

CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN RHETORIC AND PRACTICE: THE CASE OF INTRA-REGIONAL RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME IN NORTHERN ETHIOPIA

Megerssa Tolessa Walo

Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Wollega University, Ethiopia

ABSTRACT

Subsequent Ethiopian governments adopted resettlement as strategy to solve food insecurity in the country. It is implemented under four Pillars-Voluntary, underutilised land, consultation with host communities and proper preparation; and other 13 Key principles and approaches. Therefore, this study aims at evaluating the resettlement programme in Metema District vis-a-vis these pillars and principles. Both questionnaire and focus group discussion were used to collect data pertaining to the implementation of the programme. The result shows that the resettlement programme doesn't agree with those pillars and principles. The extent to which the programme is voluntary is questionable as the resettlers were dictated by desperation, inducement, and intimidation. Majority of the promises the government consented to provide the resettlers were not materialized and the programme is not environmentally friendly. Above all, the programme could not solve the food insecurity of the people no matter how the major objective was to ensure food security.

Keywords: Food insecurity, sustainable development, resettlement, rhetoric, practice.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Ethiopia has been experiencing chronic food insecurity over the past many years, which has driven the successive Ethiopian governments to take intervening actions. Despite their different specific objectives and implementing mechanisms among the last three governments of Ethiopia, generally speaking, they all have (at least in theory) one thing in common-food security.

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia set a five-year development plan in 2006 termed as Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) from 2005/6 to 2009/10. The major attention of this plan is the eradicate poverty and hunger through Food Security Program (FSP) and one way to achieve this programme is through "voluntary resettlement" MoFED (2006). Core to this plan is sustainable development in which the resettlers are expected to produce surplus products shortly after the implementation of the resettlement scheme.

Resettlement schemes have grown in importance in the past forty years in Ethiopia due to the extent of the problem. The current government of Ethiopia decided to take an urgent action before the situation gets out of control. So, resettlement is identified as one of the key and quickest ways to achieve food security in a short- and medium-terms. The short-term resettlement plan is to resettle 440,000 heads of households (ca. 2.2 million people) in four regional states in three years (2003 – 2005). The government considered resettlement as the cheapest and viable solution to the problems of food

insecurity on the basis of (a) availability of land in receiving areas, (b) labour force of the resettlers, and (c) easing pressure of space for those remaining behind, especially after three years. The operational approach is noted to be intra-regional, voluntary, self-help, and iterative without imposition from above and no quota system at all (Asrat Tadesse, 2009, Gebre Yntiso, 2005; FSS, 2006; Wolde-Silassie Abute, 2003).

Nonetheless, implementing this state-sponsored resettlement programme is not as easy as governments assume. Experiences in the world including Ethiopia reveal the fact that things often do not go smooth in resettlement operations unless managed with careful care. Hasty execution of the resettlement might have humanitarian and ecological consequences and hence, the program needs thorough preparation to achieve food security as intended (Cernea 1996).

Statement of the Problem

The implementation of the contemporary intra-regional resettlement programme in Ethiopia is with the bold rationale of attaining food security and reduce poverty through improved access to land with operational approaches of intra-regional, voluntary, self-help, and iterative without imposition from above and no quota system at all (Gebre Yntiso, 2005; Wolde-Silassie Abute, 2003). More specifically the programme is expected to achieve cultural similarities and partnership, self-help and cost sharing, environmental concerns, self reliance, and minimum infrastructure. To make the programme effective and meet its objectives, the government set out key principles in line with the international standards. However, the materialization of the principles is under question in many cases.

Most researches done on resettlement in Ethiopia assessed the process and results of the programme (Kassa Belay, 2004; Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher and Kasahun Berhanu, 2007; Wolde-Silassie Abute, 2003). They did not evaluate the resettlement programme against the international and national guidelines. In line with this concept the major purpose of this study is to assess the current intraregional resettlement programme against the national principles and pillars in focus in the Metema resettlement site in North Gondar, Ethiopia. By doing so, policymakers, practitioners and local leaders will have a clearer understanding of the difference between rhetoric and practice and make appropriate interventions towards the betterment of the lives of the rural people.

METHODOLOGY

This article is based on fieldwork conducted in 2011 in three resettlement sites in Metema District of Amhara region. Metema District is one of the 21 Districts (Districts) in the north Gondar Zone of Amhara region in Ethiopia. In the District, there are seventeen resettlement sites out of which only five (Das Gundo, Mender 2 & 3, Tumet, Mender 6 & 7, and Kumer sites) received resettlers from 2003 onwards. Therefore, purposive sampling is used to include those Districts that received settlers as of 2003 of which three sites (Mender 2/3, Mender 6/7 and Kumer) were randomly selected for the study.

In the study both primary and secondary materials were used. The primary sources were gained from the resettlers, the offices of food security program coordination and disaster prevention of Metema District and Amhara regional state. Method of data collection greatly determines the quality of the data. Accordingly the major data collection techniques used in this study includes interview, focus group discussion, and personal observation. Groups having 5-6 members (one in each site) were formed the discussion held mostly on their free time (from 01:00-pm to 02:00 pm) and the information was recorded and eventually analysed. In each site, I interviewed two to three respondents, including settlers, local residents and local

officials. I also interviewed government officials responsible for planning and implementing the resettlement programme at local and zonal levels.

In the analysis, mostly qualitative techniques were used because majority of the data are ideas and opinions of the participants. Tables and percentages were also used to illustrate the opinions of the respondents. Discussions of the results are made by evaluating the conditions of the resettlement programme implemented in the study area in accordance with the pillars of the Ethiopian government in focus.

In addition to the primary data for the research, reference is made to several assessments of the resettlement programme that have been conducted in the region and elsewhere. Documents at the offices agriculture and rural development in the District and region are the major secondary sources used during the study.

GUIDELINE OF RESETTLEMENT AND RELOCATION

International Guidelines/Declarations/Principles of Resettlement and Relocation

In full cognizance of the contents of the present Guidelines there may be instances in which, in the public interest, or where the safety, health or enjoyment of human rights so demands, particular persons, groups and communities may be subject to resettlement. According to Bikram Jeet Batra and Shivani Chaudhry (2005), such resettlement must occur in a just and equitable manner and in full accordance with law of general application.

Accordingly, all persons, groups and communities have the right to suitable resettlement which includes the right to alternative land or housing, which is safe, secure, accessible, affordable and habitable. In determining the compatibility of resettlement with the present Guidelines, States should ensure that in the context of any case of resettlement the following criteria are adhered to:

- Setting resettlement policy consistent with present Guidelines and internationally recognized human rights has to be in place before carrying out the programme.
- Resettlement must ensure equal rights to women, children and indigenous populations and other vulnerable groups including the right to property ownership and access to resources.
- The actor proposing and/or carrying out the resettlement shall be required by law to pay for any costs associated therewith, including all resettlement costs.
- No affected persons, groups or communities, shall suffer detriment as far as their human rights are not concerned nor shall their right to the continuous improvement of living conditions subject to infringement. This applies equally to host communities at resettlement sites, and affected persons, groups and communities subjected to forced eviction.
- That affected or relocated persons; groups and communities should be provided information with regards to the relocation site. The State shall provide all necessary amenities and services and economic opportunities The entire resettlement process should be carried out in full consultation and participation with the affected persons, groups and communities. States should take into account in particular all alternate plans proposed by the affected persons, groups and communities (Bikram Jeet Batra and Shivani Chaudhry, 2005).

Pillars, Principles and Approaches of the Resettlement in Ethiopia

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, in accordance with the international principles and guidelines discussed above, prepared four pillars and 13 key principles and approaches of intra-regional resettlement programme (New Coalition for Food Security in Ethiopia 2003), which are legally bounded. The four pillars include:

Voluntarism- This entails that settlers will migrate voluntary, they can return to their home areas if they change their minds, and they have a use right for their land in the home area for three years.

The Availability of Underutilised Land- The regional governments must identify and have enough land available before the program starts.

The Consultation with the Host Communities- The host community must fully participate from the planning stage to the implementation of the resettlement programme and the government must ensure that they agree to receive settlers in their areas.

Proper Ppreparation- This means that a minimum of infrastructure must be in place before moving people.

Key Principles In addition to the four pillars, the New Coalition for Food Security document outlines 13 further key principles and approaches - Intra-regional, cultural similarities. Partnership; self-help and cost sharing, Transparency; Iterative; Capacity building, Environmental concerns, Development process, Self reliance, Income and employment creation, Community management, Minimum infrastructure (FSS, 2005; New Coalition for Food Security in Ethiopia 2003). Of those principles, the most important were intra-regional resettlement, environmental concern, and development process.

Intra-regional Resettlement - Ethiopia is a nation with multi-ethnic groups each having their own languages and customs. In such countries implementing interregional resettlement could result in conflict between and among the different ethnic groups as the case during the Derg regime. Drawing lessons from the past, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia embarked upon intra-regional resettlement as a major principle has to avoid linguistic/ethnic differences between settler and host populations and eventually avoid potential clashes among the resettlers. This principle is related to the fourth pillar-consultation with the host communities- since the host communities need to show their consent whether to accept the new comers or not.

Environmental Concern- The concept of environment and resettlement is strongly correlated. Whenever there is resettlement of people in an area, there is an inevitability of environmental degradation particularly deforestation associated with expansion of agricultural land. Experiences in Ethiopia shows that resettlement has led to considerable deforestation for land clearing, construction, and firewood, resulting in soil erosion, reduction of bio-diversity and potential climate change (Asefa Tolera, 2005: 21-24). With regard to this key principle, one should be careful since the availability of 'virgin' land particularly in the northern part of Ethiopia, where this study focuses is unthinkable because of the high population pressure in the area.

Development Process- The guidelines advocate promoting not just food security but marketable surpluses to improve livelihoods

The approaches include:

Partnership- the guideline calls for cooperation among stakeholders in the implementation of the resettlement programme such as government, donors, NGOs, private enterprise, hosts and resettlers.

Self-help and Cost Sharing- The guidelines suggest the need for the resettlers to avoid dependency and participate in the process through their labour.

Transparency-The guidelines stress the need for adherence to rules and for active information to be available to partners.

An Iterative Process-The need to learn and adapt resettlement practice on the basis of learning from experience was emphasized.

Self reliance- Breaking the “dependency syndrome” and fostering self-reliance have been major aims.

Income and Employment-The guidelines suggest the need to promote not just agricultural production but off-farm activities and small businesses, which could eventually increase the incomes of the resettlers.

Community Management-The guidelines suggest that settler communities should be “in the driver’s seat”, actively involved in planning, implementation and monitoring.

Minimum Infrastructure-The guidelines suggest that infrastructure should be similar to those in areas of origin and that there should not be deterioration in service delivery.

OVERVIEW OF RESETTLEMENT IN ETHIOPIA: PAST AND PRESENT

Resettlement During the Imperial and Derg Regime

In imperial times, thousands of settlers were moved to several dozen schemes, mainly set up on the initiative of local governors, missionaries or NGOs. The type of settlers varied, and included urban unemployed, pastoralists, ex-soldiers and famine victims. During the first decade after the 1974 Revolution, the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission set up more than 80 schemes accommodating tens of thousands of settlers, most of whom were famine victims. Though exact figures about the number of people resettled by the imperial regime are difficult to find, Clarke (1986), cited in Kassa Belay (2004) reported that up to the Revolution of 1974, 20,000 families were resettled mainly from the drought afflicted and over populated north to the south.

However, state-sponsored settlers are settled in areas selected by resettlement administering authorities without consulting the host population, assessing the capacity of receiving areas to accommodate settlers and factoring in the implications of the resettlement program to the host population and the environment. This situation is believed to have resulted in hostilities and violent clashes among host communities and resettled families (Laura Hammond, 2008).

The military government that overthrew the imperial government in 1974 considered resettlement as a very powerful policy instrument to alleviate the problem of chronic food insecurity in drought-prone areas of northern Ethiopia. After the 1984-85 famine, the Derg resettled more than half a million settlers in a couple of years mainly from Wello, Tigray and Shewa- all in the Northern part of Ethiopia to areas to the west, especially Wellega, Kafa and Illu Aba Bora. Though the resettlement was intended to be voluntary and a large proportion of settlers were famine victims, targets were turned into quotas. Two kinds of

planned settlements were set up: large-scale ‘conventional’ mechanized collectives in the lowlands on the western border, and small-scale ‘integrated’ settlements in the highlands, reliant on ox-plough cultivation (FSS, 2006; Kassa Belay, 2004).

As a whole, there were about 600,000 people resettled from 1984 to 1986. Some of the major problems observed during the resettlement programme of this period included hasty site selection, limited land, poor infrastructure, difficult access, over-stretched services, and serious human and animal diseases. Recruitment involved coercion, propaganda and inducements; implementation on a campaign basis led to poor planning, family separation, high morbidity, mortality and suffering in transit shelters and on arrival. Imposed collectivisation, villagisation and mechanisation were resented. Rights of local people were overlooked and their land was expropriated. Resource-based conflicts between resettlers and local people were common, and lowland groups were marginalised. Environmental effects included forest destruction for land clearing, fuel and construction. Most resettlers left, notably after the Derg’s defeat in 1991, and the experiment was a costly failure with tragic human socioeconomic consequences (FSS, 2006).

Resettlement During the EPRDF

The military government implemented large-scale resettlement schemes, whose impacts have been hotly debated, until the current Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) took over power in May 1991. The FDRE has made resettlement a major component of its food security strategy. Having earlier opposed resettlement, the government came to consider it as a vital component of food security and poverty reduction strategies. To avoid excesses and failures of the Derg resettlement the government and its donor, and international organisation partners, established the New Coalition for Food Security in 2003 which proposed a major resettlement component involving resettling 2.2 million people in three years (FSS, 2006).

The government hoped the programme greatly solves the food insecurity problem of the rural residents. Nonetheless, the programme could not fully achieve its intended objective due to its failure to fully adhere to the resettlement pillars and guidelines it set.

Sustainable Development and Sustainability in line with Resettlement

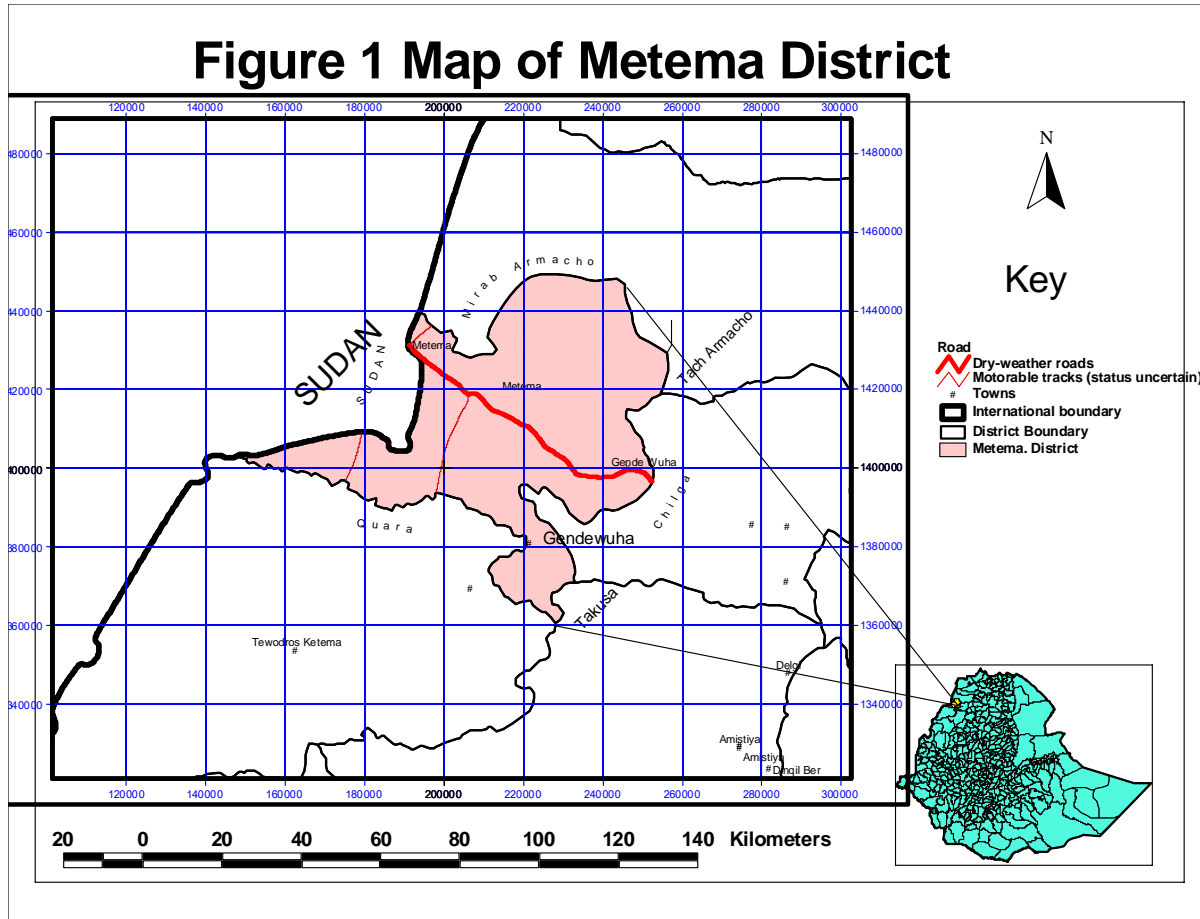
The Rio+20 World summit held in June, 2012 stressed that domestic difficulties of countries have no lasting remedy unless they are aligned with stewardship of our planetary home and provision for all members of the human family, that is sustainable development. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and it can be assessed by reference to parallel progress in its “three pillars” - economic growth, human development and environmental protection. These can be examined at local, national, regional or global levels (One World, 2012).

The contemporary resettlement schemes in Ethiopia in theory has given due attention to the sustainable development. The pillars and principles of the implementation of the resettlement programme stresses that the state-sponsored voluntary resettlement scheme should be environmentally friendly, and based on thorough discussions with the host and the new comers. The resettlers should not only produce subsistent production, but also are expected to engage in off-farm and non-farm activities to increase their incomes. Resettlement planning should be comprehensive so that it results in sustainable food security attainment and overall socio-economic development issue which is one of the focal point of the PASDEP

(MoFED (2006). However, practically, this does not seem always hold true. If new comers have to resettle on “underutilised land”, environmental degradation is inevitable and this is practical in many resettlement sites in Ethiopia.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AREA

Metema district is one of the 21 districts in the north Gondar Zone of Amhara region. It is bounded by Tach Armachew in the north, Quara in the south, Chilga in the east and Sudan in the west (See figure 1).



Source: Produced by the Researcher

The total population of the District, according to the 2007 summary and statistical report of Ethiopia, was 110,231 of which 58,734 are males and the rest 51,497 are females. Out of the total population of the District, 29,685 live in urban area and 82,546 live in rural areas (CSA, 2008). The capital city of the District is Genda Wuha, with a total population of 5,502 (Amhara livelihood zone report, 2007). The rationale to move of these people in selecting Metema District has to do with the limited population concentration and 'virgin' land considered suitable for agriculture.

The landscape the North West, where Metema district is situated, is predominantly plain with some hills and lies in the lowland agroecology. The vegetation consists of acacia trees, gum arabic and bush scrub scattered across the entire Zone. In the lowlands there is an extensive grazing interspersed by farms and scattered settlements. The annual rainy season lasts from

June to September. In most years the amount of rainfall (around 800mm) is optimal for the cultivation of different crops the most important of which are sorghum, millet, maize for food and sesame and cotton as cash crops. The temperature ranges from 15⁰C to 45⁰ C. Production in the area is rainfed, which depends on summer rains that last from June to September (Amhara Livelihood Zone Report, 2007).

Results

In the District a total of 48,520 people resettled, of which only 23,941 (49.3 %) are living in the new sites from 2003 up to 2010. There was no resettlement programme carried out during the year 2006 (see table 1). Not all people moved are still living in the sites. A considerable number of the resettlers left the new sites for their original homelands because of many reasons.

Table 1. Table Showing Summary of Resettlers in Metema District (2003-2010)

Year	Total Reresettlers			Currently present			Resettlers Left Metema District	
	HH heads	Individuals	Total	HH heads	Individuals	Total	Total	Percentage
2003	6927	5127	12054	1062	2130	3192	8862	73.5
2004	2208	1806	4014	882	1665	2547	1467	36.5
2005	10285	5660	15945	1879	2577	4456	11489	72
2006	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2007	2013	1288	3301	750	753	1503	1798	54.5
2008	1060	1032	2092	962	895	1857	235	11.2
2009	2601	3724	6325	2222	4013	6235	90	1.4
2010	2032	2757	4789	2032	2757	4789	0	0
Up to 2010	27126	21349	48520	9789	14790	24579	23941	49.3

Source: Office of the food Security programme coordination and Disaster prevention of Metema District, 2011.

In the sample sites of the District a total of 18,570 resettlers were resettled from 2003 up to 2009 and about 12,288 (67 %) abandoned the new site. No resettlement programme took place in 2006 and 2008 (see table 2)

Table 2. Resettlers Moved to the Sample Sites and Currently Residing in the District from 1995-2001 E.C

S/N	Site	Year							
		2003		2005		2007		2009	
		Resettlers came to the site	Currently residing in the site	Resettlers came to the site	Currently residing in the site	Resettlers came to the site	Currently residing in the site	Resettlers came to the site	Currently residing in the site
1	Mender 2/3	935	328	327	123	0	0	1262	451
2	Mender 6/7/8	4492	1310	2355	862	178	94	7025	2266
3	Kumer	323	168	675	256	0	0	998	424
Total		5750	1806	3357	1241	178	94	9285	3141

Source: Office of the food Security programme coordination and Disaster prevention of Metema District, 2011.

When we see the number of the resettlers left for their original homeland in comparison with other districts in the zone, the case of Metema district is relatively better. In Metema district the ratio of those total resettlers moved to those currently living in the new sites is 0.47 that is about 53 % left in the sites. Tach Armacheho district is the leading in sending retaining the resettlers in the new sites (88%) followed by Tegede and west Armacheho districts (73 % and 70 % respectively (see table 3). Quara district is the leading in this case.

Table 3 Summary of Resettlers Moved and Currently Residing in Districts in North Gondar Zone in Comparison with that of Metema District from 1995-2001 E.C

S/N	District	No. of sites	Those resettled (A)			Those currently residing (B)			% (B/A*100)
			HH heads	HH members	Total	HH heads	HH members	Total	
1	Quara	16	31194	33108	64302	12672	18163	30835	47.95341
2	Metema	16	25094	18637	43731	8135	11970	20105	45.97425
3	West Armacheho	10	15138	15558	30696	10484	11308	21792	70.99296
4	Tegede	5	3888	5070	8958	2790	3794	6584	73.49855
5	Tach Armacheho	2	881	1217	2098	846	1010	1856	88.4652
Total		49	76195	73590	149785	34927	46245	81172	54.19234

Source: Office of the food Security programme coordination and Disaster prevention of Metema District, 2011

Social service facilities in the metema District shows that there are 11 health institutions with 36 professionals and 4 veterinary clinics, 18 educational institutions (including primary and satellite schools), 138 hand pump water wells for the whole 16 different sites. If we see the student teacher ratio it is 1:51.5. There is no all weather road in the District (see table 4).

Table 4 Institutions, Service Providers, and Manpower in Metema District (2003-2009)

S/N	District	No. of Resettlement sites	Health Institution	Professionals	Water	Education			Road (in Km)		Ware house		Service providers	Communication	Radio	Veterinary clinics
						Institution	Teachers	Students	All weather	Dry weather	Fixed	Movable				
1	Metema	16	11	36	138	18	96	4944	0	188	8	8	21	1	4	

Source: Office of the food Security programme coordination and Disaster prevention of North Gondar Zone, 2011

Metema district is climatically hot and in such areas the necessity of water is crucial for the people and their cattle. This is because one of the major causes for the resettlement programme is shortage of rainfall. Accordingly in the district under consideration, the major source of water is ground water (Table 5). There is one big river called Guang River crossing the district (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Guang River Crossing Metemea District Resettlement Sites.



Photo by the writer

Table 5 Drinking Water Provision in Metema District (2003-2009)

S/N	District	General Infrastructure				Functional			
		Deep Hand pump	Medium Hand Pump	Deep water wells	Total	Hand pump	Medium Hand Pump	Deep water wells	Total
1	Metema	47	81	10	138	46	51	8	105

Source: Office of the food Security programme coordination and Disaster prevention of North Gondar Zone, 2011

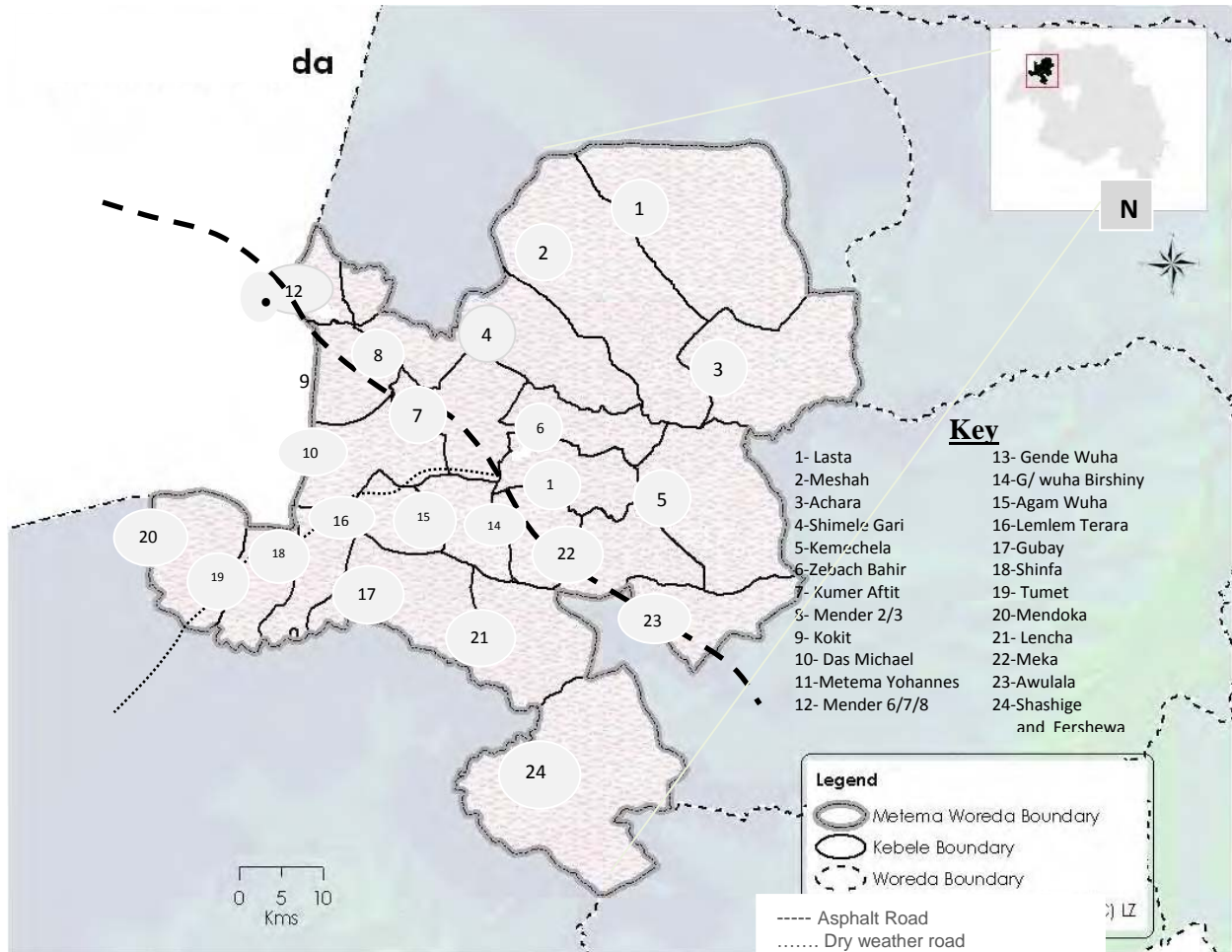
DISCUSSION

Three woredas, namely Metemma, Quara and Tach Armacheho, were identified as more suitable for resettlement in Amhara Region. The initial plan, according to the study, was to resettle 3,300 households (about 15,000 individuals) from all zones of Amhara region except from West Gojam. This initial number, however, has eventually risen to a little over 20,000 households (more than 100,000 individuals). According to officials, the reason why they decided to increase the number of people to be resettled is because the potential of the destination areas particularly of Metema is proved to be much more than what they anticipated, and that it is believed the destination areas are fully capable of hosting the revised number of households, and even more (UN-EUE, 2003). However, there is no concrete evidence to support this claim.

In the Metema District, there are 22 resettlement sites found in nine kebeles (figure 2). According to official in the District food security and disaster prevention office, there are a total of 32,615 resettlers in the District who came from different zone

of the region including special zones (see table 2). The reason for the resettlement programme in this District is not different from that of other Districts that is due to the recurrent drought in their original homeland.

Figure 2 Map of the Resettlement Sites in Metema District



Source: Office of the food Security programme coordination and Disaster prevention of Metema District, 2011

In some cases majority of the resettlers were left for their original homeland and some other places after observing the resettlement site for many reasons. Harsh whether condition and mismatch between what they expected and what they actually found in the new sites are among the major reasons. According to field observation and discussions held with the resettlers, some of the resettlers went back to their original homeland (73.5 % in 2003) after observing the site they are given to resettle in because the land is water-logging and the soil is infertile because the sites were settled by other farmers in the past (table 2).

Over the seven years almost half, 49.3 % of Metema left the resettlement site. According to the resettlers the area is not thoroughly studied as to whether the locality is suit for agriculture or not.

Figure 4 Researcher Undertaking Focus Group Discussions with the Resettlers



Photo by the writer

The resettlers put in their words as follows:

.....officials roughly observed the forest in the area and chose as it is fertile and inhabited or under-inhabited. Because of this, some even went back the same day they came to the site for resettlement. Still others left the area after some times to be employed in daily labourer activities in other areas. I will also leave this area shortly to my previous home.

This particular discussion shows that there is less difference between the resettlement scheme of the Derg and that of the EPRDF except in the latter case the resettlers are informed about their movement before the relocation. Most of the resettlers in this particular site could not even feed themselves and, thus the guideline of self reliance is compromised.

Implementation of the Resettlement Programme

Causes of the resettlement in Metema District- Discussions held with the resettlers and officials in the site demonstrated that the major push and pull factors the resettlement programme in all the sites in the District is erratic rainfall and shortage of farm land in the sending area causing recurrent drought and famine and availability of underutilized land in the receiving area respectively.

Recruitment and Preparations-The voluntary intra-regional resettlement guidelines emphasise the need for proper preparations before implementation of the programme (FSS, 2006). These include recruitment and briefings in sending areas, and preparations in resettlement areas, notably of roads and access, shelter and housing, food and other provisions, water and sanitation, allocation of land and oxen, and health and education services.

Selection of the resettlers in Metema District was made by the District officials in the sending area based up on their interests. Once their willingness was checked, they were given orientation. Nonetheless, the settlers reported they had not given full information about the new site. In the discussions in most sending regions authorities mainly chose one-way delivery of

government message to the people rather than adopting participatory problem-solving approach while the pillars of resettlement and international guidelines stress on full participation in the planning and implementing process of the programme.

Some of these promises, particularly house, a pair of oxen, three years of relief aid, and agricultural inputs, could not be delivered on arrival. Because of this some resettlers were reported to have dictated by desperation, inducement, and intimidation to leave their original home land rather than voluntarily. The resettlers also claimed that the orientation programme was exaggerated. For example they told that officials showed us video of green and forested land, which they say was not the picture of the site after observing the area. They also reported that there was no house constructed for them on their arrival.

According to the officials in the District, meetings were held in sending areas to inform communities about the resettlement. Thorough discussions with the resettlers about the objectives, service provisions, and environment of the new site were made. Resettler during the discussion on their part explained that promises including two hectares of fertile land, a pair of oxen, standard housing, and adequate health and education services, in some cases up to three years of relief aid, and agricultural inputs were made to us. Thus, differences between expectations and actual conditions were among the major reasons leading to resettlers to leaving shortly after arrival and dissatisfaction among those who remained.

Management of the programme- Districts in the sending and receiving areas, according to the pillar, are responsible for the assessment, planning and implementation of the resettlement programme. The receiving District assesses the availability of basic services such as ground water and unutilized land and are responsible for the construction of houses by the receiving community. The sending District then recruits, organizes, orients and carryout the transportation of the resettlers.

Nonetheless the reality in the Metema District is different from this fact. In site such as Kokit 2/3, settlers were rushed to the resettlement area without pre-observation by the delegates to the new areas. There existed widespread resentment on the part of many settlers of resettlers who sent their delegates in that they were shown a few good sites that do not represent inhospitable and unproductive areas.

Transportation- Settlers were transported by bus in group. On their way they were provided rations and first aid. According to officials, the sending District Development Agents and first aid providers moved with them up to the resettlement site for some times until they were accustomed to the new environment. In most sites in the District the resettlers were made to settle in 'open areas' among the previously occupied or settled sites during Derg time. That is why the resettlers are complaining for the shortage of farmland. This contradicts the pillar of resettlement on underutilized land.

Arrival, Establishment and Development

Reception- Up on the arrival of the resettlers the host community warmly welcomed the new comers in most sites. This may be because of the fact that the host people were by themselves resettlers of the previous regime and they understand the risks they faced when they came to the new sites. They extended the support also because they thought that constructions of social services such as road, health posts, schools and drinking water are provided following the resettlers. They cooperated in construction of houses, rented land and ox for them, and made social relations with them. In some cases, however, there exist a sort of disagree between the resettlers and the host communities on resource.

The resettlers resided in the areas under different regimes are also heterogeneous in terms of ethnic background. There are resettlers in the area who were from Benishangul Gumuz, Oromo, and Agaw (who claim to have their own language than Amharic, which is the official language in the resettlement sites) questioning the intra-regional resettlement programme of the country.

Social services at the 'new home' - One of the preconditions for successful resettlement programmes is the availability of social services such as health, education, road, and water at the resettlement sites before relocating people. Past lessons from Derg's resettlement programme illustrate that such programmes often fail when the government relocates people before putting social services in place at the resettlement areas. In Metema District the social service provision is better in some cases and not satisfactory in some other components of the services (see Table 5). There are a total of 138 hand pump water wells, of which only 105 (76 %) are currently functional. The rest 24 % are out of use at the time of the study. There is also no continuous follow up and maintenance of the water pumps despite the payment made by the resettlers for maintenance and guarding the water pumps in response of the service they get from the water for the

As confirmed by government officials, social services available at this resettlement site are adequate. However, for the total of 20,105 population resettled in 16 sites of the District, the services are insufficient and needs more attention to upgrade.

Health - According to field observation and discussions held with officials in village 6, 7 &8, despite high incidence of malaria and meningitis, there are no health facilities in the area. The problem of health institutions is not boldly observed in the study area. There are 11 health institutions in the District (see table 5) serving the resettlers in the area. Nonetheless the institutions are not furnished with trained man power and medical instruments no matter how there is high incidence of malaria and meningitis in the sites. The climatic condition in Metema District in particular is hospitable for anopheles mosquito causing the disease malaria. Nevertheless, now, this condition is reported relatively solved in some sites such as Kokit 2/3 (Mender 2 and 3) sites because of the supply of mosquito nets. The health extension workers are doing their best in training the resettlers particularly on family planning aspect besides the provision mosquito nets against the malaria.

Education - There is one Satellite school (School in which pupils, after completing grade 3, are eligible to join grade 5 by jumping over the next grade) with relatively fair facilities (see figure 5). Once they complete this cycle, they move to the District city, Genda Wuha, which is about 25 kms from the site (figure 5).

Figure 5 Satellite School at Kumer Resettlement Site.



Photo by the writer

There is no question that additional classrooms (at least up to grade 8), chairs and tables are required immediately for the settlers because children (especially girls) face difficulty of travelling such distances daily and this eventually hampers the Millennium Development Goal of education for all.

Road- The newly upgraded asphalt road from Gondar to Sudan passes through Metema District. Dry weather road connects some sites such as Kokit 2/3 to Gende Wuha, the capital of the District, which is only about 2 km (from the junction to the resettlement village). Others suffer particularly during rainy season as they face difficulties to go to health posts, market centers, and perform other businesses.

Water -Water sources include rivers, springs, and wells. Distance to rivers and reduced flow in the dry season are constraints in the resettlement site. The settlers have access to hand pump water dag for them close to the site after their arrival (see table 6 & 7). They are allowed to fetch 8 jerry cans per day for 4.00 Ethiopian Birr per month (Figure 6). The payment is made for the maintenances of the hand pump and salary for the guard.

Figure 6 Photograph of People Queuing their Jerry Cans to Fetch Water at Mender 6/7Rresettlement sites.



Photo by the writer

Shelter and Housing- Local people were mobilized to build shelters or houses for resettlers. In several cases resettlers were dismayed to find contrary to their expectations that they had to build houses after their arrival (Figure 7). This action completely opposes the pillar of provision of houses to the new comers before their arrival.

Figure 7 Residential houses of the resettlers (partial) in Metema District.



Photo by the writer

Until the houses are built, the newcomers were forced to temporarily live with the previously settled people. Even where houses had been built these were often of poor quality and had to be rebuilt.

Other Provisions-The resettlers were provided utensils such as jerry cans, pots, plates and cups, clothing mainly in the form of blankets, bed nets against mosquitoes, and farm tools including hoes, sickles, and axes. Food aid up to 20 kg of grain/person /month (wheat, maize or sorghum) and in some cases 0.5 kg of cooking oil was distributed in the form of ration for two years. The lack of continuity of this provision brings about unbalanced service provision.

Land and Farming Facilities Allocation- Resettlers had been told about being allocated two hectares of cleared and utilised farmland. In fact in some cases they had to clear new land, and households generally obtained a maximum of two hectare due to land scarcity. In other cases there were complaints about water-logging and that land distribution did not take account of family size or land quality. Some reported that they were provided one hectare from one site and another one hectare from other far site. This caused problem for the cultivation and management of the farmland. One of the causes for such land division is that the site was inhabited and the new comers were placed by identifying plots free from inhabitants.

One of the members of the focus group discussion put as follows:

When we arrived here, we found bare land which is unproductive. It was already exhausted nutritionally. Even the arable land is water logged and not comfortable for cultivation. I am forced to rent land to feed my family. We are in trouble. I urge the government to resettle us again in new area somewhere else. Of course we appealed to the regional government and got positive response. But the woreda administrators became reluctant to implement what the regional government told them.....

One of the major problems the resettlers raised was shortage of farm land particularly for the young. When young get in to marriage, they have no place to cultivate and help themselves and forced to be engaged in daily labourer. This shows that the resettlers didn't get better infrastructure than their original homeland, thus failure to adhere the national and international guidelines. Some try to solve this problem by renting farmland form the host population. They also complain of small plot of land (2 hectares) compared to the host population, which shows their ignorance of the land provision system. This is also the result of lack of proper orientation.

Oxen-Settlers were either provided an ox for one or two households. There were complaints particularly where only one ox was provided for two households since four households had then to form a team to plough, leading to delays and constraints on productivity. Livestock diseases notably trypanosomiasis present serious challenges to effective cultivation; some settlers fearing loosing cattle by thieves and robbers sold oxen after the harvest and bought them at higher cost the following ploughing season. Some of the oxen are easily susceptible to low land and dry area diseases since they are brought from high lands

Agricultural inputs

The settlers are refused to use agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and improved seeds. They could not afford the price of the inputs and the government did not support them until they establish themselves at the new home thus leading to failure to feed secure their food supply. Even those who can afford do not want to use it because they think the fertilizers destroy their cropping.

Concerning the use of agricultural inputs, one of the discussants put in his words as below:

... I am not willing to use fertilizer because it burns up my crops.... It is good only for cotton and green paper production only. I also do not use improved seeds because I cannot afford the price.

The local leaders and development agents have the responsibility to raise the awareness of the farmers on the use of fertilizers. The settlers have shallow knowledge of the merit and demerit of the fertilizers. On the other hand improved seed has to be supplied to the resettlers by making some arrangements though the farmers have no financial capacity to buy it.

Type of Agriculture- The major type of agriculture in the site is rain fed type. They do not use irrigated agriculture though there is Guang River crossing the District. The major products they produce include *teff*, sorghum, sesame, and cotton.

Off-farm and non-farm activities

Some of the resettled farmers are engaged in off-farm activities on other people's farms for wages or payment in kind. When I asked people about job opportunities in all the sites, working on other people's farms during harvest and weeding time was often mentioned. There is no non-farm activity mentioned job opportunity in the site. However, few people are engaged in activities like guard of Church and daily laborer in projects owned by local investors, thus questioning the ideas of sustainable life.

Environmental impact

Experience in Ethiopia and elsewhere in the world show that large-scale resettlement has not solved natural resource management problems in the highlands. Resettlement has often exacerbated natural resource management problems in lowlands resulting in conflicts with local peoples.

Obviously, resettlement takes place in under-utilised land areas because these areas are 'new' and uninhabited or under inhabited. Whenever people are inhabited in such areas there is clearing of forests for agriculture and other purposes leading to environmental degradation. In most sites, the resettlers reported there is serious environmental degradation.

Majority of the resettlers reported that the site in which they were resettled were not unutilized land. However, some got the chance of obtaining plots not possessed previously by farmers. In such cases the adverse impact on the environment is inevitable. Tree cutting and forest clearing for various purposes lead to decrease in biodiversity and soil degradation, and eventually influence natural resource management systems. The resettlement programme is hoped to take place on underutilised land. Nonetheless, from this narration one can clearly see that this is not the case in the Metema resettlement site if not in all the sites. The other issue one can get from the discussion is whether to relocate the resettlers once again to another site to where the resettlers claimed or not. If this is the case to what extent this condition continues? What will be the fate of the environment if the resettlement process continues? How does the motive of resettlement in an attempt to solve the problem of food security of the society in a sustainable manner be evaluated?

Despite differences in the scale, there were huge losses of forest and other natural resources with enormous negative impacts on the sustainability of environment. Contrary to what has been set out in the Resettlement Programme Implementation Manual (PIM), forest and wildlife resources were not protected, nor were the resettlers provided with education and advice.

The other critical issue raised on discussion with the resettlers about environmental protection is the reluctance of lower government officials (at district level) of implementing the environmental law set at national and regional levels. Up on the accusation of people of cutting tree for charcoal production, the accuser is asked to provide another three witnesses and follow the trial case travelling far distances. This made the people not to follow the illegal forest clearance as they are asked to follow the cases leaving their businesses aside.

At the initial period of the resettlement the District officials told the previously settled people not to warn the new comers in fear of disappointment and leaving back to their home of the new comers. But this encouraged the new resettlers to keep on cutting the forest illegally. Those accused of illegal deforestation claim that they have nothing to support themselves. Forest products are their means of income by which they can cover their living expenses. The District environmental protection offices on the other hand claimed they tried to discuss with the people, but the resettlers kept on clearing the forest rather than providing the resettlers with alternate energy and income sources.

Despite the difficulty to comment on the scale of erosion, land degradation and soil fertility loss experienced by the resettlement areas in the absence of systematically generated data, one can judge by observing the decrease in the productivity of the area. Given the scale of the forest destruction reported from the sites covered in these studies, the different cultural practices of the resettlers in dealing with land and forest resources, and the fragility of the ecosystem of the resettlement areas, I safely argue that the future threat is eminent.

Relation with the host community

From the outset of the implementation of the programme, the relationship between the resettlers and the host community was reported very positive. When they came to settle in the Kokit 2 and 3 resettlement sites, the host population warmly welcomed them and provided them the necessary raw utensils. Even in the shortage of the farm land, the resettlers rent land from the host and cultivate.

Home Visit- Home visit plays a key role in strengthening social networks between families and societies at large. Heads of the families and some able members (young) at the outset of the programme, move to the new sites. This is made because they observe the environment and decide whether to stay there or not according to the pillar of the resettlement. However most resettlers frequently visit their original home because they have families, relatives and other properties left there. Their land in their homeland stays their property until three years of their departure. Home visit continued even after this time.

CONCLUSION

Given the fact that millions of rural farmers are faced with chronic and acute food insecurity year after year, the Ethiopian government is right in its view that Ethiopian rural communities' poverty and food aid dependency should be overcome once and for all through a more sustainable and long-lasting solution. However, resettlement programme should not be given priority in a sense that it has many negative socio-cultural and environmental consequences, thus does not seem a viable option. State sponsored, organized resettlement programmes can be successful if they are executed in a very careful and gradual manner by taking into account a wide range of socio-economic, cultural, institutional and political issues. It should also be a process, starting as a pilot and replicated at a wider scale if proved successful.

The issue of Environmental protection and rehabilitation programmes does not seem to have been thoroughly considered in the original feasibility study of the resettlement programme. The resettlement has led to considerable deforestation for land clearing, construction, and firewood, resulting in soil erosion, reduction of biodiversity and potential climate change. Some sites were selected in or very near to some of the few remaining forest areas, resulting in virtual disappearance of certain indigenous tree species and wildlife. When people move from their original home land there are social and cultural crises. Competition of resource use is the major cause for the disagreement. The resettlers are still urging to relocate (even by their own cost) in other areas because of the claim of the poor soil fertility of the new areas and the regional government promised to transfer them again.

One of the major problems observed during the field visit was misleading information about the new site. Before the implementation of the programme the people were told that every necessary service (houses, fertile farmland, and other infrastructures) are prepared and after the arrival, they found it discouraging. The overall discussion generally revealed that the resettlement was initiated by economic desperation in home villages and the attractive package promised by the government in the receiving site. While majority of the resettlers are unable to secure their food security as intended, there are few settlers who succeeded and are living better life than their previous life. More importantly, the basic principles of sustainability and sustainable development in not fully achieved. Except very few farmers, a vast majority of them are still under food insecurity let alone surplus production.

There is no monitoring and evaluation mechanism as to whether the programme met the intended target or not. Had there been such evaluation, there would have been improvement in planning and implementing the programme elsewhere. Hence the result shows that the contemporary intra-resettlement programme in the study area does not fully abide the pillars and guidelines formulated at national level.

REFERENCES

- Livelihood Profile of Amhara Region*, Ethiopia, North West Cash Crop Amhara Livelihood Zone Report (2007)
Livelihood Zone (NWC). Amhara National Regional State. Pp 2-5
- Asrat Tadesse (2009) *The Dynamics of Resettlement with reference to the Ethiopian Experience*. KDSC
Series of Research and Perspectives on Development Practice. Kimmage Development Studies Centre Dublin , Ireland
- Assefa Tolera (2005, December 19) *Impact on Environment and Host Communities*. Research Project Workshop
Forum for Social Studies, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Bikram Jeet Batra and Shivani Chaudhry (2005) *International Human Rights Standards on
Post-disaster Resettlement and Rehabilitation Working Document*, PDHRE –
People’s Movement for Human Rights Learning in collaboration with the United
Nations Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing (13-50).
- Cernea, M. (1996) Understanding and Preventing Impoverishment from Displacement: Reflection on the state
of knowledge. In McDowell, C. (ed.) *Understanding impoverishment, the consequence of development
induced displacement*, Berghahn books, Oxford.
- CSA (2008) *Summary and Statistical Report of the 2007 Population and Housing Census*,
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Population Census Commission, Addis

Ababa

Gebre Yntiso (2005, December 19) *Stakeholder Participation in Resettlement Decision-making in Ethiopia*.

Research Project Workshop presented on Forum for Social Studies, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

UN-EUE (2003) *Intra-regional Voluntary Resettlement in Amhara: A possible way out of the chronic food trap?* Assessment Mission: 1 - 16 March 2003. Pp4-7. Addis Ababa

FSS (2006) *Understanding the Dynamics of Resettlement in Ethiopia, Summary Briefing Paper*. Policy Briefings No. 4(1-5), Addis Ababa

____(2005) *Understanding the Dynamics of Resettlement in Ethiopia*. Research Project Workshop, Forum for Social Studies, Addis Ababa

Kassa Belay (2004) Resettlement of Peasants in Ethiopia, *Journal of Rural Development* (No. 27), 223-253

Laura Hammond (2008) *Strategies of Invisibilization: How Ethiopia's Resettlement Programme Hides the Poorest of the Poor*, Oxford University Press (8-17)

MoFED (2006) *Ethiopia: Building on Progress A Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP)* Volume I, Addis Ababa

New Coalition for Food Security in Ethiopia (2003). *Voluntary Resettlement Programme (Access to Improved Land)*. Vol. II, Addis Ababa.

OneWorld (2012, June). Publish Educational Guides. *Sustainable Development guide*. Retrieved from <http://www.oneworldgroup.org>

Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher and Kasahun Berhanu (2007). A literature review on Decentralization in Ethiopia. In Taye Asefa & Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher (Eds) *Decentralization in Ethiopia* (pp 9-56) Addis Ababa: FSS

Wolde-Silassie Abute (2003) *Resettlement as a Response to Food Insecurity: The case of Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR)*, Assessment Mission: 12 May -02 June 2003. Pp 2-8.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Megerssa Tolessa Walo is a lecturer in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at Wollega University in Ethiopia.