annual budget approval, it has been reported that lack of appropriate follow up of the budget management by the responsible bodies has contributed to the delays in capital resources procurement and purchase of poor quality goods. This usually comes in June, which is the last month of annual program.. A good example of this poor performance is the fact that data obtained from the Finance Management Unit have indicated that the amount of unutilized budget of KSW from 2005-2008 was Birr 12,853,683. Out of this, Birr 857,058 in 2005, Birr 4,100,410 in 2006, Birr in 5,797,315 in 2007, and Birr 2,089,900 in 2008 were not utilized. The informants also indicated that the amounts of capital budget and public works beneficiary transfers were considerable. Specifically, the underlining reason for underutilization of the public works beneficiary transfers as discussed with the informants was the failure of the beneficiaries to regularly attend the public works activities because of the overlap of the program schedule with the local peak agricultural season. Lastly, capacity deficiency of the Finance Management Unit was also cited by the staff as another problem contributing to underutilization. They stated that inadequate number of staff,, lack of cooperation in logistics, for example in providing vehicles, from responsible bodies coupled with delays in transfer from the region were factors that contributed to the weaknesses in budget utilization at the *woreda* level.

From the foregoing discussion, it can be understood that failure to make timely budget endorsement, lack of proper budget monitoring, and capacity deficiency of the Program Finance Management Unit have hindered the effective and efficient utilization of the program budget.

### ***Stakeholders Coordination***

The woreda is a key tier of government that undertakes the planning and implementation of safety net activities (MoARD, 2006). At this level, the stakeholders' coordination has a key role in program implementation. Therefore, the extent to which the stakeholders have been delivering their joint responsibilities in program planning, monitoring and evaluation, and review were the subject of this discussion. The challenges that affected the stakeholders in this regard will also be discussed.

Key informants were probed about the PSNP planning process and one of them replied as follows. "In the beginning, until the third year, *kebeles* used to prepare and deliver safety net plans that constitute, among others, community labour contributions for rural infrastructure developments like soil, sand and stone collection, site clearing, leveling and excavation activities within the district. Sectors also provide safety net plan activities that complement *kebele* plans. Then a detail review of the plans and consolidation and budget allocation

are made by the WFSTF before it is delivered for approval by the cabinet.” Further, informants indicated that beginning from 2008 onwards this procedure has not been regularly carried out; and except the delivery of haphazardly prepared *kebele* safety net plans the collaborative work of stakeholders at the district level in planning has become minimal. Monitoring, evaluation and reviews are among the important responsibilities that the *woreda* level stakeholders have to carry out to keep the program on track. In this regard, informants argued that no effort has been made to monitor and evaluate the program at *woreda* level,.

The WARDO Early Warning and Food Security Report (2011) has shown that despite the efforts by established Focal Unit Committees to correct the problem, administrative chores with which officials are pre-occupied have made the annual monitoring and evaluation work impractical. They also argued that the review of the program by the *woreda* level stakeholders has never been exercised. Research informants from PSNP implementing sectors have responded that the absence of regular monitoring, evaluation, and review meetings on the progress of the program have resulted in poor performance of PSNP assisted projects and wastage of resources. As the informants stated, the program provides factory products as well as other construction materials that help to construct and/or renovate schools, water schemes, health facilities, FTCs, and so on; however, a considerable amount of factory products like cement has been wasted due to delay in timely and immediate use of the resource. Moreover, they reported wastage and misuse of stored resources. The core problem as claimed by the research respondents for the poor coordination by all stakeholders at this level was inaction of the WFSTF, which is primarily plagued by lack of attention and excessive sector specific work burdens.

The discussion highlights that there has been little collaborative work needed among the stakeholders at *woreda* level in program implementation. This has handicapped the regular follow up on progress, and made it difficult to undertake immediate corrective measures on problems pertaining to targeting, public works, budget utilization, PSNP assisted projects, cross cutting issues and so on. It seems that the weaknesses exhibited among the *woreda* level stakeholders have adversely affected the overall progress of the program.

## Uses of PSNP Transfers

PSNP transfers have been delivered to the beneficiary households since 2005. According to the WARDO and *Woreda* Finance and Economic Development Office (WFEDO), transfer payments in 2005 and 2008 were made in kind (i.e., food). A combination of cash and food transfers were delivered to beneficiaries

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in 2006 while in 2007, 2009, and 2010 the transfer was made in cash. In 2011 the transfer of food was made for a month and for the other 5 months cash transfers were delivered. At the beginning, the amount of transfer payment that each beneficiary was entitled to receive was 6 birr per day or 30 birr per month or 30 birr of worth of food. That meant from 2005 to 2007, i.e. for three years, transfer payments were made on the basis of this initial standard. In 2008, the amount of transfer payment was increased to 8 birr and as a consequence the monthly payment was 40 birr per person. Again the payment per day was increased for the second time from 8 to 10 birr from 2009 onwards and this has worked until 2011. Each beneficiary in the later case is entitled to receive 50 birr per month. The main reason for the improvements of the transfer rates according to the WARDO experts was the scaling up of the price of food grain. Cognizance of this background this section proceeds to explore how the beneficiaries have used the transfers and their impact on the consumption and asset holding of the beneficiary households.

*Cash Transfer.* The data in Figures 2a and 2b show the purposes for which the beneficiaries have used the cash resources.

Figure 2a. Use of cash transfer for consumption

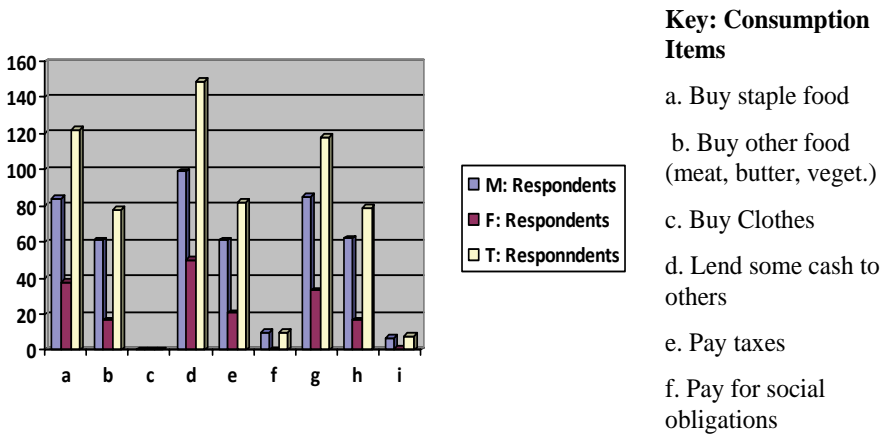
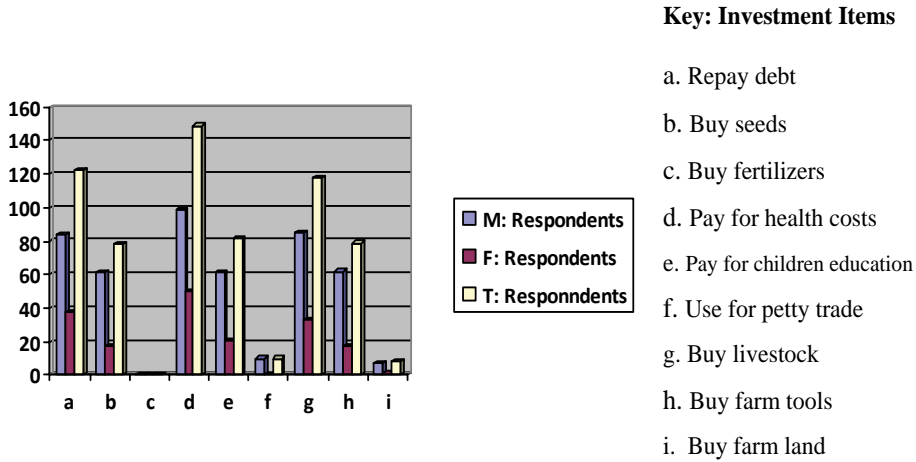




Figure 2b. Use of cash transfer for investment



SOURCE: Researcher's Household Survey (2009)

As displayed in Diagram 2a, nearly the entire sample households have used the cash transfer to buy staple food. Moreover, the vast majority of the households 190 (95.5 percent) have also reported that they used the cash transfer to buy clothes. These two were the most important consumption items for which almost all households have spent the cash transfer. As illustrated in Diagram 2b, among the investment items, 149 (74.5 percent) of households have spent for health care, 122 (61 percent) households used to repay debt, and 118 (59 percent) households bought livestock. The sample households' cash transfer spending trend demonstrates that the majority of the households have spent more on consumption than investment items.

*Food Transfer.* The survey also assessed how the beneficiaries have used food transfers and the summary is presented in Table 5.

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*Table 5: Use of food transfer*

No	Questionnaire Items	PW Beneficiaries			DS Beneficiaries			Grand Total		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
<b>1</b>	Use of food transfer									
<b>a</b>	Eat all the food	120 (60)	44 (22)	164 (82)	8 (4)	28 (14)	35 (17.5)	128 (64)	72 (36)	200 (100)
<b>b</b>	Sell to buy other food									
	Give for repayment	66(33)	17(8.5)	83 (41.5)	3 (1.5)	9 (4.5)	12(6)	69 (34.5)	26 (13)	95 (47.5)
<b>c</b>	Sale to buy household assets	1(0.5)	2(1)	3(1.5)	-	-	-	1(0.5)	2(1)	3(1.5)
<b>d</b>			4(2)	9(4.5)	-	1 (0.5)	1(0.5)	5(2.5)	5(2.5)	10(5)

SOURCE: Researcher's Household Survey (2009)

The survey result shows that all of the households have used the food transfer mainly for consumption. The households who used to sell the food transfer in order to buy other food items were 95 (47.5 percent). It appears that these households sold transfers, like wheat at the local market in order to buy food grains of lower price like maize, sorghum and others food items with the purpose to increase the size of the food or to maximize the transfer of resources in support of consumption smoothening. Extremely small numbers of households have used the food they received for other payments and sold some in order to buy other household assets. As illustrated in the above table, the tendency to repay debt during food transfers is lower whereas in the case of the cash transfers, repaying debt is higher (see diagram 2b). Here, it can be understood that the majority of the households have primarily used the food transfer to feed themselves.

In field discussions on the purposes for which PSNP beneficiaries have used the transfers, the participants have described the condition of their past lives. One man summarized the common view saying, “Before PSNP intervention, we were chronically food insecure; we often spend a day without a meal, work for others to feed ourselves, gather wild foods for consumption, and in general we were completely destitute.” Subsequently, the FGD participants also explained the purposes for which they have used PSNP transfers. Some of these included consumption and to clothe themselves, for health expenses to take care of ill household members; to buy livestock, agricultural implements, and durable goods; to provide children attending school with necessary educational materials; to repair old houses and build new ones; to prevent the sale of livestock for minor emergencies and food purposes; to avoid labor work with a minimum return; avoid borrowing from local lenders for food purposes.

## **Impacts of PSNP Transfers**

*Impact on Household Consumption.* It has been shown that the majority of the beneficiaries have used both cash and food transfers mainly for consumption purposes. To assess the impact of the transfers on the consumption of households, the survey asked the opinion of the sample households and summarized the result in Table 6.

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*Table 6: Households' perception about their consumption after PSNP intervention*

No	Questionnaire Items	PW Beneficiaries				DS Beneficiaries				Grand Total				
		M	F	T	M	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
<b>1</b>	Did PSNP improve your consumption?													
<b>a</b>	Yes	93 (46.5)	41 (20.5)	134(67)	8(4)	22(11)	30 (15)	101 (50.5)	63 (31.5)	164 (82)				
<b>b</b>	No	27 (13.5)	3(1.5)	20(15)	-	6(3)	6 (3)	27 (13.5)	9 (4.5)	36 (18)				
<b>2</b>	Household members daily meal frequency													
<b>a</b>	Adult													
1		2 (1)	-	2(1)	-	-	-	2(1)	-	2(1)				
2		40 (20)	16(8)	56(28)	5(2.5)	10(5)	15 (7.5)	45 (22.5)	26 (13)	71 (35.5)				
3		51 (25.5)	24 (12)	75(37.5)	3(1.5)	12(6)	15 (7.5)	54 (27)	36 (18.5)	90 (45)				
4		-	1(0.5)	1(0.5)	-	-	-	-	1(0.5)	1(0.5)				
<b>b</b>	Children													
1		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
2		12 (6)	4(2)	16 (8)	-	4 (2)	4(2)	12 (6)	8(4)	20 (10)				
3		61 (30.5)	28 (14)	89 (44.5)	2(1)	10 (5)	12(6)	63 (31.5)	38 (19)	101 (50.5)				
4		20 (10)	9 (4.5)	29 (14.5)	6(3)	8 (4)	14(7)	26 (13)	17 (8.5)	43 (21.5)				

SOURCE: Researcher's Household Survey (2009)

As can be seen from item 1 of Table 6, 164 households (82 percent) claimed that the food and the cash transfers have improved their consumption levels. These households were further asked about the daily meal frequency of their adults and children. Regarding the adults' meal frequency, 71 (35.5 percent) and 91 (45.5 percent) of the sample households indicated that adults ate twice and thrice a day respectively. In the case of children, 101 (50.5 percent) and 43 (21.5 percent) of the households replied that after PSNP intervention they could feed their children thrice and four times a day respectively. In contrast to the above discussion, 36 (18 percent) of the households reported that PSNP was not effective in improving their household consumption.

Some FGD participants have had mixed views concerning the impact of PSNP on smoothing consumption. Expressing their mixed view, one FGD participant summarized a common view saying, "Had the PSNP not been implemented, most of us would have died. The program however merely prevented our death but could not lift us to the top of the terrace or hill." Other participants referring to the existence of food shortages during PSNP period stated that although dinner was available among many households, they did not have lunch since the beginning of food insecurity in Konso. In other words, many households did not have lunch even during PSNP period. In short, the main message implied is that the transfers were inadequate to have adequate meals required in a day ---- a point which will be further elaborated under section 9.

The major reasons provided by the survey households and FGD participants for the failure of PSNP in smoothing consumption are: sharing the received transfers among non-targeted households; delay of payments; and poverty and drought that constrain households' own food production. From the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that except some beneficiary households, PSNP has brought an encouraging improvement in filling the food gap of many households.

*Impact on Household Assets.* In addition to smoothing consumption, the PSNP has been meant to prevent the erosion of household assets and enable households to stabilize livelihoods (DPPA, 2008). Concerning this, households were asked about the impact of PSNP on their asset status. According to the findings, 122 households (61 percent) replied that the PSNP has increased their household assets, and the remaining 78 (39 percent) said that it had not changed their household assets. Out of the total 72 sample female households, 39 sample households (19.5 percent) of sample households and 54 percent of female households reported that PSNP did not change their asset possession.

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*Table 7. Wealth ranks and households' livestock asset status after PSNP intervention*

Wealth Ranks	Livestock Wealth Groups	PW Beneficiaries			DS Beneficiaries			Grand Total		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
<b>Very Poor</b>	HHs with no Livestock	3(1.5)	6(3)	9(4.5)	3(1.5)	13(6.5)	16(8)	6(3)	19(9.5)	25(12.5)
	1-3 goats/sheep	58(29)	30(15)	89(44.5)	4(2)	15(7.5)	19(9.5)	62(31)	45(22.5)	107(53.5)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>61(30.5)</b>	<b>36(18)</b>	<b>98(49)</b>	<b>7(3.5)</b>	<b>28(14)</b>	<b>35(17.5)</b>	<b>68(34)</b>	<b>64(32)</b>	<b>132(66)</b>
<b>Poor</b>	0-2 cattle	56(28)	8(4)	64(32)	1(0.5)	-	1(0.5)	57(28.5)	8(4)	65(32.5)
	2-4 goats/sheep									
<b>Middle</b>	1-2 plow oxen	3(1.5)	-	3(1.5)	-	-	-	3(1.5)	-	3(1.5)
	2-4 cattle									
	6-10 goats/sheep									
	0-1 donkey									
<b>Better-off</b>	2-4 plow oxen	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	5-7 cattle									
	10-16 goats/sheep									
	0-1 donkey									

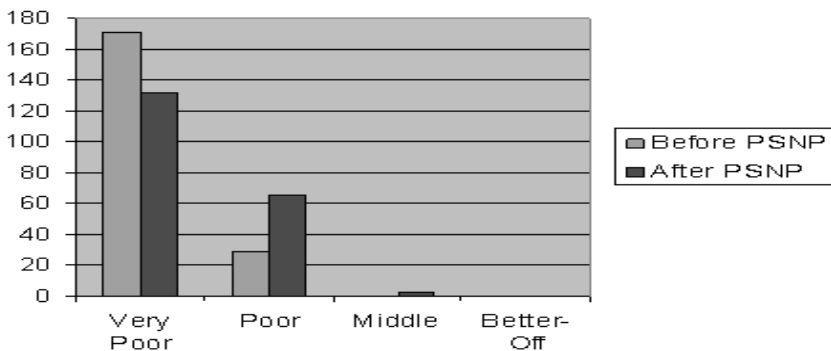
*Source:* Researcher's Household Survey (2009)

As depicted in Table 7, 175 households (87.5 percent) have varying status of livestock holdings; however, 25 households (12.5 percent) do not own livestock assets. All together, the number of households which do not have livestock and those with livestock possessions of 1-3 goats/sheep altogether is 132 (66 percent). These households are categorized as very poor. Households that had 1-2 cattle and 2-4 goats/sheep were 65 (32.5 percent) and they are categorized in the poor wealth rank. Only 3 (1.5 percent) of the households own livestock assets proportional to the middle wealth rank livestock status.

FGD participants have also reported on program beneficiary households who have shown encouraging changes in their asset status. They indicated that particularly some beneficiaries in Sawgame and Mechallo who had access to credit service by the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and have engaged in off-farm activities like oxen fattening, grain trade, brewery of local drink (*Chaqa*), and other petty trades, have succeeded in improving their asset status. There were no households which have reached a better-off level of livestock wealth ownership status. .

From the discussion of livestock ownership, it can be learned that the proportion of households who owned livestock assets have increased over the period of PSNP. As a consequence, a steady move from the lower wealth ranks to the upper ones is attained among the majority of the sample households. On the basis of the before and after-PSNP households' livestock assets, the comparison of the sample households' wealth rank groups before and after PSNP is given in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Comparison of households' wealth rank groups on the basis of their livestock assets before and after PSNP



SOURCE: Researcher's Household Survey (2009)

## **An Assessment of the Productive Safety Net Program in Selected Kebeles of Konso Woreda**

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The number of sample households that belong to very poor wealth rank were 171 (85.5 percent) before PSNP intervention. After PSNP intervention, this figure has declined to 132 (66 percent) of the sample households. Initially, the households who belong to the poor wealth rank were 29 (14.5 percent), but this has increased to 65 (32.5 percent) of the sample households. Before PSNP intervention, there was not a single household who belongs to the middle level wealth rank. But as shown in Table 8 and Diagram 3, 3 households (1.5 percent) had attained this wealth rank.

Up until the survey period the level of better-off wealth rank has never been reached by any sample household. As discussed under the second section of this study, there have been repetitive droughts that affected the Konso *Woreda*. These shocks have had a negative consequence or impact on the normal functioning of all households; and indeed for the poor households who are highly vulnerable to shocks and have less resilience to the same, the extent of the effect would be higher. In spite of the adverse effects induced by the shocks, it has been revealed that a considerable number of the households have shown changes in their wealth rank position after the program although the majority of them are still in the lower wealth ranks. In the presence of unfavorable conditions and without a control group, attributing the changes as the direct impact of the program seems unsound. But, it appears that a combination of the contributions of the program and the improving trend in the households' improvement of wealth status could be responsible for the changes.

The FGD and interview with the experts on whether PSNP did protect the poor households from the depletion of household assets or not and whether it built more assets for the sample households or not disclosed contrasting views. To begin with, some participants said that prior to the PSNP intervention there were poor households who sold any plot of land they had in order to deal with household shocks and to repay debt. They added that some households eventually began to use their houses as collateral to borrow money when confronted with household shocks. Nevertheless, the same participants stated that after the PSNP intervention such circumstances have been significantly reduced. On the contrary, other participants argued that in a good harvest year the PSNP transfers could adequately fill the food gap of the poor households in food deficit months. In this case the transfers halted the depletion of the household assets.

In periods of drought, however, PSNP transfers could not halt the sale of household assets for food or other purposes. Respondents indicated that during the program period droughts of different magnitudes hit the area in 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009 and 2011. Particularly, the very severe droughts or the bad years, such as 2006, 2008, and 2009, and 2011 had serious adverse effects on the



program beneficiaries. The repetitive droughts in most cases reduced the agricultural income that could supplement the income from PSNP. In this regard, the income from PSNP became the only main resource upon which the household depended. Because only PSNP resources were insufficient to support household expenses, beneficiaries were forced to borrow or sell whatever asset they possess during the bad years. They also said that PSNP transfers could help households to respond to modest household shocks, but they could not deter the poor households from selling assets in circumstances of severe diseases in the family. Regarding asset building, both FGD and experts unanimously stated that in relatively good harvest years, the transfers helped the beneficiaries to buy some livestock. But, they attested that in drought or poor harvest years such as 2006, 2008, 2009, and 2011, the transfers even failed to serve smoothing consumption and hence did not contribute to asset building.

To move poor households out of food insecurity, preventing the erosion and rebuilding their asset status are critical preconditions. This is because the enhancement of the asset status of households directly improves the living standard and the capacity of households to access food. With this in mind, the lesson learnt from the impact of PSNP in this regard is as follows. PSNP has increased the assets of many beneficiaries; however, the changes were inadequate as a result only small proportion of the households has achieved significant structural change in wealth ranks. The vast majority of the beneficiary households have only benefited from only PSNP resources while a few have benefited from the integration of PSNP and OFSP. As a result, the majority have never achieved significant structural change and only a few have done so.

## **Integration of PSNP with OFSP**

The food security program is designed as an integrated set of interventions to accelerate the rate and the probability of attaining household food security. The components of the integration are PSNP, OFSPs, and Broader *Woreda* Development Programs and the macro-economic environment. The integration of these is essential to enable the chronically food insecure households to graduate from food insecurity. Accordingly, participation in safety net program makes a household eligible on priority bases to participate in the other food security program interventions (MoARD, 2006). Table 9 shows the level of link between PSNP and OFSPs found among the sample households.

In field discussions, a small number of households reported that they had received some packages related to OFSP; however, the majority 161 (80.5 percent) of the households replied that they never benefited from OFSP packages. This implies that with only 19.5% of the sample households covered

## An Assessment of the Productive Safety Net Program in Selected Kebeles of Konso Woreda

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in both PSNP and OFSPs, achieving the graduation of the majority of the food insecure households out of safety net program within the planned time frame would be difficult.

Concerning the linkage of PSNP with OFSP, different issues were raised among FGD participants and the experts. The FGD participants of two study *kebeles* (Sewgame and Machallo) stated that in their *kebeles* there was NCA supported saving and credit service; however, it is not necessarily integrated with PSNP. They stated that despite a planned integration, some sample households have had the opportunity to access the NCA saving and credit service, and have engaged in diverse livelihood activities, and consequently have attempted to improve their life.

FGD participants of the remaining two *kebeles* (Abaroba and Sorobo) stated that they did not have any access to OFSP interventions that support PSNP. Rather they reported that every rural community including PSNP beneficiaries have access to credit from Omo-microfinance institution. But they added that the poor households like PSNP beneficiaries did not dare to receive credit from the institution. Experts explained that OFSP was planned to support the asset building process of PSNP beneficiaries; however, this component of FSP was never implemented in the district. According to the experts, the reason for this was the existence of World Bank and NCA assisted food security programs that provide credit for rural poor in 20 *kebeles*. In the district, however the experts underlined that the provision of these credit services and PSNP were integrated neither at *kebeles* nor at household levels. As a result, the *woreda* has achieved a low graduation level, i.e. 202 and 28 households at *woreda* and sample *kebeles* levels respectively. When comparing 15,639 and 1723 beneficiary households in the *woreda* and *kebeles* respectively, the graduation result is 1.3% for the *woreda* and 1.6% for the sample *kebeles*. According to some research informants, the graduation process which was undertaken in 2008 was marred with problems. Despite the established benchmarks informants stated that some absolute poor and people were screened to graduate by some community members and *kebele* authorities.

From the above discussion, it can be learned that there was no link between PSNP and OFSP in the district. Moreover, no effort was made to integrate the existing World Bank and NCA food security programs with PSNP to accelerate graduation. In short, the principle of making linkage between PSNP and OFSP is less recognized as a strategy to achieve the graduation of the poor from food insecurity.

## Overall Household Self Assessment

The survey assessed households' opinions about their current food security status as compared to the status they had before PSNP intervention. In addition, their level of confidence to graduate out of food insecurity via PSNP was also queried. The survey results are depicted in Table 8.

Table 8. *Household self-assessment and graduation confidence via PSNP*

No	Questionnaire Items	PW Beneficiaries			DS Beneficiaries			Grand Total		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
1	Perception of your current food security status as compared to pre-PSNP									
a	Better-off	79(34.5)	35(17.5)	114(57)	7(3.5)	20(10)	27(13.5)	86(43)	55(22.5)	141(70.5)
b	The same	39(18.5)	9(4.5)	48(24)	1(0.5)	6(3)	7(3.5)	41(20.5)	15(7.5)	56(28)
c	Worse-off	1(0.5)	-	1(0.5)	-	2(1)	2(1)	1(0.5)	2(1)	3(1.5)
2	Your Confidence to graduate from food insecurity via PSNP									
a	Confident	7(3.5)	-	7(3.5)	-	-	-	7(3.5)	-	7(3.5)
b	Not Confident	104(52)	43(21.5)	147(43.5)	7(3.5)	26(13)	33(16.5)	111(55.5)	69(34.5)	180(90)
c	Uncertain	9(4.5)	1(0.5)	10(5)	1(0.5)	2(1)	2(1)	10(5)	3(1.5)	13(6.5)

SOURCE: Researcher's Household Survey (2009)

## **An Assessment of the Productive Safety Net Program in Selected Kebeles of Konso Woreda**

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As can be seen from item 1, responses of 141 households (70.5 percent) indicated that they consider that they are relatively in a better-off status. Responses of 56 households (28 percent) indicated that they perceive no change in their food security situation. On the other extreme 3 households (1.5 percent) stated that their food security situation has worsened. This demonstrates that as compared to their past situation, PSNP has improved the food security status of many households. But it can be also understood that the program has not resulted in major improvements in the livelihood of some beneficiaries.

Concerning graduation confidence via PSNP, 180 households (90 percent) responded that they are not confident. Responses of the 13 households (6.5 percent) have shown that they are uncertain about the effectiveness of PSNP as a strategy to help them graduate out of food insecurity. At the other extreme 7 households (3.5 percent) replied that they have a confidence in their ability to graduate out of food insecurity through PSNP.

The survey result confirmed that the majority of the households had seen improvement in their food security status after PSNP intervention. But surprisingly, as indicated in item 2, large numbers of households were doubtful about the potential for PSNP as an effective food security strategy to enable them to become food secure. In spite of the program benefits acknowledged by large number of respondents, a similar proportion of the respondents have also underscored that PSNP as strategy of food security has not been strong enough to shift them to the status of food secure. Therefore, it is suffice to state that PSNP as a food security strategy has been largely fruitful in stabilizing consumption. But, its contribution to build a strong asset base for the households to the status of better-off and that would help them not to fall back into food insecure state in the future, has been insignificant.

The survey households, FGD participants, and key informants have identified some challenges faced in program implementation. The first point is the inadequacy of the program benefit. The survey households and FGD participants indicated that the increases in the price of food items had diminished the value of the cash transfer program, and in comparison to other daily labour pay the benefit rate of the program is low. They have shown that the exclusion of some family members in the initial targeting, the sharing of program benefits with non-targeted households at the beginning of the year, and lack of supplementary income from other sources were other factors that contributed to its inadequacy.

Regarding the sharing of program benefits, respondents indicated that the sharing of the benefits of aid benefit among all community members has been an established tradition in Konso. They stated that besides *kebele* administrations,

traditional social institutions that have considerable leadership power over the community have been the bodies that enforce such practice to work in the rural community.

The second point was the failure in the provision of transfers that meet beneficiary preferences. To make transfers, the PIM guides state that factors such as the existences of food surplus in the neighborhoods, availability of active food markets and community preference are considered for the delivery of cash transfer, On the other hand, absence of food markets and community preference are considered for the delivery of food transfers. Although *kebeles* have been planning their preferences depending on analysis of the situation, respondents indicated that, except for one instance, transfers in many cases do not meet beneficiary preferences.

The third point is the overlap of the public works schedule with the local farming season. The guidelines have stated that the public works schedule must not undermine normal agricultural activity or should not interfere with peak period of labour demand in the local agricultural cycle. The respondents indicated that the public works schedule (January-June) overlaps with *meher* season (the main agricultural season) the of Konso area. Their report indicated that this has undermined the performance of public works and also affected the beneficiaries to properly attend the schedule and secure income from the program. The experts indicated that due to the overlap of the program schedule with the local farming season, 4 million birr, which would have been paid for public works beneficiaries, was returned in 2006. Experts added that the delay of payments, absence of the integration of PSNP and OFSP, inappropriate use of PSNP resources among some beneficiary households, less awareness about the program among *woreda* and *kebele* cabinet members, and inadequate number of program supervisors were key problems. Generally, the research informants' suggestions would imply that PSNP would need to overcome the above mentioned constraints so as to enable the transformation of the poor households out of food insecurity.

To sum up, all sample households had been in a state of chronic food insecurity prior to the PSNP intervention. After five years of program implementation, it has been learnt that the majority of the households have shown improvements in their consumption pattern. Nevertheless, many of them have not yet exhibited the required level of improvement in their asset status that is crucial to access food and improve livelihoods. And as a result, many of them are still in the very poor and poor wealth statuses.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

On the basis of the collected data, analyses and interpretations were made and subsequently, the major findings and conclusions are described as follows.

1. Before PSNP intervention, the extent of consumption problem among the sample households has been extremely high. Firstly, the entire sample households have indicated that they face the difficulty of meeting annual food requirements. Secondly, on average the sample households have faced shortages of food for five consecutive years. Thirdly, the majority of the households had the experience of facing food gap at least for three months annually. Finally, the majority of the households' assets, i.e. land and livestock ownership status--before PSNP intervention was similar to the wealth status of the lowest wealth rank group in the community.
2. Beneficiary targeting was undertaken thrice in connection with PSNP. The first was an entry targeting to the program, the second was meant to correct exclusion and inclusion errors, and the last was an entry to the second phase of PSNP. It appeared that in all circumstances both administrative and community targeting systems were applied. Nevertheless, it is understood that a reliable wealth rank has never been produced due to community reluctance to report actual possessions, and inadequate resource (manpower, finance and time) allocation for the work.
3. Various community assets have been performed under the public works component, such as soil and water conservation, road networks development, FTCs, schools, health facilities, water schemes, and so on. It has been learnt that these assets have benefited the community in different ways. In spite of the above appreciation, the delays in public works payments, transfer of benefits without realistic verification of work outcomes, and failure to employ a participatory planning approach have undermined the successful implementation of public works and thereby curtailed the benefits that the beneficiaries as well as the community could have obtained out of the activities.
4. The execution of local community activities that conform with the direct support of the second category has never been tried. Moreover, cross-cutting issues that are mainstreamed within the PSNP have not received the necessary attention from the local authorities.
5. It has been found that the majority of the program beneficiaries have used the transfers predominantly for consumption purposes than

investment. PSNP has brought improvements in the consumption pattern of the majority of the beneficiaries and there has also been a general increase in their livestock assets which has been reflected in the decline of the number of households who had not own livestock assets before PSNP intervention and the move of some households towards the upper wealth ranks.

6. In spite of the overall trend exhibited in the increase of livestock assets among the PSNP beneficiaries, the study has demonstrated that the nature of increase in household assets was steady. Thus the growth in assets did not bring the beneficiaries from lower wealth ranks-characterized by food insecurity to the upper wealth rank (better-off), which is relatively a status at which households could be food secure. It is also reflected in the low achievement of graduation at both sample *kebeles* and district levels.
7. In comparison to their past living conditions, the food security status of PSNP beneficiary households has relatively improved. Nevertheless, PSNP resources alone have not been claimed as a dependable or an effective food security strategy to transform poor households out of food insecurity.
8. The main problems faced in program implementation have been identified. Some of the problems were intrinsic to the program while some were external factors. The former includes low rate and delays of payments, transfers of resources that do not meet beneficiary preferences, overlap of the PSNP public-works schedule with local farming season, misuse of PSNP resources among some beneficiaries, absence of linkages between PSNP and OFSP, failure to make timely budget approval, and ineffective and inefficient utilization of the program budget. Moreover, the multi-sectoral bodies designed for the execution of the program at the *woreda* level have been weak to carry out their joint responsibilities like coordination in planning, monitoring and evaluation, and review of the program's physical and financial plans. The latter factors include deep rooted poverty and recurrent droughts.

Based on the assessment's major findings, the main conclusions drawn entail that prior to the inclusion of the sample households into PSNP, almost all of them were suffering from food deficiency and were resource poor. After their inclusion into PSNP, the sample households have used PSNP transfers for many purposes and as a consequence they have exhibited undeniable improvements in their lives, particularly in terms of consumption and protection of household

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assets. In real terms, PSNP has brought a desirable change in the consumption of the beneficiary households, but it has been less successful in rebuilding household assets to the level that the assets could safeguard the beneficiaries against further food insecurity. The potential of PSNP to contribute to the transformation of many poor households out of food insecurity has been constrained by a number of program related adverse factors, such as delays in program payments, making transfers that do not satisfy beneficiary preferences, overlap of public works schedule with main local farming season, misuse of program benefits, absence of integration of PSNP and OFSP, and external factors, such as deep rooted poverty and recurrent droughts. As a consequence, PSNP has largely served to prevent the fall of the beneficiaries into deeper destitution. But, enabling the graduation of the poor households out of food insecurity through PSNP resources alone has not been possible.

In addition to its desirable effect on the consumption pattern of beneficiaries, PSNP has also contributed to the development of community assets. Nevertheless, it is understood that a number of serious challenges were encountered in program implementation. Some of the major ones have been failure to base beneficiary screening on well founded wealth rank, inability to undertake biannual beneficiary refinement over the program period, failure to apply a participatory planning approach in a consistent manner, weak public works plan execution, weak work verification system, failure to implement cross-cutting issues, ineffective and inefficient budget utilization, and capacity constraints of *woreda* level stakeholders in discharging joint responsibilities in program management. Overall these weaknesses have affected the maximum outcomes that the beneficiaries and the larger community could have reaped out of the implementation of the program.

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# **Geblen and Korodegaga: A Tale of Two Food Insecure Villages in Tigray and Oromia Regions**

*Philippa Bevan, Rebecca Carter and Catherine Dom*

The people of Geblen suffered from considerable hardship during the 1984/5 famine in Tigray. The famine, coupled with the *Derg's* forcible resettlement scheme caused a double tragedy. During this famine people died from hunger and an epidemic, and they lost their livestock through death and forced sale and they have not re-stocked yet (1994). (Geblen, *Ethiopian Village Studies* 1996: 6).

It was a time when there were no birds singing. They must have died too, I suppose. Vultures drifted high in the air without flapping their wings. They didn't need to since the air rising from the ground was so hot. Cows bellowed from hunger throughout the night and cockerels crowed at strange times. But, children didn't cry. That was the worst of it. Children looked their mothers in the eyes, pleading for food, but there was none. I couldn't find any and my breasts were dry. My little girl died on the fifth day without food. I should have died with her. *Woman, 35, Korodegega 1985* (Webb and von Braun, 1994: 81)

## **Introduction**

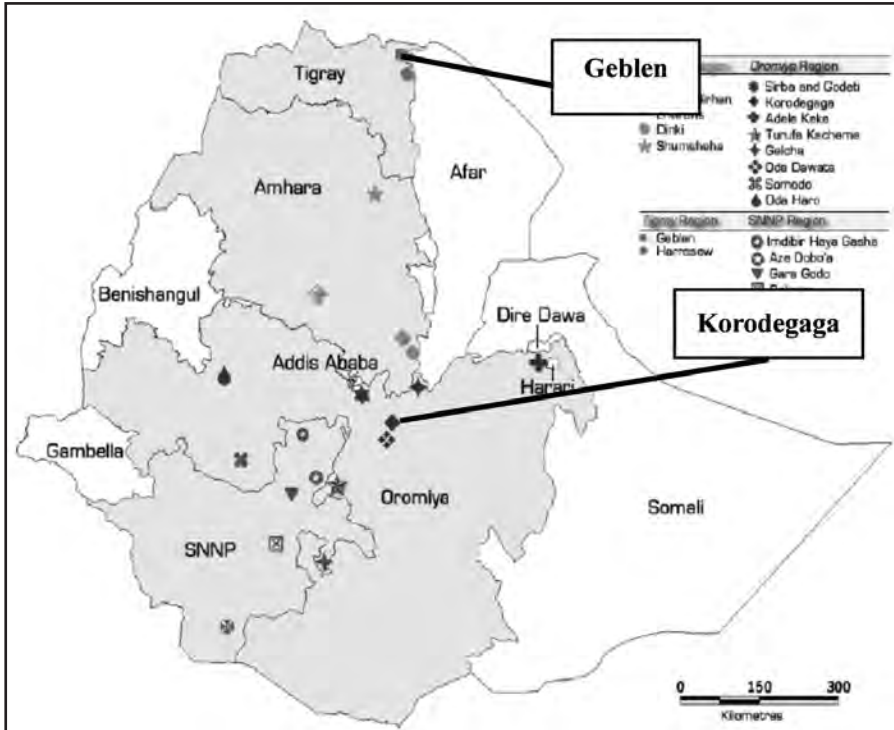
This chapter traces and compares the longer-term trajectories of two drought-prone rural communities in East Tigray (Geblen) and Arssi (Korodegaga) which were included in the Productive Safety Net Programme and associated credit programmes from 2004<sup>1</sup>/5.

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<sup>1</sup> The programmes in Geblen were launched as pilots in 2004.

**Geblen and Korodegaga: A Tale of Two Food Insecure Villages  
from the Long Term Perspective on Development Impacts Research**

*WIDE site Map locating Geblen and Korodegaga*



Ethiopia’s history has been punctuated by famine with one of the earliest recorded drought periods occurring between 253 and 242 BC. Tigray has been particularly badly afflicted; in a ‘non-exhaustive list’, in addition to droughts general to Ethiopia and in Northern Ethiopia, Webb and von Braun listed severe droughts particular to Tigray in 1812-16, 1831, 1835-38, 1864-66, 1876-78, 1880, 1953, 1957-8, and 1964-66 (1994: 20). Geblen comprises two villages in the *woyna dega* area on the Eastern Tigray highland plateau and two villages in the *kolla* area on the steep slopes down to the plateau in the Afar region. Rainfall has regularly been erratic and inadequate and much of the land cannot be used to grow crops due to the steep and stony terrain and sandy soil. In 2010 there was a very small town, Mishig, emerging around the administrative centre which was connected by a small all-weather road to a tar road joining the zonal capital Adigrat (35 kms), and Freweini, the *wereda* centre (39 kms).

‘Korodegaga lies on the floor of the Rift Valley in the drought-belt of an otherwise prosperous region’(Webb and von Braun, 1994: 60). It is a few

kilometres from the resort of Sodere on the opposite side of the river Awash. The Arssi Oromo in the area were agro-pastoralists who came under Ethiopian imperial rule towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They were forced to leave the 'flat, fertile and cool areas of Arssi land' and move to the 'arid, hot and ragged lowlands' where they gradually settled (Bevan and Pankhurst, 1996b: 4). There are nine villages scattered over a large area which is almost encircled by the rivers Awash and Qelete. In 2010 access to the *wereda* centre, Dera, was either by a dry-weather road with an average walking distance of 3–3½ hours, or by crossing the Awash River on a manually-hauled raft and walking to the nearby all-weather road where there were minibuses to Dera (19 kms) which was 30 kms from Nazreth the third largest city in Ethiopia.

The data and analytic approach comes from a longitudinal case-based study of twenty exemplar rural communities in the four Established Regions which began in 1994 and is still ongoing. WIDE<sup>2</sup> began with a 1995 baseline (WIDE1) and repeat research was conducted in 2003 (WIDE2) and 2010/11 (WIDE3 Stage 1<sup>3</sup>). Each of the three research projects was designed to explore how the rural communities worked as a whole using comparative case-based analysis of qualitative data made by Ethiopian fieldworkers of both sexes using a protocol approach. The WIDE2 fieldwork included a special focus on wellbeing, and the WIDE 3 fieldwork on policy. While none prioritised social protection there is sufficient material in the databases to construct two comparable narratives.

***The chapter is organised in two substantive sections.***

In *Section 2* we describe the paths which led each of the communities from famine experiences in the mid-1980s, through drought with food aid and no famine in the mid-1990s and 2002/3, to their inclusion in the two programmes in 2004/5 and their handling of the 2009 drought. In *Section 3* we identify and explain similarities and differences in the ways in which the two programmes were implemented and show how disconnects between, on the one hand, the assumptions implicit in the macro policy design and, on the other, assumptions implicit in local values and power structures and relations, led to outcomes which had not been imagined at the macro level. We argue that the progress of the programmes depended to a considerable degree on the existence or absence of development interventions in other sectors and other economic and political features of the locality and more widely. We also describe the ways in which the programmes interacted with features in the wider economic, societal, political

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<sup>2</sup> Eighteen of the communities have been included in the panel Ethiopian Rural Household Survey.

<sup>3</sup> Stage 1 was conducted in six of the twenty communities. Stage 2 fieldwork in eight drought-prone communities, seven of which were in PSNP *whereas*, had just been completed at the time this chapter was written.

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and cultural systems of the communities. We conclude by presenting some hypotheses about what one would expect to find in other rural communities with similar social protection and asset-building programmes.

## **Livelihood histories**

### *Leading up to 1995<sup>4</sup>*

#### *Geblen before 1995*

As described above Geblen inhabitants settled in two highland villages and two lowland villages in an area that is mostly steep and in places cut by ravines. For many years before 1995 Geblen's core livelihood system had been based on crop production and animal husbandry supplemented by trading, migration and food aid. The community was badly hit by the 1974/5 famine and from the later 1970s to the later 1980s embroiled in civil war. As the battlefield shifted, Geblen was administered by three organisations, the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party, the Tigrayan Peoples' Liberation Front and the Derg. A few men were conscripted for the army by the Derg and there was substantial conscription by the TPLF. People from the community were imprisoned, banned from marketplaces and fined by the Derg.

The 1984/5 famine, combined with war, forced around 200,000 Tigrayans to migrate to Sudan. In addition an estimated quarter of a million died and up to one million were displaced (REST, 1993, quoted in Bevan and Pankhurst 1996a: 4). As in 1974/5 people in Geblen died from hunger and famine-related disease. Also many people were forcibly re-settled. They were called to Edgahamus for food aid distribution, rounded up in military camps and then moved to resettlement sites in Wollega. Some were killed trying to escape from the camps or by wild animals or robbers as they tried to return to Geblen. Others stayed in the sites and were doing well in 2003 (WIDE2).

In 1995 Geblen had a population of roughly 2,500. There was no market, school or health facility. There was a dry weather road to the *wereda* capital Edagahamus (20 km) but no public transport; the walk from the nearest village took roughly 3½ hours. During the 1980s there had been attempts to construct terraces but they had failed to control the erosion. Trees and bushes were being rapidly destroyed and the fertility of the soil had degenerated over the years. Crops included maize, sorghum, tef, barley, lentils, linseed, and *beles*/cactus some of which grew wild, while the major livestock were goats and bees, since

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<sup>4</sup> The data informing this section comes from WIDE1

farmers had still not re-built stocks of cattle lost during the droughts of the 1980s. There was little communal grazing land. Agricultural technologies included crop rotation, use of manure, and customary water and soil conservation techniques and very limited use of fertiliser and improved seeds. Even in a year of 'good' rainfall the average harvest only supplied food for 3-4 months. Other sources of income included sale of livestock, masonry for a few men, and gender-specific handicrafts for both. Individuals and whole households migrated for daily agricultural labour, mostly to Western Tigray, between October and March-June, while men migrated to Eritrea and some from there to Saudi Arabia for temporary manual employment, usually in November.

Informants said that since the TPLF took control of the area inequality had decreased. They differentiated the peasant class into three categories: poor, self-supporting and better-off. Geblen was inhabited by a mix of Tigrayans and Irob; in the highland villages the Tigrayans were the majority while in the lowland villages the majority were Irob. It was estimated that 65% of the population were Christians, mostly Orthodox but with a handful of Catholics, and 35% Muslims. While the Christians and Muslims mixed socially religious differences meant that the community was not tightly knit.

The first act of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia to affect Geblen was a ban on land re-distribution in July 1991. In 1995 there were two Extension Agents from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Natural Resources responsible for three *tabia*<sup>5</sup>. They interacted with two agricultural development cadres and two women development cadres in each of the four villages. Each of these was responsible for ten Model Farmers or Model Women. There were some complaints about too many government meetings and the free work service people were expected to provide.

### *Korodegaga before 1995*

As described earlier the first Korodegaga residents were evicted by northern settlers from their old lands and settled in the lowland area in small villages to protect themselves from attacks by other pastoralists, particularly the Kereyu and Jille. During the Italian occupation in the early 1940s Amhara settlers took more land and the Arssi Oromo became tenants until the 1975 Land Reform; at that time there were two landlords in Korodegaga.

Respondents said that the people had regularly suffered from hunger since the early 1980s; there were major food crises in 1983, 1986, 1987, 1989 and 1990. Forty-five per cent of households surveyed in 1988/9 had experienced at

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<sup>5</sup> The name for a *kebele* or Peasant Association in Tigray.

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least one famine death (Webb and von Braun, 1994: 81). In 1995 Korodegaga had a population of around 1500. There was no market or health facility but there was a Grade 1-4 school built in 1990 which had 41 students, eight of whom were girls. The dryweather road to Dera was first constructed in 1985 to bring food aid to the site. In 1995 the main rainfed crops grown were maize, *tef*, wheat and beans while the common livestock were cattle, goats, sheep and donkeys. Animal dung was used as fertiliser and there was some crop rotation. Chemical fertilisers and improved seeds were introduced in 1992 by the extension agent; about half the farmers used it that year. Output was increased in 1992 and 1993 when the rain was relatively good but failed in the bad drought of 1994 leading to debt. Livestock suffered during drought and extension workers had been coming too late to deal with epidemics. The main source of household cash was firewood mostly sold by women; during droughts this activity increased considerably. Some poorer women did daily labour on nearby irrigation farms.

In 1995 there was no irrigation activity at the site, although there had been between 1964 and 1993. In 1964 a landlord planted orange trees by the Awash which were watered by hand. After the revolution the farmers divided themselves into 10 groups of roughly 25 people, shared the orange trees and continued to water them by hand until they were taken by the new Producers' Co-operative in 1986. UNICEF provided a pump which was used by the PC to water orange and papaya trees and grow vegetables, and, following its abolition in 1991, by re-constituted groups of farmers. A flood destroyed the generator in 1993 and all trees died within a year. A larger UNICEF irrigation scheme on which work began in 1989 failed to work on completion due to design faults.

Almost 100% of the population were Arssi Oromo Muslims belonging to the Sebro clan, which was classified into 11 lineages arranged in a hierarchy headed by the majority lineage which was also called Sebro. Social interaction was strong at village level rather than being community-wide. The difference between rich and poor depended on livestock ownership and access to food. One respondent said that the richest members could 'bribe officials and get things they want before the poor know or have heard about them' (Bevan and Pankhurst, 1996b: 29).

#### ***Comparison of livelihoods in the communities in 1995***

In 1995 both Geblen and Korodegaga were prone to drought, distant from markets and services, with core livelihood systems combining crop production and livestock; as a result the inhabitants needed supplementary livelihood strategies in order to survive. Food-for-Work had become a regular feature in both livelihood systems. In Geblen migration and skilled craft work made other important contributions, while in Korodegaga women sold firewood. Attempts



by Agricultural Development Agents to persuade farmers to take credit to use fertiliser and improved seeds were hampered by the fact that this was only profitable if it rained. A big difference between the sites was that Korodegaga had irrigation potential and residents had some experience of using it during the late Imperial and Derg eras, while Geblen residents had migration linkages to nearby towns, and to Humera, Eritrea and Saudi Arabia.

### ***The communities in 2003<sup>6</sup>***

#### ***Geblen in 2003***

There had been some changes to public goods and urban linkages by 2003. The road to Edgahamus had been improved so that trucks and government cars could travel on it, though transport for farmers was infrequent and expensive, and there were new paths joining the villages. A primary school (Grade 1-4), Health Post, administrative offices and a Farmers' Training Centre had been built. There were three new tea-rooms and two new small shops in the *tabia* centre and a new grinding mill had been bought by the Women's Association. Communal land was under protection from grazing animals. A water reservoir was under construction by the Catholic Mission.

#### ***Droughts had continued to affect livelihoods on a regular basis:***

Before we had honeybees, our country was so rich and it was covered by forest. In fact the children could not change their clothes but were not suffering from starvation like now. We had milk and butter, meat and good harvests. ... Before we were self-reliant economically. At least we could feed ourselves... We did not need food aid. Since the 1985 famine we are experiencing a difficult situation. We used to grow wheat, sorghum, tef etc. – now there is only wheat. Women sell eggs, crops, chickens and off-farm work is mostly petty trade, which does not have much profit, and labouring on nearby farms. All wait for the Food-for-Work programme. (WIDE2: mix of women respondents)

#### ***The economy was in decline:***

Due to shortage of rains and the unfertile nature of the land the production of crops has been significantly decreasing. The members of the community believe that the area was basically an area of livestock rather than grain. Wealth was determined by the size of livestock. This is still prevailing. However, due to scarcity of rain and poor policy of grazing land the number of livestock has dropped dramatically. As a result the consumption of the people is decreasing in quality and quantity. There is no investment in the

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<sup>6</sup> The data informing this section comes from WIDE2.

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area, except some construction of buildings for official purposes. Hence the community depends largely on food aid. (WIDE2: male respondent)

Output of food crops was very low because of the lack of rain and there were no new agricultural technologies. A few people had non-farm work in the *tabia* centre and the only paid employees in the community were the *tabia* chairman and a teacher. Food-for-Work and petty trade were increasing. Migration was still an important livelihood strategy during the dry season for those with land and all year for those without; people went to urban areas for daily labour (7 *birr* a day) and to get assistance from relatives. Men who were good at masonry could get jobs in towns (35 *birr* a day) especially on the reconstruction of Zala Ambessa town which had been destroyed by the Eritrean army in 2001. One consequence of the war was that people could no longer go to Eritrea for work or en route to Yemen and Saudi Arabia and migration to the Gulf significantly decreased as a result of tight border controls.

A service co-operative was started in 1999: '*it is useless and the items are easily available in private shops*'<sup>7</sup>. In 2003 seeds, fertiliser, pesticides and soil conservation were provided through the agricultural extension service. Respondents were not enthusiastic; the service '*benefited the fertiliser suppliers and extension agents who got per diems*'. The fertiliser did not '*conform to our area*' – meaning it was unsuitable for the soil. Some seeds were no good and the fertilised crop residue used for fodder was '*poisonous to cattle*'. Those living far from the *tabia* centre could not get animal health services as the agents did not want to travel too far.

A credit programme covering five *tabia* began in 1999. Credit was provided on a group basis: at first groups of seven people with loans of 50-2,500 *birr* at 18% interest; in 2003 groups of three people with loans of 50-50,000 *birr* and 15% interest. Group lending reportedly created conflicts among friends though it helped those without livestock as they no longer had to borrow from moneylenders at high rates. It was said to be harmful for young men who used it for drink but benefited women selling eggs and running small shops and reportedly many old and poor people had improved their lives by taking credit. Some used it to buy food. For the future there were recommendations of irrigation for cash crops and greater linkages with markets via improved roads.

### *Korodegaga in 2003*

No changes to public goods or urban linkages between 1995 and 2003 were reported from Korodegaga. Rain continued to be inadequate and unreliable and

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<sup>7</sup> Quotes such as this one have been taken from interviews conducted during WIDE2.

there was a serious drought in 2002/3. Asked an open-ended question about Korodegaga's economy a group of farmers responded:

The economy of Korodegaga is going from worse to worst. Recurring drought is affecting the people. We are always waiting for the helping hands of the government. Production is getting less and less from year to year. There is no such thing as saving except the women's saving and credit association. No investment at all in the area. The land is not enough even for the dwellers. Consumption is increasing from time to time as men are marrying two or more wives and many children are born to each household. There are farmers who have 11-13 children from a single wife. What have stayed the same is the hunger and malaria.

***A group of women were more positive:***

We are getting help from the government. We receive wheat and sometimes oil. Production has decreased due to drought. We have started an irrigation system before three years. It consists of 130 residents. These people are the ones who are living a relatively better life now. Land has never been distributed since Derg. There are people who have about six hectares and there are those who have none. The weather condition was very bad during the last years and the production is too low or sometimes none so that the community's population is found in greater poverty. There is a woman's saving and credit association which is successful in changing the life of some families.

Output of food crops on rainfed land was said to be low and some women said that fewer different types of crops were being grown; the seeds of horsebeans, lentils and millet were too expensive. Farmers said they had started using more fertiliser but it was becoming more and more expensive and there was often not enough rain to get a good yield. Livestock holdings had reportedly decreased 'drastically' due to drought and diseases. Two rich households had acquired camels which survived better in drought conditions.

Local employment opportunities were described as 'zero' although one community member was employed as a Life Guard at Sodere resort. There were local opportunities for daily labour at times of weeding and harvesting and some went to Dera for unskilled daily labour. Ten men had joined the army: three had died, three had returned and four were still serving. Food for Work (FFW) opportunities had increased following the 2002 drought. Firewood selling continued.

Starting in 2000 the NGO Self-Help Initiative supported the installation and running of a medium-sized pump in the river Awash and the establishment of an irrigation co-operative with 130 member households. Farmers grew onions, tomatoes and green pepper as cash crops using selected seeds, fertiliser and

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pesticides for which credit was available via the Irrigation Association. The quality of the produce was said to be much worse than similar production during the Derg. Prices were reportedly very low as there was no road transport to the *kebele*. Self-Help also supported the creation of a women's savings and credit association; at the time of the research there were 36 members who were meant to contribute two *birr* every 15 days. They could borrow up to 400 *birr* paying back 430 with interest.

The poor state of the road was described as the biggest constraint on economic development. It took 3½ hours to reach the nearest market at Dera on foot. Some respondents claimed that their community was a very easy one to develop; *'the area can easily be changed through irrigation and construction of a bridge on Awash.'*

### *Comparison of community livelihoods in 2003*

Both communities produced no rainfed crops during the 2002 drought. In the period between 1995 and 2003 there had been considerable investment in infrastructure benefitting Geblen, which was not the case in Korodegaga. However in the latter in 2000 130 households had acquired small pieces of irrigated land to grow cashcrops, although the quantity and quality of the outputs were relatively low. The role of FFW in both economies had increased. As a result of the irrigation there were more daily labour opportunities in Korodegaga; in Geblen a few people had set up shops and tea-rooms in the growing 'urban' centre and an increase in petty trade was reported.

### *Comparison of experiences of drought and food aid between 1995 and 2003*

#### *Drought and food aid in Geblen 1995-2003*

Asked when the community had received food aid the answer was 'always' since 1985. Since the early 1990s it had been associated with work such as road construction and terracing. Such work reportedly affected the productivity of the farmers as it was *'usually programmed in the very important farming days and seasons'*. Committee members and *tabia* leaders' kin were said to be highly favoured. The food was sometimes three months late which was particularly problematic for poor people. The Catholic Mission and the Red Cross were also providing food-for-work in 2003; *'it saved me from begging and exile'*. Through the work the Farmers' Training Centre was built and the road maintained.

Attitudes to food aid were ambivalent; it had helped the community to survive but had also developed *'the sense of a need to be fed by food aid (tetsebaynet)'* reducing attempts to find other survival strategies. It was also

suggested that *'food aid should have been given upon provision of productive work rather than simply upon repeated activities (even food for work has brought little change) and free gift.'*

### *Drought and food aid in Korodegaga 1995-2003*

Respondents said that food security had been steadily declining. *'During the Imperial regime the rain was falling regularly and there were wild fruits. Cattle were plenty. Trees were present. During the Derg period everything was less. With EPRDF there is nothing.'* Food aid started in 1984 following repeated representations to the government by three community leaders. The food aid had saved many lives, particularly of those without friends and relatives to support them.

Respondents estimated that more than 20 people had died during 2002/3 as a result of hunger. *'The causes of the deaths is not clearly known. The assumption is that they died because of malaria which people cannot resist at a time of famine.'* Between 1999 and 2003 Food-for-Work was continuous. The work mostly involved eradication of the partinium weed which had spread when fertiliser was introduced; there was some terracing and road maintenance. There were complaints that the work was not properly policed and because the *kebele* was *'not firm'* absentees received food aid. Other claims of lack of fairness were that some men were registered in more than one *kebele* and that households with the same numbers of members did not get the same amount of food aid.

Again attitudes to food aid were ambivalent: *'the community is praising the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission as it provides food every month but on the other hand the spirit of working for oneself is dying... we are born farmers so we have to work for ourselves. Rather than giving us the food aid it is better to build us a new irrigation system or renew the UNICEF built water pump. Then we would be no more parasite... money or job opportunities would be better.'*

### *Comparison of coping strategies during severe droughts*

FFW was very important in both communities and in addition in Geblen two NGOs were providing Cash-for-Work for people working on roads and terracing; there were reports that only relatives and friends of the administration had access to these opportunities. Otherwise the leading work strategy in Geblen was migration followed by selling wood and charcoal; in Korodegaga firewood-selling was the leading strategy, followed by migration. In Geblen livestock and other property might be sold; the emphasis was on livestock sales in Korodegaga.

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Borrowing for consumption during extreme droughts was reportedly difficult in Korodegaga since everyone suffered food shortages. In Geblen there was borrowing from better-off neighbours and relatives in and beyond the community. Some government credit for farming inputs was used to buy food in Geblen but there was no such credit in Korodegaga. In both sites children might be sent to relatives elsewhere. As things deteriorated migration for begging and stealing increased. The final resort was ‘distress migration’ – going looking for food wherever it might be found. Households also cut back on their consumption; meals would be smaller and/or less frequent. They also gathered wild foods, although in both places many of these were said to have disappeared.

### ***The communities in 2010<sup>8</sup>***

#### *Geblen in early 2010*

In 2007 the population of the *tabia* was estimated to be 3,500; one third of the 750 households were registered as landless and 46% were female-headed, two trends that were said to be upward. By 2010 a very small town called Mishig was emerging around the *tabia* administrative buildings which were in place in 2003. Electricity arrived in 2008 and recently the *tabia* had provided small plots of land for young married landless families to build houses. Mishig was connected through a small all-weather road to a tar road at Edagahamus going to Adigrat and in the other direction to Freweini, the centre of the new Saesia Tsaeda Emba *wereda*. There was transport three times a week from Geblen to Edagahamus and every day from a neighbouring *tabia* 45 minutes walk from Mishig where there was also a small market. There was a wireless phone in the *tabia* office. The mobile phone network reached a few spots in the *tabia* though the reception was not good. There was a new health post, the primary school had become full-cycle and satellite primary schools had been built in the two remote *kushets*. The paths between the *kushets* and the *tabia* centre had been improved.

Less than 10% of the *tabia* was used as farmland and in most areas the soil was poor and even in good years households covered at most a few months of their food needs with their own production. Since 2009 all non-farm land had been put under a strict zero-grazing programme which officials said would revive the area; this caused serious lack of access to fodder for livestock and cactus for people. Terracing and tree-planting activities over the years had borne little fruit. There were reportedly only two relatively good years of rainfall between 2003 and 2009. In three of the years crops totally failed; in one even

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<sup>8</sup> The data informing this section comes from WIDE3

cactus were destroyed and drought and diseases killed 810 animals. The core livelihood system was in decline and the scarcity of water and the stony soil and topography prevented the use of technologies found elsewhere in the *wereda*. The few existing water structures, which served an estimated 10% of the population, did not hold water the whole year. Around 120 households grew onions, tomatoes, and potatoes on a maximum of 25m<sup>2</sup> for minimal incomes. The very few household ponds built did not hold water as they were not cemented despite *wereda* promises. A programme to introduce modern beehives had failed due to drought and use of improved seeds and fertiliser led to debt when the rain failed. A new breed bull had been introduced in 2008.

Households needed other activities in their livelihood portfolios. One option for most households was PSNP work which, although not well paid compared to other daily labour opportunities, including smaller-scale NGO FFW projects, was supposed to be a reliable source of food/income. Although in February 2010 the food aid due seven months earlier had still not arrived. Apart from the PSNP, other local non-farm opportunities were few and occasional, for example NGO development projects needing labour. As in the past people migrated for variably long periods of time to different places, finding jobs on construction projects or quarry work in the Region, going to Humera for the sesame harvest, women finding work in towns as housemaids, waitresses, or commercial sex workers, men as manual labourers. Some women migrated legally to the Gulf States to work as housemaids; an increasing number of men and women were also travelling to these states illegally along people-smuggling routes. There were stories of hardship and failures though a few people were sending remittances to their families in Geblen.

There was a surge in migration by youth who lacked access to land. The *tabia* tried to organise groups and facilitate the provision of credit for them to start economic activities but by early 2010 only one such group had been formed. After strong resistance by others in the community they were given land from the communal land and started beekeeping but like others they failed to get any production due to drought. Market linkages were also an issue. Examples of success among the young people who stayed in Geblen were rare, and linked to some exceptional factors like the story of a young man who invested the savings he had made by working several years in a grinding mill in various local activities. Education and getting a job was hoped by many to be a way out and there was a strong and new commitment to education. Two women from Geblen had recently been appointed as teachers elsewhere.

We do not have sufficient evidence to draw strong conclusions but we suspect that what community-level economic growth there had been was externally generated as a result of migration and remittances and administrative



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investments. There had been some lifestyle changes; plastic goods had mostly replaced locally-made pots, houses in Mishig tended to have corrugated iron roofs, and there were a few TVs in cafés, bars and homes. Inequality had increased as, although those falling in the poor category were not poorer than in the past those in the rich category were richer.

The PSNP was put in place in 2004 before the national programme was rolled out; there was also emergency food aid in 2005, 2007 and 2009. The local household asset-building programme known as ‘the family package’ focused on credit for goats and improved beehives. There was also credit for fertiliser and improved seeds through the Farmers’ Association Co-operative. The *tabia* and sub-*tabia* administrative and party structures overlapped and had the same leaders. There was a heavy responsibility on party members and especially local leaders to ‘show the way’ and convince others to adopt government policies, including credit. Party membership was high but not universal. For some people it sounded like a matter of genuine personal commitment, for others, particularly women, it brought ‘no benefit but no harm’. However, people generally resented the coercion which was apparent in several areas, particularly to adopt risky packages but also latrine construction and fertiliser.

#### *Korodegaga in early 2010*

The only change to the settlement pattern was that the *kebele* administrative centre, Sefera, had started to grow with the building of new *kebele* offices, a savings-credit office, and a health post; a veterinary office was being built. The mobile phone network was put in place in 2008. It was hoped that electricity would soon reach Sefera, as it had during the Derg, as there was a plan to reconnect the large government pump which depended on electricity. There had been no real change to the roads although the seasonal road to the *wereda* town had been maintained by an Australian investor using his tractor.

Regular firewood selling had become a less important coping strategy due to increased daily labour opportunities and the PSNP which was put in place in 2006. There were extreme droughts in 2003 and 2009 and while the economy was said to be improving as a result of irrigation the livelihood system was ultimately still dependent on rainfed agriculture so that when the rain failed, as in 2009, many households found it hard to cope.

The irrigation potential was being increasingly exploited. Some farmers owning small pumps individually or in small groups irrigated their private land. There were two communal schemes operating under one joint irrigation association which gave good services to its members including credit for inputs. The NGO scheme described earlier was still functioning despite the phasing out



of SHI support in 2005. Almost all landholding households belonged to the larger government scheme which started working in 2007 but stopped in 2008 when parts were stolen; it was due to re-start later in 2010. Inward investment in irrigated land was increasing; some investors came for one or more production periods and rented land from farmers or the school. Two successful investors had leases; one had held his for some time while in 2009 the *wereda* gave a lease to an Australian investor for 27 hectares on which he was using drip irrigation. Youth and women's co-operatives who had been allocated irrigable land faced obstruction from some farmers.

There were three DAs and the household asset building programme focused on sheep, chickens and oxen. Improved seeds of *tef*, and wheat were made available to some farmers although quotas were restricted. By 2010 credit for fertiliser was no longer available except through the irrigation association. New hybrid maize seeds distributed through the irrigation association failed since the farmers were not taught how to manage the plants. A few farmers tried growing cassava and sweet potato but were not enthusiastic.

Richer farmers spent most of their time on rainfed and irrigated agriculture and livestock-rearing helped by wives, sons and daughters. Many also farmed share-cropped or rented land and employed daily labourers. In some cases family members did daily labour on other farms and/or sold firewood to get cash. Poorer farmers and women heading households usually had a portfolio of activities changing over the year including daily labour, FFW and selling wood. Some young men with access to oxen worked on sharecropped or rented land. There were still virtually no local non-farm activities. *Wereda* officials estimated that about 15% of the community were involved in the government co-op movement. In addition to the co-operatives working on irrigated land there were youth co-operatives using rainfed land and one successfully but seasonally loading and unloading irrigation inputs and outputs. Youth co-operatives producing stones and sand had failed due to poor road access. Starting from 2005, when the first woman went to work in Saudi Arabia, there was a growing interest in international migration; by 2010 seven men and women had migrated illegally to Sudan.

Economic growth was internally generated through increasing investments in irrigation. Richer farmers were building bigger houses with corrugated iron roofs and buying modern furniture. Nearly everyone used improved stoves which had been introduced by SHI. Inequality had increased as the wealth of rich farmers increased and there were signs of incipient class formation: between landed and landless, and within the landed group between successful irrigation farmers and those with no irrigated land or no household labour to exploit it.

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Development policies and services related to livelihoods were provided by government and NGOs. They included PSNP from 2006, agricultural extension advice, support for youth co-operatives, savings and credit for women, and credit and seeds for irrigation farming. With community labour the primary school in Sefera had expanded to grade 5 and a new satellite school was built in another village. A health post had been built and two health extension workers were in place although not yet living in the community.

The *wereda* and *kebele* administration played a significant role in the developments around irrigation but many community members were frustrated by the poor access to inputs and output markets. One respondent argued that what was sustainable for the community was irrigation but it could only take off if government provided subsidies for seeds, fertiliser, and fuel and helped with repairing water pumps. Another constraint was the lack of a bridge over the river to facilitate marketing of the products, something which the community raised repeatedly at *wereda* level. The *wereda* and *kebele* officials did not always see eye-to-eye and there had been a high turnover of *kebele* officials in the years between 2003 and 2010.

### *Comparison of the communities 2003-2010*

Geblen's administrative centre was closer to becoming a town than Korodegaga's, while road access and transport from the *kebele* was much better for Geblen residents. This was ironic given (1) potential improvements in productivity in Korodegaga with good road access and (2) the decline of the Geblen core economy. There was no sustainable environmental re-habilitation in either community. Both communities were hit by serious droughts in 2003 and 2009 and, while both core livelihood systems were centred on rainfed agriculture, even in a good year rainfed production plus PSNP were quite insufficient. For Geblen residents the main supplementary strategy was seasonal, temporary or longer-term migration, some international which was mostly illegal. For those living in Korodegaga there were two strategies: involvement in irrigated farming as a smallholder, co-operative member or daily labourer and selling firewood. International migration had just started; mainly on an illegal route to Sudan. In both sites inequality had increased. Such economic improvement as was visible in Geblen was externally generated as a result of migration and administrative investments. Despite the impact of recurrent droughts the Korodegaga economy had improved as a result of the irrigation activities. Government-community relations in Geblen were 'good on the surface' although some poor people complained that the government no longer cared about poor people. Party membership was high but not universal. While nearly all Korodegaga residents were party members for most this was not out of conviction. There were various tensions between the *wereda* and *kebele* officials.

## **PSNP and household asset-building packages in the two sites 2004-10**

The annual emergency appeal process for households in chronically food insecure areas was partially replaced by the national rollout of PSNP in 2005. At the time of the WIDE research in 2010 selection of beneficiaries for PSNP2 had just been undertaken in Geblen; in Korodegaga the *kebele*'s status in PSNP2 was not clear.

### ***PSNP 2004-10***

#### *Geblen PSNP 2004-10*

Geblen PSNP1 was a government implemented programme with food-for-work and direct support elements. Officially 70% of households were registered for the programme with benefits for up to six members. Unofficially the assistance was shared through a system of partial family targeting; as a result in 2007 90% of the households benefited for varying numbers of members (Dom: 2007). Other household members could be given emergency food aid during bad droughts. Recruiting committees in each sub-*kebele* selected households and numbers of members. There were regular allegations that some *tabia* officials were benefiting rich friends and relatives, some of which were raised with and addressed by the *wereda*. Some poor people with no connections with the committees were reportedly excluded but there was no suggestion that party membership was a criterion for inclusion<sup>9</sup>. Officials said that all women were given the opportunity to participate in PSNP. There was a lot of conflict during selection for targeting including accusations of nepotism and patronage; some excluded people complained to the *wereda* and *kebele* administration and some were subsequently included. There were tensions over the selection of participants in PSNP2 and several people suggested that targeted interventions damaged social relationships as it divided the community into those benefiting and those not.

PSNP provided food and money for six months each year. Food was commonly provided and cash only sometimes. The value of the cash transfers rose due to inflation from 8 *birr* per person per month in 2008 to 10 *birr* in 2009. Food was preferred because the purchasing power of the cash transfer was not constant, being determined by the fluctuating grain prices at the local market. Also, according to a male household head, "*men misuse the cash they are given*

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<sup>9</sup> In 2009 there were said to be 270 party members.

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*by purchasing alcoholic drinks. Therefore, it is better to us to be given the ration in the form of food. If so, we will directly take it to our house and give it to our women who are using it efficiently”.*

In most years, dependent on the weather, emergency food aid was provided by the government, Adigrat Catholic Diocese Secretariat and World Vision Ethiopia to the non-PSNP households and to PSNP households with more members not covered by PSNP. The emergency transfers were 15kg of wheat per person and sometimes oil. Forty per cent of under-five children received supplementary feeding under programmes funded by World Food Programme, UNICEF, and World Vision although families tended to share this food among all household members. Elderly and other ‘weak’ people, pregnant women and mothers with children aged less than ten months were exempted from the public works while those unable to work in remote areas worked in the village, cleaning the Health Post, fetching water for the Farmers’ Training Centre and so on.

Delays in PSNP transfers caused hardship. With a seven month delay in PSNP implementation at the time of the WIDE research a father of six said that he feared his children could die of hunger if the PSNP rations were not delivered very soon. In addition recipients did not always receive the amount of grain that they had been promised by officials, with an average of 5kg reportedly deducted from each 50kg of grain provided.

The PSNP ration enabled households to meet various needs, such as feeding the family, paying off debts, buying sugar, coffee, salt and non-food consumables and paying for children’s school stationery. For some the PSNP was their only coping mechanism in times of drought: many poor people ‘*would otherwise be dead of hunger*’. The PSNP support also served as collateral for poor people and enabled the better-off to avoid selling their asset base or borrowing money to buy food. There were indications that the aid strengthened the customary social protection system, relatives and neighbours being more willing to lend to each other in anticipation of repayment from future PSNP rations.

The public works included maintenance of roads, watershed management, terracing and school improvements. PSNP was a source of employment, and for many the only work opportunity, but the daily wage rate in 2008 was low at 10 *birr* compared with unskilled labour rates of 20-25 *birr*. Women had a heavy household workload and *kebele* officials had written to the *wereda* recommending that women’s additional workload should be taken into account so that women should not be expected to work the equivalent of men. People were also expected to work for free on community labour projects for 40 days a

year, up from 20 days a year previously, although an arrangement was reached for them to complete the 40 days work in 20 days.

Terracing in hilly Geblen may have prevented some erosion but did not make a big difference; the Head of the Women's Association said that "*Relentless effort has been exerted for the construction of terracing and soil and water conservation activities, though we did not see the fruit*". While people in Geblen were aware the community needed better soil conservation and watershed management, they had reportedly given up hope of the PSNP works making a difference because they had not seen any real impact from their labour over many years. People were appreciative of the work on roads and schools that brought them benefits they wanted. The schools constructed through PSNP were said to be of superior quality to those built using voluntary community labour.

By 2010 no household had graduated from the PSNP due to recurrent drought which, as described below, had contributed to the almost total failure of the household asset building programme leading many people into debt. Some respondents said that poor people in the community were dependent on PSNP because the support was enough to sustain people without enabling them to build up their asset base and bring about a significant change in their lives. There was also a perception that PSNP made people lazy: the *tabia* leader said that in the long run regular food aid was harmful as '*those who had been industrious and self-sufficient people are now developing a culture of dependency*'.

Migration abroad, along with daily labour in neighbouring areas, was a common strategy for coping with the economic hardships, especially for young men who felt there was no hope for them in Geblen. However, some PSNP beneficiaries reported being more inclined to stay in Geblen as they were receiving PSNP support. This was approved by those who were worried about the impact on the community of the rapidly increasing youth exodus.

### *Korodegaga PSNP 2005-10*

PSNP in Korodegaga was funded by USAID and implemented by the NGO Catholic Relief Services. Seventy per cent of households were beneficiaries. *Gerie*<sup>10</sup> selected the beneficiaries for PSNP support based on *wereda* instructions. Local officials and beneficiaries agreed that in PSNP1 the support was not sufficient; Korodegaga's quota was smaller than other *kebeles* due to the judgment by *wereda* officials that the community's irrigated farming would meet some of its food security needs. Officials re-evaluated beneficiaries' wealth, their PSNP ration size and coverage of PSNP family members annually and

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<sup>10</sup> Each sub-*kebele* – or *got* – contain 4 or 5 *geries*; a *gerie* constitutes 27-32 households.

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reportedly decreased aid allocated to some families in order to cover more households. The number of family members supported by PSNP varied each year. For example, one family received support for six members in 2005, four in 2006, seven in 2007 and back to four in 2008.

People not considered as *kebele* residents were not allowed to participate in any organisation or development programmes, though they were included in PSNP if they lived in the house of a resident. There was a case of exclusion of a woman who had grown up in the community but whose husband was an outsider. There were reports of officials favouring rich friends and relations: “*well-to-do families are getting the aid due to corruption and this situation needs to be improved*”. There was a lot of mobilisation around the 2010 election and the community was warned of exclusion from PSNP unless they registered to vote in the election and accordingly most people did.

The serious shortages of food aid created tensions between *kebele* officials and the community. There was conflict over selection decisions; some households perceived inclusions of some richer families and exclusion of other less well-off families as unfair: “*Everybody wants to be included in PSNP. The excluded poor went to the wereda to complain and then back to the kebele officials to solve their problem. Then kebele leaders, gerie and DAs with the community discussed the issues and solved the problem*”. There was also some conflict related to the Public Works when people did not arrive on time or at all and refused to pay the cash or food penalty.

PSNP assistance was provided for six months of the year between February and July. The planned PSNP monthly transfer was 15 kg of wheat per person and sometimes oil and *fafa*, a soya and cornmeal blend. PSNP households received emergency assistance in very bad years, such as one to three transfers a year of 30kg of wheat and 3kg soya beans, or 30kg wheat and ⅓ litre of oil. Families also received nutritious food and vitamins for malnourished children funded by UNICEF; 96% of children in the community were apparently covered by this programme. The elderly and weak were exempted from PSNP public works and received direct support. There were no reports of direct aid for disabled people. One returned soldier complained that he had to do PSNP work even though his war wounds made it very hard for him.

The food was sometimes delivered late and was not sufficient in times of serious drought like 2009. Although emergency food aid was provided from September 2009 after PSNP1 had ended many farmers said they had to sell cattle to buy food. The community members did not seem to know about a second phase of PSNP and whether it would be implemented in Korodegaga, though

*wereda* officials said that, given the irrigation potential, there was a plan to graduate the whole community apart from 77 individuals.

The food aid was essential for the poor, in meeting their consumption needs and preventing them from selling their assets in times of drought. Some poor people said that otherwise they would have died. PSNP aid contributed to the diversified livelihoods of the better-off. Some thought customary social protection was weaker because people expected PSNP to provide the support that in the past relatives, friends and other networks gave each other but others experienced no change.

The PSNP public works were mainly road maintenance and terracing. Other activities included planting trees, cleaning irrigation channels, filling up gorges, and removing weeds. People were also mobilised to contribute free labour for community projects; it was not always clear which projects were PSNP public works and which general community work. In recent years the community constructed the farmers' training centre; *kebele* and savings and credit offices; a school; a health post; a teachers' home; a health extension worker's home; a veterinary building; fences for the school and teachers' home compound; and a women's toilet for the school and teachers. To choose the PSNP work activities, the DAs and *kebele* officials would discuss with the *wereda* Agricultural and Rural Development/Irrigation and Food Security offices. Some farmers resisted having terracing on their land because it reduced land area though others were said to be keen. There was reported resentment that individual farmers benefited from the terracing whereas projects like road maintenance served the whole community. Livestock often destroyed terraces and newly-planted trees.

People were expected to work two days a week from 8am to 12pm throughout the year and every day when the time of the aid provision approached. This reduced the time households had for their own farming activities. Household members 'substituted' for each other in undertaking the PSNP public works, including wives substituting for husbands, older children for parents. A group of boys aged 13-14 explained that PSNP support enabled them to go to school and learn without being hungry but at times they spent school time participating in the public works.

There had been a target to graduate about 1,200 households with capital of 3,000 *birr* per household member through the implementation of PSNP1 but, as in Geblen, no household graduated. This was partly due to the 2009 drought and partly to perverse incentives. A number of farmers had reportedly sold cattle in order not to qualify for graduation. *Kebele* officials felt food aid increased dependency because people assuming the PSNP would continue forever



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preferred to sell their assets rather than build them in order to remain in PSNP. They hoped that dependency on food aid would decrease as the area's irrigation potential was exploited. Irrigated farming in Korodegaga was already contributing to improved food security through better productivity, production of maize and vegetables on irrigated land, and more daily labour opportunities. However, in 2010 rain-fed agriculture was still at the core of most household strategies.

### *PSNP Comparison 2005-10*

There were interesting similarities and differences in the implementation of PSNP in the two sites. Geblen's PSNP was implemented by the Government and Korodegaga's by the Catholic Relief Services. The inputs were slightly different: Geblen beneficiaries received mainly food aid and sometimes cash while those in Korodegaga received only food. In both sites the majority of households received PSNP support, 90% in Geblen, 70% in Korodegaga, with a maximum of six household members covered but commonly with fewer members supported in order to spread the aid to more households. In both sites there were delays in the delivery of the aid which made poor families struggle to meet their food needs. Geblen beneficiaries reported receiving consistently less food than promised, while in Korodegaga the insufficient quota granted to the community caused conflict in selection as well as shortages. The same complaint was found in both communities: that officials' gave access to relatives and friends regardless of wealth and poor people without networks were at risk of exclusion. While neither site reported party membership as a criterion for selection, in Korodegaga people were told that registering to vote in the 2010 election was essential for PSNP selection and almost everyone had joined the party. Threats of removal from PSNP were used in both sites to persuade people to participate in different government programmes particularly latrine-building in Korodegaga and the family package and fertiliser on credit in Geblen.

In both sites the benefits were clear: poor people depended on PSNP for survival, to pay their debts and as collateral, while PSNP enabled the better-off beneficiaries to maintain their asset base and avoid borrowing to buy food. Customary social protection was thought to be strengthened in Geblen while perceptions were mixed in Korodegaga. In both sites some people perceived that the PSNP was creating a 'culture of dependency' by giving people just enough to survive but not to change their lives and by making people 'lazy' and less likely to work hard to invest in their own future.

Public works on roads and schools that benefited the whole community were appreciated in both sites. Environmental works were less appreciated and generally ineffective. People from both sites reported some issues and conflict



around public works: limiting time for personal farming in both places; overburdening women and the low wage rates in Geblen; school absenteeism and conflicts over attendance in Korodegaga.

### ***Household asset-building 2004-10***

#### *Geblen household asset-building 2004-10*

The Government introduced household credit-based extension packages in 2004. Credit was provided by the Dedebit Credit and Savings Institution, a micro-finance institution founded by the Relief Society of Tigray. Loans were provided for fertiliser and improved seeds; farmers reported being '*forced*' to take these packages even when they did not want them. Even some people without land had to take fertiliser under threat of removing their participation in PSNP. At the time of the fieldwork there was no crops Development Agent (DA) in Geblen. About a third of households took livestock loans, purchasing cows, goats, sheep, donkeys and chickens and 60% took loans for improved beehives. Continuous drought led to shortage of water and fodder for animals and there were epidemics of livestock disease in 2007 and 2009, with more than 800 deaths in 2009. In 2009 a livestock DA was assigned to Geblen but although a vet clinic was built in 2004 it had no personnel or medicines.

In an effort of the *tabia* administration and DAs to try to reach the *wereda* targets for the OFSP, many farmers were forced to take modern beehives packages '*against their interest*', with threats of otherwise being denied other opportunities including access to the PSNP. Party members were expected to be '*in the vanguard*'. Roughly 60% took more than 500 modern beehives on credit. Few people successfully placed bees in the modern hives, some because of the additional cost to get bee colonies, and others because their bees died through lack of rain or limited bee-keeping knowledge and skill. Livestock packages were generally better accepted and whilst many households failed to benefit as their livestock died due to lack of water, fodder and/or regular vet services the livestock holdings of some households increased.

Better-off farmers with access to irrigable land used the credit to purchase water pumps; others engaged in non-agricultural activities put the money towards trading and grinding mills. A number of women were doing quite well using the credit to run small shops, teashops and bars in Mishig. The OFSP non-farm packages also worked for a few youth who '*at least did not get bankrupt*'. But *tabia* officials pointed out that youth needed skills to be able to engage in more lucrative work.

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The credit was also used for non-official purposes. One woman in Geblen used half of her OFSP credit to construct a house in the *kebele* centre which then generated rent. Some engaged in small businesses in Mishig used the credit to build new houses and buy modern equipment such as beds, DVD players and TVs. Some parents gave it to children to pay for migration to the Gulf. Others used it to buy food and other consumption goods.

There were problems with debt. Those unable to repay from income were reportedly taken to the social court and either sold their assets or '*mortgaged their land*'. Even so the outstanding community debt was not small. For the poorest households, taking a package under constraint may have aggravated a cycle of debt and due to failure with packages some households previously not receiving PSNP support joined the programme.

People of all ages, including party members, expressed resentment at having to take credit for activities that were unlikely to succeed. One *tabia* official, pointing at the high level of bad debt in the *wereda* as a whole and the usually good performance of the *tabia* in terms of repayment, said that this enforcement '*cannot continue*', as everyone in the *tabia* would become bankrupt. People including officials suggested farmers should not be made to repay when there is drought. However, when one farmer considered as a loyal party member tried to put his dissatisfaction with packages being forced on people in writing in the minutes of a party meeting attended by party officials from several *tabias*, the *tabia* officials of Geblen threatened him with imprisonment for his '*anti-development outlook*'.

### *Korodegaga household asset-building 2005-10*

Credit was available from a number of sources from 2001. The NGO, Self-Help Initiative (SHI), initiated a credit association for women at that time and in 2009, with help from Japan International Co-operation Agency, the government started a second association for non-members of the SHI association. Credit was given via the DAs for sheep and chickens, improved maize and *tef* seeds, fertiliser and herbicides. From 2003, in different years, credit was provided for *wereda* Agriculture and Rural Development quotas of improved seeds of *tef*, wheat, maize, soya beans, onions, tomatoes, and green peppers. The selection of households for credit extension packages was carried out by sub-*kebele* officials and was intended to target the poor though it was not linked to PSNP support. Quotas of improved seeds were small. The Irrigation Association which was established with help from SHI in 2000 and had its own bank account was another source of improved seeds and fertiliser on credit. Fertiliser for rain-fed land was not available on credit in 2010.

Newcomers to the *kebele* that were not considered to be '*kebele* residents' were not given credit packages. 'Everyone' in the community was a Party member so this was not a criterion for inclusion. It was also reported that people without 'relations' with sub-*kebele* officials were unlikely to get access to packages due to the small quotas in relation to need: '*Improved seeds are not distributed to female-headed households and those who are not relatives of the distributors*'. However there were some women heading households obtained credit through the women's credit associations. Some poor people felt that rich people were benefiting and poor people were excluded: they complained orally and in writing to the *wereda* Agricultural and Rural Development office but the *wereda* said targeting was up to the *kebele* officials who knew the community well. There was a complaint that officials kept the '*important seeds*' (tef and vegetables) for themselves and only distributed others which they did not need (maize, wheat and soya beans). Nobody had complained to the *wereda* but the issue was raised in a *kebele* meeting.

Irrigation farmers benefited from improved vegetable seeds: '*Many members of the community have benefited from using improved seeds – he has been benefiting by using improved vegetable seeds. Accordingly, he could buy clothes and food, could produce cereals for household consumption, bought oxen, goats, chicken, and different utensils*'. On the other hand a project to plant improved maize on irrigated land failed totally since farmers misunderstood the advice and removed the fruiting buds. Some women and young people who got credit to buy sheep and goats lost the animals due to livestock disease; there was a newly-built vet post but no vet had been assigned and the three DAs concentrated on crops rather than livestock support. The quota of cattle from the *wereda* Revolving Fund was small. There were no non-farm packages.

Many households were in debt from taking credit for improved tef seeds which failed due to drought; for the improved maize that failed for Irrigation Association farmers; and for livestock that died due to drought, shortage of fodder and grazing land and disease. Some poor households consumed the improved seeds taken on credit. While debtors were meant to pay by selling their assets or renting out their land many debts were still outstanding. The Revolving Fund for livestock did not revolve due to lack of debt payment; some recipients said they thought the cattle had been a gift.

According to the *wereda* officials no agricultural extension packages succeeded due to farmers' resistance, technical problems and unfavourable weather. Many credit beneficiaries said they should be allowed to suspend repayments of their debt if their livestock died or when there was drought. One *kebele* official said that when interventions failed, such as water harvesting and last year's new maize seed, both the community members and the *wereda*

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officials blamed the *kebele* officials. People did not want to repay the debt even when they had the ability to pay it, while *wereda* officials forced the *kebele* to collect debt re-payments on time causing a lot of conflict. He complained of lack of support, encouragement or praise from both community and *wereda* officials.

### *Comparison of household asset-building packages*

In both sites there was intensive activity around household-asset building packages with many households taking credit for crops and livestock inputs. Both had improved seeds programmes; fertiliser was forced on people in Geblen but was not provided on credit for rain-fed cultivation in Korodegaga. Farmers in both had incurred debts for fertiliser when harvests failed. Livestock packages in Geblen were mostly unsuccessful with the almost total failure of the improved beehives and many animals dying from disease and lack of fodder because of recurrent drought. Korodegaga livestock were also affected by drought and disease but some people had benefited from the packages. There was lack of support, with vet posts built in both sites but neither with a vet or medicinal supplies. Geblen had non-agricultural packages that had some success with women and youth; there were no non-agricultural packages in Korodegaga.

Geblen party members were in the vanguard to take credit which harmed many of them. In Korodegaga everyone was a party member so it was not a criterion. In Geblen packages were forced on threat of expulsion from PSNP and there was a high failure rate due to their unsuitability for an area suffering frequent and deep droughts and without key supporting services. In Korodegaga the opposite problem was reported with small quotas of cattle and seed not matching demand and complaints of *kebele* officials keeping the best seeds for themselves and their networks. However, people still struggled to repay their debts when packages failed and there was conflict between *kebele* officials and the community over repayments.

### ***PSNP and asset-building packages in the two communities: an exploration of key processes, mechanisms and functions***

In this section we adopt three perspectives on the PSNPs and asset-building packages in the two sites. *First*, we look at how cultural disconnects between government and community assumptions about the programmes and social interactions among the different players affected the implementation of the local PSNP and development packages in each site. *Second*, we consider how each intervention worked within the total web of government interventions entering the community during the period. *Finally* we draw some conclusions about the processes, mechanisms and consequences of the interventions in each site considered in their wider community context.

*Cultural disconnects and social interactions around PSNP and asset-building packages 2005-10*

The macro-level design of PSNP, OFSP and other credit programmes depended on a set of assumptions about how they could and should be implemented. Some of these assumptions were at odds with community-level values and norms, while others were blind to the role which power structures play in on-the-ground implementation of development interventions. In this section we describe how (1) cultural disconnects between the top-down policies and local cultural repertoires and (2) social interactions involving top-down bureaucratic pressures and hierarchical kin networks led to processes and outcomes which did not conform to the theories underpinning the official policies.

With regard to access to PSNP FFW and direct support we have seen that only 10% of households were excluded from PSNP in Geblen and only 30% in Korodegaga. In neither was full family targeting practised as a result of pressures from the community to meet norms of sharing. These norms challenged the assumption informing full-family targeting that each rural household operated like an independent business; regular and predictable food aid would prevent sale of assets and provide a floor from which households could start to build assets through packages and credit. In reality in such rural communities there are many different kinds of household; they vary depending on where they are in the household cycle, the sex of the household head, and the ways in which members are related. Most households have complex long-term exchange links with other different kinds of household and in both sites in order to allow more households into the programme the number of members of each household included was limited and liable to change each year, reducing the predictability assumed in the top-down model.

Another assumption implicit in the macro model was that it would provide a safety net for poor and vulnerable households. However, while this was the case for many such households in both sites, some poor households ‘*without networks*’ were among the excluded minorities in both sites, while many richer households were beneficiaries. These richer beneficiaries were expected to help poorer households (with whom they had connections) when the official programmes were not delivering, for example when transfers were delayed. Another feature of the PSNP which was not anticipated in the macro policy was its use as an incentive by kebele officials and extension workers who were under considerable pressure from above to meet a set of targets. In both communities people were threatened with removal from the programme if they did not conform with government directives such as to register to vote in the 2010

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election and dig latrines in Korodegaga, and take credit for fertiliser and livestock packages in Geblen.

The household asset-building and other credit packages were intended to enable households which had been provided with some long-term security through the PSNP to invest in activities which would increase their assets over the years to the point where they would no longer need to participate in the FFW programme and would graduate. One problematic disconnect in this regard was the top-down choice of crop and livestock packages whose success depended on sufficient rain and, in the case of animals, a reliable veterinary service to provide vaccinations and deal promptly with incipient epidemics. Neither sufficient rain nor vets were available in either site and at the end of PSNP1 no household had graduated. Another disconnect was the assumption in the macro model that everyone would want to build assets and graduate with no recognition of the perverse incentive for people who wanted to stay in the PSNP to sell rather than build assets.

Turning to the social interactions around credit and packages the wereda pressure on kebele officials and extension workers in Geblen to meet package targets was considerable, which was an outcome of pressure on them from higher-up government echelons. This pressure was transferred to farmers, particularly those who were both party members and PSNP participants, and they were forced to take credit and beehives and fertiliser which they did not want and which failed to generate any outputs. Wereda officials dealing with Korodegaga did not seem to be under similar pressure from above to meet package targets, maybe because this mattered less in Oromia and/or the credit programmes involved NGOs. In both sites it was difficult to establish how many outstanding debts were actually collected.

The broad goal of the work done through FFW in PSNP1 was to construct community assets, with a macro-level focus on environmental degradation and roads. In the official programme work, such as terracing, making checkdams, digging ponds, making and maintaining internal roads and paths, was to take place for so many hours a day, on so many days a week, usually for the six months leading up to the main planting period. This was linked with a macro-level assumption that the work would take place at slack times in the agricultural calendar while farmers said the work often interfered with important seasonal tasks. Another cultural disconnect was that in macro policy documents community assets were imagined as benefiting everyone in the community equally while people working on terraces, paths or ponds in particular places could see that they mainly benefited those living near to them.

*PSNP and asset-building packages in the web of interventions 2005-10*

Since the 1980s both communities had experienced patchy and often unsustainable development interventions in the local infrastructure and environment, and the livelihood, social protection, human development, and governance fields. From 2003, when the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme was launched at national level, followed by the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty in 2005, the number and intensity of interventions increased at an accelerating rate. In both communities during the five years that the PSNP and packages were being implemented there was other work on roads and eroded land, schools were built and extended and more teachers appointed, Health Posts were built and HEWs put in place, Farmers' Training Centres were constructed and the number and education levels of livelihood extension workers increased, the organisation of co-operatives for youth and women began, kebele structures were re-designed in various ways, there were changes to peace, security and justice systems, and various measures to improve women's rights and wellbeing were put in place.

None of these interventions operated independently; they were linked in four main ways. First energy, resources and time devoted to one intervention by organisers and beneficiaries reduced that available for others. For example DA involvement in governance matters reduced time for livelihood development, while women's attendance at meetings on hygiene and health took time that could have been spent on livelihood activities. Much of the environment-related community work connected with PSNP and the household work related to unrealistic credit packages wasted time which could have been more usefully spent. Also the linking of credit with a restricted number of official packages made it hard for each household to use it in ways best suited to its particular economy.

Second, for interventions to flourish in the short-term or contribute to development in the longer-term *timing* in relation to other interventions was often important. For example investments to increase productivity of cash crops without simultaneous good access to markets in Korodegaga was inefficient and big investments in education in Geblen not linked to plans for appropriate employment development for future graduates was increasing youth exit and contributing to tense inter-generational relations. Livestock packages would have been much more profitable if good veterinary services were in place before they were launched and they had been accompanied by animal drinking water projects and emergency 'fodder aid' in extreme drought situations.

Third, aspects of some interventions undermined others. For example, preventing access to communal and household grazing land in Geblen to enable



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longer-term renewal, reduced the efficacy of the livestock credit programme. The timing of the public works programmes interfered with agricultural work calendars. Those who accumulated debt through failed packages were less able to make use of other interventions which required household investment such as education, preventive health and health care. Some teenagers were absent from school to work on the FFW programme.

However, fourth, there were also synergies between interventions. PSNP food reduced school absenteeism due to hunger and more generally increased energy levels for work in schools, on farms and in homes, improving the impact of educational, livelihood and health interventions. The work on roads improved community linkages in Geblen and maintained them in Korodegaga enabling access to markets, schools, and health posts and health centres. Denser governance structures improved the flows of information and instructions throughout the communities and threats of loss of access to PSNP encouraged people to take some interest in government preventive health and livelihood programmes. PSNP provided critical support for very poor households and vulnerable elderly and disabled people and all female-headed households in Geblen were included. There were also credit packages focused on women; through a savings and credit association in Korodegaga and non-farm credit in Geblen.

### ***PSNP and asset-building packages in broader community contexts 2005-10***

The ways in which the two programmes were implemented were affected by the ways in which the broader community social systems worked. They entered and responded to the ongoing dynamics in the local economies, societies, politics and cultures while their implementation through the period had some feedback consequences for the systems.

#### ***The community economies***

Since at least the 1980s Geblen's core economy has produced annual food deficits of varying sizes and the population has been sustained and grown on the basis of regular injections of food aid and income earned outside the *tabia*. It is likely that in the years 2005 - 10 the annual PSNP aid, supplemented in two years by emergency food aid, injected rather more income into the community than in the days of emergency food aid. Its main contribution to the economic system were to improve individual wellbeing and human resources, reduce household asset sales, keep more people living in Geblen than would otherwise have been the case, and contribute a platform for a growing demand for education at all levels.



Given rainfall patterns over the period the household livestock asset-building and crop packages were misconceived since their success depended on a minimum amount of rain every year which rarely fell. Many households accumulated debts for fertiliser, beehives and livestock with many selling assets or renting out land in order to pay them off. It seems likely that the community as a whole would have been better off without the packages. The farmers who bought local goats with their loans contributed to the local economy via a multiplier effect by increasing the income of local goat-selling farmers. This was not the case with the modern beehives which were not locally made. Given the location and local skill-sets there were few alternative investments that could be made at household level; some women used loans to invest in cafés, bars and rooms to rent in Mishig. The emergence of this small town depended on government investment in an administrative centre for the *tabia*. A few traders used loans to good effect. Loans used unofficially for youth migration had not produced much income feedback to the local economy at the time of the fieldwork. Some loans used unofficially for consumption improved human resources and wellbeing while expenditure on alcohol brought problems for some individuals and households but boosted the local town economy. There was little credit provided to organisations other than households; one youth co-operative took credit for modern beehives which failed.

Privately the DAs recognised that the official packages were not going to work without resolution of the water shortage problem but publicly stuck to the official discourse and did not try to mitigate the negative effects of forced packages on credit. They were not involved in providing advice or skill-training in relation to the non-farm packages which had more potential to succeed.

Farmers in Korodegaga have been experimenting with smallscale irrigation for almost fifty years. At the time of the research there were a variety of technologies in place: small pumps irrigating individual farms and small co-operatives; a medium-sized pump feeding irrigation channels; a medium-sized pump connected to drip irrigation; and two large pumps feeding irrigation channels which were expected to start working shortly. There was also talk of spate irrigation possibly being introduced in part of the kebele. There were a variety of institutional arrangements: smallholders using irrigation; an irrigation association of farmers with small plots fed by one of the medium-sized pumps; small women and youth co-operatives; and private investors from outside the community including one from Australia. While smallholder and daily labour opportunities related to irrigation had increased considerably and looked set to continue to grow in 2010 most smallholders still regarded rainfed agriculture and livestock rearing as their core livelihood activities. Given the two all-year rivers

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which surround the community the potential for an increase in local production and productivity is much greater than was achieved in 2010.

In this economic context the PSNP aid could be seen as supporting smallholder households through a transition to irrigation-related farming and daily labour requiring a change in mind-set and management skills. On the other hand the work requirements and regular food supply may have reduced the incentive to make the transition which was also held back by the lack of investment in improving access to vegetable markets through better transport connections. It is likely that different types of farmer and household responded differently. The PSNP work and the increasing daily labour opportunities reduced levels of firewood sales.

Poor road access also contributed to the failure of youth co-operatives preparing sand and stones for construction work. Not all farmers had irrigable land, and given that packages were standardised and intended to be accessible to PSNP participants with potential for graduation, the government-linked household credit programmes focused on the risky activities of rainfed agriculture and livestock. These led to economic improvement for some households but to increased debt and economic decline for others. Non-government credit provided through the Irrigation Association was much more effective though it was not linked to good advice; the main failure on the irrigated land was due to mismanagement of hybrid maize. Generally the DAs did not seem to have responsibility for advising on farming activities outside the government-recognised packages.

### *The local societies*

As described above a household's kin networks were important in the detailed allocation of work and food in each year of the PSNP in both sites, while in Korodegaga they were also important in gaining access to limited quotas of improved seeds and credit. The broader informal security regime was also organised around kin networks within which reciprocal obligations to assist family members in times of need were strong. People in sub-kebeles charged with selecting households and deciding how many people in each to include in the programme were under great pressure to meet their family obligations and, looking to their own household's future, invest in kin networks. Membership of a selection committee also provided a power resource through which they could gain favours and take revenge on enemies. Excluded kingroups fought back by regular appeals to the wereda in Geblen while in Korodegaga clan and kin-based factions were active in engineering frequent changes in the kebele leadership.

In Geblen the programmes reportedly strengthened the informal security regime since poor family members in need at a certain time had expectations of

resources with which they could reciprocate. Some respondents in Korodegaga said that the programmes had not undermined informal security exchanges while others said that lower levels of need among poor and vulnerable people receiving food aid and government calls for households to act individually and had reduced reciprocal exchanges.

The focus of both programmes on households boosted the power and resources of household heads, particularly male ones, and while there were special opportunities for women in both sites this was not the case for the growing numbers of un(der) employed young men with varying education levels. Young people in Geblen reported heightening inter-generational tensions reflected in rapidly increasing youth migration. In Korodegaga more efforts had been made to increase youth opportunities through allocation of land to individuals and groups organised in co-operatives with access to some credit.

### *Community politics*

Following the realisation during the 2005 election that there was considerable rural support for opposition parties a number of changes were made to kebele structures: large kebele Councils were established, kebele managers were appointed, and other government employees were given roles in kebele Cabinets. At the same time sub-kebele structures penetrated deeper into the community through the establishment of development groups and 1-5 cells which became increasingly inter-twined with party structures. These small structures were intended to disseminate both political and economic information and instructions and with regard to the latter control of access to PSNP food aid and credit for packages was a potential power resource for the achievement of government and party goals. However, although government employees and other officials threatened removal from the PSNP if people did not participate in other interventions, notably voter registration, digging latrines, and taking credit, there were no reports that such threats were followed through.

Generally farmers did not want to take credit for risky fertiliser and livestock and bee-keeping packages in Geblen but the political pressure exerted particularly on party members was hard to resist and officials were unwilling to raise community complaints with wereda officials. All adult residents in Korodegaga were reportedly party members and many women were keen supporters as a result of changes in their lives attributed to government actions; many men seemed simultaneously to be opposition supporters.

### *Community cultures*

Cultural disconnects between the assumptions implicit in the two government programmes and relevant community beliefs and norms have been described

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above. Kebele officials and some farmers in both communities suggested that regular PSNP aid was encouraging a ‘culture of dependency’ while some wereda officials responsible for Korodegaga were scathing about the ‘lack of awareness’ in the community despite frequent long meetings to ‘aware’ people. The meetings were highly unpopular due to their length and boring and repetitive nature. While they seemed quite effective in transmitting messages about what people should do in some areas there was a large gap between awareness and practice. In some cases this was because household or community resources necessary to implement the interventions were expensive or missing and in others because the locals could not see the point of the intervention.

### **Conclusion: suggestions of some wider implications**

We conclude by presenting some hypotheses about mechanisms and outcomes likely to be found in other rural communities in Ethiopia which are recipients of PSNP and credit programmes<sup>11</sup>. We believe these may also operate in other contexts where social protection is provided through regular food or cash for work and credit is only available for certain packages. We focus on social protection via long-term food aid programmes, the important things that need to be in place if development packages of credit and inputs are to succeed, and the work side of the programmes. We then take a longer-term perspective on the trajectories of the two communities and discuss the implications for other drought-prone communities in Ethiopia.

#### ***Social protection via regular food aid***

We expect to find the implementation of safety net programmes in other communities to be affected by two major cultural disconnects. The first opposes macro assumptions about the importance of family targeting with local norms of sharing, and the second the macro focus on poverty with the community prioritising of kin obligations.

The regular injection of food or cash into communities provides government employees based in the community and local kebele officials with a valuable power resource. This power is likely to be used in the form of threats and promises in attempts to make community members conform with government interventions which have top-down targets. In some contexts the resources may also be used in patron-client networks organised along clan, lineage or kingroup lines.

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<sup>11</sup> We will be testing these hypotheses using the data made recently in 2011/12 in eight other drought-prone rural communities in the four big regions.

The regular injection of food and cash into the community is also likely to improve average nutrition levels with good consequences for livelihood and education participation. It should prevent some deaths of poor and vulnerable people with no or poor production prospects and reduce household asset sales. It should also reduce resort to customary coping strategies such as firewood selling and migration. We expect a range of outcomes for different types of household: those led by entrepreneurial characters will use the safety net as a platform for adopting new household activities and technologies while those led by ordinary farmers will experience gradual improvements in lifestyle. The resources will have fuel bad habits, such as drinking, smoking and chat-chewing, in some households, while they will provide some basic security for those unable to work at all. The balance of these different kinds of response will depend on the opportunities in the wider economic context and some cultural factors. For example communities where Kalehiwot Protestantism is the dominant religion may have fewer men with bad habits since such habits are banned and if practised lead to expulsion from the church<sup>12</sup>.

The regular injection of food and cash will also have consequences for the community's economy; if there is increasing demand for products and services from within the community this will improve community incomes further. The consequences for local informal security regimes will vary depending on the extent to which networks of support are confined to closer families or reach across wider networks and the extent to which individualistic values have penetrated the local culture. The programme is unlikely to have generated a general community culture of dependency and although it may have discouraged some people from adopting new productive strategies it will have supported others to take new risks.

### ***Development packages of credit and inputs - important things that need to be in place***

If the packages of inputs and credit have not been appropriate for local conditions and pressure to meet top-down economic targets has been strong we expect political imperatives to have dominated at the expense of economic rationality. This is likely to have been associated with increasing levels of household debt. We also expect graduation rates to have been lower than planned as a result of household responses to incentives and broader community resistance. The more the packages have been supported by other interventions

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<sup>12</sup> Recent research found more tolerance of such habits in Mekane Yesus Protestantism, Orthodox Christianity and Islam (apart from drinking alcohol).

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such as road-building, electricity, and good access to veterinary services and wider economic changes such as increased demand and good prices for inputs and outputs the greater their contribution to the community's economic growth is likely to have been.

### ***Food for Work/Cash for Work and watershed management***

Environmental public works in both sites involved poor planning, absence of wereda resources to support the work, uneven benefits and unmotivated workers who had been involved in such work over many years without seeing any real changes. We hypothesise that environmental activities will not be very successful unless the activities chosen fit the context, they are well-planned and there is relevant parallel investment in resources, training and supervision. Other public works activities are unlikely to be performed with the energy and commitment which people are willing to expend when rewards are clearly and immediately related to effort.

### ***Longer-term trajectories of the drought-prone rural communities***

Compared with 1984 the government approach to drought and potential famine in rural areas has changed enormously as the tales of the progress of Geblen and Korodegaga since 1984 show. Since the 2003 drought, which affected both communities badly but did not lead to large exodus and deaths, government investment in the communities, including PSNP and household asset-building packages, has increased at an accelerating rate.

In Geblen, given the unsuitability of the location for smallholder farming as currently organised, the major role the PSNP has played has been to keep more people in the *tabia* than would otherwise be the case. Looking to the future if PSNP-type social protection is discontinued there is likely to be a considerable increase in out-migration, especially among the youth, and regular demands for emergency food aid with the amounts depending on the weather. There do not seem to be any potential changes at meso-level which might affect local livelihoods unless there is an expansion of tourism, which in any case would be unlikely to provide employment for many Geblen residents.

In Korodegaga the PSNP has also played a role in keeping people where they are, though at the same time the economic system has been affected by the expansion of irrigation. In the future it is likely that more land will be irrigated and drought will have less impact, though it is not clear what the institutional arrangements will be. This will depend on decisions made at Regional and Zonal level. Future possibilities include a large smallholder system organised along co-operative lines; a mix of small investors, smallholders irrigating private land

with small pumps, and smallholders organised in co-operatives with larger pumps; and the leasing of all the land to a large investor.

A major lesson from this comparison is that the way that PSNP and packages work in a particular community depends to a large degree on the wider economic context. In the Growth and Transformation Plan period many drought-prone rural communities with irrigation potential will experience structural upheavals as a result of higher level decisions on local institutional arrangements for irrigation use. The trajectories of communities without irrigation potential will depend to a large degree on whether new non-farm activities are economically viable and what form government social protection policies take when PSNP2 comes to an end.

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# **Psychological Morbidity, Long Term Food Aid and Food Insecurity in Rural Ethiopia: A Cross-Sectional Community Study<sup>1</sup>,**

*Charlotte Hanlon, Girmay Medhin, Frank Kortmann,  
Jan-Gerrit van Uffelen*

## **Background**

Few studies have investigated the impact of long term food aid provision to chronically food insecure populations upon psychological and psychosocial<sup>2</sup> well-being. This study represents a first effort to increase our knowledge on this subject in Ethiopia

### ***Psychosocial aspects of food insecurity***

The social consequences of food insecurity, including local people's conceptions and coping strategies, have been the subject of much literature in Africa (Shipton, 1990). Research was stimulated by Sen's seminal work in 1981, arguing that lack of entitlements and power relations were responsible for famine (Sen, 1981). In Ethiopia research was further motivated by the major famines of 1973-4, 1984-5 and 2002-3, leading to a wealth of publications (Mesfin Wolde Mariam, 1984; Dessalegn Rahmato, 1991 and 1999; Webb and Von Braun, 1994; Yared Amare, 1999 and 2001; Sharp et al., 2003; Pankhurst and Bevan 2004; Pankhurst, 2010a).

Nonetheless, in a review article on Ethiopia written a decade and a half ago, Kloos and Lindtjorn (1994) noted that "*the psychological impact of famine has been neglected*". The only example identified was a study among resettlers in the Southwest which concluded that psychological damage to bereaved

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<sup>1</sup> The research for this paper has been undertaken as part of the Linking Emergency Aid to Food Security (LEAFS) research programme which is a joint four-year research programme by Wageningen University in the Netherlands and Bahir Dar University in Ethiopia. The research is funded by WOTRO Science of Global Development of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, 'psychosocial' will be taken to refer to qualitative exploration of psychological and social factors, without any accompanying assumption of, or evidence for, underlying mental disorder. The term 'psychological morbidity' will be used to refer to psychological ill-health as indicated by symptoms of mental disorder, most commonly depression, anxiety and traumatic stress disorders.

relatives and to members of households with missing or separated members was widespread (Bhalla and Woldetekle, 1988).

Most of the existing studies of the psychological and psychosocial consequences of humanitarian crises in Ethiopia focus on the effects of displacement rather than famine, particularly related to war and resettlement. For instance, there have been studies on the psychosocial consequences of the Ethio-Eritrean war (Behailu, 2005 and 2009; Nordanger, 2007), on psychological morbidity in camps of internally displaced within Ethiopia (Aptekar and Behailu, 2009; Araya et al., 2007), on adaptations of Ethiopian returnees from Somalia (Zarowski 2000; 2004) from Sudan (Hammond, 2004; Kassahun, 2009) and Sudanese returnees from Ethiopia to Sudan (van Uffelen, 2010), as well as resettlement in other countries, notably the psychosocial adaptation of Ethiopian refugees in America (McSpadden, 1988), and Ethiopian Bete Israel immigrants in Israel (Youngmann et al., 1999).

In recent years there has also been increasing research interest in the psychological impact of food insecurity (Weaver and Hadley, 2009). In Tanzania, seasonal food insecurity was found to be associated with anxiety and depression symptoms among female caretakers (Hadley and Patil, 2006, 2008). Similarly, in southern Ethiopia, chronic food insecurity was associated independently with high levels of depression and anxiety symptoms in a large sample of men and women (Hadley et al. 2008). More generally, poverty has been associated robustly with psychological morbidity (Lund et al. 2010).

### ***Long term aid, dependency syndrome and psychological morbidity***

The potential psychological impact of being a recipient of long term aid, over and above the negative consequences of chronic food insecurity, has not been investigated systematically but is of great relevance to aid programming in Ethiopia.

Much has been written about the concept of an ‘aid dependency syndrome’, defined by Little as “*a condition where farmers modify their social and economic behaviour in anticipation of food aid*” (Little, 2008). Lentz and Barrett (2004) distinguish between positive and negative dependency. Positive dependency occurs when external assistance helps individuals, communities and organizations to meet their basic needs when they are unable to do so. Negative dependency occurs when individuals, households or communities needs are met at the expense of recipients’ capacity to meet their basic needs in the future. Aid dependency has also been described in more psychological terms, as “*one of the features of extreme poverty, associated with a sense of shame or defeat*” (Harvey and Lind, 2005). In a case study from Ethiopia, as quoted by Harvey and Lind

(2005), *'There was often a stigma of shame or defeat about such dependence [on depending on the good will of others] for the people we talked to, who contrasted it with the respectable ideal of self-sufficiency and being able to support one's own household. Several informants mentioned the importance to them of being 'tira dehu' (good poor or proud poor) meaning independent of other people's help, and not indebted'* (Devereux, 2003).

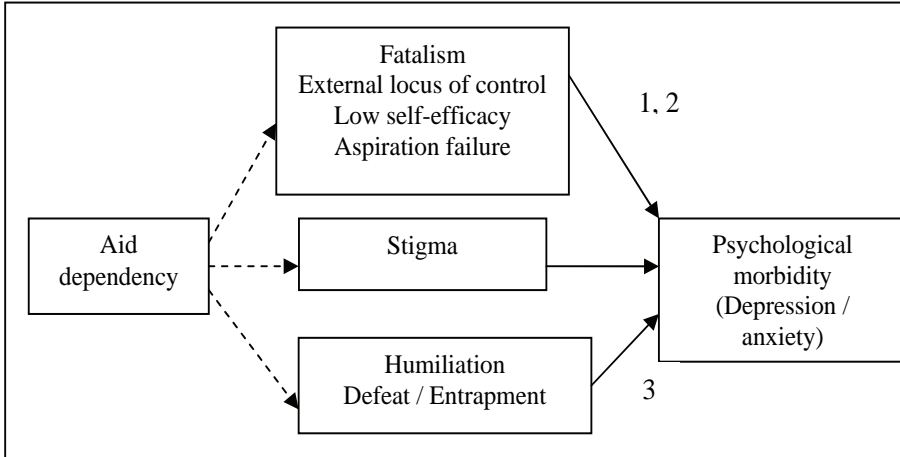
In chronically food insecure Ethiopian households receiving long term aid through the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), high levels of 'fatalism' were measured, defined as *"a sense of helplessness that a person may feel with regard to proactively modifying his or her future"* (Bernard et al., 2011). The authors draw parallels between this notion of fatalism and the psychological concepts of 'external locus of control' (Rotter, 1966) and low 'self-efficacy' (Bandura, 1977) both of which have been shown to be vulnerability factors for depression (Prociuk et al. 1976; McFarlane et al., 1995). High levels of fatalism in long term recipients of aid were found to be associated with maladaptive economic behaviours: when presented with a hypothetical scenario of access to credit, respondents expressing a fatalistic attitude were less willing to ask for credit and more likely to say that they would spend their credit in ways that failed to optimise the long term economic benefit (Bernard et al., 2011). Such behaviours are termed *'aspiration failure'*, that is *'the lack of systematic proactive effort to better one's future'* (Frankenberger et al., 2007). The extent to which these potentially maladaptive psychological characteristics of fatalism, external locus of control, low self-efficacy and aspiration failure relate to aid dependency and maintenance of poverty is unknown.

## **Problem Statement and Theoretical Framework**

Long term aid that is associated with dependency may be associated with a range of risk factors for psychological morbidity, depending on the degree to which dependence upon aid leads to an external locus of control, low self-efficacy, shame, stigma, humiliation and a sense of defeat or entrapment (figure 1).

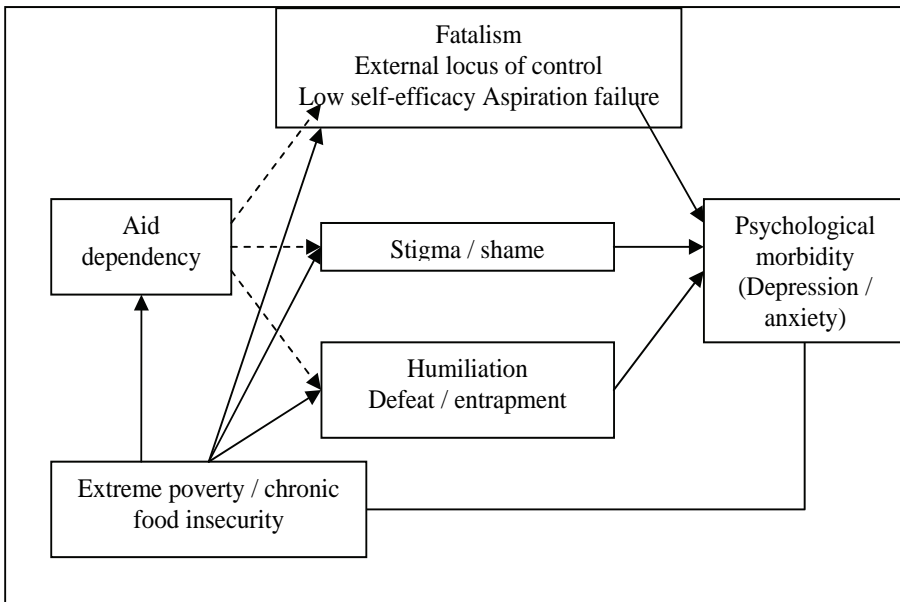
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*Figure 1: Theoretical model for association between aid dependency and psychological morbidity*



1 = Rotter (1966); 2 = Bandura (1977); 3 = Brown and Harris (1978)  
 Extreme poverty and chronic food insecurity have a potential confounding effect on the association between aid dependency and psychological morbidity (figure 2).

*Figure 2: Potential confounding effect of chronic food insecurity on association between chronic food insecurity and psychological morbidity*



In Ethiopia, the introduction of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) provides an opportunity to compare the psychological impact of this predictable form of long term aid to more sporadic aid provision for chronically food insecure households.

### ***Research questions***

The three research questions this study tries to answer are:

1. Do levels of psychological morbidity vary across communities who are (i) food secure, (ii) food insecure and served by a predictable aid programme (the Ethiopian PSNP), and (iii) food insecure without predictable aid?
2. Does long term dependency on food aid have a negative psychological impact on recipients?
3. Is the prevalence of psychological morbidity higher in individuals who were in receipt of predictable aid compared to recurrent but unpredictable aid or no aid in food insecure areas?

## **Methods**

### ***Study design and setting***

The basic study design was a cross-sectional community survey conducted in four rural Ethiopian communities in Amhara region. The study was conducted in selected sites in four rural *weredas* in Amhara region: Enemay, Ankober., Sekota and Ibenat. Apart from differences in the level of exposure to food insecurity and food aid, these sites were largely comparable in terms of being situated in the Amhara region, their populations being composed largely of native Amharic speakers and strong similarities in livelihoods, based on cereal cultivation combined with livestock.

Yetmen in Enemay *woreda* and Dinki in Ankober *woreda* were both the subjects of previous research<sup>3</sup> and were thus well-characterised with respect to levels of food security and receipt of aid. The four sites in Sekota and two sites in Ibenat were part of the *Linking Emergency Aid to Food Security* (LEAFS) project (2008-2012) examining the impact of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). For the sake of simplicity the four areas under consideration will be referred to in this chapter as Yetmen, Dinki, Sekota and Ibenat.

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<sup>3</sup> The 'Long-term perspectives on development impacts in rural Ethiopia' study (WIDE3): see Bevan, Dom and Pankhurst (2010).

Yetmen is located in Enemay district (*woreda*) Gojjam zone of Amhara Region, in an area with good rainfall producing surplus and exporting teff to Addis Ababa. The area has not suffered from drought and is not a recipient of food aid (Bevan, 2010).

Dinki is a sub-kebele (*got*) located in Ankober district (*woreda*), North Shewa, Amhara region, within a drought-prone belt of the Rift valley escarpment (Pankhurst, 2010b). The climate is hot and fairly dry. The Dinki community is chronically food-insecure and in receipt of sporadic, but not predictable, aid.

The Sekota community sample included four villages (Eugolo, Dratuk, Addis Alem and Feleshman) that are geographically close to one another (around 10 minutes' walk) and share the same agro-ecology. The Sekota villages share the same characteristics, except for Addis Alem which has a relatively larger number of female headed households due to the small market which provides divorced women with a source of income by selling local beer (*tella*).

The Ibenat community sample is taken from two villages, Bedemidroch village in Mechena sub-district (*kebele*) and Faresgie village in Worgaja sub-district (*kebele*). Ibenat is characterised by high levels of food insecurity with over one-third of the population in receipt of predictable aid through the PSNP program (since 2005) and annual aid before that. The people in the district are dependent on rain-fed agriculture and some livestock rearing.

Dinki, and the sites in Sekota and Ibenat *weredas* are all situated in chronically food insecure areas. These are areas that have experienced serious famines in the mid 1970's and mid 1980's and the so-called 'mini-famine' in 2003, particularly in Sekota. Relief aid has been distributed to the food insecure families in these areas for a prolonged period of time. In the case of Sekota and Ibenat, food aid has been provided on an almost-annual basis for over three decades. Food aid to food insecure households in Dinki is of more recent origin but has been provided for well over a decade.

### ***Sampling***

The sampling was as follows: in *Yetmen* 152 out of 496 households were selected randomly. *Dinki*: 150 out of 169 households were selected randomly. In *Sekota* four out of ten villages were randomly selected randomly from the Jerba church parish (*debir*), located in Peasant Association (PA) 10, Sekota district. Household heads and spouses from all households within the selected villages were invited to participate in the study: Eugolo 41 households, Dratuk 39 households, Addis Alem 48 households and Feleshman 46 households. In *Ibenat* two villages were randomly selected randomly for inclusion: Faresgie 78 households and Begemedroch 85 households. The number of villages was

limited to those where the research team had an established rapport. All members of the selected households above the age of eighteen were interviewed.

## **Measures**

### *Psychological morbidity*

The Self-Reporting Questionnaire (SRQ-20) (Beusenberg and Orley, 1994) is a self-report scale which seeks to measure symptoms of mental disorder. The SRQ was originally developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) using expert consensus to select items that were considered to be cross-culturally relevant for the detection of people in primary care who might suffer from common mental disorders. The 20 item version of the scale, the SRQ-20, includes symptoms of depression and anxiety as well as somatic idioms of distress (for example, frequent headaches, poor digestion) which often indicate underlying mental disorder. In the original version of the scale (the SRQ-24), an additional four items were present, designed to tap into psychotic disorders; however, the reliability and validity of these additional items has been shown to be limited and so they were not used for the analyses in this chapter. A culturally adapted version of the SRQ, the 'SRQ-F' was developed and validated in northern Ethiopia (Youngmann et al., 2008). The SRQ-F includes 19 items from the original SRQ-20 together with nine additional items reflecting culturally relevant idioms of distress for the Ethiopian setting.

In order to be able to include questions from both the SRQ-20 and the SRQ-F 29, the version used in this research included the question (no 11) which was omitted in the SRQ 29, therefore comprising 30 questions. However, in order to maximise comparability with studies from other African settings and other Ethiopian studies, in this chapter the analysis has focused on the SRQ-20 questions. Appendix II includes the Amharic and English versions of the SRQ-20, the English version of the SRQ-29, and the Amharic Version of the SRQ-30 used in this study.

The SRQ-20 was designed to be a self-reporting instrument. However the SRQ can also be administered by a lay-interviewer and so is appropriate for settings with low levels of literacy and where mental health professionals are scarce. The respondent is asked about the presence or absence of the symptom in the preceding one month. Administration of the scale takes up to 10 to 15 minutes.

The SRQ-20 has been used in numerous studies in Ethiopia and across many low- and middle-income countries (Alem et al., 1999; Tafari et al., 1991; Kebede et al. 1999; Mulatu, 1995). Evidence for the cultural validity of the SRQ-20 in community settings in Ethiopia comes from three validation studies

conducted in Addis Ababa (Kortmann, 1988), Gonder (Youngmann et al. 2008) and Butajira (Hanlon et al., 2008). In each of these studies, respondent scores on the SRQ-20 were compared to an independent gold standard evaluation of the presence or absence of mental disorder. In the validation study most similar to the current study, persons scoring six or more (out of 20) on the SRQ-20 were found to have an increased likelihood of diagnosable psychiatric disorder (Hanlon et al., 2008). For the purposes of this chapter, persons scoring six or more on the SRQ-20 will be described as having ‘psychological morbidity’, indicating a clinically relevant level of symptoms of mental disorder associated with an adverse impact on social and interpersonal functioning.

Despite the above support for the validity of the SRQ-20 in Ethiopia, there is concern that respondents may give a ‘yes’ response even in the absence of mental disorder if they perceive a potential benefit. For example, in healthcare settings, ‘yes’ responses in the absence of mental disorder were found to occur in persons who were looking for a sick certificate to exempt them from work (Kortmann, 1990). Although this particular problem is not likely to be an issue in non-help-seeking, community populations, it is possible that surveys which have an obvious focus on poverty and aid may be susceptible to over-reporting of symptoms in the hope of gaining some benefit. In support of this contention, a previous Ethiopian community study focused on poverty, and conducted by a non-governmental organisation known to provide anti-poverty interventions, found much higher scores on the SRQ-20 than previous Ethiopian studies (Harpham et al. 2005). In an attempt to overcome this potential problem, data collectors underwent extensive training to ensure that they understood the concepts which the SRQ-20 items were seeking to identify. When administering the SRQ-20 the data collectors were asked to indicate whether they considered any ‘yes’ response to be valid, of doubtful validity or invalid on the basis of the probe questions recommended by Youngmann et al., 2008. Responses recorded as ‘invalid’ were excluded in the SRQ-20 scoring.

The Amharic version of the SRQ-20 used in this study was based on the translation by Youngmann et al. (2008).. For the purposes of the current study, the team of researchers considered the translation of the SRQ-20 and SRQ-F-29 and made minor adaptations to improve comprehensibility. The main changes are in brackets and bolded in Appendix II D.

### *Food aid*

In Sekota and Ebinat, covered by Ethiopia’s PSNP, self-report of the following categories were obtained:

- those receiving food transfers in exchange for public works (‘public works’),



- those not able to work and receiving direct handout support ('direct support'),
- those who did not receive any food assistance
- those who received food assistance formerly but no longer did so because they had left the programme, either of their own volition ('self-graduates') or because they were considered to have become food secure and therefore graduated from the programme ('graduates')

In all of the study areas, respondents were asked about receipt of food aid or cash for food, as follows:

- Frequency of receipt of food aid in the last 10 years (categorised as food aid in all years vs. no food aid at all or not receiving food aid every year)
- Receipt of food aid during the 1984-1985 famine
- Receipt of food aid during the Derg period (1974-1991), excluding the famine period (categorised as no food aid, some years and most years).

### *Potential confounders*

Potential confounders are those characteristics that are related to both long term food aid dependency and psychological morbidity and are not part of the causal pathway. Based on the WHO's "World Health Report 2001" (WHO, 2001) the following potential confounders were measured: socio-economic status, socio-demographic characteristics, presence of major physical diseases and, life stressors.

## **Socio-economic status**

Food insecurity was measured by self-report of food shortage in the preceding 10 years ('often or always' vs. 'sometimes or never'), food shortage during childhood (sometimes vs. never) and number of months of food shortfall in the preceding year. Socio-economic status was indicated by the size of land owned by the household (2 or less *timads*<sup>4</sup>, 2.01 to 4 *timads* and 4.01 or more *timads*), number of cattle and number of sheep or goats. Educational level was categorised as no formal education vs. some formal education.

### *Socio-demographic characteristics*

Respondents gave self-report of age, gender, marital status (married vs. single, divorced, widowed or abandoned).

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<sup>4</sup> Local land measurement unit with 1 *timad* being the amount of land that can be ploughed in one day using a pair of oxen, (around one quarter of a hectare) (Abebe, 2006)

### ***Presence of major physical diseases***

Self-report of chronic illness or disability.

### ***Life stressors***

Self-report of death of an adult, child or relative, marital conflict, community conflict, unexpected loss of an ox /cow or being unable to repay a loan in the preceding two years.

### ***Data collection***

Interviews were carried out in all four sites within a period of four weeks, between October and November 2011.

Data collection was carried out by two teams of two people (one team for Dinki and Yetmen and one team for Sekota and Ibenat) each composed of two trained researchers, one male and one female. They were of Masters level in anthropology, sociology or social work and had worked on qualitative research projects including the Wellbeing in Developing Countries and the Young Lives research projects. In the cases of Dinki and Yetmen the data collectors had already worked in these sites. Data collectors were trained for a total of three days by a Dutch transcultural psychiatrist (F. Kortmann) with extensive experience living and working in Ethiopia, as well as experienced with research in Ethiopia using the SRQ. During the training, Dr. Kortmann was supported by a social anthropologist (Dr. Alula Pankhurst) who is fluent in Amharic and was brought up and has lived most of his life in Ethiopia. Training included detailed discussion about how particular SRQ items relate to aspects of mental disorder, for example, indicating an underlying depressive or anxiety disorder. For each 'yes' response, data collectors were required to use standardized probes, following the methodology for evaluating validity of SRQ responses utilized in a previous research study (Youngmann, 2008). The probes asked about (1) the meaning that interviewees ascribed to their response based on a concrete example, and (2) what they thought was the cause of their symptoms. Data collectors were then able to make a judgement about the validity of the given 'yes' response as an indicator of psychological morbidity. The data collectors were observed conducting interviews with one another and, subsequently, with persons with established mental illness in a psychiatric facility setting.

### ***Sample size, Data management and analysis***

In order to achieve statistical significance a total of around 1000 participants were required, 250 per site. Data were checked in the field for completeness and entered into an SPSS database. Stata version 12 software was used for data analysis. Percentages and mean values were used to summarise categorical and

continuous variables respectively. Pearson  $\chi^2$  tests were conducted to evaluate the statistical significance of differences in categorical characteristics between the different study sites.

The hypothesis that various forms of food aid would be associated with psychological morbidity (SRQ-20 score  $\geq 6$ ) was tested using logistic regression with psychological morbidity as the dependent variable. It was not possible to adjust simultaneously for clustering at both the household and study site level. Therefore, adjustment for household clustering was prioritised as this was assumed to exert a larger effect. Study site was also included as a variable in each analysis. The odds ratios (and 95% confidence intervals) for the association between food aid and psychological morbidity were presented after (1) adjustment for clustering by household and study site, (2) separate adjustments for groups of potential confounders, and (3) full adjustment for all potential confounders simultaneously. *A priori* potential confounders were evaluated in univariate  $\chi^2$  analyses. Age, sex and all potential confounders that were associated with psychological morbidity with a p-value of 0.20 or less in univariate analyses were included in the multivariable model. Due to collinearity, the variable indicating recurrent food shortfalls in the preceding ten years was selected in preference to months of food shortfall in the preceding one year.

In view of the interest in the literature of the specific role of ‘hopelessness’ in relation to aid dependency and maintenance of poverty, exploratory analyses were conducted to look for differences in the prevalence of suicidal ideation (SRQ item 17) across study sites in relation to their food security status and pattern of aid.

## Findings

A total of 1114 adults were interviewed, located within 618 households. The majority of respondents were household heads: Yetmen (54.8%), Ibenat (57.6%), Sekota (54.9%) and Dinki (54.6%).

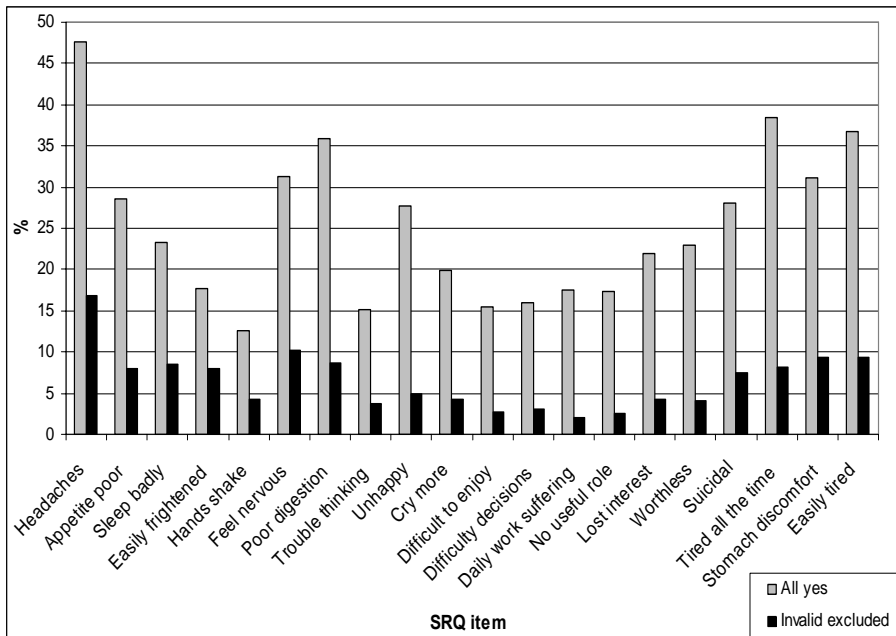
### *Over-reporting on the SRQ*

Taking ‘yes’ responses to SRQ items at face value, the overall prevalence of psychological morbidity was incorrectly estimated to be 37.1% on the SRQ-20 (scoring six or more) and 40.5% on the SRQ-F (scoring eight or more). When the ‘yes’ responses that were considered by the interviewers to be invalid were excluded, the corrected prevalence of psychological morbidity using the SRQ-20 (score  $\geq 6$ ) across sites was 5.7% and using the SRQ-F (score  $\geq 8$ ) was 6.6%.

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Figure 3 shows the percentage of ‘yes’ responses for each item of the SRQ-20, contrasting inclusion and exclusion of the invalid responses. Over-reporting was consistent across SRQ items and was associated with residence in Yetmen, older age, no formal education, female gender, being unmarried, presence of disability or chronic illness and lower socio-economic status<sup>5</sup>.

*Figure 3: SRQ-20 item frequencies including and excluding invalid ‘yes’ responses*



In view of the similarity in prevalence estimates using the SRQ-20 and SRQ-F, further analyses are presented using the SRQ-20 to enable comparison with studies conducted outside of Ethiopia.

***Descriptive characteristics by study site***

The characteristics of the respondents in each study area are compared in Table 1 (see Appendix 1)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Data available from authors on request.

<sup>6</sup> All the tables have been placed in Appendix 1.

Across all sites, the mean age of respondents was 41.7 years (standard deviation (SD) 16.12), ranging from 13 to 90 years; 48.3% (n=537) of respondents were male and 35.9% of households contained six or more persons.

In keeping with the goals of the purposive sampling, food insecurity was lowest in Yetmen when considering food shortfalls in the last year and over the preceding ten years. The socio-economic status of Yetmen was also substantially better than the other three study areas with respect to proportion of respondents with formal education, having a land size of more than four *timads* and possessing four or more cattle, or four or more sheep or goats.

Sekota was the most impoverished site, with the lowest level of formal education, smallest land size per household, lowest number of cattle and the highest level of chronic food insecurity (often / always in the last ten years). However, Ibenat and Dinki had the highest levels of food insecurity in the preceding year. Overall, the percentage of respondents from each site reporting two or more stressful life events in the preceding two years was 14.0% in Yetmen, 37.1% in Dinki, 53.4% in Sekota and 60.1% in Ibenat. Chronic illness or disability was most prevalent in Dinki (15.8%), followed by Yetmen (9.3%), Sekota (6.5%) and Ibenat (4.0%). The unexpectedly high burden of disability in Yetmen may reflect the high percentage of the Yetmen sample who reported serving in the Ethiopian armed forces.

### ***Food aid across sites***

In the food insecure areas, only a small minority of respondents had never received food aid over the preceding ten years: 32.9% in Ibenat, 18.1% in Sekota and 4.4% in Dinki. Most respondents reported receipt of sporadic aid for at least some years during the last ten years, and only a minority received such aid every year. Less than two percent of respondents from Yetmen had received any food aid in the preceding ten years. Almost all respondents from Dinki (97.8%) had received emergency food aid during the 1984-1985 famine compared to only 30.7% in Ibenat, 37.2% in Sekota and 2.5% in Yetmen. During the Derg regime, outside of the time of the 1984-1985 famine, 22.2% of Dinki respondents received food aid most years, compared to 14.9% in Sekota, 6.4% in Ibenat and nobody in Yetmen.

In the PSNP sites of Ibenat and Sekota, 62.2% and 37.7% of the respondents, respectively, participated in public works or were direct support beneficiaries. It was necessary to combine these two components of PSNP into a single category due to small numbers of the direct support beneficiaries. Similarly, the small number of households graduating from the PSNP precluded analysis of any association with psychological morbidity.

### ***Psychological morbidity and suicidal ideation across sites***

The prevalence of psychological morbidity was significantly lower in the food secure, no food aid area of Yetmen (1.4%; n=4) compared to the food insecure areas;  $\chi^2(1)$  12.39;  $p < 0.001$ . In the food insecure study sites, there was no significant difference in the prevalence of psychological morbidity in the sites with long term, predictable food aid delivered as part of PSNP (Sekota 6.4% and Ibenat 8.7%) compared to the site with sporadic aid only (Dinki, 6.2%);  $\chi^2(2)$  6.12;  $p = 0.013$ . However, respondents from Dinki (food insecure, sporadic food aid) had significantly higher levels of suicidal ideation in the preceding month (12.8%; n=35), compared to respondents from the Sekota (7.6%; n=21) and Ibenat (7.4%; n=21) sites (food insecure, long term, predictable aid), who in turn had higher levels of suicidal ideation than Yetmen (food secure, no food aid):  $\chi^2$  20.85(3);  $p = 0.001$ .

### ***Food aid and psychological morbidity***

In the univariate analysis, respondents reporting receipt of sporadic food aid every year in the preceding 10 years were more likely to have an SRQ-20 score of six or more (psychological morbidity): crude odds ratio (OR) 4.09 (95% confidence intervals (CI) 1.52, 11.03). However, this association was confounded by sociodemographic factors, socio-economic status and exposure to chronic illness or disability and life events: adjusted OR 1.51 (95%CI 0.48, 4.75). See Table 3.

Receipt of food aid during the 1984-1985 famine was also associated with SRQ-20 score  $\geq 6$  in univariate analysis: crude OR 2.70 (95%CI 1.55, 4.70). Again the association no longer held to true after adjusting for potential confounders: adjusted OR 1.47 (95%CI 0.68, 3.22). See table 4.

Similarly, receipt of food aid 'most years' during the time of the Derg regime, outside of the 1984-1985 famine was associated with SRQ-20 score  $\geq 6$  in the univariate analyses (crude OR 5.65; 95%CI 2.51, 12.73) but not after adjusting for confounders: adjusted OR 2.11 (95%CI 0.77, 5.83). See table 5.

In contrast, participation in the PSNP through public works or as a direct beneficiary showed no association with SRQ-20 score  $\geq 6$  in either the univariate (crude OR 0.81; 95%CI 0.42, 1.55) or multivariable (adjusted OR 0.61; 0.30, 1.30) analyses. See table 5.

### ***Factors associated with psychological morbidity***

In univariate analyses, scoring six or more on the SRQ-20 was associated with increasing age, being unmarried, having experienced serious and recurrent food shortages over the preceding ten years, four or more months of food shortfall in

the preceding one year, suffering from chronic illness or disability and experience of stressful life events in the preceding two years. See table 6.

In the final multivariable model, the following factors were associated independently with psychological morbidity (SRQ-20  $\geq$  6): increasing age (adjusted OR 1.02; 95%CI 1.01, 1.05), food insecurity (adjusted OR 2.76; 1.30, 5.81) and experience of stressful life events in the preceding two years (adjusted OR for one life event 3.85; 95%CI 1.04, 14.35, adjusted OR for two or more life events 4.57; 95%CI 1.25, 16.72). Larger land size (2.01-4.00 *timads* vs. 2 or less *timads*) was associated with lower odds of psychological morbidity: adjusted OR 0.44; 95%CI 0.23, 0.84. There was no association between receipt of food aid and psychological morbidity. See table 7.

## Discussion

In this community-based cross-sectional study from rural Ethiopia we carried out one of the first systematic investigations of the association between long term food aid, chronic food insecurity and psychological morbidity using standardised, culturally valid measures. The findings will now be discussed in relation to the initial research questions and theoretical framework.

1. *Do levels of psychological morbidity vary across communities who are (i) food secure, (ii) food insecure and served by a predictable aid programme (the Ethiopian PSNP), and (iii) food insecure with recurrent but unpredictable aid?*

Analyses at the level of study site found no significant difference in the prevalence of psychological morbidity across the food insecure sites, regardless of whether aid was predictable or unpredictable. However, there was a significantly lower level of psychological morbidity in the food secure site of Yetmen when compared to the food insecure sites. When considering reports of suicidal ideation, there was a significant difference between food secure and food insecure sites (Yetmen vs. the other sites combined) and between predictable aid and unpredictable aid in food insecure sites (Dinki vs. Sekota and Ibenat combined), but this difference became non-significant after adjusting for confounders. The presence of very high levels of aid received by respondents in Dinki in the food-insecure, non-PSNP site, limited our ability to look at the relative impact of food insecurity and long term aid on psychological morbidity at the level of the community.

***Does long term dependency on food aid have a negative psychological impact on recipients?***

Analyses at the level of individuals in the four sites combined found that food insecurity, poverty and stressful life events were each associated independently with psychological morbidity. However, neither receipt of recurrent food aid (in the past 10 years, during the 1984-1985 famine and during the Derg regime) nor residence in an aid-dependent area, was associated with psychological morbidity.

These findings argue against a negative impact of food aid on psychological well-being, instead indicating that the underlying reasons for receipt of food aid (food insecurity, poverty and exposure to ‘shocks’, as indicated by the ‘stressful life events’) are the most important drivers of psychological morbidity. Following this logic, increasing food aid and alleviating food insecurity, poverty and vulnerability to shocks, may be associated with improved mental health.

*Is the prevalence of psychological morbidity higher in individuals who were in receipt of predictable aid compared to unpredictable, albeit recurrent, aid or no aid at all in food insecure areas?*

In the PSNP sites, predictable long term aid provided through Public Works or the Direct Support component of PSNP was not associated with increased psychological morbidity compared to households who did not receive any aid or who had graduated from the programme. Furthermore, although not significant statistically, the odds ratio was below one suggesting that this form of long-term aid might even be protective against psychological morbidity.

***Predictable aid, psychological morbidity and the dependency syndrome***

The mode in which long term food aid is delivered, in particular the extent to which the dignity of the recipient is respected, has been reported to be an important factor in determining whether aid is associated with stigma, humiliation and hopelessness (Harvey and Lind, 2005). Furthermore, it has been argued that ‘autonomy’ or the freedom to be able to engage in decisions about one’s future is an essential capability, enabling escape from the poverty trap. A tentative finding from this study is that predictable, long term aid may have psychological benefits over recurrent but unpredictable aid by supporting greater autonomy (implying self-efficacy and internal locus of control) and reducing stigma, humiliation and hopelessness, all of which are established risk factors for psychological morbidity (Brown and Harris, 1978; Prociuk et al. 1976). Duflo argues that hope should also be considered an essential capability required to overcome poverty, alongside adequate health, nutrition and shelter (Duflo,



2012). Indeed, disproportionate economic benefits were observed in asset-based aid programmes in Bangladesh, thought to be mediated by a decrease in levels of hopelessness and consequent increase in productivity (Bannerjee and Duflo, 2011). This fits with the findings discussed by Bernard et al. earlier that negative psychological processes (low self-efficacy and external locus of control) are associated with behaviours that are less likely to bring a household out of poverty (Bernard, 2011).

### ***Long term food insecurity and psychological morbidity***

The finding that food insecurity and poverty were associated with psychological morbidity, after adjusting for a range of other variables including receipt of aid, is in keeping with a large body of work in the field of mental health (Lund et al., 2010). The inter-relationships between poverty or food insecurity and psychological morbidity are thought to be bi-directional. The social causation theory posits that factors associated with poverty, including heightened stress, social exclusion, decreased social capital, malnutrition, increased obstetric risks, increased risk of trauma and violence, all increase the risk of psychological morbidity (Lund et al., 2011). On the other hand, the impaired functioning and productivity, stigma and discrimination leading to reduced work opportunities, and health care costs associated with psychological morbidity all serve to maintain poverty. A recent systematic review of interventions to break the cycle of poverty and psychological morbidity found compelling evidence for economic benefits of interventions to improve psychological health, and preliminary evidence that certain types of economic interventions (e.g. conditional cash transfers and assets) were associated with psychological benefits (Lund et al., 2011). There is a need to distinguish the interventions appropriate for negative psychological effects of chronic food insecurity and poverty from those required when these psychological characteristics are present as part of a psychiatric disorder, for example, depression. Nonetheless, the lack of specific attention to psychological morbidity in persons who are food insecure and poor may be an important factor in the maintenance of their low economic status.

### ***Limitations***

The cultural challenges of identifying psychological morbidity in a non-Western setting with low levels of literacy and in the absence of a definitive diagnostic measure should not be underestimated. Relying on self-report of psychological symptoms to a non-mental health specialist runs the risk of misattribution of expression of 'yes' responses to a psycho-pathological process when they may in fact be an expression of social distress or a means to obtain benefit in one form

or another. In this study, extensive efforts were made to minimise these difficulties through rigorous training of data collectors and probing of ‘yes’ responses to gain further evidence before accepting their validity as indicators of psychological morbidity. Furthermore, there has been a large body of work carried out in Ethiopia to enhance and establish the validity of the SRQ for this setting. It is reassuring that both the standard SRQ scale and the Ethiopia-specific, culturally adapted SRQ-F, gave almost identical estimates of the prevalence of psychological morbidity (around 6%) using the validated cut-offs for each scale. This prevalence estimate is at the lower end of the range expected for community settings, indicating that our categorisation of psychological morbidity is conservative and skewed to the more severe end of the spectrum.

The cross-sectional nature of the study limited our ability to make causal attributions or determine the temporal relationship between food insecurity, aid and psychological morbidity. Due to the relatively low prevalence of psychological morbidity, we may have been under-powered to detect true associations between aid and psychological morbidity, especially in the analyses restricted to the PSNP sites. As has already been highlighted, the number of participants who were food insecure but not receiving aid was low and might constitute a group with particular difficulties, for example, marginalised from society, potentially excluded from assistance for various reasons, and at increased risk of psychological morbidity.

### ***Future directions***

The study presented in this chapter provides initial evidence that dependency upon long term food aid is not associated with psychological morbidity but replication of these findings is required. Future studies should aim to include communities where a substantial proportion of the population are food insecure but not recipients of aid. Longitudinal analysis of the relationship between food insecurity, aid and psychological morbidity is required. Systematic measurement of potential components of an aid dependency syndrome, including perceived stigma, self-efficacy, locus of control and hopelessness, is also needed in order to understand mechanisms linking food insecurity, aid and psychological morbidity.

### **Conclusions**

Food insecurity and inadequate interventions to alleviate it and poverty more generally appear to be the most important factors leading to poorer mental health in these rural Ethiopian communities. Concerns about a negative psychological impact of long term aid, mediated through an ‘aid dependency syndrome’ appear

ill-founded. In terms of psychological morbidity, predictable aid may be protective and have benefits over sporadic emergency aid but a larger, prospective study is needed to explore this adequately.

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## Appendix I: Tables

*Table 1: Description of the four communities*

	<b>Yetmen</b> (Food secure)n (%)	<b>Ibenat</b> (Food insecure + PSNP*) n (%)	<b>Sekota</b> (Food insecure + PSNP) n (%)	<b>Dinki</b> (Food insecure + no PSNP) n (%)	<b>Pearson <math>\chi^2</math> (degrees of freedom)</b> ( <b>P-value</b> )
<b>Psychological morbidity</b>					
SRQ $\geq$ 6 prevalence (excluding invalid responses)	4 (1.4)	18 (6.4)	24 (8.7)	17 (6.2)	$\chi^2(3)$ 14.36 (p=0.002)
<b>Aid indicators</b>					
Aid in the last 10 years					
No years	276 (98.9)	93 (32.9)	50 (18.1)	12 (4.4)	$\chi^2(6)$ 679.48 (p<0.001)
Some years	2 (0.7)	186 (65.7)	183 (66.1)	251 (91.3)	
Every year	1 (0.4)	4 (1.4)	44 (15.9)	12 (4.4)	
Received aid during 1984 / 1985 famine	6 (2.5)	86 (30.7)	96 (37.2)	220 (97.8)	$\chi^2(3)$ 465.91 (p<0.001)
Received aid during Derg regime					
None	251 (99.2)	169 (59.9)	155 (59.4)	5 (2.1)	$\chi^2(6)$ 483.92 (p<0.001)
Some years	2 (0.7)	95 (33.7)	67 (25.7)	177 (75.6)	
Most years	0 (0)	18 (6.4)	39 (14.9)	52 (22.2)	
Participated in public works or direct beneficiary (PSNP)	-	176 (62.2)	104 (37.7)	-	$\chi^2(1)$ 33.575 (p<0.001)

<b>Socio-demographics</b>				
Respondent type				
Household head	153 (54.8)	163 (57.6)	152 (54.9)	150 (54.6)
Spouse	117 (41.9)	113 (39.9)	121 (43.7)	117 (42.6)
Dependent	9 (3.2)	7 (2.5)	4 (1.4)	8 (2.9)
Age (years)	Mean 46.4 (SD 16.19)	Mean 38.9 (SD 15.54)	Mean 39.7 (SD 15.42)	Mean 41.9 (SD 16.35)
Male sex	136 (48.9)	136 (48.1)	131 (47.3)	134 (48.7)
No formal education	172 (62.1)	239 (84.5)	214 (77.3)	212 (77.4)
Not married	42 (15.1)	46 (16.3)	41 (14.8)	50 (18.4)
Household size (n=615)	22 (14.5)	25 (15.3)	35 (23.2)	27 (18.1)
3 to 5	75 (49.3)	81 (49.7)	59 (39.1)	70 (47.0)
6 or more	55 (36.2)	57 (35.0)	57 (37.8)	52 (34.9)
<b>Socio-economic status</b>				
Sometimes / never enough food in childhood	31 (11.1)	47 (16.6)	26 (9.4)	77 (28.1)
Often / always serious food shortfall in last 10 years	28 (10.0)	51 (18.0)	58 (20.9)	48 (17.6)
Months of serious food shortfall in last year				
0	144 (69.9)	2 (0.8)	183 (66.6)	6 (2.3)
1 to 3	40 (19.4)	147 (59.5)	45 (16.4)	182 (69.2)
4 or more	22 (10.7)	98 (39.7)	47 (17.1)	75 (28.5)
				$\chi^2(6)$ 503.91 (p<0.001)

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	<b>Yetmen</b> (Food secure) n (%)	<b>Ibenat</b> (Food insecure + PSNP*) n (%)	<b>Sekota</b> (Food insecure + PSNP) n (%)	<b>Dinki</b> (Food insecure + no PSNP) n (%)	<b>Pearson <math>\chi^2</math> (degrees of freedom)</b> <b>(P-value)</b>
<b>Socio-economic status (continued)</b>					
Land size (timads)					
0 to 2.00	49 (17.7)	105 (37.4)	189 (68.7)	107 (39.1)	$\chi^2(6)$ 182.1 (p<0.001)
2.01 to 4.00	141 (50.9)	102 (36.3)	81 (29.5)	122 (44.5)	
4.01 and over	87 (31.4)	74 (26.3)	5 (1.8)	45 (16.4)	
Number of cattle					
0	64 (23.7)	30 (10.7)	85 (30.9)	43 (16.7)	$\chi^2(6)$ 132.1 (p<0.001)
1 to 3	93 (34.4)	203 (72.5)	161 (58.6)	140 (54.3)	
4 or more	113 (41.9)	47 (16.8)	29 (10.6)	75 (29.1)	
Number of sheep / goats					
0	108 (41.2)	104 (37.4)	188 (68.6)	153 (69.2)	$\chi^2(6)$ 158.4 (p<0.001)
1 to 3	75 (28.6)	143 (51.4)	37 (13.5)	35 (15.8)	
4 or more	79 (30.2)	31 (11.2)	49 (17.9)	33 (14.9)	
<b>Other potential confounders</b>					
Ever served in armed forces	33 (11.9)	1 (0.4)	4 (1.5)	2 (0.7)	$\chi^2(3)$ 72.87 (p<0.001)
Suffering from chronic illness or disability	26 (9.3)	11 (4.0)	18 (6.5)	43 (15.8)	$\chi^2(3)$ 26.36 (p<0.001)

Stressful life events						
None	135 (48.4)	48 (17.0)	60 (21.7)	53 (19.3)	$\chi^2(6)$ 179.42 (p<0.001)	
1 life event	105 (37.6)	65 (23.0)	69 (24.9)	120 (43.6)		
2 or more events	39 (14.0)	170 (60.1)	148 (53.4)	102 (37.1)		
Death of child	8 (2.9)	25 (8.8)	28 (10.2)	12 (4.4)	$\chi^2(3)$ 16.63 (p=0.001)	
Death of adult	7 (2.5)	26 (9.2)	21 (7.6)	18 (6.6)	$\chi^2(3)$ 11.29 (p=0.010)	
Death of relative	63 (22.6)	134 (47.4)	171 (62.0)	160 (58.2)	$\chi^2(3)$ 105.20 (p<0.001)	
Marital conflict	16 (5.7)	43 (15.2)	23 (8.6)	17 (6.3)	$\chi^2(3)$ 19.49 (p<0.001)	
Family conflict	3 (1.1)	29 (10.3)	6 (2.2)	1 (0.4)	$\chi^2(3)$ 52.40 (p<0.001)	
Community conflict	30 (10.8)	34 (12.1)	10 (3.6)	11 (4.0)	$\chi^2(3)$ 23.01 (p<0.001)	
Loss of ox/cow	51 (18.3)	134 (47.4)	121 (44.2)	129 (46.9)	$\chi^2(3)$ 68.83 (p<0.001)	
Indebted	11 (4.0)	130 (46.3)	62 (22.5)	7 (2.6)	$\chi^2(3)$ 227.09 (p<0.001)	

\*Productive Safety Net Programme

Table 1 (continued)

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*Table 2: Multiple logistic regression model for the association between sporadic food aid and psychological morbidity (SRQ-20<sup>+</sup> ≥ 6)*

<b>Regression Model</b>	<b>Odds Ratio (OR) for association with SRQ-20 score ≥ 6 compared to no food aid in any of the last 10 years</b>	
	<b>Food aid some years</b>	<b>Food aid all years</b>
Crude OR adjusting for household clustering and study site	1.61 (0.72, 3.56)	<b>4.09 (1.52, 11.03)</b>
OR adjusting for household clustering, study site +		
Socio-demographic factors (n=1108)	1.47 (0.64, 3.36)	2.31 (0.81, 6.57)
Socio-economic status (n=1103)	1.48 (0.66, 3.32)	<b>3.02 (1.02, 8.93)</b>
Chronic illness, disability and stressful life events (n=1102)	1.33 (0.60, 2.95)	<b>2.83 (1.03, 7.74)</b>
<b>Final multivariable model including all potential confounders (n=1022)</b>	1.11 (0.49, 2.56)	1.51 (0.48, 4.75)

<sup>+</sup>SRQ-20 Self-Reporting Questionnaire, 20 item version



Table 3: Multiple logistic regression model for the association between receipt of food aid during the 1984-1985 famine and psychological morbidity (SRQ-20<sup>+</sup> ≥ 6)

<b>Regression model</b>	<b>Odds Ratio (OR) for association of food aid in 1984/1985 famine with SRQ-20 score ≥ 6</b>
Crude OR adjusting for household level clustering (n=1006)	<b>2.70 (1.55, 4.70)</b>
OR adjusting for household clustering and study site (1006)	<b>2.39 (1.26, 4.54)</b>
OR adjusting for household clustering, study site +	
Socio-demographic factors (n=1002)	1.46 (0.72, 2.96)
Socio-economic status (n=997)	<b>2.17 (1.08, 4.37)</b>
Chronic illness, disability and stressful life events (n=998)	<b>2.10 (1.06, 4.18)</b>
<b>Final multivariable model including all potential confounders (n=986)</b>	<b>1.48 (0.68, 3.22)</b>

<sup>+</sup>Self-Reporting Questionnaire, 20-item version

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Table 4: Multiple logistic regression model for the association between food aid received during the Derg regime (1974-1991) and psychological morbidity (SRQ-20<sup>+</sup> ≥ 20)

<i>Regression model</i>	<i>Odds Ratio (OR) for association with SRQ-20 ≥ 6 compared to no food aid throughout the Derg period</i>	
	<b>Food aid some years</b>	<b>Food aid most years</b>
OR adjusting for household clustering and study site (n=1028)	1.92 (0.90, 4.06)	<b>5.65 (2.51, 12.73)</b>
OR adjusting for household clustering, study site +		
Socio-demographic factors (n=1024)	1.36 (0.61, 3.02)	<b>2.98 (1.19, 7.49)</b>
Socio-economic status (n=1019)	1.93 (0.89, 4.22)	<b>4.59 (1.94, 10.87)</b>
Chronic illness, disability and stressful life events (n=1019)	1.52 (0.70, 3.30)	<b>3.98 (1.70, 9.32)</b>
<b>Final multivariable model including all potential confounders (n=1007)</b>	1.26 (0.56, 2.84)	2.11 (0.77, 5.83)

<sup>+</sup>Self-Reporting Questionnaire, 20-item version

Table 5: Multiple logistic regression model for the association between participation in the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and psychological morbidity (SRQ-20<sup>‡</sup> ≥ 20)

<i>Regression model</i>	<i>Odds Ratio (OR) for association between PSNP participation and SRQ-20 score ≥ 6</i>
Crude OR adjusting for household level clustering (n=559)	0.81 (0.42, 1.55)
OR adjusting for household clustering and study site (n = 559)	0.87 (0.44, 1.72)
OR adjusting for household clustering, study site + Socio-demographic factors (n=559)	0.75 (0.39, 1.45)
Socio-economic status (n=555)	0.77 (0.38, 1.58)
III-health and stressful life events (n=552)	0.81 (0.41, 1.61)
<b>Final multivariable model (n=548)</b>	<b>0.61 (0.30, 1.30)</b>

<sup>‡</sup>Self-Reporting Questionnaire, 20-item version

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**Table 6: Univariate associations between food aid, potential confounders and psychological morbidity (SRQ-20<sup>±</sup> ≥ 6)**

	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>Crude Odds Ratio for association with SRQ-20 score ≥ 6</i>
<b><i>Aid indicators</i></b>		
Aid in last 10 years (n=1112)		Ref
No years	431 (38.7)	1.61 (0.72, 3.56)
Some years	622 (55.8)	<b>4.09 (1.52, 11.03)</b>
Every years	61 (5.5)	<b>2.39 (1.26, 4.54)</b>
Received aid during 1984 / 1985 famine (n=1006)	408 (40.5)	
Received aid during Derg period (n=1028)		Ref.
None	580 (56.3)	<b>2.26 (1.19, 4.29)</b>
Some years	341 (33.1)	<b>7.00 (3.46, 14.20)</b>
Most years	109 (10.6)	0.81 (0.42, 1.55)
Participated in public works or direct beneficiary (n=559 <sup>†</sup> )	350 (42.0)	
<b><i>Socio-demographic characteristics</i></b>		
Age (years) (n=1112)	Mean (41.7) (SD 16.12)	<b>1.04 (1.02, 1.05)</b>
Male sex (n=1111)	537 (48.3)	0.92 (0.55, 1.53)
No formal education (n=1109)	837 (75.3)	1.19 (0.62, 2.29)

Not married (n=1109)	179 (16.1)	<b>2.85 (1.63, 4.99)</b>
Household size (n=615)		
1 to 2	109 (17.7)	Ref
3 to 5	285 (46.3)	0.72 (0.33, 1.62)
6 or more	221 (35.9)	0.65 (0.28, 1.49)
<b>Socio-economic status</b>		
Land size ( <i>timads</i> ) (n=1105)		
0 to 2.00	450 (40.7)	Ref
2.01 to 4.00	446 (40.3)	0.60 (0.33, 1.09)
4.01 and over	211 (19.1)	1.18 (0.58, 2.40)
Number of cattle (n=1081)		
0	222 (20.5)	Ref
1 to 3	597 (55.1)	0.79 (0.42, 1.48)
4 or more	264 (24.4)	0.62 (0.24, 1.62)
Number of sheep / goats (n=1033)		
0	553 (53.4)	Ref
1 to 3	290 (28.0)	0.74 (0.38, 1.45)
4 or more	192 (18.6)	0.58 (0.24, 1.40)
Sometimes / never enough food in childhood (n=1111)		

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	181 (16.3)	0.83 (0.39, 1.74)
Often or always serious food shortfall in last 10 years (n=1110)		<b>3.81 (2.25, 6.46)</b>
Months of serious food shortfall in last year (n=991)		
0		
1 to 3	335 (33.8)	Ref
4 or more	414 (41.8)	1.77 (0.70, 4.48)
	242 (24.4)	<b>2.83 (1.18, 6.76)</b>
<b>Other potential confounders</b>		
Ever served in armed forces (n=1102)	40 (3.6)	0.98 (0.12, 7.76)
Suffering from chronic illness or disability (n=1104)	98 (8.9)	<b>5.28 (2.77, 10.05)</b>
Stressful life events (n=1112)	296 (26.6)	<b>Ref</b>
1 life event	359 (32.2)	<b>5.38 (1.52, 19.07)</b>
2 or more life events	148 (53.4)	<b>6.61 (1.96, 22.29)</b>

\*Adjusted for household level of clustering and research area; <sup>‡</sup>Self-Reporting Questionnaire, 20-item version; <sup>†</sup> Analysis restricted to respondents from Ibenat and Sekota.

Table 7: Multivariable model of factors associated with psychological morbidity (SRQ-20 score  $\geq 6$ )

	<i>Crude odds ratio (OR) adjusted for household clustering (95% CI)</i>	<i>Multivariable model (n=1090)</i>
Amount of food aid in last 10 years		
No years	Ref	Ref
Some years	<b>2.76 (1.40, 5.45)</b>	1.12 (0.49, 2.56)
All years	<b>7.47 (3.01, 18.54)</b>	1.51 (0.48, 4.75)
Research area		
Food secure / no aid (Yetmen)	Ref.	Ref
Food insecure / sporadic aid (Dinki)	<b>4.53 (1.51, 13.59)</b>	2.82 (0.71, 11.13)
Food insecure /PSNP (Ibenat)	<b>4.65 (1.56, 13.86)</b>	3.55 (0.98, 12.90)
Food insecure /PSNP (Sekota)	<b>6.50 (2.20,19.20)</b>	3.90 (0.95, 16.02)
<i>Socio-demographic characteristics</i>		
Age (years)	<b>1.03 (1.02, 1.05)</b>	<b>1.03 (1.01, 1.05)</b>
Male gender	0.91 (0.55, 1.50)	0.86 (0.46, 1.61)
Not married	<b>2.81 (1.61, 4.90)</b>	1.26 (0.60, 2.67)
<i>Socio-economic status</i>		
Land size ( <i>timads</i> ):		
0 to 2.00	Ref	Ref

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2.01 to 4.00	<b>0.45 (0.25, 0.83)</b>	<b>0.44 (0.23, 0.84)</b>
4.01 and over	0.73 (0.38, 1.42)	0.99 (0.44, 2.20)
Often / always serious food shortfall in last 10 years	<b>4.28 (2.55, 7.20)</b>	<b>2.76 (1.30, 5.81)</b>
<b><i>Other potential confounders</i></b>		
Suffering from chronic illness or disability	<b>4.47 (2.42, 8.28)</b>	<b>2.75 (1.30, 5.81)</b>
Stressful life events		
None	<b>Ref</b>	<b>Ref</b>
1 life event	<b>6.09 (1.78, 20.86)</b>	<b>3.85 (1.04, 14.35)</b>
2 or more life events	<b>9.09 (2.78, 29.78)</b>	<b>4.57 (1.25, 16.72)</b>



## **Appendix II: Self-Reporting Questionnaire**

This appendix includes the English and Amharic versions of the SRQ that have been used in numerous studies, the English version of the SRQ-F 29 and Amharic versions of the SRQ-30 used in this study.

### **A. English Version of the SRQ-20**

- 1) Do you often have headaches?
- 2) Is your appetite poor?
- 3) Do you sleep badly?
- 4) Are you easily frightened?
- 5) Do your hands shake?
- 6) Do you feel nervous, tense or worried?
- 7) Is your digestion poor?
- 8) Do you have trouble thinking clearly?
- 9) Do you feel unhappy?
- 10) Do you cry more than usual?
- 11) Do you find it difficult to enjoy your daily activities?
- 12) Do you find it difficult to make decisions?
- 13) Is your daily work suffering?
- 14) Are you unable to play a useful part in life?
- 15) Have you lost interest in things?
- 16) Do you feel that you are a worthless person?
- 17) Has the thought of ending your life been on your mind?
- 18) Do you feel tired all the time?
- 19) Do you have uncomfortable feelings in your stomach?
- 20) Are you easily tired?

**B. Standard Amharic Version of the SRQ-20**

1) ባለፉት 30 ቀናት ራስ ምታት ብዙ ጊዜ ያምዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
2) የምግብ ፍላጎትዎ ቀንሷል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
3) የእንቅልፍ ችግር አለዎት?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
4) ባለፉት 30 ቀናት በቀላሉ ፍርሀት ፍርሀት ይለዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
5) እጆችዎ ይንቀጠቀጣሉ?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
6) መረበሽ መጠብብ ወይም መጨነቅ ይበዛብዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
7) ባለፉት 30 ቀናት ምግብ ከበሉ በኋላ ሆድዎን ይከብድዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
8) በትክክል ማሰብ ይቸግርዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
9) የደስታ ማጣት ስሜት አለዎት?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
10) ባለፉት 30 ቀናት ያለበቁ ምክንያት እምባ እምባ ይልዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
11) በየቀኑ በሚሠሯቸው ሥራዎች መደሰት ይቸግርዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
12) በእለት ተለት ተግባርዎ ውሳኔ መወሰን ያስቸግርዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
13) ባለፉት 30 ቀናት የየእለት ተግባርዎን ለመፈጸም ያስቸግርዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
14) በአካባቢዎ ጠቃሚ ተሳትፎ ማድረግ ያስቸግርዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
15) በአንዳንድ ነገሮች ላይ የነበረዎት ፍላጎት/ ስሜት/ ጠፍቷል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
16) ባለፉት 30 ቀናት የማልጠቅም ሰው ነኝ ብለው ያሰባሉ?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
17) ሕይወትዎን አስጠልቶዎት ሞቼ ባረፍኩ ያሉበት ጊዜ አለ?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0

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18) ሁል ጊዜ ድካም ይሰማዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
19) ባለፉት 30 ቀናት ሆድዎ ይረበሻል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
20) በቀላሉ ይደክማሉ?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0

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**C. English Version of the SRQ F-29**

- 1) Do you often have headaches?  
Yes / No
- 2) Is your appetite poor?  
Yes / No
- 3) Do you sleep badly?  
Yes / No
- 4) Are you easily frightened?  
Yes / No
- 5) Do your hands shake?  
Yes / No
- 6) Do you feel nervous, tense or worried?  
Yes / No
- 7) Is your digestion poor?  
Yes / No
- 8) Do you have trouble thinking clearly?  
Yes / No
- 9) Do you feel unhappy?  
Yes / No
- 10) Do you cry more than usual?  
Yes / No
- 11) Do you find it difficult to make decisions?  
Yes / No
- 12) Is your daily work suffering?  
Yes / No
- 13) Are you unable to play a useful part in life?  
Yes / No
- 14) Have you lost interest in things?  
Yes / No
- 15) Do you feel that you are a worthless person?  
Yes / No
- 16) Has the thought of ending your life been on your mind?  
Yes / No

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- 17) Do you feel tired all the time?  
Yes / No
- 18) Do you have uncomfortable feelings in your stomach?  
Yes / No
- 19) Are you easily tired?  
Yes / No
- 20) Do you feel that someone has been trying to harm you in some way?  
Yes / No
- 21) Have you noticed any interference or anything else unusual with your thinking?  
Yes / No
- 22) Do you ever hear voices without knowing where they come from,  
and that other people can't hear? Yes / No
- 23) Do you easily get angry at other people?  
Yes/ No
- 24) Do you feel that someone has insulted or humiliated you?  
Yes / No
- 25) Do you feel that someone has cursed you?  
Yes / No
- 26) Do you feel that someone is jealous of you?  
Yes / No
- 27) Do you feel crawling sensations under your skin?  
Yes / No
- 28) Do you feel burning sensations in your scalp or all over the body?  
Yes / No
- 29) Do you often feel your heart is beating too fast?  
Yes / No

**D. Amharic Version of the SRQ-30 used in this study**

1) ራስ ምታት ብዙ ጊዜ ያምዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
2) የምግብ ፍላጎትዎ ቀንሷል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
3) የእንቅልፍ ችግር አለቦዎት?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
4) በቀላሉ ፍርሀት ፍርሀት ይለዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
5) እጆቻዎ ይንቀጠቀጣሉ?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
6) መረበሽ መጠበብ ወይም መጨነቅ ይመስልዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
7) ምግብ ከበሉ በኋላ ሆድዎን ይከብድዎታል? (ምግብ አልፈጭ ይሰዎታል)	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
8) በግልጽ ማሰብ ይቸግርዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
9) ደስተኛ ያለመሆን ሰሜት ይመስልዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
10) ያለበቂ ምክንያት እምባ እምባ ይልዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
11) በየቀኑ በሚሠሯቸው ሥራዎች መደስት ይቸግርዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
12) በእለት ተለት ተግባርዎ ውሳኔ መወሰን ያስቸግርዎታል ?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
13) የየእለት ተግባርዎን ለመፈጸም ያስቸግርዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
14) በአካባቢዎ ጠቃሚ ተሳትፎ (ሚና) ማድረግ ያስቸግርዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
15) በአንዳንድ ነገሮች ላይ የነበረዎት ፍላጎት/ ስሜት/ ጠፍቷል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
16) የማልጠቅም (የማልረባ) ሰው ነኝ ብለው ያሰባሉ?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
17) ሕይወትዎን አስጠልቶዎት ሞቼ ባረፍኩ ያሉበት (ያሰቡበት) ጊዜ አለ?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0
18) ሁል ጊዜ ድካም ይሰማዎታል?	አዎን	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	የለም <input type="checkbox"/> 0

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19) ሆድዎ ይረበሻል?	አዎን	[ ] 1	የለም	[ ] 0
20) በቀላሉ ይደክማሉ?	አዎን	[ ] 1	የለም	[ ] 0
21) ሰው በሆነ መንገድ ሊጎዳዎ የሚሞክር ይመስልዎታል?	አዎን	[ ] 1	የለም	[ ] 0
22) ሃሳብዎ ውስጥ ያልተለመዱ ነገሮች ጣልቃ እየገቡ ያስቸግርዎታል?	አዎን	[ ] 1	የለም	[ ] 0
23) ለሌሎች ሰዎች የማይሰማ ወይም ከየት እንደመጣ ግልጽ ያልሆነ ድምፅ ይሰማዎታል?	አዎን	[ ] 1	የለም	[ ] 0
24) በሌሎች ሰዎች ላይ በቀላሉ ይናደዳሉ?	አዎን	[ ] 1	የለም	[ ] 0
25) ሰው ይሰድበኛል ወይም ያዋርደኛል የሚል ስሜት ይሰማዎታል?	አዎን	[ ] 1	የለም	[ ] 0
26) ሰው ረግሞኛል ብለው ያስባሉ?	አዎን	[ ] 1	የለም	[ ] 0
27) የሚቀናብዎት (ምቀኛ) ሰው ያለ ይመስልዎታል?	አዎን	[ ] 1	የለም	[ ] 0
28) ከቆዳዎ በታች የሚንቀሳቀስ ወይም የሚወር ነገር ያለ ይመስልዎታል?	አዎን	[ ] 1	የለም	[ ] 0
29) ከራስዎ ፀጉር ሥር ወይም በመላው የሰውነትዎ ክፍል እንደእሳት የሚያቃጥል ስሜት ይሰሞዎታል?	አዎን	[ ] 1	የለም	[ ] 0
30) የልብዎን ትርታ (መምታት ፍጥነት) አብዛኛውን የጨመረ መስሎ ይሰማዎታል?	አዎን	[ ] 1	የለም	[ ] 0

Main changes from the SRQ-20 and SRQ-29 are bolded and/or in brackets.

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# **The Importance of Labor for Food Security: Household Experiences in Ebinat *Woreda*, Amhara Region<sup>1</sup>**

*Aschale Dagnachew Siyoum*

## **Introduction**

Development interventions, including safety net provisions, often build on the notion that local people provide a counterpart contribution by providing labor, either for the implementation of the programme or for Public Works. The idea of a counterpart contribution is in response to the fear that people that are given free resource transfers will develop a dependency attitude and lack the motivation to follow up on the initiated activities. As poor people have no capital assets to provide, their contribution usually consist of labor (Grosh *et al.*, 2008; Zoomers, 1999). The question, however, is whether the labor demands are realistic and how they affect the outcomes of the intervention. This chapter tries to answer this question by looking at the experience of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme.

The Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) is one of the main components of the Ethiopian government's Food Security Programme. In combination with the Other Food Security Programme (OFSP)<sup>2</sup> and broader development interventions, it is designed to achieve household food security. Persistent food insecurity is a major problem in many parts of Ethiopia and results from several interacting factors including drought, poor soil fertility, environmental degradation, population pressure, land scarcity and lack of employment (Hoddinott *et al.*, 2011). The response of the Ethiopian government to the prevailing food security problem was, until 2005, dominated by emergency relief supported by an annual appeal mechanism (MoARD, 2009). However, after years of receiving emergency aid, the majority of the recipient households remained chronically food insecure and experienced significant food gaps even in good years (Hoddinott *et al.*, 2011). This situation motivated the

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is the result of fieldwork conducted in the framework of the Linking Emergency Aid and Food Security programme (LEAFS). See [www.wur.disasterstudies.nl](http://www.wur.disasterstudies.nl). We gratefully acknowledge the funding of WOTRO of the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) for this programme.

<sup>2</sup> Following the first phase of the PSNP (2005-9) the OFSP was modified by the current Household Asset Building Programme (HABP) and the Complementary Community Investment programme.

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Ethiopian government and its international partners to introduce a change in the policy approach with the aim of resolving the food insecurity problem and end the country's dependence on food aid. A social policy was introduced shifting away from ad hoc annual emergency relief programmes to multi-annual support in the form of the PSNP. Safety net programmes are generally intended to protect the poorest people in society or those who find themselves temporarily below a given welfare level (Tagel, 2008). In Ethiopia, the PSNP programme was launched in 2005 with the aim of protecting chronically food insecure households from hunger and asset depletion and to lift them out of poverty and food insecurity in the long term (MoARD, 2006).

The PSNP programme provides six months of food or cash transfers annually for a five year period to chronically food insecure households in selected food insecure districts. It aims to protect the poor from depleting their assets through providing a predictable, guaranteed and timely transfer (MoARD, 2004; Bishop and Hilhorst, 2010) while at the same time creating assets at the community level (MoARD, 2004). Central to the success of the programme is the reliability, timeliness and productivity of the transfers (de Gramont *et al.*, 2007; Devereux *et al.*, 2006; Slater *et al.*, 2006). The programme consists of two main components. The first one is a labor intensive Public Works component for able-bodied household members who receive resource transfers on the basis of their participation in community based public work. The second one is a Direct Support component for chronically food insecure and vulnerable households who have no labor or any other means of support. PSNP Public Work beneficiary households are expected to work on community based works for at least five days per month per household member in order to be eligible for safety net transfers (MoARD, 2004).

Public Work programmes that require labor inputs from beneficiary households have been important safety net interventions in the West since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as for example following the 1817 famine in England. Several other Western countries also adopted different types of public work programmes during the great depression in the early 1930s and in the post-war years to provide income transfers to selected groups of people (Dejardin, 1996; Webb, 2002; Grosh *et al.*, 2008). In the developing countries, especially in Asia and Africa, these kinds of public work programmes were introduced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They were further expanded during the second half of the century in the form of food-for-work programmes in which participants were paid in food in exchange for their labor. Public work programmes typically revolves around projects that require beneficiary households to carry out labor intensive activities with the aim of building Public assets that can help

communities in their effort to create self-sustaining livelihoods (Humphrey, 2002; Grosh *et al.*, 2008).

In Ethiopia similar programmes requiring labor inputs from beneficiary households started after the country's devastating famine in 1974-75. From the late 1970s onwards different types of food security interventions with a public work component were implemented in the country in the form of food-for-work (FFW) programmes. The largest FFW programme in Ethiopia, and in Africa, was Project 2488 which focuses on soil and water conservation and implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP). Similar programmes were also implemented in the country during the 1990s and early 2000s including the Employment Based Safety Nets (EBSN) and the Employment Generation Scheme (EGS) (Humphrey, 2002). In 2005, the Ethiopian government introduced the PSNP programme incorporating elements of earlier FFW programmes that had been implemented in the country since the 1970s. All these programmes require beneficiary households to invest labor in order to be eligible for resource transfers. In rural Ethiopia, where agricultural activities are labor intensive, interventions which require labor from beneficiary households can have serious implication for household food security. Labor-poor households in particular can be affected negatively especially when public work labor demands compete with farm related labor demands.

Several studies have examined the relationship between labor availability and food security in Ethiopia. Kidane *et al.* (2005), for example, argued that, in rural Ethiopia, where subsistence agriculture is the dominant form of the rural economy, availability of household labor is an important determinant of household productivity and food security. Subsistence agricultural systems are characterised by heavy reliance on farm labor (Topouzis, 1999) and labor shortages is often a typical characteristic of poor households. Labor shortages restrict a households' ability to undertake labor intensive agricultural activities (Getaneh, 2004; Pankhurst and Bevan, 2004). On the other hand, households with abundant labor are better positioned to increase the productivity of their land and are therefore more likely to achieve household food security. Availability of a large household labor force is also an advantage in ensuring household food security, mainly through investing the available labor in non-farm income earning activities (Hofferth, 2004, Kidane *et al.*, 2005). The 'food economy baseline studies' conducted by Save the Children UK in rural Ethiopia have also showed that availability of household labor is one of the major factors determining relative wealth and household food security status, in combination with farm size and access to draught power (Boudreau, 1998; Chapman and Haile Kiros, 1999; Haile Kiros *et al.*, 2000).

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While labor is such a crucial factor in food security, it is remarkable that the effects of Public Works as part of the PSNP have not received much attention. An exception is the study conducted by Slater *et al.* (2006) who examined the differential impact of the PSNP at its early stages of implementation. They found that labor affects the benefits that households can derive from the PSNP programme. This chapter takes up this theme with an in-depth study at household level of the labor aspects of the PSNP. It examines the differential impacts of the PSNP and OFSP programmes for different categories of households, grouped in terms of household labor availability in a drought-prone, chronically food-insecure district in the northern highlands of Ethiopia. The results of this study will contribute to the debate regarding the role of safety net programmes on household food security in situations of chronic food-insecurity. The chapter also aims to contribute to the discussion about poor people being required to contribute labor in exchange for entitlements in development programming.

The chapter will first describe the study area followed by the methodology of the research and an introduction to the PSNP in Ebinat District, Amhara National Regional State. This is followed by an analysis of the effects of the PSNP on three types of households: labor-poor, labor-sufficient and labor-rich households. It shows that the impact of the PSNP and OFSP programmes varies from one household category to another, mainly based on the availability of household labor. Irrespective of land ownership, labor-poor households were found to be more vulnerable than labor-rich households who managed to increase their household productivity even without owning enough land to feed themselves. The chapter suggests a careful rethink of the labor component of the PSNP, especially for labor-poor households, because labor requirements of the PSNP's Public Works component risks discrediting the productive objective of the programme.

### **The Study Area**

This study was undertaken in Ebinat District, one of the chronically food-insecure districts of Amhara region. The District has a total population of about 221,000 people (CSA, 2007). Of the total population, 94 percent live in rural areas and 95 percent of that rural population is dependent on rainfed subsistence agricultural production. Mixed farming is typical of the area with a combination of crop production, livestock rearing and agricultural labor. Crop production is dependent on *meher* rains, the main rainy season which lasts from June to September and which provide well growing conditions for longer maturing crops. Wheat, barley, sorghum and *teff* are the main crops cultivated for consumption while lentils, beans and oil seeds are the main cash crops. Average



production of cereal is very low which makes the district more dependent on government transfers to feed the chronically food insecure households.

A large number of rural households in the district experience severe food shortages of more than six months during the year. According to information obtained from the District Agricultural and Rural Development Office, the district has experienced both chronic and acute food insecurity since the mid-1980s caused by insufficient agricultural productivity. This has been mainly attributed to small land holdings per household, severe land degradation and poor soil fertility, erratic and unpredictable rainfall, lack of alternative off-farm income earning opportunities, absence of proper agricultural extension programmes, and increased population pressures. A large number of rural households are, therefore, food insecure and depend on government and non-governmental transfers to cover annual household food shortages. Since 2005, about one-third of the rural population received PSNP safety net transfers to cover food gaps.

In the study area, food insecurity is a year-round phenomenon and peaks usually between June and August, the main hunger season. In terms of households' self-reported food security status, survey results show that, out of the interviewed 80 households from the two villages, about 47 percent of the households experienced permanent food insecurity throughout the year and they are depending on government transfers and other social support. About 28 percent of the respondents mentioned that their situation varies from season to season mainly depending on the frequency and distribution of rainfall whereas 25 percent of the respondents reported short-term food insecurity. Interview results also showed that female-headed and households headed by elderly people tend to be more food insecure than male-headed and younger households.

## **Methodology**

The chapter is based on ethnographic fieldwork undertaken from February 2009 to July 2010 in two drought-affected, chronically food-insecure highland villages of Northern Ethiopia. Ethnographic fieldwork involves studying people's practices from their own perspectives in their own setting. It provides researchers an opportunity to study people's beliefs and actions on a daily basis (Riemer, 2009). Observation is the key method in ethnography research and is the main tool for collecting data (Geertz, 1983; Riemer, 2009). However, other methods of data collection including life histories and in-depth interviews can also be part of the ethnographic approach to fieldwork. The diversity of research methods used to collect data allows an ethnographer to cross check the accuracy

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of the information collected and is vital in validating the findings (Riemer, 2009).

This research used a combination of data collection instruments including household survey, in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The research is based on 80 PSNP beneficiary households living in the two selected villages. All PSNP beneficiary households in the two research villages were interviewed using a structured survey questionnaire to collect general household data. Survey data and focus group discussions were used to classify households into different categories on the basis of labor availability. Of the total 80 households in the two villages, 20 households were selected for in-depth interviews throughout the fieldwork period in order to explore in greater detail the role of labor in household food security under the PSNP programme. These households were interviewed on a monthly basis and provided detailed information that helped to understand the role of labor in household livelihoods within the safety net framework.

In addition to the household survey and in-depth household interviews, seven key informant interviews were undertaken with village elders, Kebele<sup>3</sup> administrators and development agents in both villages as well as with the PSNP coordinator at the District Agricultural Office. PSNP manuals, reports and other secondary materials were also used as sources of data.

The study does not aim to show how the PSNP operates as a whole. It aims to reveal the labor implications of the PSNP programme by looking at the day-to-day experiences of PSNP beneficiary households in two villages trying to achieve household food security on the basis of their labor availability.

In order to explore the role and impact of labor availability on rural livelihoods households were divided into three groups based: these categories are used throughout the chapter. Direct support beneficiary households are excluded from the analysis since those households do not have any labor available and therefore discussions on labor availability are not relevant within the scope of this study. The analysis is, therefore, based only on the PSNP Public Work beneficiary households which are required to contribute labor in exchange for receiving resource transfers. PSNP Public work households were classified into three categories based on the availability of able-bodied household members compared with the total household family size (Table 1): 1) labor-poor PSNP Public work beneficiary households 2) labor-sufficient PSNP Public work

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<sup>3</sup>Lowest tier of administration next to the district composed of groups of villages

beneficiary households and 3) labor-rich PSNP Public work beneficiary households.

*Table 1: Categorisation of households into four groups*

	Direct Support HHs	Public Work beneficiary households		
		Labor poor	Labor sufficient	Labor rich
Number of HHs	7	32	23	18
Proportion of HHs (percent)	8.8	40.0	28.7	22.5
Working member of a HH	0	1-2	2-3	4-6
Household size	1-3	3-6	4-6	5-8
Land holding size(Ha)	0-0.5	0.0-0.75	0.5-1.0	0.5-2.0
Food gaps (in months)	9-10	6-9	5-6	3-5

SOURCE: Field Survey, January 2010

## **PSNP transfers and household food security**

Since the beginning of the PSNP programme in 2005, about 37 percent of the rural population in the study area (around 76,000 people) received support from the PSNP programme in the form of food and/or cash transfer. Of the total PSNP beneficiary households, 91 percent were Public Work participants while the remaining 9 percent were Direct Support beneficiaries. Of the total number of beneficiary households in the district, according to survey results, about 60 percent of them acknowledged that the PSNP has helped them to smooth consumption. However, despite the large number of PSNP beneficiary households in the district, only few households reported a positive impact in terms of livelihood improvement and long-term household food security (Table 2).

*Table 2: Households which reported positive impact of the PSNP programme*

Impact	No of HHs	Percentage
Consumption smoothing	48	60
Asset protection	24	30
Ensuring household food security	12	15

SOURCE: Compiled by the author based on field survey, February 2010

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The limited impact of the PSNP programme in terms of long-term food security is also illustrated by the low number and rate of households who graduated from the PSNP by the end of the first phase of the programme in 2009. Contrary to government expectations, just nine percent of the total PSNP Public Work beneficiary caseload had graduated in the Amhara region, meaning that they become food self-sufficient and are no longer eligible for safety net transfers, by 2009. In the study area, about five percent of the Public Work beneficiary households graduated by the end of the first phase of the PSNP programme. Moreover, most of these considered they had been prematurely graduated and were in fact still food-insecure (Aschale Siyoum *et al.*, forthcoming).

Our survey data show that PSNP was instrumental in smoothing food consumption for 60 percent of households. However, respondents also reported that the PSNP resource transfers were not sufficient to cover their entire food gap. Over half of the interviewed beneficiary households argued that although they were receiving PSNP transfers, they were still forced to sell their productive assets and take on credit to cover their food shortages (see Table 3). Only a limited number of households were able to use PSNP transfers to cover their food shortages, protect their assets and improve their risk-taking behaviour through investing PSNP cash transfer in other income-earning activities.

It has been known that the impact of the PSNP and OFSP programmes on household food security and long-term livelihoods differs according to the nature and type of households participating in the PSNP. Slater *et al.* (2006) argued in their research that rural households in Ethiopia are not all the same. Households differ in many ways, including in terms of their resources, their objectives, the strategies they adopt, the problems they encounter, and the success they have at making a living. As illustrated below, our results show that not only the impact of the PSNP and OFSP programmes are different across different categories of households but also that these differences are mainly based on the availability of household labor. The following section of the chapter discusses ways in which the PSNP and OFSP programmes affect the three major categories of Public Work beneficiary households.

*Table 3: Additional mechanisms devised by PSNP beneficiaries to cover food shortages*

Household mechanisms	No.	Percentages
Sale of household assets	37	46
Off-farm activities	29	36
Use of credit	26	33

SOURCE: Field Survey, May 2010

## **Labor-poor Public Works beneficiary households**

This group is composed of 32 Public Works beneficiary households who are labor poor. These are households that typically have one or two adults that can provide labor, but cannot meet the labor demand imposed by the PSNP on the basis of the number of family members. These include mainly male-headed poor households without sufficient labor, female-headed households with young children and households headed by elderly people with under age dependents (mainly below 12 years of age). This group of households account for about 40 percent of the total number of beneficiary households. Most of the households have a plot of land ranging from 0.25 to 0.75 hectare, some households are landless. Household size ranges from three to six persons and households experience a food gap of six to nine months. Although most of the households have access to land, the majority reported that they are not able to plough their land and are therefore forced to rent it out due to lack of household labor availability. Households that are unable to farm their land and rent out for others can be divided into two groups. The first group are those households who have land but lack labor, which is the case for Direct Support beneficiaries. Such households do not face labor competition as they have no labor available and are not expected to participate in Public Works.

These households are not included in the analysis in this chapter. The second one is those households who have labor but those who cannot plough their land due to labor competition to undertake both the Public Works and own farms. So what these households do is to rent out their land in unfavourable terms and invest their labor in Public Works. Under current sharecropping arrangements, they receive a quarter to half of the production and therefore increasingly depend on PSNP transfers. This kind of land rent is not an indication of labor shortages alone. Households sometimes rent their land due to shortage of animal traction. However, interviews showed that labor was the crucial factor, because if they had more labor they could have exchanged their labor for the use of an ox to plough their land. The community has an informal arrangement in which a farmer can work on another farmer's land for two days in return for using an ox to plough his own land for one day.

Households in this group who own land expressed their concern that due to their involvement in Public Works they face competing labor claims between the programme and their own agricultural activities. In conditions of competing labor claims poor households' uncertainty about securing sufficient crop production from their land force them to subcontract their land and invest their limited labor in the PSNP to secure resource transfers. Such type of decisions to

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securing short-term survival over long term at the expense of long-term preservation is what Wood (2003) called the 'Faustian bargain'.

PSNP officials claim that no PSNP labor is required during the peak agricultural season from January to June. However, it appears that government officials consider seeding, weeding and harvesting as the main agricultural activities. For farmers, however, one of the most labor intensive agricultural activities is land preparation and this coincides with PSNP Public Work activities. Brown *et al.* (1994), for example, argued that factors which diminish labor quantity and/or quality will increase the incidence and depth of household vulnerability to poverty and food insecurity. In this regard, poor households in the study area are characterised by an overwhelming reliance on labor as their single most important factor both from a production and income generation perspective. Participation in PSNP Public Works reduces their available labor for both their farming and off-farm activities. This finding is contradictory to the findings of the World Bank which argues that in developing countries safety net programmes often do not reduce labor efforts substantially (Grosh *et al.*, 2008). The following account of one labor-poor household illustrates the labor implication of the PSNP programme clearly.

*In my household I am the only one who can work in the safety net. I work throughout the month and therefore I don't have the time to plough my land though I own an ox. If there were no public works I would plough my land myself through Mekenajo [a term to denote ox sharing arrangements where two farmers pair up their oxen to plough their land in turn] to increase my benefit rather than renting out my land. Unfortunately I do not have enough labor in my household and, therefore, I am forced to rent out my land to another farmer. I have done this for the last three years and as part of the crop sharing arrangement I received only one-third of the harvest.*

In environmentally degraded areas, like the study area, diversification of income sources helps households to protect their income and food consumption levels. In sub-Saharan Africa where agriculture is often risky, non-farm activities have a greater role in stabilising household consumption providing on average almost 60 percent of rural household income (Brown *et al.*, 1994). For labor-poor households in Ethiopia, however, participation in the PSNP's Public Works limits households' opportunities to engage in non-farm activities which one way or the other affects household food security. Some of the households in this group can sometimes engage in daily labor, mainly weeding and harvesting, on other people's farms to supplement their income in a small way. Labor absorption by the safety net's public work activities, therefore, affects not only households' farm activities but also limits the possibility of labor-poor

households' income diversification as can be illustrated by an the following interview excerpt:

*I have five family members and I am the only one who can work in the safety net since my children are not yet ready to work and my wife is breast feeding our new born child. I am working in the safety net programme throughout the month to get the safety net transfer for all my family. Therefore I do not have time to work on my land or in other income-generating activities. The safety net transfer, however, is not enough to cover our food shortage and we always face food gaps even with the safety net support. If there were no public work requirements I could have used my labor to plough my land or to engage in other activities to earn more income to cover our food gaps.*

For this group of households, PSNP transfers are utilised as a key resource to smooth food consumption. For some households, part of the PSNP transfer is used to cover other household expenditures and to pay back loans, particularly when PSNP resource transfers come in the form of cash. This further reduces the consumption smoothing role of the PSNP transfer (Table 4) and makes households more vulnerable to falling back into destitution rather than improving their livelihoods.

Table 4: Use of PSNP transfers by labor-poor households

Use	No.	Percentage
Consumption smoothing	18	56.2
Consumption smoothing and debt repayment	8	25.0
Consumption smoothing and other expenditure	6	18.8
Total	32	100.0

SOURCE: Field Survey, March 2010

A number of households in this group also depend on credit from the Amhara Credit and Saving Institution (ACSI), Church and other social organisations. Although credit is provided for productive investment, households divert the credit to smooth food consumption during periods of shortage. This risks further impoverishment due to their inability to repay their loans from loan-financed business activities. Some of the households used the PSNP cash transfer for debt repayment while at the same time taking another loan for consumption purposes thus entering a vicious cycle of indebtedness (Aschale Siyoum *et al*, forthcoming). This can be illustrated by the following interview excerpt:

*Last year I took credit for livestock fattening but since I do not have many people in the house to help me in this activity I used the money to purchase*

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*fertiliser. However, due to the drought last year part of the harvest was lost and I was unable to repay the loan. So I was forced to sell my ox in order to pay back the loan. Failing to repay my loan would mean that I will not receive a loan again and that means I will face a serious problem. After repaying my loan I am now planning to take another loan so that I can buy an ox and plough my land.*

The problems encountered by this group of households are aggravated by operational problems within the PSNP in particular the lack of full-family targeting and the timing of transfers. Full-family targeting refers to the provision of sufficient resources to households to meet all family members' consumption needs in order to help households avoid the sale of their productive assets to compensate for partial transfers. Lack of full-family targeting forces households to sell their productive assets to meet consumption needs at the risk of increasing their vulnerability. The absence of a tailored approach to PSNP transfer is also another major issue. PSNP transfers are provided for a maximum of six months. Therefore, households facing food gaps of more than six months are forced to sell their productive assets in order to cover their food needs. This makes households more vulnerable to falling back into destitution rather than improving their livelihoods.

For most households in this group the PSNP has no impact on household asset protection or on long-term household food security (see Table 4). In fact, interview results show that about 81 percent of the households in this category reported that they have been forced to sell their assets, in particular their livestock. This happens even in normal years in order to buy food to cover household food shortages. Labor-poor households utilise most of their labor for public work activities: this offers only a limited effect in terms of smoothing consumption, let alone protecting their asset base and ensuring long-term food security.

### **Labor-sufficient households**

This group includes 23 households from our sample and they are largely dependent on agriculture but do not produce enough food due to factors including small land holdings, land degradation and lack of financial capital. These households account for about 29 percent of the total PSNP beneficiary households in the two research villages. Household size ranges from four to six household members and households typically face a food gap of between five to six months. Household landholding is reported to be between 0.5 and 1.0 hectare of land. This group of households utilise PSNP transfers primarily for consumption smoothing (Table 5 below). However, in addition to consumption smoothing, for about 55 percent of the households in this group, resource



transfers also contribute to protecting household assets. The majority of the households expressed that, when paid on time, PSNP transfers were instrumental in reducing the sale of their productive assets for consumption smoothing.

*Table 5: Use of PSNP transfer by labor sufficient households*

Use	No.	Percentage
Consumption smoothing	14	61
Consumption smoothing and debt repayment	5	22
Consumption smoothing and other expenditure	4	17
Total	23	100

SOURCE: Field Survey, March 2010

Labor-sufficient households, nonetheless, reported a conflict of interest between the PSNP’s labor demands and their own agricultural practices. Households disclosed that, though they have a plot of land, production falls short of producing enough food to feed their household throughout the year. They thus depend on the PSNP transfers to cover their food shortages. Most of the households complained that investing their labor into the PSNP to have access to resource transfers meant that they could not engage in other non-farm activities to earn additional income to cover their food gaps. Due to insufficient production, about 48 percent of the households in this group also reported their dependence on credit for consumption, especially during critical periods. PSNP transfers make a relatively small contribution to their livelihoods which is partly due to the lack of full-family targeting, as can be illustrated by the following example:

*We do have sufficient labor in the household and we are using our labor both to participate in the safety net and work on our own land. But production falls short of what we need and therefore we depend on the safety net transfer for half of the year. However, we are not getting safety net transfer for all our household members and are therefore forced to sometimes take credit from ACSI and other sources to cover our food shortages. If all household members received safety net transfers we could have used the credit for other purposes.*

Households in this group also mentioned that they do not have confidence in the PSNP programme and are anxious that they will not get the same transfer for next year. Although the programme promises a multi-annual timely and reliable resource transfers, the frequent re-targeting exercises and the implementation of graduation in recent years makes them doubtful about the

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future. This undermines households' ability to utilise credit for productive investment. The following account from a farmer shows this clearly:

*We are now getting the safety net transfers but we are not sure whether we will get transfer for next year. If we knew for sure that we will continue to receive the safety net transfers we could have taken a large amount of credit to buy agricultural inputs to increase our productivity. However if we do not receive safety net transfers and if we don't get good production how can we repay the credit? Therefore, instead of putting ourselves in debt which we might not be able to pay, we decided not to take a loan as we are not sure if we will still get the PSNP transfer for next year or not.*

About 51 percent of the households in this group explained that PSNP also helped them to retain their household labor to work on their farm land, instead of migrating to seek wage labor in other areas. This situation also enabled some of the households to use the OFSP credit packages to increase their productive assets to a certain extent. However, access to OFSP loans was not easy to get and most of the households were not successful in securing credit, despite their interest in doing so. Of the total number of households in the group, 50 percent of them reported access to an OFSP loan. Households who had taken OFSP loans also reported that not all of the households in the group used the loan entirely for the intended purpose which is to increase household productive assets, mainly livestock. This is because of the need to cover other household expenses and to spread risks. 78 percent of the interviewed households in this group, who did receive an OFSP loan, diverted part of their loan to meet other household needs including loan repayment and consumption smoothing (see Table 6 below).

*Table 6: Use of OFSP loan by labor sufficient households*

Use	No.	Percentage
Livestock purchase	7	50.0
Loan repayment	6	42.8
Consumption smoothing and other expenses	5	35.7

SOURCE: Field Survey, March 2010

In general, results of the study revealed that, for this group of households, given the sufficient household labor availability together with small land holdings and meagre amount of safety net transfer, PSNP has a limited impact in terms of consumption smoothing and asset protection and in its contribution towards achieving long-term household food security. The major impact of PSNP for this group of households is consumption smoothing. It also enabled a

significant number of households in this group to reduce distress asset sales though a large number of them still depend on credit to cover part of their food shortages.

## Labor-rich households

This group of households, constituting around 23 percent of all PSNP beneficiary households in the two research villages, are labor-rich Public Works participant households. They largely depend on agriculture but nonetheless experience food gaps, even in good years. Households' food gaps range from three to six months. These are households with five to eight household members and with a land holding size in the range of 0.5 to 2.0 hectares, including the land they access by renting or share cropping arrangements. These households can be divided in to two types. The first type constitutes those households who own large plots of land of their own. The second type is made up of households who own a small plot of land themselves but farm larger plots of land through renting or share cropping arrangements. In all cases availability of abundant labor enables them to plough large plots of land. However, these households still face food shortage and PSNP transfers are an important source of food or cash and is said to be instrumental in smoothing consumption and protecting assets (Table 7).

Table 7: Use of PSNP transfer by labor rich households

Use	No.	Percentage
Consumption smoothing and asset protection	11	67
Consumption smoothing and asset building	4	22
Consumption smoothing and other expenditure	2	11
Total	18	100

SOURCE: Field Survey, March 2010

In some cases (22% of households), the transfers also helped to build assets. Some households, for example, reported the use of PSNP cash transfers for purchasing livestock (mainly goats and sheep) as illustrated in the following example:

*The safety net is helping us as we used some of the money to buy livestock. We do have enough labor and we use our labor to rent additional farm land. By farming more land we increased food production and therefore could use part of the cash transfers to buy livestock. This year, for example, we bought two goats using the money we received from the safety net transfer.*

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With households having enough labor most of them reported that they rented additional farmland, in particular from labor-constrained households, in order to maximise their agricultural income. Some of the households in this group also try to increase their income through small-scale irrigation using motor pumps to increase productivity. Some households also used their PSNP transfers to cover other household necessities thereby avoiding the sale of crops to pay for such expenditures (Table 7). An interviewed household exemplifies this as follows:

*Before the safety net, we were sometimes forced to sell part of our crop in order to cover other expenditures like clothing, sugar, coffee and to buy stationary for children to go to school. Now, thanks to the safety net programme, we are not selling crops any more to cover such expenditures. We are using part of the safety net cash transfers to buy such items and preserve our harvest for our own consumption.*

Households also use PSNP transfers to purchase food crops in times of need thereby avoiding the sale of productive assets like livestock to cover consumption needs. This group of households are also the ones who make the most use out of OFSP loans. Labor rich households reported that the predictability of income through the PSNP enabled them to take loans which in turn enabled them to engage in other income generating activities. About 72 percent of the households reported having access to OFSP loans. Of these households, the majority of them (69 percent) reported that they bought at least one productive asset using an OFSP loan. About 35 percent of the households also used OFSP loan to engage in other income-earning activities to supplement their household income.

In agriculturally risky environments households with more diversified sources of income are considered to be less vulnerable to food insecurity (Reardon *et al.*, 1992) and diversification of income sources generally protects household incomes and consumptions levels (Brown *et al.*, 1994). As compared to labor poor and labor sufficient households labor rich households reported a relatively diverse income base as a result of available labor within the household and access to loans. Nevertheless, it is also true that not all of the labor rich households used the OFSP loan fully for the intended purpose. They usually use part of the money to cover other expenditures. The following account of a household shows how households utilise part of their credit for unintended purposes:

*We took credit from the food security programme last year to engage in petty trading. However, we did not use all the money for trading purpose. We used half of*

*the loan to prepare a wedding ceremony for our son. The loan provided us with the money to arrange the wedding without the need to sell our livestock to pay for it.*

Information gathered from household group discussions and interviews with Development Agents and Kebele administrators showed that most of the 'graduated' households in the district originated from the labor rich PSNP households. The majority of the labor rich graduated households, however, do not see themselves as food self-sufficient (that is do not face food shortages and can withstand modest shocks) and are not happy with their graduation. In fact the self-reported food gap of labor rich households is a reported 3 to 5 month period (see table 1). In one of the study villages, for example, graduated households were found to participate in FFW projects implemented by another organisation, the Red Cross, mentioning that they are still in need of support even after graduation. This is another indication that graduation is undertaken prematurely in the study area. In this regard, even labor-rich households who have increased their asset base and improved their food security as a direct result of the PSNP and OFSP programmes, may eventually be forced to sell their assets to cover imminent food gaps. In line with this Sharp *et al.* (2006) warned that premature removal of households from safety nets may endanger the gains of the PSNP and will put households at risk of sliding back into poverty and food insecurity. We may conclude, then, that the PSNP and OFSP programmes have most impact on labor-rich households, yet even for this relatively successful group, they fall short of ensuring sustainable food security.

## Conclusion

The Ethiopian PSNP programme is an attempt by the government and its international partners to permanently resolve the decades long food insecurity problems in the country. Since its launch in 2005 the safety net has assisted millions of chronically food insecure households in Ethiopia's chronically food insecure districts. The PSNP aims to reduce household vulnerability through providing reliable and timely resource transfers over a five year period to cover household food gaps and prevent the sale of household's assets. Together with the OFSPs, and the HABP and the CCI programme that modified the OFSP in 2009, Ethiopia's Food Security programme promotes sustainable community development to address the underlying causes of food insecurity. Though the PSNP and OFSP programmes have contributed to smoothing household food consumption gaps in the two research villages, their impact in terms of long-term household food security remains low and falls short of expectations. Study findings suggest that in rural Ethiopia, where agriculture is characterised by heavy dependence on farm labor, the PSNP programme has resulted in labor

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competition between the PSNP Public Works and people's own agricultural activities, in particular for labor poor and labor sufficient households.

The impact of the PSNP and OFSP programmes varies from household to household with household labor availability a key diagnostic variable. In situations where there are competing labor claims, availability of household labor is crucial in ensuring household food security and in enabling the household to benefit from other related food security interventions, particularly the PSNP and the HABP and the CCI programme that replaced the OFSP Labor availability is instrumental in enabling households to diversify their income and thus in generating additional household income which strengthens household food security. Labor-poor households are found to be more vulnerable and at risk of becoming trapped into poverty and food insecurity as opposed to labor-rich households. Labor availability is thus a critical resource and determines to significant extent the potential impact of the PSNP and its supplementary programmes to contribute to long-term household food security.

The chapter also revealed additional reasons why the PSNP and its supplementary programmes fall short in enabling labor-poor households to improve their food security status, despite the government's intention to lift these households out of poverty and food insecurity. An important additional reason explaining why the programmes fall short of projected impact is the small amount of resource transfers that households receive: the dilution of resource transfers that meant the end of full family targeting which forces beneficiary households to sell productive assets or to take loans to cover food shortages. Such activities put households at risk of being trapped in a vicious circle of indebtedness and poverty. Delays and the longer term unpredictability nature of resource transfers are reported as additional reasons for explaining the limited impact of the PSNP and its supplementary programmes on labor-poor households. The longer-term unpredictability of the PSNP's resource transfers does undermine household risk management strategies and contribute to a hesitance amongst households to make productive investment.. In this regard, not only the frequent retargeting of the PSNP programme but also the premature nature of graduation undermines households' confidence in the PSNP programme.

Data from the two research villages show that the majority of the PSNP participants continue to be poor and food insecure even though they received safety net transfers and have had access to OFSP loans over the 2005-2009 periods. Apart from consumption smoothing, positive impacts on asset protection and asset building has been limited to a few labor-rich PSNP beneficiary households. The competing labor claims, limited value of resource transfers and absence of full family targeting reduce the overall effectiveness of

the integrated programmes on labor-poor households. Given the fact that many of the households are labor-poor, this raises serious questions about the feasibility of the PSNP programme and its complementary OFSPs in achieving their intended objectives for a significant proportion of the households targeted by Ethiopia's Food Security Programme.

Findings of the two research villages show that the PSNP and other related food security programmes did not result in a significant improvement in food security status for the large majority of labor-poor households. Labor poor households in particular are forced to spend their available labor on the PSNP's Public Works to access resource transfers they need in an effort to smooth household consumption. As a result they have little to no labor available to engage in agricultural activities. This raises critical questions about the PSNP's demand for labor in exchange for resource transfers. With poor households characterised by labor shortages it results in serious challenges for such households engaged in 'productive' safety net and development programmes., Productive safety net requirements to participate in Public Works tend to overlook the fact that labor poor, and even labor sufficient, households engage in Public Works at the expense of other activities that can positively contribute to their livelihood. The design and implementation of productive safety nets and its complementary interventions needs to take into account the day to day reality of labor poor households and provide them an opportunity to effectively use their labor for sustained growth. This calls for rethinking the popular notion of safety net interventions demanding labor from beneficiary households in exchange of resource transfers.

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# **Rethinking Safety Nets and Vulnerability: Implications of Household Cycles, Types and Shocks**

*Alula Pankhurst*<sup>1</sup>

The Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) involves over eight million people in public works and direct support. In this chapter I start by outlining the background and rationale for moving away from emergency aid to more predictable support preventing food insecure households from selling assets. However, the concern with growing numbers relying on the safety nets has led to the current orthodoxy that in order to 'graduate' and become food secure households need to be involved in the Other Food Security Program (OFSP) primarily composed of agricultural extension package loans, and more recently redefined as the Household Asset Building Program (HABP) involving loans through financial service providers. Whereas studies suggest that this approach can and does work for certain types of household, this chapter argues that this combination may not be appropriate for the more vulnerable households.

The results of the research presented in this chapter show that households that are 'off-track' in terms of the ideal household cycle particularly due to divorce or death of one or both spouses are more prone to be among the poor and more likely to suffer social shocks. Such households, including many female-headed households, it is argued, tend to be labour-short, risk-averse, and unfamiliar with package technologies whose agricultural focus is often not well suited to their own survival and coping strategies. Moreover, off-track vulnerable households may become more food insecure after taking loans if they face shocks, particularly illness of household members and death of livestock bought through loans, and may have to sell key assets, going against the primary PSNP objective of avoiding distress asset depletion.

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the World Conference of Humanitarian Studies at Groningen in 2009 in the Linking Emergency Assistance to Food Security (LEAFS) panel on food security. Much of the thinking about extreme poverty derives from a couple of papers I wrote with Philippa Bevan as part of the Wellbeing in Developing Countries research based at the University of Bath (Bevan and Pankhurst 2007a and 2007b). I am grateful for funding WOTRO Science of Global Development of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), and the UK Economic and Social Research Council. I also wish to thank Philippa Bevan for all the collaboration on which this research was based.

The chapter argues that in the reformulation of the PSNP twin approach of public works and direct support and to link the program and the HABP to the social protection needs of vulnerable households a third track could be devised which is more appropriate to off-track households who are involved in public works. This should involve introducing an insurance component against idiosyncratic shocks that particularly affect vulnerable off-track households, with an emphasis on health and livestock insurance linking social protection initiatives in the new Draft National Social Protection Policy (2012) with the plans for health insurance in the Health Sector Development Programme (2011). The HABP system could be made more sensitive to the needs, potentials and constraints of vulnerable households, in terms of flexibility of loan size and type with more emphasis on non-farm and off-farm options which are more in tune with their strategies.

### **From emergency aid to food-for-work to safety-nets**

Ethiopia became synonymous with famine after media coverage of three major famines in 1973-4, 1984-5 and 2002-3, which stimulated academic research particularly on social consequences and coping.<sup>2</sup> In particular Sen's analysis of entitlements changed much of the thinking regarding approaches to famine. Responses in the 1980s by the government and the international community sought to develop early warning systems and lasting solutions, including the government's controversial resettlement Program (Dessalegn 2003, Pankhurst 2009a, Pankhurst et al. this volume), and massive food-for-work programs. The World Food Program support involved a commitment of over a quarter a of billion US dollars, making it the largest Food for Work project in Africa in terms of resources committed. By the mid 1980s the project operated in 117 river catchments and a 180,000 hectares has been afforested and 460,000 hectares had been treated through soil conservation (Yeraswork 2000:xxiv). Despite seemingly impressive temporary achievements in physical terms, the program failed to become community-supported and sustainable for a number of administrative, technical and policy-related reasons. In particular issues surrounding ownership of rehabilitated areas were not resolved resulting in lack of incentives for maintaining the structures. The allocation of scarce hill-side land for forestry without considering the priorities and needs of individual households and community grazing was resented by the rural population leading to the destruction of much of the planted forests and conservation structures at the time of the downfall of the Derg and the period of instability until the

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<sup>2</sup> See Mesfin 1984, Dessalegn 1991, Webb and Von Braun 1994, Yared 1996, 2001, Sharp, Devereux and Yared Amare 2003, Pankhurst and Bevan 2004, Pankhurst 2009b.

EPRDF consolidated its power and reorganized the administration (Yeraswork 2000, Pankhurst 2001, 2003a).

After the defeat of the Derg in 1991 the National Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Strategy was formulated in 1992. The directives for this policy identified Employment Generation Schemes as a main vehicle for able-bodied beneficiaries to contribute to Development, although in practice this approach was not applied systematically throughout the country (NCFSE 2003). In 1996 a National Food Security Strategy was issued; it was improved and updated in 2002 under the umbrella of the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP), Ethiopia's first Poverty Reduction Strategy Program. The central objective of the Food Security Strategy was to ensure food security at the household level within the Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization (ADLI) Policy. The targets of the updated Food Security Strategy were mainly chronically food insecure households in moisture deficit and pastoral areas. The 2002 updated version introduced concerns with environmental rehabilitation and sustainability with a focus on water harvesting and promoting high value crop production (Workneh 2008:2-3). Food Security concerns remained a high priority in the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP), Ethiopia's second Poverty Reduction Strategy Program (MoFED 2006).

The reoccurrence of famine in 2002-3 renewed the preoccupation with finding a means of going beyond emergency humanitarian aid and addressing in more lasting ways the basic food needs of food insecure households. In 2003 the government in collaboration with donors established the New Coalition for Food Security, in which safety nets were promoted as an important way of protecting household assets against shocks and promoting community asset creation through labour-based public works (NCFSE 2003a). A second important aspect promoted by the government was a new resettlement program (NCFSE 2003b) which is discussed in a chapter in this volume. More recently the Other Food Security Program has involved the development of the Household Asset Building Program which seeks to promote household assets through access to credit (MoARD 2009). The HABP differs from the previous OFSP packages in three main respects. There is expected to be better coordination with the extension services with a move to more demand-led approaches with clients as well as other actors, such as the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency, programs for women and youth, and off-farm technical officers. Second, credit services have been de-linked from the extension service. Instead, credit will be provided through microfinance institutions (MFIs) and Rural Savings and Credit Cooperatives (RUSACCO). Third the clients are to be food-insecure households in chronically food-insecure *weredas*. PNSP clients are to

be prioritized to promote 'graduation at scale' (MoARD 2009, Guush et al. 2011).

## **The Productive Safety Net Program**

Building on the ideas of the NCFSE in 2004 the Ethiopian Government with multi-donor support<sup>3</sup> designed the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP). The main objective was to ensure that poor households in chronically food insecure *weredas* were protected from selling their key assets during times of drought and to build community assets by involving food insecure households in public works. The program was also meant to encourage households to engage in production and investment activities, enhance their purchasing power and promote market development.

A dual approach was developed: On the one hand selected households with labour are involved in public works for which they receive payments in cash or kind, on the other households without labour or other support from relatives or who cannot participate in other community activities (notably disabled persons and orphans) are eligible for direct support without labour contributions.

The PSNP was launched by the Government with support of development partners, in January 2005. Initially 4.8 million chronically food insecure people were targeted in 192 food-insecure *weredas* in six regions: the four major regions: Amhara, Oromia SNNP, and Tigray as well as Diredewa and Harar regions. This was increased in 2006 to 7.19 million people selected from 234 *weredas* in 7 regions, with Afar Region added to the previous six. In 2007 the operation targeting 7.19 million people in 274 *weredas* in 7 regions. Since January 2008 PSNP has also involved a pilot pastoral program in Afar, Oromia and SNNPR and Somali Regions (Haile et al. 2008, Gilligan et al. 2008).

The increasing coverage and numbers involved in the PSNP raises the question of whether and if so how households could 'graduate' from dependence on the safety-nets program and thereby attain self-sufficiency and potentially allow for other households to be included in the program.

There has been some confusion over the notion of 'graduation' and whether it refers to graduation from the PSNP, from dependence on food aid, from food insecurity, or from chronic poverty. Studies suggested that poor households may not be able to graduate easily unless they are able not just to protect their assets from depletion through the PSNP but can increase them

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<sup>3</sup> The donors included the World Bank, the World Food Program, the European Union, the United States Agency for International Development, the Canadian International Development Agency, the United Kingdom Department for International Development, and Irish AID.

through involvement in productive activities through packages and credit (Gilligan et al. 2008). In 2007 the Government's Food Security Coordination Bureau issued a Graduation Note suggesting that: "It is not expected, however, that the PSNP will itself move households towards food sufficiency and graduation. For this to occur, additional interventions are required to build household assets and address vulnerabilities that make households food insecure" (FSCB, 2007: 3). There has also been some controversy as to how graduation should be measured and benchmarking procedures suggested by an International Food Policy Institute study with thresholds and a proposed asset-based approach (Gilligan et al. 2007), have been adopted and adapted regionally (Devereux et al. 2008, Dom 2008).<sup>4</sup> Priority for the HABP program has gone to PSNP households to promote 'graduation at scale' (MoARD 2009). The perceived imperative of households moving out of the program to make way for other food insecurity households and to demonstrate that the program is achieving success by reducing the number of beneficiaries according to targets had led to much pressure to graduate households, with the risks of them not having achieved food security and as several chapters in this book suggest 'sliding back' into food insecurity (see Aschale, Gelebo, Tafesse, Van Uffelen, this volume).

## **Linking the PSNP to the OFSP and HABP**

The government agricultural extension program had been revised and reformulated in the mid 1990s into a new system known as Participatory Demonstration and Training Extension System (PADETES). It emphasized the package approach to agricultural development and nurtured the research-extension and input-credit distribution linkages (Habtemariam 2008). The focus was initially on food crops but later high value crops and livestock and natural resources followed and some attempt was made to tailor packages to agro-ecological zones and to become packages more gender-sensitive (Habtemariam 2008, Dessalegn 2008). Concerns to link extension services with food security were part of the revised the Food Security Strategy in 2002, the New Coalition for Food Security, and especially the PASDEP (MoFED 2006).

Unlike the PSNP which has been funded largely by donors the Food Security Program (FSP) has been funded by Government<sup>5</sup>. Since 2004/05 the

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<sup>4</sup> The question of graduation is discussed more fully in several chapters in this volume notably those by Aschale and Slater and McCord.

<sup>5</sup> However, there has also been a food security Project involving donor support notably from the World Bank, the Canadian International Development Agency and the Italian Cooperation, which included some funding for household income generation and asset building revolving funds which has benefited some 285,000 households of whom about 281000 were also PSNP beneficiaries (Haile et al. 2008).



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Government has been allocating approximately US\$230 million per year for the FSP from its own resources. However, only 38% was earmarked for promoting the household credit program whereas the remaining 62% was utilized for resettlement and community asset building interventions. Some 692,000 households accessed the credit program from 2005 to 2007, the bulk of which was used for agriculture based interventions related to livestock, seed and irrigation (Haile et al. 2008). One study found that the four most popular packages are all related to livestock – dairy, sheep rearing, sheep or goat fattening, and oxen fattening. The fifth most popular package is beehives for honey production. These five packages accounted for 90% of all packages taken over the four years from 2005 to 2008 (Devereux et al. 2008). There have been some attempts, notably in Tigray, to promote non-agricultural packages for the youth, though in practice the tendency has been to consider land as a pre-requisite for obtaining packages (Dom 2008).

Linking the PSNP with the other food security program (OFSP) came to be seen as an important way of addressing the question of 'graduation' and a number of studies suggested that households that were involved in both PSNP and OFSP were more likely to increase their assets and improve their livelihoods than those that were only involved in the public works. (Gilligan et al. 2008; Devereux et al. 2008). However, in practice the overlap between the two programs has not been systematic and varied between regions, and vulnerable households may face shocks that prevent them from using loans appropriately (Slater et al. 2006). According to one study in practice the overlap was only found to be strong in Tigray region where 69 % of those receiving OSPF were also involved in PSNP public works as compared with 29 % in Amhara, 20 % in SNNP and 12 % in Oromia (Gilligan et al. 2008). However, in another study the extent of overlap had increased overall from 6% to 21% between 2006 and 2008 (Devereux et al. 2008).

More recent reviews suggest that there have been benefits from households having access to both PSNP and the HABP. Having access to both programs was found to increase food security by 1.53 months, relative to having no program benefits, 147 kg more grain, 297kg/ha more yields, 1,001 Tropical Livestock Units more, increased use of fertilizer and terracing, and investment in fencing (Guush et al. 2011).

In addition to the specific case of PSNP and HABP there is some evidence to suggest that households that have access to credit and inputs are in a better position to move out of poverty (FDRE 2009; Pankhurst 2009c). Moreover, peasants with enough land, livestock and labour who also have access to inputs and credit can prosper rapidly. Remarkable success cases of enterprising farmers who have prospered rapidly, have been applauded and given prizes and media



coverage as model farmers (Lefort 2012). However, the question remains whether this approach can work for households with less material and human resources. In particular poor households taking credit which they may have to use for consumption or to deal with shocks, notably health problems or death of livestock bought through credit may end up indebted and may even have to go to money lenders to repay loans (Chekol 2006). Before returning to this question the next section considers how the household cycle can lead to the creation of types of household that have been formed as a result of social shocks and are more prone to be poor and also at risk from further shocks.

### **Household cycles, types and shocks<sup>6</sup>**

Households in rural communities in Ethiopia are small systems with three economic functions: to produce livelihoods; to reproduce household members on a daily basis, and, at certain stages in the household development cycle, to produce and raise children to work in the future. Their position in the local development cycle relates to the ages of the leading adults. As a result of the stresses of rural life households regularly deviate from the locally accepted household development trajectory (for shorter or longer periods) with consequences for the collectivity as well as individual members (Bevan and Pankhurst 2007a).

The ideal-type household development cycle is both universally determined in relation to biological and social cycles and culturally adapted with respect to norms relating to marriage, residence and inter-generational relations. Within Ethiopia in the Amhara society the household cycle begins with the establishment of a new household by a young couple (new household), has a period where the first children are born and dependent (young nuclear family), moves into a period where children provide household labour (mature nuclear family), followed by a period when the older children set up their own households with more or less assistance from the parents (emptying nest), ending with a period of dependency by the old parents and the handing over of the remainder of the property (dependent old household). In societies where the norm of polygyny prevails, such as among the Arssi Oromo and Argobba communities in the studies sites, when the household is in the mature nuclear phase, the head either brings a second (and sometimes third) wife into the household, or sets up a separate household for the additional wife, keeping more or less connection with the first wife. Customarily a widow was expected to marry a brother of her dead husband, while if a wife died the family was

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<sup>6</sup> This section is based on research carried out by the Wellbeing in Developing Countries Research Program in Ethiopia in 2005 in four rural communities in Amhara and Oromia regions (Bevan and Pankhurst 2007a).

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expected to replace her with a sister and these customs are still practised, although it may now be easier for the woman to refuse (Bevan et al. 2010).

Most women heading households are widows. Some will be able to get back on to the ideal-type cycle by remarrying while others will remain female-headed until either a son who has grown up takes over the household, or the woman dies or is taken into a younger household as a dependent. Among the Arssi Oromo and Argobba divorce is frowned on and marriage with a divorced woman unwelcome. In contrast divorce and the rejoining of the ideal-type cycle through remarriage are common among the Amhara.

In an analysis of the structures of all households responding to a Resources and Needs Survey 28 household types emerged, 11 ideal-type households forming stages along the two major ideal-type tracks found in the communities (monogamous and polygynous), and 18 ‘deviator’ households which had ‘fallen off’ the ideal track at different stages (see Table 1 below).

*Table 1: Major household types experiencing poverty*

<b>Ideal-type household cycle</b>	<b>Shock event or choice</b>	<b>Deviator households</b>
1. Young man alone in household	Never to marry	12. Old man who never married
2. Young couple	Infertility	13. Young infertile woman divorced 14. Old infertile woman widowed
3. Young nuclear family: young man	Death of one Divorce/separation Death of children	15. Widow with young children 16. Widower with young children
4. Old man remarries and starts new family		
5. Mature nuclear family	Death of one Death of both Divorce/separation Death of children	17. Widow/divorced/separated woman with older children 18. Widower/divorced separated man with older children 19. Step-family 20. 3-generational mixed household young male head 21. Sibling household

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6. Polygynous: 2 wives in same hh	Abandonment of Wife 1	22. Polygynous: abandoned wife
7. Polygynous: Wife 1s household		23. Polygynous: woman married to former lover and father of children
8. Emptying nest	Death of one Death of both Divorce/separation Death of children	24. Three-generational household headed by old female 25. Older woman with grandchild(ren) 26. Old male abandoned by successive wives
9. Male-headed three-generational hh	Old father dies or marries again	Household in transition towards ideal-type track
10. Nuclear family with old parent	Old parent dies	Household stays on track
11. Old couple	Death of one Last land passed to son(s)	27. Old man alone 28. Old woman alone

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An important finding of the research was a tendency for the households that had fallen off the ideal cycle to be more likely to be among the extremely poor (very poor or destitute). Through interpretation and analysis of the Resources and Needs Survey (RANS) data on 925 households 61 were classified as ‘extremely poor’ in terms of ownership of locally-valued productive assets:<sup>7</sup> of these 51 were classified as destitute and 110 very poor. These extremely poor households (the very poor and destitute combined) constituted 17.4% of the total sample from the four villages. Significantly of these extremely poor households only just over a third (35%) were on the locally ideal household track compared with 62% of all households. Moreover, about two-thirds (65%) had suffered a social shock (death of spouse/parents, divorce or separation) which had knocked them off the track compared with 38% of all households. There were higher proportions of extremely poor households in all off-track categories except stepfamilies and polygynous female-headed households. There were also much higher proportions of female-headed among the extremely poor. While 18% of

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<sup>7</sup> Productive assets were used to identify the extremely poor households (the combination of the very poor and destitute). In developing the productive asset measure key productive assets for each site were identified including land, livestock, employment and each household was ‘boxed’ by one of the authors using personal judgment informed by in-depth knowledge of the communities into one of the following seven categories: Very rich doing very well, Rich doing well, Upper Middle doing fairly well, Lower Middle getting by, Poor not quite managing, Very Poor struggling and Destitute living from hand to mouth.

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the combined sample were female-headed with dependents this was true of 35% of the extremely poor households.

A second important finding related to the types of shocks the extremely poor experienced. The shocks reported in the RANS were combined into four categories (see table 2, Annex 1):

- 1) ***livelihood and reproductive asset-shocks***, (including drought, pests and livestock diseases, frost, flood, fire, loss of job, and debt) representing 58% of all the shocks,
- 2) ***human resource shocks - health*** (including illness, death and accidents) representing 28%
- 3) ***social shocks - household related*** (including divorce, disputes within the family with neighbours and about land contracts, inputs, and sales, theft, exclusion from organization and marriage costs) representing 9%, and
- 4) ***social shocks - government related*** (including imprisonment, forced contributions, confiscation of land or other property, political or ethnic discrimination, imprisonment, resettlement, bans on migration, land reform, and war), representing 5%.

Significantly, a greater proportion of the shocks reported by the extremely poor (the very poor and destitute combined) are human resource - health shocks, and a lower proportion are livelihood and reproductive asset shocks. Among all health shocks the proportion of shocks reported by the extremely poor is significantly higher than that reported by the overall sample. Among livelihood shocks the proportion of shocks reported by the extremely poor relating to fire, job loss and indebtedness was higher than the proportion among the overall sample (See Annex1 Table 2).

Moreover, the extremely poor reported a slightly higher proportion of household related social shocks. Among household-related social shocks divorce, theft, disputes over inputs and sales, and marriage costs the proportion reported by the extremely poor is higher than that reported by the rest of the sample. The extremely poor reported a slightly lower proportion of government related social shocks. However, imprisonment, land confiscation and migration bans reported by the extremely poor were higher than those reported by the overall sample (See Annex1 Table 2).

Cases studies showed that many factors were involved in the off-track households trajectories into extreme poverty, some occurring long ago, others very recently, and yet others at times in between. They involved a wide range include infertility, conflict with spouse, loss of spouse(s) through death, divorce

or abandonment (sometimes taking money and grain), deaths of parents, deaths of children, illness of head including mental health problems, expenses associated with illness and death of family members, marriage costs, old age, loss of land by women, livestock stolen, forced sale of livestock, drought, livestock diseases, crop pests, ethnic discrimination, burned houses, conflict with neighbours, compensation costs, taking to drink, and inability to escape from being a labourer (Bevan and Pankhurst 2007a: 43)

## **Vulnerable households and the PSNP+OFSP - HABP equation**

We have seen that the current orthodoxy suggests that for households to graduate out of food insecurity requires more than just their involvement in the productive safetynets public works which cannot be expected to do much more than enable them to withstand shocks without distress sale of assets and assist them in 'consumption smoothing' to overcome the food gap during the hunger season before their crops ripen. It is believed that households need to be involved in other food security initiatives, notably improving their production, particularly through the extension package inputs and especially credit. There has been evidence that this approach can work and even lead to impressive cases of success. However, vulnerable households, notably off-track households and especially female-headed households face constraints, and some evidence suggests that the PSNP+OFSP- HABP equation, at least in its current format, may not be the appropriate option for these types of household.

There are at least four reasons that result in constraints on the ability of off-track and vulnerable households to graduate from safetynets with the assistance of the current Other Food Security Program options.

The first reason is that off-track households tend to be labour-short, often because they have faced social and health shocks such as infertility, divorce and death of the household head and/or spouse. The most vulnerable tend to rely on other households, including those of siblings, parents, or children, or even neighbours and their children or on sharecroppers for labour requirements for ploughing, fetching wood and water. In short, whereas the PSNP absorbs labour and the OFSP requires it (Slater et al. 2006). The involvement in public works requires a significant commitment of time on the part of adults within the selected households over many months, sometimes more than half the year.

However, the dominant use of loans for credit is to acquire livestock, and this requires labour to look after the animals. There have been cases of vulnerable female-headed households selling animals they bought with credit as they were unable to manage looking after them, and others who did not want to

take loans for lack of labour (Chekol 2006, Pankhurst 2009b). Furthermore, there are risks that children's education may be delayed so that they can look after livestock, or children from poor households may become shepherds for richer households and not go to school (Bevan and Pankhurst 2007b, Pankhurst 2010). In Tigray where graduation was slower, some of those who had 'self-graduated' and left the program did so because they could not engage fruitfully in credit and productive ventures while still being involved in the public works (Pankhurst 2009b).

A second reason that inhibits the involvement of vulnerable households in credit packages is their tendency to be risk-averse. This can be considered a trait of peasant societies which in Ethiopia has been accentuated by their experience of the unreliability and sometimes coercive nature of relations with the state (Clapham 2002). However, this tendency is accentuated among the off-track, vulnerable households whose margins beyond survival and whose potential buffers against shocks are more limited (Bevan and Pankhurst 2007b). There is some evidence of resistance to taking packages among the vulnerable even with strong encouragement by the extension services. Participation in the PSNP public works was at one point in Tigray made conditional on taking package loans (Slater et al. 2006, Devereux et al. 2008). In this context vulnerable households were faced with a difficult choice and some resisted while others reluctantly took loans in order to be able to benefit from the food in exchange for labour. There were cases where this decision was regretted when households faced shocks relating to health or death of livestock bought through the loans and became indebted risking imprisonment unless they find means of repaying their debts, which sometimes involved selling key productive assets such as oxen or cows (Chekol 2006). The pressure to ensure that loans are repaid can create a tense relationship between extension agents and the farmers they are expected to assist (Dom 2011). Moreover, loan defaults are not only a problem for individual households but have a cumulative effect on *wereda* administrators who may seek to cover deficits from other budget lines to avoid being blacklisted from further access to credits (Pankhurst 2009b).

A third reason is lack of sufficient knowledge about the technologies and concern about whether they would receive adequate extension support. Whereas some of the extension packages such as improved seed and fertilizer may not require much special knowledge and training, others such as the management of irrigation technology or beehives do require training and support if they are to be effective. Vulnerable and female headed households faced particular problems with the bee-hive packages that were strongly promoted in Tigray. Though there were many households that managed to improve their livelihoods through introduction of improved bee-hives, and even some cases of successful female-

headed households who had access to male labour, there were a number of reported cases especially among vulnerable and female-headed households where they were not able to benefit from the technology and sold hives at half the price for which they had obtained them on credit, resulting in them having to find other ways to repay debts, including selling key livestock assets. There were also some complaints that extension services were limited and that a major concern was to ensure that the loan is taken and repaid (Pankhurst 2009b, Dom 2010).

A fourth reason relates to the size and type of loans available. Due in part to ideas about graduation thresholds (Gilligan et al. 2007, Dom 2008), there has been a tendency to encourage farmers to take larger loans which will enable them to graduate faster. However, vulnerable households are often not comfortable taking larger loans and would prefer to have smaller loans for instance to purchase small-stock rather than cattle. Loss of cattle can lead to serious indebtedness of poor households (Chekol 2008). The loans and packages tend to be used for agricultural purposes with which the extension agents are more familiar, and despite some attempts to make the packages more gender-sensitive the biases still present constraints (Dessalegn 2008). Vulnerable households and especially female-headed households face constraints in agricultural activities, particularly of limited male labour for ploughing. Moreover, their own income-generating activities often rely on non-farm activities such as trade, alcohol brewing, crafts, hairdressing, and collecting wood. However, there seems to be limited support for loans for trading, alcohol production is frowned upon, wood cutting is often outlawed and crafts are generally looked down on (Pankhurst 2003b).

The new Household Asset Programme has sought to build linkages with women's and youth programs, micro and small scale enterprises and off-farm technical advisors and to delink the provision of credit from extension services and involve financial service providers including MFIs and RUSACCOs (MoARD). However, an evaluation comparing PSNP beneficiary households also accessing HABP credit with non-beneficiary households did not find any significant variation between them when it came to starting their own non-farm business. This suggests that at least by the time of the study the implementation had not achieved noticeable differences for those who combined PSNP (Guush et al. 2011).

## **Health and animal insurance for social protection**

Shocks relating to human illness and livestock death are serious risks to food security and the extremely poor and vulnerable households are more prone risks

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which can exacerbate indebtedness and lead to a declining spiral of impoverishment. This is therefore an important rationale for introducing health insurance and animal loss insurance in the designs of improvements to food security and social protection programs.

Regarding health insurance a review of some of the studies of health insurance schemes shows that they are quite common in many developing countries. These include within Asia in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Cambodia, within Latin America in Bolivia, El Salvador, Paraguay, and Peru, and in Africa in Benin, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda (Dercon and Kirchberger 2008). Other countries within Africa implementing health insurance schemes include Burundi, Cameroon and Ghana (Arhin 1994, Atim 1999, Osei-Akoto 2002).

In Ethiopia after a period where health insurance only covered about 1% of the population in the formal employment sector largely in urban areas, the Ministry of Health has launched an ambitious plan for health insurance through a combination of Social Health Insurance (SHI) and community-based health insurance (CBHI) as outlined in the Health Sector Development Program IV with the aim over covering about 50% of the population by the end of the period in 2015 (MOH 2010). The process of establishing and institutionalisation of an insurance system started with studies and experience sharing visits to several African, Latin American and Asian countries. The MoH built on this work to develop a national health insurance strategy. SHI will cover employees in the formal sector, which is mainly payroll based while CBHI will cover the rural population and the informal sector in urban areas.

The preliminary work on health insurance led to a background document on Social Health Insurance (SHI) that proposed key policy and technical recommendations and an institutional structure for the Federal Social Health Insurance Agency (FSHIA). A draft law and regulation were revised and presented for policy and technical discussions. The legal framework was improved based on the inputs from the various stakeholders and then submitted a second time to the Council of Ministers for endorsement and the subsequent ratification by the Federal Parliament. The Social Health Insurance (SHI) Proclamation was approved by the Council of Ministers and Parliament in July 2010. A regulation was formulated containing the detailed features of the health insurance scheme including membership, benefit package, institutional arrangement.

Pilot community-based health insurance (CBHI) aims to cover more than 83.6% of the population, and is planned to be implemented in two stages. After piloting, it will be scaled up throughout the country drawing on lessons from the



pilot phase. Thirteen Woredas (covering 1.45 million people) in four pilot regions (Tigray, Amhara, Oromia and SNNPR) were selected. Feasibility studies were carried out in these regions. A draft law and regulation were produced followed by consultative discussions and were submitted to Parliament. The draft National Social Protection Policy does recognize that the poor are more likely to suffer from ill health than the better off. However, social protection provisions are largely limited to formal sector employees and some pilot community health insurance schemes (MoLSA 2012). However, it would be important to seek to link the initiatives of the Ministry of Health for community-based health insurance with social protection initiatives for the food-insecure households facing risks of health shocks, particularly the more vulnerable households.

Informal mechanisms in a number of countries including Ethiopia provide some protection against all kinds of risks, often focusing on death, but this protection is often partial and incomplete (Morduck 1999). In the case of *iddir* funerary societies in Ethiopia started by migrants to the capital Addis Ababa in the early twentieth century, they have provided assistance with burial services but are only beginning to become involved in health care and credit (Pankhurst 2003c, Dercon et al. 2006, Pankhurst et al. 2008, Dercon et al. 2008). This is clearly an area where there is scope for greater integration between formal and informal systems (Criel 1998).

Regarding livestock insurance there is considerable international experience with financing animal health services (Riviere-Cinnamond 2004). Four options for financing livestock services can be distinguished: 1) taxation which may be direct as in some developed countries or indirect levied on expenditure on goods and services as for example sales tax, value-added tax, excise tax and import-export tax, national or local; these are more common in the animal health field in developing countries though often not earmarked for animal health service funding as discussed by Anteneh (1984) for 14 West African countries.<sup>8</sup> 2) User charges or out-of pocket payments, which may involve direct cost-sharing through co-payments of a flat fee or charge per service or co-insurance as a percentage of the total charge, or indirect cost-sharing as a result of policies for instance on what services are not reimbursed or which services are privatized or pharmaceutical regulatory mechanisms. 3) national insurance for livestock and animal health services, which is widely used in the European Union, and Asian countries notably India, India, Nepal, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, and 4) private

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<sup>8</sup> Taxes included: 1) import export taxes on live animals, meat and edible offals, 2) trade licences, 3) livestock head tax, 4) meat inspection fee, 5) slaughter fee, 6) market fee, 7) holding ground fee, 8) transit fee, 9) sanitary tax or veterinary certificate.

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livestock insurance that may be structured through farmers' associations, cooperatives, community-based initiatives, mutual livestock insurance groups and insurance companies, and has been used in several Latin American countries, India, Israel, Turkey, and within Africa in Kenya and Ethiopia through cooperatives (de Haan and Bekure 1991). Such insurance may be 'substitutive' as an alternative to national insurance, 'supplementary' involving additional higher quality coverage, or 'complementary' services not provided by the national system.

In Ethiopia customary systems of self-help in the case of the death of oxen are common, in which community members consume the ox if it has not died from illness and contribute to the purchase of a substitute for the person who has lost his ox (Yigremew 1997). Formal livestock insurance mechanisms were attempted under the Southern Rangelands Third Livestock Development Program, and some NGOs such as Oxfam UK have more recently experimented with community based insurance schemes. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development issued in 2008 important National Guidelines for Livestock Relief Interventions in Pastoralist Areas of Ethiopia, which however, do not refer to insurance mechanisms. Within the current package system there are in theory some provisions in the package credit system for loss of livestock. However, the procedures for proving that livestock have been seen by veterinary services tend to be bureaucratic and cumbersome, in effect making it almost impossible for loans to be legitimately written off.

Given that currently most loans are used to acquire livestock it would be important for linkages to be developed between the HABP and veterinary services, which could reduce the risks of livestock morbidity and mortality. More generally, weaknesses in the design and implementation of vaccination, including use of inappropriate vaccines, low vaccination coverage, problems with vaccine dosing, incorrect timing of vaccination, and problems with vaccine storage have been noted (Catley et al. 2009). Furthermore, the consequences of increased livestock as a result of package loans on natural resource and linkages with community-based management practices also need to be given attention, particularly since a major objective of the PSNP public works program is to rehabilitate degraded areas and encourage conservation.

Current initiatives with risk insurance have focused on 'covariate' shocks, notably drought, affecting large groups of households, rather than idiosyncratic shocks which affect specific households at particular times (Hess et al. 2006, Maxwell et al. 2008). However, this chapter has argued that the vulnerable households are more prone to the later, and insurance that would be useful to protect them from the impoverishing effects of shocks and ensuing indebtedness

would need to consider and focus on idiosyncratic shocks, especially health shocks, and death of humans and livestock.

## Conclusions

The move away from a reliance on emergency food-aid to safety-nets in Ethiopia has been a welcome attempt to find more durable solutions and prevent households falling from transitory or short term to chronic or longer term food insecurity through the sale of productive assets. The PSNP has been benefiting over eight million people in 234 *weredas* in seven regions with a two-track approach that enables food insecure households with labour to engage in public works and those without labour or support to obtain direct transfers. However, there have been increasing concerns about the rising numbers of beneficiaries, as well as growing needs of food-insecure households and *weredas* not included in the program. More importantly, government concerns have centered around how large numbers can 'graduate' from the PSNP, become food secure and no longer require assistance.

The current orthodoxy suggests that the PSNP on its own may not allow large numbers to graduate from food insecurity, but that combined with the other food security programs, and especially the extension packages loans and more recently the Household Asset Building Program this will become possible. While studies have shown that this may be a realistic option for certain types of household, and that there have been striking success cases, this chapter has argued that it may not be a suitable option for vulnerable households.

This chapter discussed household vulnerability in relation to the concept off-track households who have fallen off on the ideal household cycle. Research shows that such households are more likely to be among the poor and more prone to shocks, especially social and health shocks. I argued that off-track households, particularly female-headed households, may face difficulties in benefiting from packages and household asset building programs since such households tend to be labour-short, risk-averse, lacking required skills, and disadvantaged by the agricultural focus of loan packages; the existing packages are not well adapted to their own survival and coping strategies, which focus more on off-farm and non-agricultural activities. The Household Asset Building Program has, however, sought to be more accommodating of off-farm alternative or supplementary ways of generating income, though it remains to be seen how effective this will be in practice and whether extension services and financial service providers will be adapted sufficiently to address their needs.

Some evidence suggests that off-track vulnerable households can even be made more insecure by taking loans, if they face shocks, particularly illness or

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death of household members and death of livestock bought through loans. In some cases repaying loans to avoid imprisonment forced them to sell key assets, notably livestock, going against the basic aim of the food security program of enabling food insecure households to avoid distress sale of assets. Moreover, the pressure to ensure loans were repaid created tensions between extension workers and farmers they were expected to assist, though this should be avoided with the current Household Asset Building Program. Whereas there has been some attempts to promote risk insurance for co-variate shocks notably weather related crop insurance, this study suggests that vulnerable household are more at risk from idiosyncratic shocks, especially illness and loss of livestock, which would suggest the need for incorporating human and animal health insurance mechanisms into the program design. Though the draft National Social Protection Policy (2012) does recognize that the poor are more likely to suffer from ill health than the better off, so far provisions are largely limited to formal sector employees and some pilot community health insurance schemes. The current Health Sector Development Programme IV does have ambitious plans to increase the level of health insurance from 1% to 50% by the end of the period in 2015, through social health insurance for employees in the formal sector, which and community-based health insurance for the rural population and the informal sector in urban areas. It can be hoped that the health insurance and social protection policies and programs will be able to work hand in hand to design appropriate projects for vulnerable food insecure households and create synergies with existing forms of customary funerary insurance.

The PSNP program has a dual track approach, either public works or direct support, and the Household Asset Building credit loans have come to be considered key to graduation. Given the risks faced particularly by vulnerable and off-track households in taking loans, a third track that addresses the needs of vulnerable households could be devised. Such an approach would differentiate between farmers with adequate land, livestock and labour profiles and have the potential to graduate with the PSNP+HABP formula and more vulnerable households that have potential and do not need direct support but may require different strategies. To some extent the new Household Asset Building Program is seeking to do this by transforming the package system to make it more appropriate to the needs of vulnerable households by promoting non-agricultural income-generating activities. This needs to be prioritized to improve the linkages between the safety nets and other social protection approaches which have being considered in the draft Social Protection Policy (2010).

The credit provision needs to be more sensitive to the requirements, potentials and limitations of vulnerable, off-track and female-headed households. This includes introducing greater flexibility with regard to the size and type of

loans and modalities of repayment. In particular there should be greater scope for smaller, more frequent loans. Moreover, there should be more consideration of non-farm and off-farm options which relate to and build on the existing strategies of vulnerable households. The extension services may not be adequately trained to support such initiatives. However, support and training for business activities, trade, crafts, and agro-processing are areas that deserve further promotion to enhance the potential of vulnerable households to become food secure.

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**ANNEX: TABLE 2 SHOCKS: COMPARING VERY  
POOR AND DESTITUTE WITH THE SAMPLE**

SHOCK TYPE	ALL SITES	Very Poor	Destitute	VP+D	% all	% Extremely Poor
<b>LIVELIHOOD AND REPRODUCTIVE ASSETS SHOCKS</b>						
Drought	456	40	28	68	25.1	25.1
Pests before harvest	210	19	6	25	1.4	9.2
Livestock diseases	134	8	3	11	0.6	4.1
Frost	93	7		7	0.4	2.6
Flood	58	3	1	4	0.2	1.5
Pests storage	48	6	1	7	0.4	2.6
Cold wave	14				0.0	0.0
Loss job	13	1	2	3	0.2	1.1
Debt	17	2	1	3	0.2	1.1
Fire	9	1	2	3	0.2	1.1
<b>livelihood - assets</b>	<b>1052</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>48.3</b>
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES - HEALTH SHOCKS</b>						
Illness	259	30	19	49	2.7	18.1
Death	242	31	18	49	2.7	18.1
Accident	16	3		3	0.2	1.1
<b>Human - health</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>37.3</b>
<b>SOCIAL SHOCKS - HOUSEHOLD RELATED</b>						
Divorce - person	30	3	3	6	0.3	2.2
Divorce - child	23	6	1	7	0.4	2.6
Family dispute	18	1	1	2	0.1	0.7
Land dispute	14				0.0	0.0
Robbery	14	1		1	0.1	0.4
Theft	4				0.0	0.0

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<b>Input contract dispute</b>	7	1	1	2	0.1	0.7
<b>Sale contract dispute</b>	6	2		2	0.1	0.7
<b>Conflict</b>	7	1		1	0.1	0.4
<b>Neighbours dispute</b>	2				0.0	0.0
<b>Social Exclusion</b>	2				0.0	0.0
<b>Marriage costs</b>	33	6	2	8	0.4	3.0
<b>Social - household</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>10.7</b>
<b>SOCIAL SHOCKS - GOVERNMENT RELATED</b>						
<b>Imprisonment</b>	23	4		4	0.2	1.5
<b>Forced contribution</b>	21	1	1	2	0.1	0.7
<b>Confiscate land</b>	13	1	1	2	0.1	0.7
<b>Ethnic discrimination</b>	12				0.0	0.0
<b>Confiscate other</b>	7	1		1	0.1	0.4
<b>Political discriminate</b>	4				0.0	0.0
<b>Migration ban</b>	3		1	1	0.1	0.4
<b>Political prison</b>	3				0.0	0.0
<b>Land reform</b>	2				0.0	0.0
<b>Resettlement</b>	1				0.0	0.0
<b>War</b>	1				0.0	0.0
<b>Social - government</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>3.7</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1819</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>



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# Household Experiences of Graduation from the PSNP: Implications for Food Security

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## Introduction

Food insecurity resulting from poverty and recurrent droughts continues to be a major challenge in sub-Saharan African countries (Nigussa and Mberengwa, 2009: 249). This has led to a shift in policy approaches where initiatives to sustainably resolve food insecurity are combined with social protection measures that aim to alleviate the impact of food insecurity. Social protection refers to “*all initiatives that provide income (cash) or consumption (food) transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance social status and rights of the excluded and marginalized*” (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004: 9). Social protection programs are similar to welfare programs in developed nations. They are institutionalized mechanisms (departing from the ad-hoc provision of humanitarian aid) providing safety nets for people who cannot survive by their own means and efforts. In order to keep safety nets temporary, they must be complemented with programs that enable recipients to overcome dependency on aid. This is especially important in a country like Ethiopia, where resources for social protection programs are extremely limited in comparison to the large number of people who qualify. In 2005, Ethiopia embarked on a Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) that has the dual aim of protecting people against food insecurity and helping them to escape from poverty (de Gramont et al., 2007). This program is perceived as an important landmark in the development of productive safety nets.

This chapter examines whether the Ethiopian PSNP enables recipients to ‘graduate’ from the program according to the definition of graduation as adopted by the Ethiopian food security program, meaning that they become food-self-sufficient and no longer need the support of the PSNP program. The PSNP started in 2005 as a joint initiative of the Ethiopian Government and international donors. It is a response to the recurring food crises in the country. Though food crises in Ethiopia go back to Biblical times these became frequent since the late 19th Century (Pankhurst, 1985). Since the mid-1970s Ethiopia’s responses to recurrent food crisis have been dominated by humanitarian

assistance. Emergency relief is mostly unpredictable and most of the time it is being delivered after people have depleted their assets. The PSNP, however, is a long-term program with predictable transfers (Devereux et al., 2008). It is designed to protect households from slipping into destitution by providing six months of food or cash transfers to chronically food insecure households for a period of five years. Beneficiary households with able bodied members get food or cash in exchange for labour in public works, while vulnerable families who have no labour or other means of support get direct support (MoARD, 2004). With these contributions, households are secured of enough food to overcome their hunger gap. The key to the program is that recipients are simultaneously enrolled in complementary development interventions called the Other Food Security Programs (OFSP) that aim to lift households out of poverty and food insecurity by building the asset base needed for successful ‘graduation’ (MoARD, 2006).

When it was launched in 2005, the PSNP supported about 5 million people in four regions. By 2009 the number of beneficiaries had grown, mainly through geographical expansion of the program to pastoral areas, to 8.3 million people in eight regions. It was expected that the case load would decrease when assisted households started to graduate (MoARD, 2009). Recent studies, however, show that graduation rates fall far below expectation (MoARD, 2009; Devereux, 2010). For example according to information obtained from the Amhara region food security bureau, by the end of 2009, about 9% of the public work beneficiary households have graduated in the region leaving more than 90% of the households in need of safety net transfers to cover their food shortages.

Are the low numbers of graduation merely an indication that the program has been slower than anticipated, or is the program not viable in producing food secure graduates? To contribute to this crucial question, this chapter presents the findings of a study on a group of households that has graduated from the first phase of the program (2005-2009). The study sheds light on the principles and practices of graduation in Ebinat district, and analyses the situation of graduated households. It also examines the experience of graduation from the perspectives of graduated households. While many studies have been carried out on the safety net program in Ethiopia, most of the studies have been done at national level neglecting local perspectives (Coulter, 2009). This study examines the experience of safety net graduation at household level in an attempt to fill this gap. By focusing on PSNP graduated households, the chapter aims to contribute to discussions on the feasibility of the PSNP graduation in Ethiopia, and social safety nets in general.



Ethnographic fieldwork was undertaken for 18 months from February 2009 through August 2010 in two villages in a drought affected highland area of Ethiopia. Data were collected using in-depth household interviews and questionnaire surveys conducted with selected PSNP graduated households and from secondary data collected from the district agricultural office. Of the 163 households in the two villages, all of whom were surveyed, 16 were graduates. These 16 households were interviewed further to collect in-depth household data throughout the fieldwork period. Moreover, community focus group discussions and key informant interviews were conducted. Key informant interviews were undertaken with representatives of community elders, Kebele (district) administrators and experts at the District agricultural office and regional bureaus. PSNP implementation manuals, assessment reports and graduation guidance notes were also reviewed as sources of secondary data. The household head was the main informant for the study. In the absence of the head, another adult member of the household was interviewed. Households were asked a range of questions regarding their livelihoods, the role of the PSNP and OFSP in household food security, their experience of graduation and about the status of household after graduation. The analysis of the data collected from this study is not meant to provide generalisations about PSNP graduation in Ethiopia in general but to show how the program is implemented and reveal local level processes and dynamics in a remote chronically food insecure district. By doing so the study highlights issues that may not come to light through larger surveys and evaluations and therefore has potentially important implication in safety net programming.

The chapter starts by analysing the concept of graduation, the definition of benchmarks to determine graduation, and the principles of implementation. The second part of the chapter introduces the study area and characteristics of graduated families compared to non-graduated families. It shows that graduated families indeed have more assets than the average PSNP recipient. Nonetheless, as the next section will show, the majority of graduated households continues to be food-insecure or risks falling back into food insecurity in the short term. The final part of the chapter presents the experiences of these households with the program. We conclude that the livelihood conditions in the district and the institutional set-up of the program are important factors why successful graduation is unlikely, and how people continue to be dependent on different programs and safety nets.

## **The meaning of graduation**

Graduation from a safety net program is described as *“a process whereby recipients of cash or food transfers move from a position of depending on*

*external assistance to a condition where they no longer need these transfers, and can therefore exit the program”* (Devereux, 2010: 9). In the PSNP’s Program Implementation Manual, the term graduation was first introduced as a key goal of the safety net program in 2004 (MoARD, 2004). Later in 2006, graduation was adopted as the overall goal of the government Food Security Program (FSP) of which PSNP is a major component. This document emphasizes that graduation should be a result of integrated efforts. For a food insecure household to become food self-sufficient, a household must also receive other interventions aimed at building household assets. Therefore, the PSNP was linked with OFSP programs aimed at building household assets (MoARD, 2006). The safety net ensures that households remain at the same level and protects them from falling into destitution while the OFSP enables them to build their productive assets and address factors of vulnerabilities that make them food insecure (MoARD, 2007). Other development programs also contribute by creating an enabling environment and helping households to build productive assets (Slater et al., 2006; Dom, 2008).

In 2007, a definition of graduation was introduced into the food security program to guide its implementation (MoARD, 2007). Graduation is introduced as a two-stage process. The first stage is graduation from the PSNP and the second is graduation from the Food Security Program. This chapter, however, is focused only on the first stage of graduation i.e. graduation from the PSNP as defined in the graduation guidance note. Graduation from the Food Security Program is a much more complex and longer term issue that cannot be addressed on the basis of the current context where only a small proportion have graduated even from the PSNP. Graduation was described as the movement of a household out of the PSNP. This occurs when a household has improved its food security status to a level that shifts it from being classified as chronically food insecure to food self-sufficient, and it is then no longer eligible for the PSNP. Graduation from safety net is, therefore, defined as: *“A household has graduated when, in the absence of receiving PSNP transfer, it can meet its food needs for all 12 months and is able to withstand modest shocks”* (MoARD, 2007:1). This state is described as being ‘food sufficient’. Note that this definition is narrow as it only refers to the quantity of food, and not to its nutritional aspects. Most definitions of food security emphasize that it relates to the required needs for all family members to live healthy, active and productive lives (Maxwell and Frankenberger, 1992; Christiaensen, 1994). The qualitative and nutritious aspect incorporated in these definitions is not part of the definition of the Food Security Program. This chapter will follow the FSP definition and only ask about the quantity of food people reportedly need to be food secure.

## **Graduation benchmarks**

Graduation benchmarks use a measure of household assets to determine households' potential for graduation. Graduation benchmarks describe the level of assets a food sufficient household is likely to have in each Region. This is because assets are considered a better indicator than income in reflecting lasting changes in chronic food insecurity status. The idea of asset-based graduation benchmarks was introduced by IFPRI, at the request of the Ethiopia government. The IFPRI study indicated that incomes tend to fluctuate between seasons while assets are likely to remain stable except for periods of severe shocks (Hoddinott, 2006; MoARD, 2007). It is also difficult to accurately measure income as people are not willing to share such information openly. Devereux (2010) also considers asset ownership a better indicator of resilience than income because it provides better protection against livelihood shocks as they can be liquidated to bridge a food gap. Tolossa (2005) who undertook a study in Oromia zone of Amhara region also reported that food insecurity is associated with lack of productive assets such as land and oxen. Though applying an asset based system of graduation benchmark seems feasible and might be thought to be simple to administer, it is not without critics. Asset based criteria are difficult to implement and do not always reflect the extent of household food self-sufficiency. This is partly because it doesn't take savings, remittances and incomes from other off-farm activities into account which might have significant contributions to household food self-sufficiency.

Assets owned by households are converted into their monetary value in order to assess whether a households reaches the graduation benchmark or not. The benchmarks differ across regions (Table 1). The regional food security bureau of Amhara Region, where this research was implemented, adopted a regional benchmark of 4200 birr per capita. According to the regional graduation guidance note, until a household reaches this point, it remains eligible to participate in the PSNP and cannot be removed from the program unless households decide to leave the program by themselves - a term which is described as self-graduation (MoARD 2007). Theoretically self-graduation occurs when households leave the PSNP program voluntarily. This occurs when a household decides that investing labour in other activities (like wage employment or own production) are more profitable than participating in the PSNP (MoARD, 2007). There were no self-graduated households in the study area of this research.

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Table 1 illustrates the regional graduation benchmarks adopted by four major regions of the country. It describes the difference both in terms of graduation benchmarks and the use of asset elements across different regions.

*Table 1: Indications of Regional Benchmarks of the Major four regions of Ethiopia*

Region	Initial IFPRI Benchmark*	Average asset value according to FGGN**	Benchmark as adopted in the RGGN***	Asset Benchmark Elements
Amhara	4,800 Birr per capita	4,200 Birr per capita	4,200 Birr per capita	Livestock, agricultural technologies, perennial crops, savings, capital, store, weaving equipment's, and other income generating items
Oromia	10,000 Birr per capita	19,187 Birr per household	19,187 Birr per household	Livestock, crop production, perennial crops, income from income generating activities
SNNPR	4,000 Birr per capita	2,998 Birr per capita	75% or more based on regression	Land holdings, level of schooling, capital based on agricultural tools and livestock availability, family size and sex of household head
Tigray	4,300 Birr per capita	5,600 Birr per capita	5,600 Birr per capita	Productive assets and must have repaid 75% of outstanding loan

SOURCE: Adapted from the IDL group 2010

\* Based on the 75% benchmark (a potential exclusion error of 25%) and a land holding of less than 1 ha.

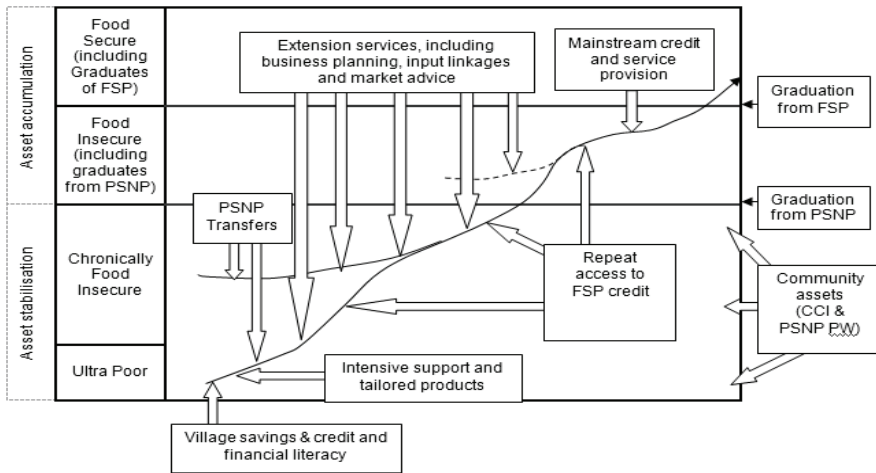
\*\* Federal Graduation Guidance Note

\*\*\* Regional Graduation Guidance Note

## Graduation in principle

Figure 1 below shows the implementation scheme of the PSNP in conjunction with credit and other supports from other food security programs. These programs will enable chronically food insecure households to build productive assets while keeping their consumption smooth. As their assets base increases, PSNP beneficiary households will reach a point where they no longer need safety net support and graduate from the program. After graduation, however, households are still entitled to receive support in terms of credit and extension, and to participate in other development interventions to further develop their productive assets until they finally become entirely independent from the Food Security Program (de Gramont et al., 2007; MoARD, 2009).

Figure 1. Linkages between PSNP, OFSP and Other Development Interventions



SOURCE: Adopted from Food Security Program 2010-2014 (MoARD, 2009: 16)

One of the core principles of the FSP is that the community should play a crucial role in the graduation process. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the Community Food Security Task Force (CFSTF) to decide on graduation. This taskforce is formed by elected representatives of an elder, youth, female, male, and a health extension worker together with a development agent and representative from the Kebele food security task force. (MoARD, 2007).

While the CFSTF should decide on graduation, the assessment of the households is undertaken by government officials, the so-called development agents (DAs). The DAs in each Kebele prepare an overview of the asset holdings of PSNP beneficiary households. Once information on household assets has been collected, they calculate the value of household assets per household member using a set of agreed asset values. On the basis of the resulting household profiles, the CFSTF will prepare a list of households that can graduate from the PSNP. Those households with asset holdings equal or higher than the benchmarks will be proposed for graduation to district authorities. The district will review and approve these proposals for graduation. For effective implementation of the benchmarks, the regional graduation guidance note emphasizes the establishment of a strong institutional framework from the district down to the village level. Nevertheless, as it will be shown later in this chapter, some of these institutions established were not effective in executing their intended tasks specially those institutions at Kebele and Community levels.

### Study area

The study was undertaken in South Gondar Administrative Zone, in Ebinat district, one of the chronically food insecure districts of Amhara region. Ebinat was selected for this study because of high levels of food insecurity with more than one-third of the population being undernourished. According to information obtained from the district agricultural office, about 37% of the rural population of the district (77, 618 people) received support from the PSNP program since 2005. The district is predominantly agricultural, 96% of the population is involved in mixed farming practicing crop production, livestock rearing and agricultural labour. Livelihoods in the area are predominantly dependent on rain-fed agriculture. However, rainfall patterns are erratic and uneven and are characterised by late onset and early withdrawal. Average land size is very small and declining becoming too small to support an average family size of five people per household.

Wheat, barley, sorghum and *Teff* are the main crops cultivated for consumption while lentils, beans and oil seeds are the main cash crops grown in the district. Average production of cereals, the major agricultural output is very low. Average duration of household food sufficiency based on production in a typical year is between 6-7 months. As a result, large numbers of households are chronically food insecure and, therefore, depend on government support. Poor agricultural performance is attributed to poor soil fertility, high environmental degradation and weather-induced drought. The vulnerability of the district is further increased by fragmentation of land holdings, limited agricultural extension programs, population pressure and climate change.

## **Characteristics of the graduated households**

Major socio-economic differences existed between graduated and non-graduated households in Ebinat district. Out of the total of 80 PSNP beneficiary households in the study area female headed households account for about 20% of the beneficiaries. However, among the graduated households females represent a small proportion. Of 16 graduated households in the area, only two were female headed households while the remaining 14 were male headed. In the study area of the total 163 households, 80 households were getting PSNP transfer since 2005. Out of these 80 beneficiary households 16 households have been “graduated” by the end of 2009 while 64 households were still getting PSNP support. The following section will compare these two groups of households in order to explore the difference in the livelihood situations of the graduated and non-graduated households, especially in terms of asset ownership as this is the basis used to select graduated households. Non-graduated households have an average family size of 5.3 whereas graduated households reported an average family size of 6.2 with one fourth of the households have eight household members.

The major types of assets in the area include livestock and land ownership. Regarding livestock ownership; oxen, cows, sheep, goats and donkeys are the main livestock kept by farmers in the area. Possession of these livestock, however, decreased over time mainly due to drought, lack of fodder and increasing level of poverty. Graduated households were relatively better-off than the non-graduates. For most livestock the differences were significant. Average ownership of oxen for non-graduates was found to be 1.2 whereas for graduated households average ownership was 1.7 (Table 2). It was also found that 23% of the non-graduated households have no ox at all whereas all graduated households reported possession of an ox. Sheep and goat ownership also revealed further differences. Average ownership of sheep and goat for the non-graduates was 2.5 whereas graduated households own 3.5 on average. In terms of donkey ownership graduated households have one donkey on average compared with 0.5 for non-graduated households. No major difference was recorded in terms of cow ownership. In the study area, however, possession of other livestock was very low which indicates the high level of poverty faced by many of the households.

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Table 2. Characteristics of graduated and non-graduated households

Households Characteristics		Status of Households		
		Graduated	Non-graduated	Total
Sex of Household heads	Male	14	50	64
	Female	2	14	16
Average family size		6.2	5.3	5.75
Average livestock ownership	Ox	1.7	1.2	1.5
	Cow	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Shoats	3.5	2.5	3.0
	Donkey	1.0	0.5	0.75
Average Land ownership		1.0ha	0.75 ha	0.87 ha
Land Rented on average		1.0ha	0.5ha	0.75 ha

SOURCE: Own Field Survey 2010

Average size of land ownership among graduated households was one hectare compared to 0.75 hectare for the non-graduates. About one third of the graduated households have less-than one hectare of land; just over half of the households own between one to two hectares of land while the rest have more than two hectares of land. To maximise their production, most of the households rented land from labour poor households and households who don't have an ox. Average size of rented land was found to be one hectare for graduated households whereas it was 0.5 hectare for the non-graduates. Because of the small size of farm lands, the level of productivity was very low. Off-farm activities are also limited except for some people who migrate to nearby or distant areas to work as daily labourers. Households reported that the PSNP is a major source of food which provides them resources used for household consumption.

This comparison shows that indeed the graduated households had access to more assets than the average PSNP recipient household. The question is whether their assets are enough to become sustainably food secure?



## Are graduated households food secure?

This section of the chapter illustrates the food self-sufficiency situation of graduated households based on households' self-assessment of food sufficiency. As discussed above graduation from the PSNP is defined as being food self-sufficient throughout the year. When the graduated households were asked about their food self-sufficiency status about a quarter of them reported food self-sufficiency throughout the year. The study, however, revealed that a significant group of graduated households falls short of the intended outcomes. Three quarters of the graduated households reported a food shortage even after graduation. These households faced a food shortage of two to five months (Table 3). These are households who reportedly had a food shortage of about six months when they were targeted in the PSNP. They described that the safety net program had resulted in an improvement in their food consumption, yet they were still food insecure.

Table 3: Graduated households by months of food self-sufficiency

No of Food Sufficient Months	Frequency	Percentage
12 Month	4	25.00
10 Month	3	18.75
9 Month	4	25.00
8 Months	3	18.75
7 Months	2	12.50
Total	16	100.00

SOURCE: Own Field Survey 2010

Among the graduates, households who reported food self-sufficiency are those with better asset holdings and household labour. According to these households, having enough labour and oxen enabled them to rent additional land to produce enough to cover household food shortage. It also enabled them to better utilise the credit they took. They mostly used the credit to buy an extra ox and rent additional land which helped them to increase their productivity.

On the other hand, graduated households who reported food shortages, gave small land size, shortage of oxen for ploughing, and effects of the frequent droughts as major reasons for their food insecurity situation. They reported that inability to adequately feed their households forced them to sell the livestock

they have acquired over the last few years to cover household consumption gaps. program

Household interviews showed that the livestock holdings of graduated households improved after their participation in the PSNP and OFSP programs, although most of their livestock was bought with a loan that had not yet been repaid. A few labour rich households also reported that they used part of PSNP cash payments to purchase livestock. However, about three quarters of the graduated households depend on livestock sales to cover consumption gaps and to pay back their loan. In the study area, where livestock ownership is very low, the sale of livestock for consumption smoothing purposes is critical for rural livelihoods, as it can endanger the future viability of households. This is likely to make households become dependent on emergency relief for survival in the long-term (Devereux and Guenther, 2009; Carter and Barrett, 2007). The majority of graduated households in our sample was thus still food insecure, in debt over the purchase of livestock and was losing their accumulated assets. This raises the question of why they were graduated from the program.

### **Graduation in practice: Ebinat district**

In Ebinat district, safety net records showed that a total of 77,618 people received support from the PSNP since its introduction in 2005. Of these, 91% of the beneficiaries were public work participants while 9% of them were direct support beneficiaries. In the district, graduation has been implemented since 2008 using the regional benchmark of 4,200 birr per capita. Accordingly, of the total public work beneficiaries 3,608 people (870 households) have graduated in the district during the first phase of the program (2005-2009). This represents about 5% of the beneficiaries.

According to information obtained from the Amhara Region Food Security Bureau, after setting the graduation benchmark at the regional level, awareness creation meetings were undertaken with zone and district administrators. Training was also provided to district agricultural office experts about the overall graduation process since they are responsible for the training of the Kebele food security task force and the development agents at a lower level. However, the trainings provided were said to be very theoretical and did not provide them with the skills they need to implement graduation benchmarks. The CFSTF were also unaware of graduation benchmarks.

Graduated households were asked about their awareness concerning the graduation benchmark and process of graduation. About two-thirds of the households reported lack of awareness. One-third of the households revealed a very limited awareness. The majority of the household heads reported that they

were not even briefed about the criteria before their graduation. Households were also asked if they agreed with the decision about their graduation. Only two of the sixteen households agreed about the decision. One household head responded that:

*I don't agree with the decision. I believe that it is wrong that I graduated from the safety net. There are households better than me who still participate in the PSNP because they are very close to the Kebele administrator. It is good that I have got a credit that I used it to buy additional livestock and to purchase cereals. But they forced me to graduate when they knew that I don't cover my food needs throughout the year. I still believe that I should get the safety net since I don't cover my food gaps.<sup>1</sup>*

Good connections with Kebele administrators were mentioned by some households as a reason for a household to stay in the PSNP. Caeyers and Dercon (2011) reported a similar finding where connections to powerful people at local level were the most important predictor of being included in the safety net. Most of the graduated households argued that they did not know anything about their graduation until they have been informed by the CFSTF in a public meeting.

Graduated households were also asked whether they had been provided with credit before graduation. It was found that about three quarters of the households were provided with credit before they graduate, although more than two-thirds of them used a significant amount of the credit for consumption smoothing purpose. It was also indicated that none of the graduated households have started loan repayment so far. One household head told us that:

*We have taken credit one year before we were graduated. They told us that we should use the money to buy livestock but we didn't use all the money to buy livestock. We have eight family members but we were getting the PSNP only for five family members for the last four years and, therefore, the support was not enough. Especially last year was not a good year. Hailstorm destroyed our crops and therefore we used part of the loan money to buy grains for consumption.<sup>2</sup>*

Three quarters of the graduated households argued that, when the Kebele committee decides to graduate them, the committee was looking only at the fact that they had taken credit without examining their food security status or productive assets they have acquired. When asked about this, members of the Kebele council asserted that households who have taken credit are better-off in terms of asset holdings and are expected to graduate from the PSNP. Apparently, the council took credit as a sole indicator for graduation, rather than determining

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<sup>1</sup> Interview: Graduated household, Mecheda February 29, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Interview: Graduated household, Mecheda, June 18, 2010

household's asset base as would have been required. As this study shows, however, access to credit doesn't guarantee households' food sufficiency as most of the households used a significant amount of the credit to cover short-term food shortages. This type of graduation exercise was also documented by Devereux (2010) where access to credit was used as criteria to select graduating households without considering its role in productive investment.

Safety net beneficiary households expressed their views that desire to have access to this limited credit service became a motive for households to graduate even without improving their food security status let alone their household assets base. A graduated household explained this as follows:

*Before I graduated I wanted to take credit from the safety net but when I ask for credit the Kebele committee told me that I can get the credit only if I will graduate from the PSNP. I didn't want to graduate but I need the credit to buy an ox that is why I was selected for graduation. But I still face food shortages.<sup>3</sup>*

### Support after the graduation

To prevent graduated households from falling back into poverty and destitution, graduated households are entitled to household asset building supports, Program such as credit, extension support and provision of technology (MoARD, 2007). Graduated households, however, revealed that they did not get support as pledged to them after their graduation. Less than a quarter of households reported to have received limited technological support, in particular *Broad Bed Maker* and *Tayrager* used to improve ploughing. The majority of the households, however, did not receive any support from the government. Three quarters of the households described that they are now supporting themselves through selling their livestock. They are worried that if they do not get proper support from the government to improve their livelihoods, they will fall back into destitution after they have sold off all their livestock. The following excerpt from one household demonstrates this clearly:

*When we graduate they told us that the government will support us in the future, but since graduation no one has visited us and we did not get any support. For now we are selling our livestock to cover our food shortage but we are now worried about the future. When we finish our livestock we will be in trouble. We need to be supported by the government.<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> Interview: Graduated household, Worgaja May 12, 2010

<sup>4</sup> Interview: Graduated household, Worgaja, January 15, 2010

This lack of support, according to interviewed households, became an impediment to expand their livestock and other business opportunities. Most of these households depend on subsistence agriculture on small plots of degraded land with the PSNP provided a significant input into their livelihoods. They are not able to cope with the withdrawal of this support and risk to lose the assets they built over the course of the program.

The district PSNP coordinator explained the lack of access to credit for graduated households with reference to resource shortage. Because of limited financial resources, the district only provided credit to new cohorts of graduating households since 2008. This was also reported in interviews held at the regional food security bureau. An expert at the regional bureau explained that OFSP resources fall short of the demands at the regional level, which is a reason to restrict credit to potentially graduating households.

The graduation guidance note (MoARD, 2007) states the possibility of households re-entry into the PSNP when hit by shocks. However, none of the graduated households knew about this possibility. Experts at the district agricultural office also argued that allowing re-entry into the safety net will affect the effectiveness of the program. The experience of Ebinat district showed that support provided to graduated households hit by shocks has been covered by the contingency budget and risk financing mechanism rather than allowing re-entry into the PSNP. In 2009, for example, in one of the study villages the contingency budget was used to support graduated and non-beneficiary households after their harvest had been damaged by a hailstorm.

## **Challenges of program implementation**

The results above revealed that 12 out of the 16 graduated households continue to be food insecure and depend on the sale of livestock to cover their food gaps. How could this happen? Discussions with graduated households revealed that the combination of the PSNP and OFSP programs were not sufficient to sustainably improve households food security situations. Both graduated and non-graduated households were asked to indicate the main problems preventing households from achieving food security with support from the PSNP and OFSP programs. 56% of the households indicated that the main problem was the small nature of transfer they received as compared to the problems they faced. 31% believed that lack of appropriate information about the PSNP and OFSP programs were a major factor, whereas 13% reported the non-transparent nature of program implementation (Table 4).

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Table 4. Major problem preventing households to achieve food security

Major Problem	Frequency	Percentage
Small nature of transfer	45	56.25
Lack of clear information about PSNP and OFSP	25	31.25
Non-transparency of the program	10	12.50
Total	80	100.00

SOURCE: Own Field Survey 2010

Results from in-depth interviews held with food insecure graduated households and key informant interviews conducted with district agricultural experts revealed that the following five factors are the major reasons why the combination of the PSNP and OFSP programs have failed to take all graduated households out of poverty and food insecurity in a sustainable way.

### *Too little support*

Beneficiary households raised concerns about the amount of transfer they received. The majority of the participants argued that the amount of safety net and other food security program transfers are too small to cover households' food shortages. This results in limited improvements in household asset accumulation patterns which is a critical step for graduation to take place (Devereux, 2002; Carter and Barrett, 2006; Devereux and Guenther 2009). Households also mentioned their concern about the current high rate of inflation which has reduced the purchasing power of the cash transfer. More than two-thirds of interviewed households described absence of full family targeting<sup>5</sup> as a major factor why the amount of transfer is too small. Full family targeting was introduced into the food security program in 2007, to avoid the need of households to sell their assets to compensate for partial transfers. However, implementing full family targeting was a major problem, as PSNP resources were diluted in order to cover larger number of needy households. About three quarters of the households who have received credit used a significant amount of the credit for consumption smoothing. This was also related, in the experience of households, to the late nature of transfers which forced them to use credit and sale of livestock to cover consumption gaps. Most of the households reported

<sup>5</sup> Full family targeting refers to provision of sufficient resources to households to meet all family members consumption needs.

that a delay of two months is common and sometimes even higher. Gilligan et al. (2009) also reported issues of payment delay as one major problem of the safety net program.

### ***Meeting quota or targets***

The district PSNP coordinator mentioned in his interview<sup>6</sup>, that they annually receive a graduation quota from the regional food security bureau. Local development agents and Kebele administrators, in turn, revealed that they usually receive orders from the Woreda agricultural office to graduate a certain number of households every year. As a result, they reported that, they are being forced to select every year a certain number of households among safety net beneficiaries for graduation, irrespective of their level of food security. Allocation of the graduation quota, therefore, puts pressure on local officials at district level.

Officials at the regional bureau, however, explained that the bureau does not set graduation quota, but instead graduation targets are set for each district, in order to estimate the necessary resources required to achieve graduation and to monitor graduation performance. It was clear that, whatever the purpose of the targets, the understanding and interpretation at the district level was about quotas by which their performance would be evaluated at a later stage. Fear of being held accountable for program failure, which would result in negative effects for career prospects of local officials, thus affected the implementation process. A similar result was reported regarding targeting of households for resettlement in Sekota district (Bishop and Hilhorst, 2010). This explains why local officials have a tendency to graduate households prematurely.

### ***Limited Awareness and Training***

The study revealed a lack of awareness concerning the graduation process and graduation benchmark at Kebele and community level especially on the part of the beneficiary households. About two-thirds of graduated households revealed lack of adequate knowledge about graduation. They were not even briefed about the criteria before their graduation. Members of the CFSTF also showed no knowledge of the graduation benchmark. Even the development agents (DAs) and members of the Kebele food security task force who have been trained to implement graduation believed that the training was very theoretical and insufficient in terms of providing them practical instructions and experience on how to implement the program. This lack of proper awareness, therefore, contributed to poor implementation capacity of the program at the local level

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<sup>6</sup> Interview: District PSNP coordinator May 9, 2010

which ultimately affects its success. Dom (2008) also reported similar findings about how limited awareness due to lack of proper training on graduation process affected implementation of graduation in Tigray. These results are, however, contrary to what is reported by the graduation assessment report commissioned by the World Bank which reported adequate awareness of the graduation concept even at the local level (the IDL group, 2010).

### ***Inconsistent Asset registration***

Development agents are said to be responsible for recording the assets of safety net beneficiary households. In the study area, however, it was reported that asset registration was undertaken together with members of the Kebele Councils and was undertaken without the consent of individual households. From field observation and interviews with households and DAs, the study revealed that one major problem is lack of consistency in recording household assets among DAs throughout the district. Another example is that assets which are not elements of regional graduation benchmarks are included in the asset registration process. The study, for example, witnessed that ownership of weapons was included as an element of graduation while weapon ownership is not an official element of graduation. There was also a case where DAs registered the value of perennial plant by estimating its value for 10 years' time while there is no guarantee that the plant will be productive for 10 years.

### ***Lack of Strong institutional setup for program implementation***

The study also revealed the lack of strong institutions for the implementation of the program at community level. Though the Community Food Security Task Force (CFSTF) exists in structure, they are not functional. In principle they are responsible to select potential graduates, however, the actual selection of graduates was undertaken by the Kebele council and the DAs. The CFSTF is only in place nominally as a symbol to be seen to follow the proposed structure. In a discussion, one member of the CFSTF told us that they do what they have been told to do by the Kebele administrator and the DAs. They do not know what criteria to use and what the graduation benchmarks are about. They select people simply based on the information they get from the Kebele administration.

The study also revealed the lack of a strong institutionalised appeal mechanism. The appeal committee comprises the same people as the Kebele council who select and approves households for graduation. Though there were a few cases of appeals made at the Kebele level against graduation, more than half of interviewed households expressed the view that they even didn't know the possibility of appeals against their graduation. Even most of the households who



knew about the possibility of appeal don't believe that things will be different if they complain later. The appeal cases made at the Kebele level were also turned down by the Kebele committee. For example, one graduated person expressed his experience as follows:

I know that I was selected for graduation not because I am rich. But where can I go to complain? If you go to the Kebele office you will get those same people who make the decision in the first place. I went to the district Agricultural office to complain but they told me to make my complaint at the Kebele office and they sent me back. But in the Kebele they don't want to listen to my problem. I don't have a place to go to complain. So, what can I do rather than accepting the decision?<sup>7</sup>

## **Conclusions**

The Ethiopian food security program in particular the PSNP, represents a major effort on the part of the Ethiopian government and the international donor community to assist millions of households to break out of households dependency on humanitarian assistance and achieve food security. Notwithstanding these efforts, there is an abiding question of how successful the program is going to be. Already, as indicated in this chapter, it is clear that graduation rates have fallen far behind expectations and a large number of households faced food shortages even after graduation. This chapter has investigated a group of households that were graduated. Among the group of 16 graduated households, 12 had not reached food security despite their graduation.

The first explanation of why graduation is not successful, is found in the overwhelming numbers of food insecure households that dilute even the large resources mustered by the government and donors. The total caseload being assisted by the food security program has actually increased from 5 million in 2005 to 8.3 million people in 2009, rather than going down as it was expected due to graduation. As a result, resources are spread thin. Moreover, there are not enough resources through the OFSP to allow the build-up of an asset base that renders households food secure. In addition, instead of receiving full family support, households cannot survive on limited resources provided by the safety nets alone. They have to use resources that are meant to expand their asset base to smoothen consumption.

This research also highlights that there are major institutional impediments to a successful program. The PSNP and the process of graduation is quite complex and requires a high capacity level of the local bureaucracy. In practice,

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<sup>7</sup> Interview: Graduated household, Mecheda April 24, 2010

there appeared to be many problems. Graduation was not implemented according to the rules set out for its implementation. There was lack of uniform understanding of the graduation benchmark as well as processes across different levels of implementers. This is partly related to lack of training and misunderstandings. At the same time it was found that the setting of targets or quota works as a disincentive for the quality of the program. Local level officials have an overriding concern to meet the targets, which they perceive to be important for their future career prospects. As a result, they tend to use credit facilities as mechanisms to force households into graduation without examining households food security status or productive assets. At the same time, the local committees that are responsible for implementing graduation do not function properly due to lack of organisation and information. As a result, they do not act as a countervailing power or watchdog, but follow the proposals for graduation forwarded by the DAs and local administrators. There is no effective mechanism for households to complain against unjust graduation and the complaints committees exist only on chapter. These institutional impediments result in the premature graduation of households.

The major problem remains that the food security program, the PSNP and OFSP, has not resulted in a structural improvement of the food security capacities of households in the study area. 12 out of 16 households have graduated from the program, even though they are still food insecure. They leave the program with a modest asset base, often acquired with a loan that they have not yet repaid. In order to survive, they depend on the sale of livestock, without being able to reproduce or restock their sheep and goats. Livestock in these cases, become a temporary safety net that is quickly depleting. Once depleted, households will likely become dependent again on external assistance. Despite all the efforts and good intentions, it seems that for most households, the food security program has not been able to sustainably break the vicious cycle of dependence on aid. From dependency on food aid, households have moved to dependency on the safety net program, and are now dependent on a rapidly depleting livestock base, with a risk of becoming dependent on aid again. The structural problems that have been identified as impeding food security, namely poor soil fertility, environmental degradation and weather-induced drought, population pressure, fragmented landholdings and lack of income generating opportunities outside of agriculture, have not been resolved and continue to frame the possibilities of households to overcome food insecurity. Instead of achieving sustainable food security, graduation from the PSNP has only meant for most families a re-allocation of their dependency.

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# The Gender Dimensions of Food Insecurity

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## Introduction

### *Gender and Food Insecurity*

Food security<sup>1</sup> has long been a national agenda in Ethiopia. This is not unanticipated given that nearly half of the population, 37% urban and 52% rural, is food insecure. About 10 percent of the food insecure population are chronically food insecure, excluding the number recently added due to the food crisis (HLTF, 2009)<sup>2</sup>.

The bulk of the literature associates food insecurity with poverty. Food shortages, particularly seasonal ones, are further exacerbated by factors such as climate hazards (Verdin *et al.* 2005; Cooper *et al.* 2008; Thompson *et al.* 2010) and by the limited options available to the poor to adapt to climate-related adversities. For instance, food deficits were reported for the period 2010-2011 among poor households in *belg* rain dependent areas such as the north-eastern lowlands, the south Wollo Zone, and east and west Haraghe Zones. Reduced production resulted from the *belg* rain shortage, water logging, hailstorms and diseases (FEWS NET 2010). Given that seasonal rainfall deficit varies across the regions of the country (WFP 2009; FAO/WFP 2009), regional disparity in transitory food deficits characterizes the food insecurity situations of the poor in Ethiopia.

Women make up the majority of the profile of poor and vulnerable (Ellis and Tassew 2005; Devereux and Sharp 2006; Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2002) which constitutes both cause and effect of their apparent food insecurity. Empirical evidence suggests that females in Ethiopia are disproportionately affected by food shortages within the household compared to other household members (Hadley *et al.* 2008; Yared 2010; Belachew *et al.* 2011). Also at the

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<sup>1</sup> FAO (2001) defines food security as a situation “when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” ([www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)). This applies even to the vulnerable segments of the society.

<sup>2</sup> Coordination Team of the UN System High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis 2009

extra-household level, female-headed households tend to be more food insecure than male-headed ones (Ellis and Tassew 2005; Netsanet 2009).

Ethiopian women's lack or insecurity of access to productive resources and particularly to land is widely recognised (e.g. Devereux 2000; Ellis and Tassew 2005) with adverse implications to productivity and income. For example, a study in Ghana shows that land tenure insecurity among women negatively affects productivity on women's plots (Goldstein and Udry 2005). Similarly, in Ethiopia, land rented out by women has lower productivity partly due to insecure land ownership status (Bezabih and Holden 2006; Holden and Bezabih 2009). The situation is more alarming given that a great deal of female headed households cultivate their land through sharecropping arrangements (Gebremedihin 1998, cited in Tesfay 2006; Kidist 2009).

Issues pertaining to women's food (in)security status in country have been obtaining increased policy attention. For instance, to alleviate women's poverty and enhance their wellbeing efforts have been made in key national development policies and programmes including Sustainable Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2002-2005), Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (2006-2010), National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2006-2010), Food Security Strategy (2002), Food Security Programme (2010-2014), Health Sector Development Program (2011-2015), Ethiopia's Agricultural Sector Policy and Investment Framework (2010-2020). Strategies have also been put in place with components to increase women's access to productive resources, services and employment opportunities.

As part of such venture, land certification has been carried out in parts of Tigray, Amhara, Oromiya and SNNP Regions since 2004-2005 with promising potentials for improving the situation of women (Deininger *et al.* 2007; Holden 2008). However, the change in women's food insecurity status as a result of land certification as well as other measures taken to increase women's access to resources, services and income generation have not been thoroughly investigated. Only limited studies have made a gender analysis of the national food security strategy, particularly by linking it to household-level empirical evidence on the food insecurity status of women. Moreover, previous studies have hardly addressed the food insecurity status of women of different social profiles and capabilities, e.g., conventional and *de facto* female headships, access to off-farm work and bargaining power.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine the national food security strategy from a gender perspective and provide empirical evidence on the gender aspects of household food gap. In doing so, it attempts to capture potential changes in the food insecurity status of women due to the various

endeavors that have been carried out to increase women's access to resources and services. It also identifies the key variables associated with the food insecurity status of women in Ethiopia. The resulting evidence may help to develop some policy recommendations for alleviating women's food insecurity and its implications for national poverty reduction endeavor.

### ***Why is Gender an Issue in Food Security in Ethiopia?***

Several reasons explain why gender is an issue in food (in)security in Ethiopia. These are basically rooted in both the supply and the demand side issues of food insecurity. The supply side consists of the production and food availability aspects, while the demand side consists of the amount of consumption and the access elements - population size and purchasing power- of food security. First, women make a substantial contribution to agricultural production and economic development in Ethiopia as in many sub-Saharan African countries (SSA) (Shapouri and Rosen 1999; Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2002) through engagement in agricultural production and income generation. However, women farmers are discriminated against in terms of access to agricultural inputs and resources compared to men farmers which is largely due to gender biased development policies and agricultural research; discriminatory legislations, social norms; poor representation of women in decision-making (FAO 1998). Given that the level of domestic food production is among the key variables affecting food security in much of SSA including Ethiopia (Shapouri and Rosen 1999), addressing the structural and cultural constraints affecting women's position in agricultural production becomes important for food security (Frank 1999). Second, women's contribution to household food security is also manifested in their predominant position in the informal economy. The informal sector provides poor women employment opportunities in urban areas (ILO 2003), and also in rural areas enables women to generate petty cash incomes to supplement household economy especially in times of food shortage (Hirut 2010). However, women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia encounter severe constraints including limited access to resources, inputs, market information, business development and other services (ILO 2003), resulting in low productivity and incomes despite long hours of work (Gittinger *et al.* 1990).

Third, women play a vital role in food processing, storage and management, which has crucial implications for household food security (Gittinger *et al.* 1990). Rural women play important role in minimizing food loss and diversifying diet for nutritional wellbeing of their families. Nevertheless, little attention has been paid to the needs of women farmers in research and technology development programs (FAO 1998). In the context of environmental degradation, loss of vegetation and dwindling water resources, rural women are

forced to trek long distances in search of fuel and water at the expense of time available for agriculture and income generation. Given their responsibility for ultimate food at the table, women are the first to experience the “concern and anxiety” associated with physical food shortage as well as fuel and water scarcity within the household (Hirut 2000). Fourth, notwithstanding their vital role in the economy, women in Ethiopia tend to carry a lopsided burden for food insecurity, both at the intra-household (Hadley *et al.* 2008; Yared 2010) and household (Ellis and Tassew 2005; Netsanet 2009) levels. In particular, female heads of household who traditionally constitute the majority of the poor and vulnerable (Ellis and Tassew 2005; Devereux and Sharp 2006; Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2002) are causes of concern.

Despite some remarkable efforts recently towards increasing women’s access to productive resources and services aligned to the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE, 2006), access to productive resources such as land continued to be skewed against women (CSA 2008:270). Even those women who own land may encounter systematic labour and productivity constraints in crop cultivation, e.g. lack of labor relevant for using the existing ploughing technology, and lack of access to inputs, credit and extension. As a result, such households are forced to rent out their farmlands or engage in sharecropping, having weaker bargaining position (Mogues *et al.* 2009).

It has also been found that productivity on land rented out by women land owners is lower than that rented out by men land owners partly due to issues of insecure land ownership status (Bezabih and Holden 2006; Holden and Bezabih 2009). The impact of the recent land certification on plot-level productivity shows a significant gain in productivity for male heads of households compared to female heads of households (Bezabih and Holden 2010) which has implications for food security.

Similarly, gender differences in food insecurity are increasingly recognized at the intra-household level (Hadley *et al.* 2008; Yared 2010; Belachew *et al.* 2011). This could be due to subtle preferential treatment in food provision, for example in favor of boys (Belachew *et al.* 2011) or due to women’s poor bargaining power within the household (Brousard 2012). Women and girls continued to be more vulnerable to food insecurity within the household albeit some efforts to address acute malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women through various targeted nutrition programs and the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP).

To close the loop, food insecurity has daunting implications for household labor productivity, thereby reproducing further food insecurity. Obviously, the vicious circle of food insecurity can be explained as reducing food productivity,



followed by increasing poverty which in turn deepens vulnerability to food insecurity (USDA 2010). Hence, in a context where the producers of the vital labor force in agricultural production are food insecure as well as time- and resource-poor, labor productivity and food security for the overall population is fragile, if not rhetorical.

Equally important is that women are at the heart of the demand side of food insecurity issues. In this respect, curbing population growth is considered a strategy in closing the food gap in sub-Saharan Africa including Ethiopia (Shapouri and Rosen 1999). The United Nations International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 in Cairo and various works on controlling population growth place reproductive health and gender issues at the centre (USAID 2004). To the extent that reproductive health and women's empowerment are pursued as strategies for addressing the demand side of the food gap, the role of women in food security in Ethiopia cannot be overstated.

### ***Objectives***

The overall objective of this chapter is to provide insight into the gender aspects of food insecurity situations in Ethiopia by analysing the food security strategy from a gender perspective and examining the current food insecurity status of women. Specifically it i) examines gender perspectives in the national food security strategy and its implementation, ii) assesses the food insecurity status of women in Ethiopia and variables associated with food insecurity, and iii) identifies issues and challenges in strategy and implementation, in the light of the recent food insecurity status of women, in order to inform policy.

The achievement of the first objective involves the analysis of national food security-related policies, strategies and programs in terms of addressing key gender issues in food insecurity. It also involves consulting previous works on the trends in women's food insecurity status as well as on the achievements of the national food security strategy towards addressing the same. The second objective involves a simple regression analysis to understand the recent food insecurity status of women as well as identify variables explaining food insecurity in the country. The third objective involves identifying concerns and gaps pertaining to the national food security strategy and implementation process that may reinforce gendered food insecurity.

## **Conceptual Framework: the Capabilities Approach to Analyzing Food Insecurity**

Food insecurity is conventionally associated with the problem of inadequacy in food availability and low income to buy basic foodstuffs. As a result,

development policies and strategies are focused on promoting the availability of food through increasing productivity and income at the household and national levels. Poverty and food security discussions over the last decades seemed to focus on resource-base approach, such as the livelihood framework. The livelihood approach which takes into account risks and vulnerability contexts in its analysis has been widely used in food security assessment (e.g. Young 2001).

Recent poverty and inequality analysis takes the capabilities perspective (e.g. Sen 2000; Nussbaum 2003) with the assumption that a person's well-being achievement is contingent on that person's capabilities to function (Sen 1992:39-40). Capability refers to the person's or group's freedom to achieve a valuable "beings (such as being adequately nourished and in good health) and doings (the capability to function)". It follows that individual wellbeing achievement depends on individual capability to function not only on income (Sen 1992) unlike the traditional, which are largely concerned with the "instruments of achieving wellbeing and other objectives". By putting greater value on the concept of freedom and agency, focusing on individuals' initiatives to achieve the life they value and desire to lead (Sen 2000), the capabilities approach places human capabilities at the centre of its analytical proposition unlike the standard income approach to poverty. Hence, it makes a distinction between the means of wellbeing (goods and services) on the one hand, and the "things that intrinsically matter"- the role of functioning and capabilities in achieving a valuable life on the other (Robeyns 2003).

Robeyns (2003) identifies three advantages of the capabilities approach over the standard approaches to analyzing inequality, particularly gender inequalities. First, capabilities and functioning are the key properties of an individual, i.e., the individual is the basic unit of analysis rather than the household. It also allows understanding the wider institutional contexts that impact on individual capabilities and functioning. Second, the capabilities approach allows to assess inequalities in nonmarket settings, e.g., in the care economy of domestic labour and workload, unlike the conventional inequality assessment (including food security) which focuses on the market settings, e.g., income and employment. Third, the capabilities perspective recognizes differences in location, gender, age, ethnicity and other issues such as pregnancy and disability. In sum, the approach allows examining the nature of capability deprivations and the factors contributing to capability deprivation as well as variability in the nature of deprivation (Sen 2000:87).

Therefore, the capabilities approach is relevant for analyzing issues pertaining to individual capabilities on both sides of the food security equation, as well as for analyzing the challenges that individuals may face in converting resources to a valuable functioning and wellbeing. It also helps to understand the

nature of a person's deprivation and the importance of her/his agency to achieve valuable functioning. Gender differences in access to and control over productive resources including land, credit, extension services, employment and labour may considerably constrain women from producing enough food or generating sufficient income to buy food. Coupled with time poverty and limited mobility which are socially imposed on them, women may enjoy limited choices and freedom in pursuing a livelihood (Sen 2000:87-89). Hence, the loss of entitlement to food is partly the result of lack of control and command over resources. Viewing food insecurity as capability deprivation elucidates wider structural problems than symptomatic and narrower perspectives, such as lack of income or material resources. The understanding of such interrelationships needs to be explicitly considered in food security related policies and interventions through integrating capabilities perspectives.

## **Methodology**

The analysis employs both secondary and primary data. Secondary data was collected from various policy documents, statistical abstracts and consulting of previous works on the national food security strategy, and food security situation of women in particular. Primary rural household survey data was obtained from the IFPRI dataset by obtaining permission through the website. Policy analysis and simple regression techniques were employed to analyze the secondary and primary data respectively. Based on the analysis of secondary data on the national food security strategy and of primary rural household survey data on household food gaps, this study attempts to provide a gender perspective of the national food security strategy and the position of women in the food system.

## **The National Food Security Strategy from a Gender Perspective**

### ***Nature and Components of the Strategy and Measures Put in Place***

Some remarkable policy efforts have been made to ensure the integration of women in development efforts and to promote their becoming equal beneficiaries of the fruits of development. The SPRSP consultation and planning process were progressive in embracing women's voice, women's concerns and constraints in view of alleviating women's poverty. The National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE) by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA 2006-2011) was designed to provide a national gender mainstreaming framework to advance equality between men and women in social, political and economic development. It set out strategies to enable poor women escape poverty and

become food secured through ensuring their equal access to and control over productive resources and services (land, oxen, extension, credit) (MoWA 2006). This Action Plan was integrated in various strategic documents such as PASDEP and spectral policies and programmes paving the way for gender and development to be one of the key cross-cutting issues in the development process. The PASDEP took a progressive move by taking women's issues as one of its eight pillars.

In line with this, some recognition has been given of women's poverty and food insecurity in Ethiopia's Food Security Programs (FSP) (2005-2009 and 2010-2014) with proposed measures to address them. For example, the FSP (2005-2009) pays attention to women's constraints such as work burden related to water shortage, lack of access to credit and extension services, lack of information (on family planning and income generation), and problems related to malnutrition. The program envisaged to ensure women's benefit from FSP intervention in terms of improving their health, building their assets, reducing their work burden, and expanding their livelihood opportunities. The program also proposes to improve the modality of credit delivery in order to ensure that women benefit from financial services through purchasing poultry and dairy animals. The effort to address issues of employment opportunities and income diversification for women through the PSNP document (Workeneh 2008) as well as through the development of small and micro enterprise particularly has also been noteworthy. Other related components of the FSP include Household Asset Building (HAB), Complementary Community Infrastructure (CCI) and resettlement programs.

Drawing on the experience of the first phase, the FSP (2010-2014) has been progressive in terms of mainstreaming gender concerns in its goals, objectives, outcomes, and indicators. Gender issues are relatively better mainstreamed in this FSP. For example, the new FSP aimed at ensuring food security among female and male members of chronically food insecure households, instead of targeting just household food security. It also appreciates the heterogeneity of women as it intends to address some specific needs of female heads of households, women in male headed households, and young women. Furthermore, the recent FSP recognizes gender concerns in the implementation of PSNP and proposes various remedial measures to be considered in the PSNP revised Program Implementation Manual (PIM) (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2010). The specific issues will be discussed under PSNP section.

To the extent that women's food insecurity is caused by lack of resources, services and opportunities, efforts to increase such for women contributes to addressing their food insecurity. An important question to ask here, though, is to

what extent the increase in women's access to resources, services and opportunities is translating into reduction in women's food insecurity. Moreover, while such policy and program initiatives mainly address issues of access to resources as a way of addressing food insecurity among women, they do not thoroughly address constraints relating to, for e.g., gender norms, which limit women's capability to utilize the resources and opportunities that may have been made available to them.

### ***Issues of Strategy and Program Implementation in Addressing Food Insecurity***

The Federal Food Security Strategy premised on three pillars, which are: (1) Increase supply or availability of food; (2) Improve access/entitlement to food; (3) Strengthening emergency response capabilities. However, in recognition of the poor performance and low productivity of the Ethiopian agricultural sector (Devereux 2000), the strategy has given greater emphasis to the supply side of the food security equation, that of increasing domestic food production and productivity as its key endeavours for achieving food security at the household and national levels. In what follows, we examine the main measures proposed by the strategy from a gender perspective and highlight some issues of concern.

#### ***Agricultural Production and Household Profiles***

Making a distinction between locations/regions based on their vulnerability to food insecurity as a result of environmental factors as well as recognition of the role of women in agricultural production are among the important ingredients of the Ethiopian food security strategy. However, there has not been adequate discussion concerning potentially gendered variations in individual access to, and control over, resources and differential ability to convert resources into valuable functioning in different contexts. This is particularly important given the prevailing gender asymmetries in divisions of labor and access to, and control over, productive resources which work against female farmers. Here, there are two important distinctions to make.

First, adult females in male-headed households are often overlooked in development policies although they are an important component of farming households with vital contributions in the sector. Their contributions as a source of agricultural labour and income may even be critical among food insecure households (Kidist 2009; Hirut 2010). Limited understanding of gender issues and intra-household arrangements in agriculture may lead to developing a gender neutral but, in reality, gender-biased strategy that reinforces the status quo.

Second, the national strategy paper targeting of female-headed households appears as a gender-responsive initiative, but with little effort to understand the practical and strategic problems such women may encounter due to their gender. For example, the strategy identifies female-headed households among the food insecure households in the rural, but also partly in the urban, areas, but provides insufficient explanation of the nature of their deprivation and their gender-specific problems. Instead, the cause of food insecurity among female-headed households seems to be understood in similar ways to other resource poor households: limited access to productive resources necessary to produce food. In contrast, problems and priorities of women farmers in the agricultural sector may depend also on their traditional rights and obligations as well as on the nature of the farming system (Hirut 2010). Hence, it is vital not only to provide opportunities for women but also to explore the various obstacles women encounter in the agricultural sector and effectively address their needs and enhance their capacities for better productivity.

### *Land Tenure*

In rural Ethiopia, land is a vital productive resource and determinant of wealth and food security. Nevertheless, landholding is gendered in several ways. The proportion of female heads of households with landholding status in Ethiopia in 2008 was limited to 18 percent, with an average landholding size of 0.68 hectare, substantially smaller than the average 1.06 hectares for male heads of household (CSA 2008:270). Also, little is known about the landholding status of married women and how it relates to their food security status.

The food security strategy envisaged improving the current land tenure through land certification and community participation in land use planning. The certification intended to ensure women's entitlement to household land reflecting the government's commitment to enforce the policy of increasing women's access to land and acquisition of property. An analysis of early impacts of the land certification, however, indicates that there remains some lack of clarity concerning the land size and length of contract on land rental markets which differs across regions (Deininger *et al.* 2007; Holden 2008). Such ambiguities would affect land rental decisions and deter a secure contractual arrangement on land on the part of the labor-scarce households and those with more paying alternative non-farm employment opportunities. Women household heads being the beneficiaries of rural land contracts, mainly sharecropping arrangements (Gebremedihin 1998, cited in Tesfay 2006; Kidist 2009), would mean that they are vulnerable to land grabbing in the event of delayed title transfers following death or divorce in previously male headed households.

It is also unclear as to whether and to what extent land certification has influenced the customary practices, in many regions, that underplay married women's equal rights to land and related decisions within households. This is particularly alarming given the influence of local customary practices in determining women's actual rights over household resources (WAO/FDRE and World Bank 1998; Schoz and Gomez 2004). For instance, during marriage dissolution, men generally tend to have control over household property (Fafchamp and Quisumbing 2005). Also, a fifth of widows in Ethiopia are deprived of household properties following the death of their husbands (CSA and ORC Macro 2006). The inference is that female-headed households may be left with the option of heading their households with limited resources due to discriminatory customary practices that govern property disposition upon divorce and inheritance.

### *Agricultural Extension, Markets and Credit Services*

The agricultural extension service is recognised as a key factor in reducing poverty in the country (MoFED 2006; Dercon *et al.* 2009). Hence, agricultural extension services have expanded throughout the country over the past years. In many respects, these have been menu-based or limited to certain services, with the assumption that "one size fits all". Cognizant of this pitfall, the FSS proposed to design agricultural extension packages that suit the requirements of the diverse agro-ecological zones while enhancing specialization.

Generally, in Ethiopia, agricultural extension services are directed towards the heads of households (Buchy and Basaznew 2005), who are often regarded to be men, with the assumption that they are the main farmers, even if adult females in married households play substantial roles in agricultural activities. Access to agricultural extension services by female heads of households also varies across regions, ranging from 54 percent in Tigray to 2 percent in Afar (CSA 2003, cited in MoWA 2006:17-18). Besides, services targeted to women, particularly married women, are predominantly in home economics and women's traditional activities, such as poultry and home gardening (Mogues *et al.* 2009). It fails to take into account "the unique and important" role of women in male headed households (Frank 1999) but also underplays their actual contribution in agriculture (Holmes and Jones 2011). There has been a "perception bias" against women's prominent role in agriculture (Mogues *et al.* 2009) and also "cultural viewpoint" that forbid women farmers from undertaking important tasks in agriculture, such as ploughing (MoWA 2006). The marginalisation of women's role in agricultural production may prevent technological innovations and development that are necessary to address



women's constraints (Frank, 1999) and to effectively utilize the labour force in the sector. This has adverse implication to food production.

Farmers' cooperatives have been one of the areas that the food security strategy was envisaged to strengthen in view of enhancing the position of farmers in the market as well as improving their access to agricultural inputs. Arguably, farmers' cooperatives are important to access information, technologies (Aregu *et al.* 2010), agricultural credits and inputs to farmers (Mogues *et al.* 2009). However, the proportion of women who participate in farmers' cooperatives has long been limited to 13 percent, which the PASDEP proposed to increase to 30 percent by 2010 (MoFED 2006). Moreover, women's access to agricultural inputs and credit is limited (Mogues *et al.* 2009; CSA 2003, cited in MoWA 2006) partly because women farmers in male-headed households are often left out of farmers' associations. In order to reach all women farmers and address their specific extension needs, it is crucial to re-orient and re-organise the existing farmers' cooperatives through establishing a women farmer's wing within the farmers' cooperatives. However, such a strategy requires caution as it might otherwise perpetuate the prevailing gender stereotype in agriculture, i.e., that men are the primary farmers within households.

### *Micro and Small-Scale Enterprise Development*

The development of micro and small scale enterprises is seen as poverty reduction and growth-fostering strategies through promoting income generation and linking of the agricultural sector with other sectors to enhance the use of inputs, technologies and transport services. The success of micro and small enterprises development is also seen in connection with the role of saving and credit initiatives. Aligned with this, the last few decades witnessed the expansion of microfinance institutions and programs, and industrial extension services through micro and small enterprise agencies in many regions. Following the issuance of Proclamation No. 40/1996 for the licensing and supervision of microfinance institutions in the country, several microfinance institutions have been established in the various regions, providing microfinance services to the rural and urban poor men and women. Moreover, the Ethiopian government, in cooperation with various donor agencies and NGOs initiated and co-financed various micro-credit programs to economically empower poor women in the urban and rural areas. An example of such effort is the Women's Development Initiative Project (2001-2007) which was targeted to poor women from poor districts in Ethiopia.



While the national food security strategy acknowledges the role of income generation for addressing food insecurity, particularly for women, it does not consider the control and decision-making issues of women. This has long been debated in the literature on microfinance institutions' (MFI) activities and achievements (e.g. Goteze and Gupta 1996; Kabeer 2001; Johnson 2005). Also, studies in Ethiopia have demonstrated that some women microfinance borrowers do not necessarily make use of loans borrowed in their names but pass them to their husbands because of intra-household power asymmetry (Borchgrevink 2005; Hirut 2010). It is worth noting that the types of loan products that were extended by some microfinance institutions to married women (also the terms of loan repayment) in the rural areas tend to focus on men's traditional roles in agriculture. A case in point is the provision of credit for purchase of oxen for crop cultivation. When the farming season is over, the oxen are fattened to generate cash income, which tends to be controlled by men (Hirut 2010). In contrast, some women who invested their loans on traditional female occupation, such as dairy cows, poultry and petty trading, are found to generate income they command over (Haile *et al.* 2012). Hence, the effectiveness of such programs in addressing women's food insecurity status needs to be evaluated cautiously.

### *Productive Safety Net and Related Programs*

Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) is one of the key components of the food security strategy and program that was designed to increase food entitlement to the most vulnerable individuals and households, with a special focus on women. The program has considered gender equity as one of its key principles. It intended to enhance poor women's entitlement to food reduce their work burden, and improve their health and nutrition, as well as their participation in PSNP decision-making structures so that they eventually benefit from the program (MoA, 2010). Some achievements of the cash-for-work-based PSNP have been noted, such as access to better quality food, health services and more child school enrolment (Dominguez 2010).

The PSNP has made remarkable progress in terms of targeting women as its main beneficiaries and, to some extent, enhancing their participation in program decision-making. The program recognises women's substantial role in agriculture and household food provisioning as well as their vulnerability to food insecurity as a result of gender, family composition and lifecycle factors (Holmes and Jones 2011). Female heads of households and pregnant and breast-feeding mothers were among the main targets, particularly in the direct support program. Female-headed households constituted over 50 percent of the targeted households for direct support, while women and girls comprised about 50 percent of public work participants (Sharp *et al.* 2006). Nevertheless, no clear

expectations have been reflected concerning the ways in which resources directed to men and women of food insecure households' impact upon the wellbeing of different household members.

There are also some gender concerns in the implementation of the PSNP<sup>3</sup>. First, women's representation in the *woreda* and *kebele* food security task forces is very limited, particularly in leadership positions (Sharp *et al.* 2006). This is in contrary to the fact that women make up the majority of the food insecure profile. Under representation of women in such taskforces runs the risk of underplaying the needs and concerns of women in PSNP planning and decision-making process. Second, there is a lack of gender-disaggregated data on the trainings conducted in relation to the safety net program and targeting at the *woreda* and community level taskforces (Sharp *et al.* 2006). This data is necessary to evaluate whether or not women are equally equipped with the necessary skills as members of the taskforce. Equally important is the lack of attention to raising the awareness of the food security taskforce to the gender aspects of the program (Holmes and Jones 2011) to ensure gender responsiveness in targeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the PSNP.

Third, initially the eight working hour rule of the PSNP did not take into account women's domestic responsibilities, which are also vital for achieving household food security. This means poor women experience multiple burdens as they are expected to work eight hours doing the same work as men in the PSNP while at the same time accomplishing childcare, domestic chores, farming and other social activities. Despite the evident impact of public works on women's work burden, there appears to be little willingness to alleviate the problem (Guush *et al.* 2011). This situation is more severe for female heads of households who are disproportionately represented among labor-poor households, who are unable to fulfil the public work labour requirements to get full family entitlement (Sharp *et al.* 2006). It is also worth noting that in highly drought-prone areas such as Bugna *woreda* where PSNP is carried out, women spend longer hours in search of water and fuel wood (Haile 2000).

As promised in the FSP (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, MoARD, 2009), some remedial measures to minimize the heavy workloads of women were considered in the PIM. The revised PIM states that, first, "consideration may be given to the heavy workload of women in rural areas: a woman may be asked to work fewer days for the same transfer (i.e. 15 kgs) as

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<sup>3</sup> See Amdissa (2008) and Sosena and Tsehai (2008) for some issues of PSNP implementation.

her male counterparts” (Ministry of Agriculture, 2010:26). Also, the design of public works activities is expected to allow women’s late arrival and early leaving in recognition of their domestic responsibilities. However, the absence of specific target as to the number of hours women have to spend on public works, for entitlement to the same transfer, may imply that the decision is at the discretion of program implementers thereby making it difficult for women to claim any right.

Second, the timing of public works takes into account men’s and women’s seasonal labor availability and that it considers giving priority to public works sub- project that eases women’s burden in order to ensure their participation as well as benefit from public work interventions. Third, women may be assigned to undertake tasks that are less physically demanding or attend nutritional classes or other activities that might be beneficial to them and their children. Here, one has to be cautious of task classifications, since some tasks traditionally performed by women are often regarded as less physically demanding due to gender stereotyping, yet they may be immensely energy consuming and arduous.

Fourth, the enforcement of the direct support program for pregnant women after six months of pregnancy and nursing mothers in the first ten months after delivery is apparently weak for various reasons. On the one hand, a pregnant woman becomes ineligible for the direct support program if she is pregnant after the identification of target beneficiaries. On the other, women are put under pressure to work even in times of late pregnancy and soon after delivery because of the implementing agencies’ emphasis on reducing dependency and attaining targeted public work outputs. There are cases where such women continue working for fear of losing entitlement even when they are given the right to get direct support during late pregnancy and/or are lactating (Sharp *et al.* 2006). The recent PIM reiterates the unconditional direct support transfer to women who are more than six months pregnant and lactating mothers in the first ten months after delivery but only in a situation where there is no any able-bodied person in the household to participate in public works. However, it requires other able-bodied members of the household to increase their work requirement to compensate for the women who were unable to work (MoA, 2010). This strategy does not secure unconditional transfer to those women by exempting them from the public works due to the prevailing asymmetry in decision-making as well as differential labor allocation arrangements within the household. In both cases, the fate of such target group is prone to be more determined by their ability in bargaining and negotiation rather than by the virtue of their right for unconditional transfer.

Therefore, if PSNP is to bring about the desired results, it should be gender-responsive by involving more women in the decision-making, creating gender awareness at all levels and instituting flexible working hours in recognition of women's domestic care responsibilities. It should also create diverse task options in recognition of women's life-cycle vulnerability, especially during times of pregnancy and breastfeeding (Holmes and Jones 2011).

Finally, the FSP has some drawbacks in integrating gender concerns in Household Asset Building (HAB) and Resettlement Programs, as it generally focuses on the household. The program needs to account for gender differentials in asset ownership or control within the household as it affects individual bargaining power and eventually food security status of individuals and households. Two issues deserve attention here. First, given that women in Ethiopia have limited asset ownership compared to men (WAO and World Bank 1998; Wondimu *et al.* 2003), which partly explains their food insecurity status, increasing asset holdings for women contributes to improving both their productive capacity and bargaining position with implications to their food security. Second, the FSP needs to promote joint asset ownership by men and women within conjugal households in order to improve women's as well as household food security and well-being. This is based on the premise that more assets owned by women relative to men is more likely to increase the budget share of food in the household while relatively more assets in the hands of men is more likely to increase expenditure on goods mainly consumed by men e.g. alcohol and tobacco (Quisumbing and Maluccio 2000). The impacts of resettlement programs on women's food insecurity, both among the resettled ones and those left behind by their husbands who resettled in other areas, needs to be carefully assessed.

### *Intra-household Food Insecurity*

The food security strategy uses the household as the basic unit of analysis. Underlying such an analysis is the assumption that either the household food insecurity portfolio is equally shared among members or that addressing household food insecurity is the same as addressing intra-household food insecurity. There are more persuasive reasons to believe that intra-household food insecurity differentials are not free from the situation of gender inequalities than otherwise. In many societies there exist sex and age biases in food allocation based on social valuation and perceived or actual economic contributions (Gittelsohn and Vastine 2003).

The national food security strategy seems to have overlooked the important issue of intra-household differentials in food distribution and food insecurity, as has also been noted by Workeneh (2008). Household food insecurity may not be equally shared among household members. Hadley *et al.* (2009) indicated a possible cushioning of the adverse effects of food insecurity by adults of food insecure households based on the finding that a higher degree of food insecurity was reported by adult household members than was reported by adolescent members. Particularly, women seem to carry a disproportionately higher burden of household food insecurity compared to other household members (Hirut 2000; Yared 2010). This could be due to the intra-household allocation arrangements, which involve biases in the distribution of resources (such as food and work division), often not in favor of women, coupled with women's greater concern to enhancing family welfare than pursuing personal interest (Sen 1990).

Similarly, a greater incidence of food insecurity has been observed among female-headed households compared with other households (Netsanet 2009). The Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey shows that the nutritional insecurity status of women in the reproductive age group of 15-49 years was substantially higher than their male counterparts in the same age group, particularly in rural and most moisture-deficient regions in the country. For instance, about 35 and 44 percent of women in the Afar and the Somali regions respectively are anaemic compared to 15 percent of their male counterparts (CSA and ISF Macro 2011). Although biological and reproductive reasons may in part explain this phenomenon, it is plausible to suggest that gender also plays a role, given women's lower social status in these regions.

Household food expenditure data may also underplay the possible gender- and age-based deprivations in access to food, resources and other aspects of capability deprivation, in instances of affluence. This may have both short-term (wellbeing) and long-term (capabilities) implications for women's food security status.

Hence, individual entitlement to adequate and nutritious food may not necessarily be dependent on overall household food production and income but also on various social arrangements. This suggests that addressing food insecurity issues requires the policy environment to be responsive to the facts that girls and women are disproportionately affected by household food insecurity and that household food insecurity may not be a good indicator for intra-household or individual food insecurity. The integration of the social dimension with food security is important (FAO 2001) as it allows viewing the problem of food insecurity in terms of broader structural inequalities that perpetuate deprivation in human capabilities and eventually individual wellbeing. The fact that the food security strategy focuses on improving access

to material resources to food insecure households rather than enhancing individual capabilities explains the neglect of intra-household inequalities that create and reproduce deprivation and vulnerability.

### ***Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms for Gender Impact***

The Food Security Programs, particularly the recent one, paid considerable attention to the issues of monitoring and evaluation. It identified several activities, indicators and strategies to monitor, evaluate and assess the performance of the different programs and assess the impact of the food security programs on food insecurity of households and communities. To some extent, gender based indicators and gender disaggregated data are included. This initiative needs to be strengthened in order to comprehend the impact of the FSP on women as well as on gender relations among the food insecure households and communities as indicated in both the PSNP (MoA 2010) and FSP (Food Security Coordination Bureau 2004) monitoring and evaluation manuals. Monitoring and evaluation needs to include assessing trends in the links between the different components of the FSP, for e.g. women's access to resources, opportunities, and achievements in women's food insecurity. While there seems to be progress in terms of the gross school enrolment rate, access to income-generating activities and land title deeds for girls and women, efforts to examine relationships between women's access to such resources and their food insecurity status remain deficient.

In the section to follow, empirical data is employed to examine the food insecurity status of female-headed households as well as that of households with more women's involvement in decision-making as well as the variables associated food insecurity.

### **Food Insecurity Status of Women: Empirical Evidence**

This section presents empirical evidence on the food insecurity status of rural women in Ethiopia, based on the number of self-reported food shortage months, and identifies some gender-related constraints explaining the degree of household food insecurity. Since the study is aimed at analyzing the recent food insecurity status of women, we used only the latest, i.e., 2009 IFPRI rural household survey dataset.

The underlying premise is that the degree of food insecurity status is gendered, the different profiles of household headships have implications for household food insecurity, and that indicators of the degree of women's empowerment, e.g. women's, decision-making on key expenditures, access to off-farm employment and credit, are associated with the degree of household

food insecurity. The purpose of the empirical analysis is not to establish strict causal relationships between any of the right- and left-hand side variables included in the estimation. Rather, it is to identify some useful links between gender-related variables and the degree of the household food gap which can provide insights for further investigation and inform relevant interventions.

### ***Data and Variables***

The variables used in the analysis were constructed from the rural household survey data conducted in 18 *woredas* in Tigray, Amhara, Oromiya and SNNP Regions. After dropping outlier landholders with more than 1,000 hectares and those households with incomplete data from the overall observations, a total sample of 1,351 households was included. The regional distribution resulted in 9.4% of the sample households representing Tigray (two *woredas* of the Eastern Zone), 26.6% Amhara (four *woredas* in North Shoa and Eastern Zone), 37.6% Oromiya (seven *woredas* in East Shoa, East Haraghe, Arsi, Western and Jimma Zones) and 26.4% SNNP (five *woredas* in Gurage, Kembata, Gedieo, and Wolayta Gamogofa) Zones. Households may have had several crop fields for growing cereals and pulses such as *teff*, maize, millet, barley, wheat, sorghum and beans, and perennial crops such as coffee, *enset* and *qat*.

In the study, the indicator for household food insecurity was constructed as the number of food gap months in the household during the 12 months of 2009, which is the explained variable. Mean food gap for the sample households during the period was 3.1 months (Table 1). The household food gap variable was regressed on a number of explanatory variables including the different household headship profiles and female involvement in key household expenditure decisions (clothing, schooling and medical expenditures). Other continuous and dummy variables were included to control for the effect of household-specific characteristics associated with production and consumption decisions. These included age of the household head, household size, formal education of the household head, household land holding, off-farm participation, lack of oxen, access to credit, membership in *eqqub* (a rotating savings association), expenditure on housing, unearned income receipt/transfers, and a regional dummy variable. In addition, interaction terms were included to capture the association of female-headed households' education, off-farm employment, membership in *eqqub* and credit access with the household food gap.

### Method

A general framework of household utility is maximized subject to a technology, credit and time constraint in a non-separable framework. Household utility<sup>4</sup> is a function of food and other goods consumed.

### Results and Discussion

Estimation involved regression of food gap months on indicators of female household headship, female heads' participation in off-farm work, *eqqub* and credit access, women's involvement in decision-making as well as on variables controlling for other factors associated with the household food gap. A distinction was made between *de facto* female-headed households due to migration of male heads, and conventional female-headed households due to divorce, widowhood or being single, in the examination of any differences in food insecurity status. Apart from testing the role of *de facto* female headship in explaining household food insecurity, the disaggregation of household headship profiles helped to see if the conventional way of reckoning the *de facto* female-headed households either as male-headed or as female-headed was empirically backed.

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<sup>4</sup>Household utility maximization involves decisions on the amount of commodities demanded by the household, whether the commodities are domestically produced or bought from the market. The simultaneous production and consumption decisions are functions of the decision prices, income, and household and production characteristics associated with production and consumption decisions (Sadoulet and de Janvry 1995). Due to lack of detailed data to estimate utility functions and thus the structural model capturing both production and consumption decisions, the standard reduced form of household food gap equation given by  $FG_i = b_0 + x_i b + \alpha_i \beta + \epsilon_i$  is employed for empirical estimation; where  $FG_i$  is the observed household food gap in months for household  $i$  and  $\alpha_i$  is an indicator for household headship profile and women's capability, with a corresponding parameter,  $\beta$ . That is, our empirical model attempts to capture household resource endowment and preference aspects of food security as well as the capability to use resources and empowerment status by including some additional indicators, namely, female education, decision-making, access to credit and off-farm employment opportunities and social support network, i.e., *eqqub* and transfers.  $x_i$  is a vector of other weakly-exogenous and predetermined variables influencing the household food gap, with a corresponding parameter vector  $b$ ;  $\epsilon_i$  is the error term. Since the purpose of this paper was to look into the food insecurity status of females and other household headship profiles and also to see the links between food insecurity and women's empowerment/ bargaining indicators, we chose to use a more general household model framework instead of imposing assumptions on the ways in which decisions are made in the household. By doing so, we put to test the hypothesis that women's bargaining power matters for household food insecurity. If female decision-making in household expenditures regarding clothing, health and schooling is found to be significant for household food gap, alternative models of household behavior could be more relevant to this analysis.



## *Food Insecurity Status of Female-headed Households*

### ***Female-headed households in general***

Results show that the degree of food gap in the household was significantly higher among the conventional female-headed households (at the 1% level) than in others. On the other hand, male emigration, the conventional indicator for *de facto* female headship, was not found to have a significant association with the degree of household food gap, albeit with a negative sign. Thus, the food gap among households with male head emigrants is not significantly different from the rest of the sample households, although the negative sign means that, given adequate size, such households are potentially closer to the male-headed households than to the conventional female-headed ones when it comes to the food gap. The finding implies that different constraints work against the food insecurity status of different female headship profiles. Hence, interventions to addressing food insecurity should be responsive to such differences.

Next, the role of capability indicators, notably education level, access to off-farm work, and transfers on the food insecurity status of female-headed households is examined.

### ***Female-headed households with off-farm access***

Female-headed households with access to off-farm employment opportunities tended to have a significantly lower degree of food gap in the household than others at the 5% level. This has implications for strengthening interventions towards increasing access to off-farm opportunities among female-headed households as a potential strategy for improving their food security status.

Female-headed households with better education, access to credit, *eqqub* and transfers

Increasing levels of education, access to credit, *eqqub* and transfer income among female-headed households were not found to have significant associations with the household food gap. The reason may be that access to these resources may have been too limited for female-headed households to have any significant influence on the level of household food gap although the negative sign shows the potential role of women's access to these resources for reducing the household food gap.

### ***Variables Associated with Food Insecurity for the Overall Sample Households***

This section presents the association of household food insecurity with women's involvement in key expenditure decisions as well as with household's asset holdings, access to credit and *eqqub*, off-farm participation, transfer income, education level, and expenditure on housing.

***Women's bargaining position and household food insecurity***

The findings show that households where women make key expenditure decisions concerning children's clothing and medication experience less food gap in the household each at the 10% level of significance. This could be because women who are involved in household decision-making may have substantial economic contributions to influence expenditure decision that addresses the welfare of the households differently than men.

***Asset holdings and household food insecurity***

Results show that the degree of food shortage in the household significantly decreases with the increase in household landholding (at the 1% level). This is consistent with the expectation of a favorable contribution of the size of landholding to agricultural production that enhances food availability in rural households.

Similarly, lack of oxen was significantly associated with the degree of household food gap (at the 1% level) confirming the expectation that lack of oxen significantly increases the level of food gap in the household. This implies that building household land and oxen assets is important for addressing household food insecurity particularly for female-headed ones.

***Access to financial resources and household food insecurity***

The findings show that households with members participating in local *eqqub* experienced a lower degree of food gap in at the 1% level of significance. This may be an indication of the contribution of access to local finance for bridging the household food gap. However, *eqqub* membership among female-headed households was not found to have a significant association with household food gap. This may be partly explained by the potential differences in the size of *eqqub* membership among female- and male-headed households due to differential poverty status.

On the other hand, access to credit was found to have a significant positive association with the degree of household food gap at the 1% level. This might be an indication either that the size of loan obtained is too little to bridge the food gap during the period, or that it is not accessed for consumption purposes during the same year. Access to credit among female-headed households was not found to have a significant association with household food gap. However, the sign indicates that adequate access to credit has a potential for reducing the household food gap among female-headed households although this does not seem to be the case among male-headed households. This phenomenon may be an indication of the differences in the amount of loans used for food consumption among female-

and male-headed households, or of the increased tendency of female-headed households to engage in income-generating micro-businesses.

***Other variables associated with household food insecurity***

Household food gap is found to be significantly lower among households with a higher level of educational attainment, of their heads, at the 5% level. This may be because higher level of education contributes to increasing agricultural productivity thereby household food availability.

The findings show that food gaps were significantly higher among households with off-farm-participating members at the 1% level. Similarly, household food gap is found to be significantly higher among households who received transfers or unearned income within the study year compared to that of others at the 1% level, whereas the sign is opposite for female heads who received transfer income. These findings may indicate the role of size of income/transfer; control and command over income; and gender differential in the expenditure preferences in influencing the extent to which money on hand is spent on bridging household food gap. It may be that, for the sample households, the amount of income or transfer received by a household member is too little to significantly bridge the food gap the household is facing. It may also be that the person earning or receiving the income may not necessarily be having control over the utilization of the money and that there are gendered priorities for spending the money the particular person is in control. Given that majority of the sample households are male headed, this result, coupled with the finding of a lower food gap among female heads who participated in off-farm work discussed under section 5.3.1 above, may indicate that money in the hands of women is more likely to be spent on household food consumption than money in the hands of men (Thomas 1990; Pitt and Khandker 1998; Hirut 2010).

Findings further show that households that invested in renovating their house or in building a new one during the study year experienced a significantly lower degree of food gap (at the 1% level) during that same year. This may indicate the role of income and/or wealth for reducing household food gap.

It is also interesting to note that households in the Amhara and Tigray regions tend to experience significantly more months of food gap than households in the SNNP and Oromiya regions at the 1% level. Although this phenomenon may be partly explained by the respective differences in the livelihood systems, further research is needed to clearly explain the observed differences in food insecurity situations across the regions, particularly with relevance to gender.

## Conclusions

This paper reviews the integration of gender issues in the Ethiopian food security strategy and its programs, identifies implementation gaps and provides evidence on women's food insecurity status based on empirical data. In view of addressing women's vulnerability to food insecurity and unleashing their economic potential for the country's development and poverty reduction efforts, the Ethiopian government has been integrating women's concerns into its food security-related policies and programs. Although the results of such programs, e.g., PSNP, have been encouraging at the level of targeting women, there are some issues in achieving gender-transforming outcomes as women continue to encounter gender-based constraints interacting with their capability. It is suggested that PSNP should consider gender awareness training, clearly stipulated and flexible working hours and suitable work for women, especially for pregnant and lactating ones, community crèches as part of PSNP infrastructure, and quota systems for women's involvement in community decision-making as part of their design and implementation (Holmes and Jones 2011).

In line with this, there is a need to periodically conduct assessments of program gender impacts in the area of roles and responsibilities, access to resources and decision-making at various levels. Food security policies and programs should look beyond the household, including male versus female headed, as a unit of analysis, as such tends to mask gender-based deprivations with respect to access to and control over resources and food insecurity within the unit. Also, policies and programs need to recognize the variation in individual ability to convert resources and opportunities into valuable functioning (improvement in wellbeing and capability to perform), due to life-cycle vulnerability, gender norms, and should put extra-effort and resources to address such issues. For instance, women's vital role in childcare may limit women's benefit from opportunities open to them, and also it may increase their burden.

The finding that female-headed households are generally more food insecure than male-headed ones is alarming. This is more so considering the notable efforts put in place to increase women's access to education, and productive resources and services such as land, credit and income-generating activities. This may have four implications.

First, efforts to harness the potential of women in agricultural production through increasing women's access to productive resources and services such as asset-holding and employment opportunities, particularly among female heads of households, are inadequate to bring about significant changes in the food

insecurity status of women. This is consistent with the finding that female-headed households with off-farm participation experience less of a household food gap. In line with this, there is the question of how long it may take for the increase in, for e.g., land certification and income generation opportunities to translate into increases in women's productivity and food security. Other questions might relate to the extent to which rural PSNP programs compete for labour with normal farm tasks and with women's domestic roles, and the extent to which they target the most food insecure women or pay more than the normal farming activity during the period they are carried out.

Second, such efforts may not have been adequately integrated with the complementary inputs, e.g., draught power, credit, and marketing to successfully address food insecurity among women. This is consistent with the finding that unavailability of oxen is an important impediment to household food security. Also, agricultural extension and research may have continued to be inadequately responsive to women's gender based constraints in food production (e.g. ploughing technology for women) and processing technology (*enset*, *beans*).

Third, the positive gains in reducing women's food insecurity status brought about by the increase in women's access to productive resources and income-generating activities might have been offset by climate-related adversities and the recent food inflation that have helped maintain the status quo of women as food insecure.

Forth, addressing issues of access to education, land and credit is not necessarily equivalent to addressing women's food insecurity. This supports the argument that, unlike food insecurity of the poor in general, issues of food insecurity among women goes beyond lack of access to resources and services. Gender related constraints pertaining to, for instance existing farming technology (e.g. plowing) and women's customary rights and obligations (e.g. in intra-household food and task allocations, property disposition during marriage dissolution and inheritance), and life-cycle vulnerability, limit women's capability to convert resources and opportunities available to them to improve their food security and well-being.

The food gap is found to be lower in households where women participate in household decisions such as for children's' clothing and medical expenses. This finding may indicate that female involvement in key household expenditure decisions can be considered as an economic empowerment indicator (Pasteur 2001) which, in turn, is associated with improvement in household food security status, as has also been noted in Fafchamps *et al.* (2009) in the case of nutrition and education of children. Pitt and Khandker (1998) also found that credit

provided to women significantly increases annual household consumption expenditure compared to credit given to men.

Finally, an interesting contrast is observed between the associations of access to the two types of financial resources with the household food gap: *eqqub* and credit. The finding of the association of membership in *eqqub* with a lower household food gap has implications for enhancing and supporting such informal institutions in order to strengthen the potentially favorable impact. On the other hand, credit taking may be associated with the aim of bridging the food gap in the household, but the loans made accessible to the sample households may be too small to reduce the food gap. It may well be that the loans accessible to households may be limited only to financing investment in income-generating activities. Hence their role in bridging the household food gap may only be realized at some future time. It may also be that credit taking is one indication of poverty, or that loans that cannot be repaid (e.g. through loss of livestock) or that are used for consumption may result in indebtedness and potentially aggravate food insecurity.

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**Annex**

Table 1. Description of variables included in estimation.

Variable	Unit/index	Mean	Std. dev.
Food gap	No. of months of food gap in the household	3.01	3.03
Male emigrated households	1= households with male head emigrants; 0=otherwise	0.02	0.15
Female-headed households	1= female headed households; 0=otherwise	0.18	0.38
Household size	No. of household members during 2009	4.59	2.32
Age of the head	Number of years	52.66	15.29
Education of head	Years of formal schooling	1.86	2.90
Off-farm participation	1= household member(s) participated in off-farm activities; 0=otherwise	0.51	0.50
Lack of oxen	1= did not get oxen (at the right time); 0=otherwise	0.19	0.39
Credit access	1= household obtained $\geq$ Br 20 loan during the year; 0=otherwise	0.63	0.48
Female decision: men's clothing	1= female buys men's clothing; 0=otherwise	0.23	0.42
Female decision: women's clothing	1= female buys women's clothing; 0=otherwise	0.55	0.49
Female decision: children's clothing	1= female buys children's clothing; 0=otherwise	0.43	0.49
Female decision: school expense	1= female pays for schooling; 0=otherwise.	0.31	0.46
Female decision: medical expense	1= female pays for medical expenses; 0=otherwise	0.36	0.48
Housing expenditure	1= household spent money on building/renovating housing; 0=otherwise	0.57	0.49
Membership in <i>eqqub</i>	1= household has <i>eqqub</i> member(s); 0=otherwise	0.13	0.34
Transfer income	1=received; 0=otherwise	0.11	0.31
Location	1= Tigray or Amhara; 0=otherwise	0.25	0.43

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Table 2. Regression for months of household food gap (2009).

Explanatory variable	Estimated coefficient (Std. errors)
Male head emigration	-0.514 (0.49)
Female headed	1.457 (0.39)***
Household size	-0.009 (0.04)
Age of the head	-0.006 (0.01)
Education of the head	-0.075 (0.03)**
Off-farm participation	0.753 (0.17)***
Land holding	-0.006 (0.00)***
Lack of oxen	0.899 (0.19)***
Credit access	0.529 (0.18)***
Female decision men clothing	0.294 (0.22)
Female decision women clothing	0.402 (0.20)**
Female decision children clothing	-0.417 (0.24)*
Female decision school expense	0.169 (0.26)
Female decision medical expense	-0.455 (0.24)*
Housing expenditure	-0.557 (0.16)***
Membership in <i>eqqub</i>	-0.639 (0.26)***
Transfer income	1.675 (0.31)***
Female head's education	-0.094 (0.18)
Female head's off-farm participation	-0.797 (0.39)**
Female head's <i>eqqub</i> membership	-0.268 (0.68)
Female head's credit access	-0.486 (0.40)
Female head's transfer receipt	-0.067 (0.53)
Location	1.015 (0.19)***
Constant	2.567 (0.44)***
R <sup>2</sup>	17.3
F	12.09***
N	1351

NOTE: Statistical significance is given at the 10% (\*), 5% (\*\*) and 1% (\*\*\*) levels.



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# **Food Security, Social Protection and Children's Wellbeing: Transforming the Productive Safety Net Program <sup>1</sup>**

*Yisak Tafere and Tassew Woldehanna*

## **Introduction<sup>2</sup>**

Children are more vulnerable to malnutrition, disease, abuse and exploitation than adults (Sabates-Wheeler et al. 2009). Their inability to support and protect themselves necessitates their having a third party to make decisions on their behalf. The amount of time children spend at school and at work is one of the decisions that are mainly made by their parents or caregivers. Unfortunately, these decisions may not be in the best interest of the child. There is a growing consensus that children's earliest educational experiences are crucial to their lifelong adaptability and achievements. However, many parents in developing countries decide that their children spend most of their time at work, which can violate their rights and represent a future economic and social loss to their countries. Child labour can jeopardise children's education and hinder their overall development, especially in poor rural countries, like Ethiopia, where children are considered as a source of income for their families.

Social protection programs such as safety nets and school feeding programs are the most widely used economic interventions that, directly or indirectly, aim at reducing child labour, and improving the nutritional intake and school attendance of children in poor communities. In many Latin American countries cash transfers are given to poor households on condition that their children attend school for a specified minimum number of days. Studies on the effectiveness of conditional cash transfers (CCTs) and school feeding

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<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed presentation of the methods, the analysis and findings in tables, as well as qualitative evidence with quotes from respondents see Yisak and Tassew (2012).

programs suggest mixed and results may be related to age and gender categories (see Tassew 2009).

In Ethiopia, the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) was introduced in 2005. It was aimed at ensuring food security and covered about 8 million people in 262 chronically food-insecure *woredas*. Unlike the safety net programs of Latin American countries, the Ethiopian PSNP does not directly target children, but poor people generally. This, coupled with the possibility of income and substitution effects of the program, makes the effect of the PSNP on child welfare unclear.

Various impact assessments have been done to establish the effect of the PSNP on household income and children's education (Hoddinott et al. 2009; Tassew 2009). Many of the studies are done at household level and try to investigate the impacts of the PSNP on household income. The available evidence on the impact of the PSNP is meagre. The study conducted by Hoddinott et al. (2009) did not provide conclusive evidence on the impact of the PSNP on child welfare. The other impact assessment study that directly dealt with child well-being is the one done by the Young Lives study using Round 2 survey data collected in 2006 (Tassew 2009).<sup>3</sup> As the evaluation was done after only one year of implementation of the scheme, and time-use data was available for one survey round, the study did not provide a definitive picture of the impact of the PSNP on child well-being. Given that the PSNP is a long-term program that targets households, with potentially strong repercussions for children's welfare, there seems to be a need to look at children's experience of the PSNP and its impact on their well-being using a mixed-method approach where qualitative and quantitative evidence are combined.

The objectives of this study were, therefore, to assess how far the PSNP protects vulnerable households and children from shocks, to investigate children's experiences of the PSNP, to establish the impact of the PSNP on child well-being as measured through child labour and education and to evaluate the impacts of the scheme on school grade progression and drop-out. Based on empirical qualitative and quantitative data, the findings suggest the need for child-focused social protection that goes beyond the PSNP.

The chapter is organised in the following way. Section 2 briefly provides a literature review on children's well-being, social protection and the PSNP. Section 3 introduces the sources of data and methods used. Section 4 provides a description of the sample in terms of the economic status and vulnerability of

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<sup>3</sup>Young Lives is a 15-year study of the changing nature of childhood poverty, taking place in four developing countries including Ethiopia. For further details, see [www.younglives.org.uk](http://www.younglives.org.uk).



households, PSNP participation and child well-being, focusing mainly on work and schooling. Results are analysed and discussed in Section 5. The final section provides concluding remarks and makes some tentative suggestions for policy and/or further research.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Child well-being and social protection***

According to International Labour Organization estimates (ILO 2002), there are over 200 million children who are working around the world and over 100 million of them work in situations considered highly hazardous, where their basic rights are violated and their dignity is offended. Sub-Saharan Africa has the greatest incidence of child labour – 26.4 percent of all 5–14-year-olds do some form of paid work, compared to 18.8 percent for Asia and the Pacific and 5.1 percent for Latin America. Studies show that this situation is much worse in Ethiopia than in the continent as a whole. For example, the 2001 survey of child labour in Ethiopia shows that about 49.7 percent of children aged 5–14 were working (CSA 2001).

Poverty has been suggested as the most frequent cause of child labour. Parents raise the income of the family by sending their children into the labour market and by doing so they trade off between the current high family income and a lower future income for the children, since this harms their human capital development (Basu and Van 1998). This also seems true for Ethiopia as we can understand from the 2001 child labour survey that about 90 percent of the children working in wage labour replied that they were doing so either to supplement family income (23.8 percent) or to improve it (66.0 percent) (CSA 2001). The other main causes of child labour include cultural values, family disintegration due to divorce, conflicts, drought and resettlement, low parental education, orphanhood due to AIDS, and family illness or incapacity to work.

Given these understandings and this consensus, a number of steps have been taken to reduce child labour by international organisations and national governments as well as non-governmental organisations. Legal protection for children is one of these steps. For instance, many countries, including Ethiopia, have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ILO Convention on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and Work (No.138) and the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (No. 182). However, these rules are not able to reduce child labour to the desired level. This is perhaps either because countries think that it is unaffordable to implement the rules effectively given their chronic poverty or because such laws can only be implemented in the formal sector while many children are engaged in domestic

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work and the informal sector. In view of this, it seems that economic interventions should be complemented by legal ones, if not replaced by them. Social protection is one option.

The main aim of social protection is to reduce extreme poverty, in particular by protecting the minimum acceptable consumption level of absolutely poor people (Ellis et al. 2009; Guhan 1994). Social protection emerged as a crucial response to 'safety net' discourse, opening the way for its broader purpose of contributing to longer-term poverty reduction (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2004). According to Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, a comprehensive social protection scheme should involve the following four components: *protective* measures to provide relief that would address deprivation (e.g. a narrowly targeted safety net for 'chronically poor' people). *Preventive* measures to avert deprivation with 'social safety nets' (e.g. through insurance to 'economically vulnerable' groups); *promotive* measures aimed at enhancing real income and earning capacity through a range of livelihood programs (e.g. micro-finance and school feeding for children); and finally, *transformative* measures to ensure 'social equity' by addressing the exclusion of 'socially vulnerable groups' (e.g. through a regulatory framework). Whereas the protective and preventive components can be covered through 'safety nets'; the promotive and transformative elements require moving beyond them. Transformative social protection 'extends beyond safety nets and welfare hand-outs, towards supporting citizens to claim social protection from the state as a basic right by prioritising moving people from dependence into productive livelihoods' (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2007).

Different definitions of 'social protection' have been given by various organisations and authors. For example, UNICEF (2009) views it as a basic human right, stating that governments have an obligation to provide both economic and social support to the most vulnerable segments of their populations. A conceptualisation of social protection for children could be drawn from the general conceptualisation of social protection but with more emphasis on the multidimensional nature of children's vulnerability. Economic vulnerability is very visible among both adults and children, who are assumed to be equally affected. But children are more 'socially vulnerable' than adults. Economic shocks and hunger would directly affect children, for example during a food shortage, but children might also suffer indirect effects and be forced to drop out of school or engage in wage labour. Childhood poverty and vulnerability are characterised by multidimensionality (monetary and non-monetary), life cycle vulnerabilities, dependence (on adults), and voicelessness within their society (UNICEF 2009). The peculiarities of child vulnerabilities are evident when we look at the concepts of 'child-specific' and 'child-intensified'

vulnerabilities (Sabates-Wheeler et al. 2009). ‘Child-specific’ vulnerability emerges from power relationships and inequalities within the household, where children are in a subordinate position; whereas ‘child-intensified’ suggests wider sources of vulnerabilities, such as drought or under-nutrition, which may affect the whole population but are more damaging to children than to adults (Sabates-Wheeler et al. 2009). Children’s membership of households and economic vulnerability are generally acknowledged by policymakers, but more is needed. It is necessary to introduce social protection that takes into account child-specific vulnerabilities, which calls for a new, child-focused approach. Social protection for children should address both ‘income poverty and social vulnerability’ (Blank et al. 2010). Sabates-Wheeler and her co-authors call for a ‘long view’ of child vulnerability, arguing that ‘social protection needs to adopt a life-course and intergenerational perspective in order to promote sustainable improvements in well-being as well as breaking intergenerational transmission of poverty’ (Sabates-Wheeler et al. 2009: 110). The World Bank social protection strategy aims at promoting child-focused social protection in order to ensure economic development. Part of the strategy focuses on protection from destitution and catastrophic losses of human capital and promotes children’s development by adopting social assistance programs such as cash transfers, school feeding and targeted food assistance for poor children so that they can pursue their schooling properly (World Bank 2011).

Social protection for children should ensure their overall well-being, addressing a range of needs, from economic, social, psychological and developmental to personal needs, as well as taking account of their vulnerability. In a Young Lives qualitative study carried out in Ethiopia in 2007, children were asked to discuss and establish common indicators of ‘well-being’ and ‘ill-being’ (Camfield and Yisak 2009). A comprehensive list of child well-being indicators established by children themselves included access to education (attending school, having sufficient school materials, getting a good education), having basic necessities such as food (sufficient, nutritious), clothing (e.g. shoes and school uniforms) and housing (clean, with sufficient rooms, with facilities such as electricity and tap water, and a corrugated-iron roof). In addition, rural children considered having land and livestock a sign of a good life. On the contrary, not being able to attend school or having insufficient school materials, ill health and an inability to get healthcare; lack of sufficient food (hunger, poor diet), lack of or insufficient clothing, bad housing (overcrowded housing, insufficient facilities), being an orphan, experiencing family conflict, or exhibiting bad personal behaviour suggested that the child was living a bad life – indicators of ill-being. For rural children, lack of sufficient farmland and livestock were indicative of a bad life. Indicators of ill-being clearly represent

further causes of children's multidimensional vulnerabilities (Camfield and Yisak 2009).

Achievement of well-being for poor children is a challenge as it is both a matter of living a good life at their young age and trying to grow into non-poor adults. Well-being for children, unlike adults, represents more of their human development. It matters not only for their present but also for their future well-being, signifying both 'well-being' and 'well-becoming'. For example, a hungry child cannot attend school properly and there is the possibility they will drop out of school and end up in harmful wage labour. The poor child will probably grow up into a poor adult. Consequently, any intervention that would ensure children's present and future well-being would be akin to contributing to poverty reduction and breaking intergenerational poverty. Hence, child-sensitive social protection needs to consider 'breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty' and require investments from the human capital perspective (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2010). Social protection narrowly defined as focusing exclusively on risk and vulnerability may be ineffective in addressing chronic poverty (Barrientos et al. 2005). Social protection for children needs to be comprehensive and there should be few boundaries between its components. Social protection for children makes a series of interventions over the life course. For example, school feeding, links both protective and promotive social protection because the school meals serve two purposes: 'providing an immediate consumption transfer to children who are often malnourished, and encouraging children from poor households to attend school even during difficult times' (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2004). It plays the role both of 'safety net' and 'development' because food in school may help children to deal with immediate hunger while at the same time contributing to human development by improving cognitive development of children, which impacts longer-term poverty reduction.

Synergy between child protection and social protection is crucial because it ensures both child protection (e.g. from harmful child labour) and social protection (cash transfers, school feeding, free healthcare, etc) so that children's human development can be addressed. Child-focused social protection would transform 'economic protection' into wider 'social protection' Failure to understand the social dimension of child vulnerability leads to a tendency to focus on the economic side of it (household economic poverty) and consequently to deal with it through economic transfers (e.g. food aid or cash transfer). While food aid could ensure food security and contribute to poverty reduction, addressing all aspects of child vulnerability needs to go beyond this – taking 'the long view'. The ultimate objective of child-sensitive social protection goes beyond ensuring adequate food consumption and encompasses breaking

intergenerational poverty. As poverty and deprivation are transferred across generations, social protection needs to ‘take the long view, tackling multiple deprivations through protective as well as transformative agendas’ (Sabates-Wheeler et al. 2009: 109).

### ***Empirical evidence on social protection for children***

Barrientos and DeJong (2006) undertook case studies to provide a comparative examination of the effectiveness of cash transfer programs targeting children on poverty reduction, focusing on three types of such programs: the Child Support Grant in South Africa, family allowances in transition countries, and targeted CCT programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. They find that cash transfers are an effective tool in reducing child poverty. They further emphasise that transfers require a significant investment in the provision of basic services – water, education, housing, healthcare and transport – to ensure that the supply is able to respond to the increased demand supported by cash transfers. This means that cash transfers and the provision of basic services to poor people are complementary. Their case studies also show that, to improve school attendance, the transfer ought to be set at a level sufficient to compensate households for the additional costs (direct and indirect) of sending children to school. As far as reducing child labour is concerned, the transfer level should be sufficient to compensate households for the income forgone. The key message from their result is transfers can be an effective means to reduce child poverty so long as they are large enough and basic services are in place. A World Bank report reviewing the impacts of CCTs in Latin America and Caribbean countries indicate outcomes that are positive for children. It concludes that CCTs ‘generally have been successful in reducing poverty and encouraging parents to invest in the health and education of their children’ (Fiszbein and Schady 2009).

Cardoso and Souza (2004) used household-level data in Brazil to estimate the impact of income transfers on child labour and school attendance. Their propensity score estimation result finds that income transfer programs had no significant effect on child labour but a positive and significant impact on school attendance. In addition, Cardoso and Souza documented that the school attendance coefficients of transfers made to mothers are much bigger and more significant than the coefficients of transfers made to fathers, though in this respect, there are no statistically significant differences for child labour outcomes.

Schady and Araujo (2006) used different estimating techniques including two-stage least squares, instrumental variables (IV), ordinary least square (OLS), bias-corrected matching estimators, and the difference-in-difference methods to analyse the impact of the *Bono de Desarrollo Humano* (BDH), a cash transfer

program in Ecuador, on school enrolment among poor children. Two main conclusions were reached. First, the BDH program had a large, positive impact on school enrolment. Second, program effects were significantly larger among the minority of households who believed that there was a school enrolment requirement attached to transfers. In this regard, their estimates suggest that the impact of the BDH on enrolment was approximately four times as large when households believed there was a schooling requirement associated with transfers, showing the effectiveness of conditional transfers in achieving the target.

Dubois et al. (2004) evaluated the effect of the Mexican CCT program, *PROGRESA*, on the educational behaviour of children by using the program data. To be able to successfully evaluate the issue empirically, they developed a dynamic model of education demand incorporating incentive effects of the educational system on the behaviour of students. The model incorporates the grants system introduced by *PROGRESA* and shows that such a program does not only affect enrolment decisions but also behaviour at school in terms of incentives to pass to higher grades. Their result shows that *PROGRESA* had a positive impact on school continuation. However, the program seems to have a positive impact on performance at primary school but a negative one at secondary school. They argued that this phenomenon is a possible consequence of the disincentives provided by the program termination after the third year of secondary school.

De Janvry et al. (2006) similarly investigated the role of shocks and conditional transfers on school and child labour choices using the Arellano-Bond dynamic panel-data estimator. Their finding highlighted that making transfers conditional on school attendance largely or fully mitigates the tendency of parents to take their children out of school as a result of shocks. By contrast, a conditional transfer does not reduce the rise in child work induced by a shock. This shows that the income effect of the conditional transfer is not sufficient to reduce the use of child work as a strategy to cope with risk.

Attanasio et al. (2008) analysed the effects of *Familias en Acción*, a CCT program operating in rural areas of Colombia since 2002, on the time spent by children in school and on work activities. By using the difference-in-difference framework, they showed that the program had a larger positive impact on school enrolment of older children than younger ones. However, the program had no discernible impacts on children's work in more rural areas. They document that the effects of the program on work were generally largest for younger children, whose participation in domestic work decreased by 10 to 13 percentage points after the program but whose participation in income-generating work remained largely unaffected by it. Furthermore, they found evidence of school and work

time not being fully substitutable, suggesting that some, but not all, of the increased time at school may be drawn from children's leisure time.

Edmonds (2006) investigated the child labour and schooling responses to anticipated change in income among households in South Africa who were due to receive a pension. In his finding, Edmonds concluded that anticipated large cash transfers to the elderly in South Africa appeared to be associated with increases in schooling and decreases in the number of hours worked. These changes were also associated with increasing schooling attainment and primary-school completion rates, especially for boys, while the child lived with a male eligible for a pension, showing perhaps that men are more credit-constrained than women. The South African government introduced Child Support Grant in 1998, which provided cash transfers for children and families with children. In 2002, the program was extended to children under the age of 13 but rolled out in phases until 2005 where it covered about 3.6 million children (Barrientos and DeJong 2004).

Child-sensitive social protection is an evidence-based approach that aims to maximise opportunities and developmental outcomes for children by considering different dimensions of their well-being. For example, comprehensive social protection in Ghana (UNICEF 2009) includes the National Health Care Scheme, the Education Capitation Grant, the School Feeding Program, and the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty; these address different aspects of child vulnerability and developmental needs: 'The multidimensional nature of the vulnerability and risks affecting children implies the need for different types of social protection programs, including preventive and responsive social welfare services, as well as a strong legal and regulatory framework' (UNICEF 2009: 4).

### ***The Productive Safety Net Program***

The Ethiopian PSNP was launched in 2005 across 262 'chronically food-insecure' *woredas*. These were selected from the rural areas of the regions of Amhara, Oromia, SNNP (Southern Nations, Nationalities and People) and Tigray. The program is one of the largest social protection programs in Africa, receiving substantial attention from not only the Ethiopian government, but also from various donors and is currently providing support to 8 million persons per year.<sup>4</sup> The program aims to provide transfers to chronically food-insecure households, prevent asset depletion and create community assets. It targets households that are deemed to be chronically poor and is expected to enable

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<sup>4</sup>This is equivalent to approximately 32 percent of the Ethiopian people living under the nationally defined poverty line (see MOFED 2008 for definition of poverty line).



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vulnerable households to create assets for themselves that protect them from the effects of shocks such as drought, death of household members, inflation and death of livestock. It makes special provision for breastfeeding and pregnant women, making it gender-sensitive, but remains mute on children. The PSNP has two components, namely Public Work (PW) and Direct Support (DS). The PW component requires 'adult able-bodied' people to do some community work in exchange for transfers. Direct Support beneficiaries are those households 'without labour'. They include mainly the elderly and disabled. They get the same rate of transfer as those involved in public work.

Only a few empirical studies have been done so far regarding social security programs and child welfare in the Ethiopian context. For instance, Tassew (2009) used Young Lives data collected in Rounds 1 and 2 to assess the impacts of the PSNP and the Agricultural Extension Program on children's time use between work and schooling, as well as to ascertain the highest grade completed by 12-year-old children in rural and urban Ethiopia. He documented that the Public Work (PW) component of the PSNP reduced the time children spent on caring for siblings and doing household chores though it raised the time rural children spent on paid work. On a net basis, the program was effective in reducing the total time children spent on work and increased the time girls allocated for study at home. On the other hand, the time spent on paid and unpaid work by all children, and on child care and household chores by rural girls was found to fall for children whose households were entitled to direct support, because of the income effect of direct support. Though the PSNP mainly focuses on asset building and ensuring food security, there is some evidence that suggests that it has both intended and unintended outcomes for children (Tassew et al. 2011).

Hoddinott et al. (2010) have investigated the impact of participation in the PW component of the PSNP on schooling and child labour by taking data from the Food Security Program Survey, and using nearest neighbour matching and propensity score matching estimators on it.<sup>5</sup> Their results provided encouraging evidence that a PW program could improve child schooling and reduce child labour provided that the transfers were large enough. They found that participation in PW led to 'a moderate reduction in agricultural labour' hours on average for boys aged 6 to 16 years and a reduction in domestic labour hours for younger boys aged 6 to 10 years. For boys in households receiving higher transfers (at least 90 birr per member) it resulted in a large increase in school attendance rates, with older girls gaining from a 'reduction in labour hours on

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<sup>5</sup>These are mechanisms to create a similar comparison control group in which the quality of the evaluation framework is really determined by the closeness of the match in the control group.



average and an increase in school attendance' in households receiving larger transfers (Hoddinott et al. 2010: 73).

Despite the central objective of the PNSP being to reduce the distress sale of assets in order to ensure future well-being, the 2008 impact evaluation found that participants reported distress sales of livestock 4.4 percentage points higher than control groups (Hoddinott et al. 2010: 73). Coping by selling livestock was common, with about 22 percent of households reported to have sold their livestock in 2005/6, and this increased to 29 percent in 2007/8. The consequence for children is significant and demonstrates why tackling household-level economic risk is important in addressing child-specific outcomes. PNSP households mentioned the strategies to cope in critical times, including sending children to work (5 percent), sending them to stay with relatives (4 percent) withdrawing them from school (2 percent).

## Data sources and methods

This study makes use of Young Lives data generated using both quantitative surveys and a qualitative sub-study. The quantitative data is based mainly on the Round 3 survey of 2009 but with relevant reference to the other two survey rounds, carried out in 2002 and 2006. We examine data relating to Older Cohort children and their households.<sup>6</sup> Child questions focused on time use and schooling whereas household questionnaires centred on asset holdings, the amount of income obtained from different sources, shocks faced by households, and participation in and perception of the PSNP<sup>7</sup>. The survey covered households and their children drawn from Young Lives study sites.<sup>8</sup> The qualitative component of the study was undertaken with 32 households and their Older Cohort children drawn from four rural sites sub-sampled from the survey households and children. In total we conducted eight group discussions with children and their caregivers. Individual interviews involved the children, their caregivers and other key informants including *Kebele* Food Security Task Force members (KFSTFM), PW supervisors, teachers and local officials. The focus of the interviews was on local and household shocks, the implementation of the PSNP, children's participation in the PW program, and possible impacts of the PSNP on children including schooling, work, health and food consumption.

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<sup>6</sup> In the Young Lives study, Older Cohort children are those born in 1994/5; the Younger Cohort were born in 2001/2.

<sup>7</sup> Details of the methods used can be found in a longer version (Yisak and Tassew 2012).

<sup>8</sup> The total number of observations of the 15-year-old children surveyed in Round 3 was 972, of which 497 (51.13 percent) were males and the remaining 475 (48.87 percent) were females. A total of 569 (58.54 percent) were rural dwellers while the other 403 (41.46 percent) lived in urban areas. We used data from the rural part of the sample, who live in 12 sites, because the PSNP is designed only for rural areas.

During the analysis, we tried to put together the survey data and qualitative evidence in such a way that they presented integrated results.

## **Description of the sampled children and their households: poverty, vulnerability, PSNP experience and time use**

In this section, we describe our sampled children and households, looking at the changes in their standards of living between 2006 and 2009, starting with their livelihoods and economic status. We then go on to examine their experiences of the PSNP and children's use of time between work, paid and unpaid, and schooling.

### ***Poverty status and vulnerability***

Agriculture remains the main source of the livelihood of the majority of our Older Cohort rural sample households, and poverty and vulnerability to shocks are the most overriding problems these households face. About 68 percent of the households are absolutely poor, but absolute poverty declined by seven percentage points between 2006 and 2009.

A household wealth index was computed to measure the wealth status of the sampled households for Round 2 and Round 3. The results show that households' wealth and expenditure increased.<sup>9</sup> The real monthly total expenditure per capita for the sampled households was calculated to be 94 birr in Round 2 and 110 birr in Round 3. Households were found to spend significantly more on food than on non-food items. Moreover, all types of expenditure computed in terms of per adult equivalent and per capita rise by more than 10 percent between Round 2 and Round 3, as expected, since the per capita income of people in Ethiopia has been increasing in recent years. Between Round 2 and Round 3, the wealth index increased by 35 percent, while per capita expenditure increased by 17 percent.

The common shocks affecting all sites are drought, hail storms, increases in food prices and death of livestock. Drought has been experienced by all communities, affecting their harvest and livestock. At individual household levels, death and illness of family members, have been identified as shocks, while large family sizes, and, in some communities, polygamous marriages can contribute to household vulnerability. Crop failure (72.4 percent for Round 2 and 76.0 percent for Round 3), natural disasters (65.2 percent for Round 2 and 65.5

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<sup>9</sup> The wealth index is a simple average of the following three components: a) housing quality, which is the simple average of rooms per person, floor, roof and wall; b) consumer durables, being the scaled sum of consumer durable dummies; and c) services, being the simple average of drinking water, electricity, toilet and fuel, all of which are 0-1 variables.

percent for Round 3) and food price increases (76.9 percent in Round 3) were reported to be the most significant shocks affecting many of the households. Because of the high inflation rate occurring in the country since 2005, households' welfare is affected both when they purchase productive inputs for their economic activity and when they buy for consumption.

Households try hard to get most out of farming to cope with the multiple shocks. But given the continued failure of rainfall, many looked for other means of survival. Working as daily labourers was the most common practice, and this largely involved children. Parents opted to send their children for wage labour when they needed resources to cope with food shortages. In the qualitative sub-study communities, children aged 12 and above have been engaged in wage-earning activities. Some programs run by the Government and some NGOs provide food aid, credit and other support. Local institutions like *iddir* (funeral associations) and *equb* (credit associations) also play significant roles. In some communities many households resort to moneylenders for loans when they face food shortages but then have to pay them back at interest rates as high as 100 percent.

### ***PSNP participation***

#### *Selection process*

In those sites in the Young Lives study that are affected by protracted droughts and recurrent shocks, the government-run PSNP was a common coping strategy. It targets a relatively large number of the poor households. The participation rates in both the PW and DS programs had decreased slightly by Round 3 as compared to Round 2. In the qualitative sub-study communities, on average half of the households we interviewed were included in the program.

As the periods of our qualitative fieldwork and the selection process for the second round of the PSNP coincided, we were able to observe this process and the screening procedures as they happened. In all communities a committee, set up at *kebele* (neighbourhood) level and overseen by the *Woreda* Food Security Task Force, was responsible for the selection of beneficiaries. It was made up of government officials, local elders and representatives of local associations (youth and women). The committee makes some assessment of the holdings of each household and keeps records. Then it ranks the households, beginning with the poorest. The number of beneficiary households was based on a 'quota' allocated by the *woreda* to the *kebele*. The list is presented to the *kebele* public gathering for discussion. Ideally, if some people have any complaints about the list they can present their case for possible discussion and

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consideration. Eventually, the final list gets approved in the meeting then passed on to the *woreda*.

The cut-off for eligibility varies from community to community, including ownership of one or two oxen, size of irrigable land, number of coffee seedlings and sometimes *enset* (false banana). Irregularities in the screening processes were mentioned in all communities; for example, committee members often selected those who were related to them in some way. During the public gathering those who had wider networks got the necessary support. In some cases households with two oxen were included but those who had only one were excluded. We came across a number of reports from our respondents suggesting irregularities. Officials said that they tried as much as they could to ensure fair selection – the limited quota provided by the *woreda* was to blame. There were more needy households than the quota could cover. While the beneficiaries recognised the inadequacy of the quota, they maintained that there were injustices anyway. They argued that the main problem started from the assessment of assets and the fact that the initial listings are done by a few committee members. In the meetings, very few have the courage to speak out about the irregularities, mainly for fear of officials. They also do not want to enter into conflict with those who were made beneficiaries. Irregularities in targeting have obvious impacts on children. Those who live in excluded households are very much affected. Households have to resort to other means of gaining a livelihood, including requiring their children to do wage labour, which affects their schooling. In some cases, vulnerable households affected by idiosyncratic shocks like illness and death were not seriously considered for the program. Some young people whose parents died had to engage in wage labour as they did not obtain the necessary support from the PSNP. Ideally, people who are ill should be DS beneficiaries but in practice they were expected to work for the limited quota allocated. They sent their children to work as they could not work themselves.

### *Transfers*

During Rounds 2 and 3 of the Young Lives survey, households were asked whether any family members had earned any income in the last 12 months from a list of activities, of which the PSNP was one. From this, both the proportion of households of the 569 children participating in either of the components of the PSNP and the amount of average income earned from them were computed. In contrast to the participation rate, which has fallen the amount of mean income that beneficiary households received from the PSNP has increased, but by less than the rate of inflation. The mean 12-month income that households generated from the PW component increased from 801 birr in Round 2 to 2,198 birr in

Round 3, which is higher by 174 percent but slightly lower than the inflation rate between these two periods, which was 178 percent, indicating there is no increase in the PW cash transfer value in real terms. The same level of increase was computed in per capita terms. However the income from the DS component declined by 27 percent per household and 10 percent per capita apparently partly because, as the qualitative data indicate, *kebele* officials have become very strict in the provision of DS and excluded from it people within the household who were regarded as being able to work. In general then, the amount of resources provided to households did not increase while the incidence and severity of shocks did increase. Similarly during the qualitative interviews almost all respondents confirmed that the transfer was still too small to ensure food security. Though household members were expected to do certain work, the amount they got in return was widely reported to be insufficient. The situation becomes correspondingly worse if not all household members are registered for benefits. Though the daily rate of pay has grown from 6 birr to 10 birr since 2008, it is much less than the market wage rate; in some cases less than 30 percent of the average daily wage rate. Continued food price increases have made the amount worth less in the market.

### ***The PSNP and children***

Most of the respondents, including children, in the qualitative study confirmed that they needed the money or grain they got from the PSNP. Any money they got from the program was used for food and sometimes clothing. Many people have reported that they could not have survived without such transfers, especially during economic shocks and rainy seasons when food is scarce. As members of households, children are in practice beneficiaries of these transfers. In some cases, both caregivers and children verified that some transfers were used to purchase school materials. For those who have little or are affected by severe shocks, the transfers from the program seem to remain essential. It is not unusual to hear household members claiming there are families that cannot survive or live in the area without the PSNP. Many children reported that the transfers have protected them from hunger.

### ***Public work and children's time use***

From the data we collected regarding the time children spent on different activities, we computed their rate of participation in work and other activities, which is expressed as the percentage of surveyed children who reported positive hour(s) of participation in a given activity on a typical day. Most of the children participate in different types of work (including caring for others, domestic tasks, family business, paid work, child care and domestic work). They spend a

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considerable number of hours per day on various work activities, while they should be spending less or no time on such activities if they are to have adequate time for schooling or leisure. In most of these activities, the mean hours children spend has increased between Rounds 2 and 3. This indicates that the responsibility children take in the family increases along with their age. The mean time consumed by all kind of work increased to 5.91 hours per day in Round 3 from 5.25 in Round 2, with almost all children participating. Domestic tasks was found to be the most time-consuming activity in Round 3, amounting 2.77 hours per day. Girls are in a more disadvantageous position than boys since they spend, on average, as many as 3.85 hours a day, so that the burden of the girls is roughly double that of the boys.

The participation and time spent by children on family business tasks such as agricultural work and herding was significant. About 65 percent of the children reported participating in one or more components of the family business in Round 2 and 54 percent in Round 3. Children were found to devote 2.18 hours (in Round 2) and 1.91 hours (in Round 3) per day in working in the family business, though the difference is not statistically significant. However, the role of girls, in terms of participation rate and time allocated, was found to be minimal in Round 3 as compared to boys. Girls' participation in the family business dropped from 47.3 percent in Round 2 to 26.7 percent in Round 3 and similarly the 1.36 hours per day of average time that girls used to spend on this activity in Round 2 fell to 0.6 hours per day in Round 3. One possible reason for this decrease is that in Round 3 the children were 15 years old and almost all family business activities in rural areas are performed far from home, including in forest areas. Thus, it is more risky for the household to send a 15-year-old girl to such for work since it degrades not only the status of the girl herself but also that of the family if she gets abducted. Fear of such risks makes households prefer their daughters to stay at home and get involved in domestic tasks while sons are sent to do farming and other family business tasks to increase the family income. Boys are therefore more involved in family business tasks than girls, with their participation rate at about 80 percent and their average hours per day at 2.95 in Round 2 and 54 percent in Round 3.

As far as paid work is concerned, participation increased slightly over time, from 5.2 percent in Round 2 to 8.1 percent in Round 3. However, the involvement of girls in paid work increased from 5.0 percent to 9.3 percent whereas for boys only from 5.4 percent to 7.0 percent from Round 2 to Round 3. The qualitative data indicate that opportunities for wage labour are available within the communities (e.g. stone-crusher plants, haricot bean picking, work on irrigated farms, etc.) and it was easy to send girls to be involved. Though the overall workload of children is significant, levels of participation in paid labour

are relatively low. However, the data from the qualitative study obtained from the same children in the same communities in the same year suggest a different picture. Direct fieldwork observation and in-depth interview with officials, parents and children themselves revealed that most of the Older Cohort children included in our study did participate both in the PSNP PW program and other wage labour. Among the 32 households selected for the qualitative sub-study, 22 were beneficiaries of the PSNP and another four households were excluded for different reasons after they were initially incorporated in the program. All households except one were required to do public work to get the support. Half of the children included in the program reported that they were involved in public work, but others reportedly only helped or substituted for their parents occasionally. As our child respondents, during the fieldwork, were all below the age of 16, one can conclude that children below the age stipulated in the PSNP Program Implementation Manual (PSNP-PIM) were involved in public work.<sup>10</sup> This was confirmed by a range of respondents including the PW officials, parents, children themselves and teachers as well as by researcher fieldwork observation. Comments drawn from the officials of all four sites show that children were participating in the PSNP PW component. However, parents try to underplay children's participation though most acknowledge it. Despite the officials threatening to exclude them from the PSNP, parents continued to send the children and the foremen tolerated them for different reasons. Parents said the work children did was simple and not harmful. They felt that it was good for children to help them finish their work share as the work usually overlapped with farming activities and adults had to do other things.

Children are not only involved in the PW program but do wage labour as well. Out of the 32 sub-sampled children, 15 reported having been engaged in labour to earn wages. Interestingly, nine of these 15 are from households participating in the PSNP. Some of them combine both public work and wage labour. Wage labour involved haricot bean and coffee-seed picking, pulling a horse cart to transport goods, working on irrigated farms, on flower farms and at stone-crusher plants.

The main reason children are under such pressure to work has to do with the insufficiency of PW transfers. Insufficient transfers mean that household members including children have to resort to other means to generate additional income. The most obvious thing to do is to utilise children's labour. When transfers from the PNSP fail to meet their food needs, parents and their children are obliged to do wage labour. Children have far greater needs than just food.

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<sup>10</sup>As discussed in Section 4 of the PSNP Program Implementation Manual of 2010, children can only be involved in public work if they are aged 16 and above.



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Healthcare, school materials and other expenses are also very important. To satisfy these, some children had to work, which in turn affected their education.

The timing of transfers also has an impact on households and their children. Though households do the public work from February to June, transfers are made months later than they are due. In all sites, officials and beneficiaries report that delays are common. Those poor households who badly need grains or cash have had to resort to loans with exorbitant interest rates or borrow from neighbours and relatives. But they also usually sent their children to do wage labour. Some children reported that they sometimes put off their schooling and domestic or family business work for days in order to assist their family with cash from the wage labour.

### *Schooling*

Schooling is the other measure of child well-being used in this study. As the previous sections show, the more children were involved in work, the less time they spent on schooling and study at home. In Round 2 the mean highest grade completed by all the children was found to be 3.43 and in Round 3 it was 4.91. In both rounds, girls had slightly higher grade achievements in spite of the fact they had a heavier work burden. However, the grade-for-age of children in both Round 2 and Round 3 is less than one, indicating that students do not progress one grade per year. The qualitative data confirm that most of the children are well behind the expected grade levels,<sup>11</sup> and the situation seems worse for boys.<sup>12</sup>

A major cause of lower grade-for-age is drop-out from school. The most common reason for children dropping out of school was reported to be that they were required for domestic and/or agricultural work or family business at home (including chores, farm work, helping with the family business and harvesting). More than 20 percent of children dropped out for these reasons and this is consistent with the previous idea that children who are more involved in work (domestic/agricultural and paid work) are less likely to attend school. Truancy, that is, the preference of children not to go to school, was found to be the second most common reason for dropping out, and accounts nearly 14 percent. Other reasons reported by children in Round 3 included the necessity to be involved in paid work to earn money (13.1 percent), illness or disability (8.3 percent), family

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<sup>11</sup> Ideally, children who started school at the usual age (7) are expected to reach at least Grade 7 by the age of 15. However, only eight of the 32 sub-sampled children were able to reach Grade 7 or above.

<sup>12</sup> 16 of the 24 who failed to achieve projected grade levels were boys.



issues like problems at home including parental disputes/marital conflict (6 percent) and the high cost of educational material/supplies (5 percent). Moreover, the qualitative data shows a negative association between the PSNP and schooling. Out of the 24 children who were below the expected grade level for their age, 17 were from PSNP households. Lower grade achievement was due to irregularities in attendance, failure in exams and, more importantly, dropping out of school altogether. Of the 32 children included in this study, seven were not attending school during the fieldwork. These comprised four girls and three boys. All were from households included in the PSNP throughout the program or included initially and later excluded. None of the non-PSNP households let their children interrupt their schooling. The data suggest that the PSNP does not prevent poor children from interrupting their schooling. Perhaps this is because, while children from PSNP households had to adhere to the timetable and type of work the program organisers assigned to them, children from non-PSNP households could usually decide when to work and what to do, taking into account their school time.

In the qualitative study we tried to establish the views of children, teachers and others on how the PW program affected their schooling. There was little relationship between public work and school enrolment. Construction of schools, strong initiatives from the Government and parents' willingness were already pushing enough children to enrol. However, children had to miss classes when they were required to undertake PSNP-related work. The widespread occurrence of absence was related to the design of the program, which operates during the agricultural slack period but also falls during critical school time. The impacts of the PW program on children's schooling were widely reported by the children themselves. Some teachers also confirmed that they gave permission to students who had to do public work. They stated that instead of forcing them to 'learn without food' they would allow them to work for a few days and get back to school when they could. They tried to help them to do both schooling and work. The same is true for the PW supervisors. Some of them tried to be flexible regarding timing so that poor children could do the public work as well as attend school. In some cases, parents and schools negotiate and arrange shifts for children. One child attends school in the morning and the other in the afternoon. In the other shifts they do public work or other family work tasks. These are common practices in the communities, but only for households that have working children who can attend school in different shifts. Working children try hard to balance school and work. They try to get permission from both the school and the supervisor as much as possible to attend either classes or public work.

## **Results and discussion**

This section focuses on the analysis of results and on discussion. We explore the impact of the PSNP on children, first in terms of its possible effect on household economic status, expressed in terms of wealth index and consumption expenditure, and secondly with respect to children's time use mainly for work and schooling. Finally, based on the evidence, we suggest the adoption of a comprehensive child-focused social protection scheme that could overcome the limitations of the PSNP.

### ***Impact on household wealth and consumption expenditure***

We expected the participation of households in the PW program to increase both the consumption expenditure per capita of households and the wealth level.<sup>13</sup> We found the impact of PW participation on the wealth index was negative and statistically significant, indicating that PW program was not able to build the assets of the households. We also found that PW program participation had negative and significant impact on per capita (and also per adult equivalent) food and non-food consumption expenditure, which was contrary to our expectations. On average, participation of households in the PW program reduces per capita consumption expenditure per month by 33 birr, per capita food consumption per month by 21 birr and per capita non-food expenditure per month by 12 birr. The results seem to support the general public opinion that the PSNP is making some people dependent on aid and is not lifting households permanently out of poverty. First, the real value of the transfers people obtained from the PSNP (cash or in-kind) did not increase. Second, people who were not included in the PSNP worked hard to increase the amount of payment they obtained from off-farm employment (wage labour and non-farm business), while many PSNP beneficiaries waited for low-paying public work, which they saw as less risky. Using our Older Cohort Young Lives data, excluding income from PW/PSNP, the non-PSNP beneficiaries obtained 45 percent and 41 percent higher per capita off-farm income than did the PSNP beneficiaries in Round 2 and Round 3, respectively. We asked PSNP households in a group discussion forming part of the qualitative study if those households that were poor and consequently eligible for the PSNP in 2005, at the beginning of the program, were still poor in 2009 and therefore included in the program. They all reported that they were still beneficiaries and also eligible for the second round of the program (2010–2015).<sup>14</sup> Ambivalence towards the PSNP transfer was clearly articulated by

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<sup>13</sup> For details of the methods of analysis and results see Yisak and Tassew (2012).

<sup>14</sup> PSNP officials reported that from each community, no more than five households have graduated after staying in the program for five years. From our study six households were told by officials that they had

beneficiaries from all communities. When there is drought and other shocks it is very necessary for the survival of households. However, some respondents suggested it develops dependency. The expansion of the PW program may be using up much of PSNP beneficiaries' time and hence making them dependent on aid to support their livelihood. In circumstances of protracted droughts and economic shocks, food support remains an essential means of survival. However, measured in terms of its long-term impact, this brings other negative outcomes. Food assistance seems to overshadow other livelihood opportunities that could be better in dealing with people's economic difficulties. Households that are required to work on the PW program are forced to allot a significant proportion of their time to it, leaving them with only a limited period for other work activities. Some consider public work as their main activity and source of their living. Such a misconception by beneficiaries could have a long-term impact on dependency and could be detrimental to the objective of the program.

### ***The PSNP and child well-being***

Since households have to supply labour to get transfers participation in public work increases the demand for labour. This may encourage children to help parents with domestic and family business activities if the additional demand for labour does not come from additional family labour or hired labour. Hence participation in public work has a substitution effect in the sense that public work participation increases the time children spend on work and reduces the time they have available to spend in school and on home study. However, potentially, participation in the PW program could bring additional income for households, which may help households hire labour to meet their labour demand at home and for business and thereby increase children's leisure time as well as the time they spend on schooling and studying. Therefore, participation in the PW program may have both income and substitution effects on children's time use for work, schooling and studying, so that the net effect of participation in public work depends on the relative weight of the income and substitution effects. The results of our analysis<sup>15</sup> suggest that households' participation in the PW program reduces the hours children spend on child care and increases the hours they spend on household chores and on paid and unpaid work outside the home, and reduces time spent in school. This means that the substitution effect dominates over the income effect. Since the income effect is so low, households are not able to hire labour, consequently forcing their children to substitute for their parents or do work on their own. The PW program does not have a

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'graduated' after they were given credit or asset transfer. But the beneficiaries considered themselves rather as 'excluded' and aimed to rejoin the PSNP, arguing that they were not able to ensure food security.

<sup>15</sup> For details of the methods of analysis and results see (Yisak and Tassew 2012).

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significant effect on children's participation in unpaid work, hours spent studying and highest grade completed. However, participation in the PW program increases children's grade-for-age.

The qualitative data indicate an apparent impact of the PSNP on children's time use. The public work requirements of the program forced them to engage in it at the expense of their schooling and leisure. All children from PSNP households confirmed that they participated in the PW program because their parents were not able to cover the labour demanded of their household. As the value of the transfer obtained from the PSNP is not enough to survive, parents and children opt to engage in other activities as well. More than half of the children from the PSNP households were engaged in the PW program and most of them in wage labour. KFSTFM and PW supervisors confirmed that children from the age of 13 participated in public work. Schoolteachers also reiterated that children from PSNP households usually missed classes and asked for permission, giving false reasons (for example, sickness of a family member or themselves) to work in the PW. Therefore the PSNP is neither able to fulfil households' needs nor leave children free to attend school. They had to do other activities as well as the PSNP and to ensure their survival. Overall, the PSNP failed to protect young people from working in its PW component and the insufficient transfer does not reduce their engagement in wage labour.

### *Impact on schooling*

The PW component of the PSNP does not just impact on children's time use but, more importantly, it affects their learning. The quantitative analysis suggests a significant negative effect of PW participation on children's time use for schooling, and a positive effect on children's grade-for-age. However, according to our qualitative evidence, PSNP officials, children and teachers explained the involvement of children in the PW program in relation to its negative effect on their schooling. All agreed that children of this age could do any work but said that the difference is that the scheduling of the PW program is not so flexible. Children were either combining schooling with work or dropping out altogether and continuing with work. Therefore, the grade levels achieved by children from PSNP PW households were lower than those whose household were not included in the program. Such effects have to be put down to the labour demand of the program for all households including those who have school-age children. Though not all the blame for the high prevalence of child labour could be attributed to the PSNP, the program is contributing to it, and it affects children's schooling and eventually their future.

Therefore, it seems reasonable to make suggestions about how the design of the PSNP could be improved in order to benefit children. In this regard, during

fieldwork, children, parents, teachers and even PSNP officials have put forward their suggestions on possible improvement to the program. The most common views included registering children as DS beneficiaries, making direct support for parents conditional on their sending their children to school, coordinating school-feeding programs for needy children, and increasing the value of the transfer so that it would ensure that households' food demands trickled down to children.

***Beyond food security: from safety net to child-sensitive social protection***

The PSNP remains an important support program for food-insecure households and children helping them avoid hunger. However, this study suggests that it has neither improved household wealth status nor met full food consumption needs. It has not protected children from dropping out of school and engaging in wage labour. Instead, the program has effectively forced many children to do public work, adding to their workload and correspondingly affecting their schooling. This suggests that the safety net falls short of addressing children's diverse needs.

Poor children normally fall into all three categories of vulnerability (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2004), making them target groups of comprehensive social protection. As members of poor households, they could be both *chronically poor* and *economically vulnerable* to shocks. But more importantly they are *socially vulnerable* because of social marginalisation as a result of unequal power relations with adults.

Failure to understand the social dimension of child vulnerability leads to a simplistic focus on economic vulnerability (household economic poverty), to which the solution is thought to be economic transfers (e.g. food aid or cash transfers). While food aid may augment food security and contribute to poverty reduction, addressing the wider scope of child vulnerability needs to advance beyond this – taking 'the long view' by adopting transformative social protection for children. Furthermore, from the human capital perspective, investing on children is the core means to help them break out of chronic poverty (Sabates-Wheeler et al. 2009: 117).

A comprehensive child-sensitive social protection requires thinking far beyond safety nets; in this case the PSNP in Ethiopia. The PSNP seems to overlook the importance of addressing children's vulnerability by just targeting households, with the assumption that all members of the household will benefit equally. A different approach would address the power inequality that usually governs household resource distribution. We saw earlier how children were forced to participate in the PW program to replace their adult parents, while the

transfers their households acquired from the program were used by adults, sometimes irresponsibly.

A range of components of social protection aimed at addressing the multidimensional vulnerability of children are required. For children 'an integrated approach is needed to exploit opportunities for complementarity and synergies between cash transfers, social welfare services, legislation and communication for development' (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2009: 117). Safety nets still have a role to play in this as protective and preventive measures, but do not provide the more important promotive aspects of social protection (e.g. school feeding, school fee waivers, provision of school materials, etc.) nor the transformative aspects (for example, the regulation of child labour). These have been effective in African countries like Ghana and South Africa (Barrientos and DeJong 2004). The Ghanaian experience provides us with two basic lessons: the need for comprehensive social protection for children, ranging from food, to schooling and health; and the benefits of transfers that put fewer conditions on the recipient, for example, no labour expected from schoolchildren (UNICEF 2009: 4).

We argue that child-sensitive social protection needs to address the dual needs of children by protecting them from risks and vulnerability and responding to their developmental needs. In short, child-focused social protection needs to aim at maximising opportunities and developmental outcomes for children by considering the diverse dimensions of their well-being. Children whose present ranges of vulnerability are addressed, and in whose future investments are made, are more likely to grow up into non-poor adults. Such an approach would help break cycle of intergenerational poverty, and the ultimate goal of child-focused social protection – poverty reduction combined with human development – could be achieved. As poverty and deprivation are transferred across generations, social protection needs to adopt a longer-term perspective. In general, given the multidimensional and intergenerational nature of child vulnerability, social protection for children needs to opt beyond the common household- or adult-centred protection system. This requires 'thinking outside the box' (Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux 2009: 109).

## **Conclusion**

The results of the study, particularly from the survey, suggest that despite the increase in the incidence of economic shocks, such as drought and food-price inflation and idiosyncratic, family-related shocks, such as the illness or death of family members, the participation rate of households in PW and the mean real value of transfers from the PSNP declined from 2006 to 2009. The income our

sampled households obtained from off-farm activities was much higher for the non-PSNP participants than for the PSNP participants. As a result, the PSNP had no effect on the wealth index. Moreover, the PSNP had a strong significant negative impact on per capita household food and non-food expenditure. In terms of food security and overall economic status, during the qualitative fieldwork of 2009, most households reported having the same or lower status as when the program started in 2005.

Moreover, there were positive and significant effects on the hours their children spent on unpaid work at home, indicating that the substitution effect dominates the income effect of the PW program. Participation in public work also increased the time children spent on paid work and on the total time they spent on all kinds of work, probably because children substitute for parents while parents do the public work or wage labour. Furthermore, the PW program did not have a positive effect on the time children spent in school and studying at home though we found that it did have a positive effect on children's grade-for-age. Half of our qualitative sub-sample were working for wages and for some of those children the PW program did not help improve grade completed or grade-for-age, suggesting that the program is not helping those children who are forced to drop out or repeat a grade for different reasons, mainly poverty or engagement in wage labour.

The PSNP, though mainly designed for households, has brought unintended child outcomes. The best thing we noted about the program is not the small positive results for children in terms of food provision, but rather some of the potential of the program for the well-being of children. Its objectives of household asset protection and community asset building by ensuring food security have the ingredients for long-term poverty reduction. However, poverty reduction cannot be effected simply by building up physical assets but also needs investment in human capital. The PSNP-PIM of 2010 gives a lower age limit of 16 for the PW program. But this could be increased so that children under the age of 18 are excluded from public work. This is not only in adherence to UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Ethiopia is a signatory, but also because it affects their schooling. Children are already overloaded by different activities and putting more pressure on them by adding public work makes their lives very difficult. We suggest that not only the elderly and disabled but also children should be direct support beneficiaries. This would mean that the program would require public work only from the adult and able-bodied household members, not just in theory but also in practice. Inclusion of schoolchildren in the DS component of the program would make it easier to monitor child labour. Parents would not need to oblige their children to do public work if they received direct support. More importantly, these transfers could be



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given to parents on condition that they send their children to school regularly, a situation which would protect children from both public work and possible wage labour.

The main objectives of the transfers were to protect households from selling their assets and to enable them to use other income to build up their holdings. However, even their consumption needs were not properly met and so their real income declined. The data suggest that the PSNP on its own is not generating the asset improvement needed to allow graduation, and that therefore other measures (market development, etc.) may also be needed. There is a disturbing trend among beneficiaries of developing an unhealthy dependency on the PSNP and a reduced capacity to look for other livelihood options. Thus the contribution of the PSNP to poverty reduction is questionable.

We therefore suggest that ensuring children's overall well-being would be a better way to contribute to poverty reduction. At the same time, we believe that the PSNP as it stands does not seem up to the task. For example, the assumption that PSNP transfers benefit 'all household members' has been challenged by this research. Parents, when involved in public work, often resort to having their children substitute for them, and sometimes send them to do wage labour. It was widely reported that the amount rarely reaches children because in many cases adults, mainly fathers, waste the money on unnecessary things while their children drop out of school or do wage labour to subsidise their households' income. Thus the age-based power relations in households were not taken into account while the program was designed.

Investing in human capital development, and adopting child-sensitive social protection, we argue, require thinking beyond the PSNP. In this respect, the big contribution of the PNSP in Ethiopia is that it provides an important lesson on the need to adopt a wider child-focused social protection. While the PNSP aims at household and community asset building, it could easily be extended into 'human capital building' – human development by investing in children. This could be done by respecting children's vulnerabilities, protecting them from the impacts of shocks, and adopting an integrated child-focused social protection. The specificity of this child-sensitive social protection might require further working out, but more lessons can be drawn from empirical experiences, particularly from developing countries, including the African countries discussed in this chapter. These could include school feeding, cash transfers, healthcare, and other supporting programs.

To create synergy between social protection and human capital development, it would be important to consider the option of conditional transfers. The two basic conditions could be that children attended school



regularly and avoided wage labour or other activities harmful to them but which could be undertaken by parents or caregivers. Amid limited resources and contexts of vulnerability to protracted shocks, and given the need for child-focused social protection to contribute to poverty reduction and break intergenerational poverty transfer, conditional transfers remain a plausible option. In poor countries like Ethiopia, social protection for children is not just a matter of redistribution of the available resources but also creating resources for children themselves so that they can be productive during their adulthood. Though such a dual purpose of social protection makes it difficult to implement, it remains the best way of both protecting and children and helping them develop properly – changing a poor society into a better-off one, where social protection can have only one purpose – the provision of resources to contribute to equity.

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