

# LASER PULSE

## Long-term Assistance and Services for Research (LASER) Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine (PULSE)

### A DESK REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS, YOUTH ASPIRATIONS, AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF AGROPASTORAL AREAS OF EAST HARARGHE (CHINAKSEN AND MIDEGA TOLA WOREDAS), OROMIA REGIONAL STATE, ETHIOPIA

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## **PROJECT BACKGROUND**

This desk review report is produced by the Youth Empowerment through Livelihood Transformation in Agro-Pastoral Areas of East and West Hararghe Zones, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia project. The project has been supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the LASER PULSE mechanism. It has been implemented by Haramaya University in partnership with Oromia Pastoralist Area Development Coordination Commission in selected agro-pastoral areas in East and West Hararghe zones in Oromia region, Ethiopia. More information about the project is available [here](#).

### **About LASER PULSE**

LASER (Long-term Assistance and Services for Research) PULSE (Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine) is a \$70M program funded through USAID's Innovation, Technology, and Research Hub, that delivers research-driven solutions to field-sourced development challenges in USAID partner countries.

A consortium led by Purdue University, with core partners Catholic Relief Services, Indiana University, Makerere University, and the University of Notre Dame, implements the LASER PULSE program through a growing network of 3,000+ researchers and development practitioners in 74 countries.

LASER PULSE collaborates with USAID missions, bureaus, and independent offices, and other local stakeholders to identify research needs for critical development challenges, and funds and strengthens the capacity of researcher-practitioner teams to co-design solutions that translate into policy and practice.

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**Acronyms/Abbreviations**

CSA	Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia
EHZFED	East Hararghe Zone Finance and Economic Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FTCs	Farmer Training Centers
HCS	Hararghe Catholic Secretariat
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDPs	Internally Displaced Peoples
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IMC	International Medical Corps
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LASER	Long-term Assistance and SErvices for Research
LLRP	Low Land Resilience Project
MTANRO	Midega Tola Agriculture and Natural Resources Office
MTFEDO	Midega Tola Finance and Economic Development Office
PCDP	Pastoral Community Development Projects
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Product
PTC	Pastoralist Training Centers
PULSE	Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## Executive Summary

This study is based on a systematic review of opportunity structures and aspirations of rural youth in agro-pastoral woredas of East Hararghe Zone of Ethiopia (Chinaksen and Midega Tola Woredas). Opportunity structure refers to “available opportunities in terms of policy, economic, socio-cultural, and organizational support structures for rural youth” (Endris and Hassen, 2019). For this purpose, review articles, office reports, working papers, proceedings, and other relevant documents were selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria developed for this study. Thematic analysis was employed for this study. This report is intended for the government of East Hararghe, NGOs operating in East Hararghe and other development partners at the local level to help them understand the enabling environment, occupational opportunities, and aspirations of youth in the target Woredas.

A large proportion (Nearly one-third) of the population fall into the youth category in both Chinaksen Woreda and Midega Tola Woredas. Several opportunity structures were identified for rural youth across the two woredas which include the existence of livestock and family farms, presence of government structures, community-based organizations, and NGOs operating the areas, the suitability of the areas for livestock and crop production and existence of non-farm and off-farm employment opportunities. These enabling environments can help in creating employment opportunities for rural youth in the study areas.

Of the various development interventions implemented in the areas, only a few were found to be focused on rural youth (cooperatives, productive safety net programs, and Low-Land Resilience Project (LLRP) while a large majority of the interventions did not target the youth in their programs and projects. The results of the review also indicated that youth aspirations in pursuing agriculture as their livelihood strategy declined over time in Ethiopia in general and in the study areas in particular. However, rural youth are constrained by a range of factors such as limited investment and lack of focus on youth-related interventions, limited capacity of the rural economy to absorb the youth as well as the limited technical skill of the youth.

Based on this literature review, the authors recommend that the agriculture office and other local stakeholders need to take into consideration the complexity of various challenges the youth are facing in the study areas. The findings also suggest that development interventions need to clearly target the youth in their development intervention. Interventions focusing on rural youth in the target areas need to understand the existing resources such as human, social, physical, natural, and financial resources available at the local level for transforming the livelihoods of the rural youth. Interventions targeting the youth in both woredas need to give emphasis both on agricultural and non-agricultural opportunities that can create employment for rural youth livelihood transformation. The local government and NGOs operating in the study areas need to support knowledge and skill development of the youth on how they can tap the available opportunities. The concerned offices need to also provide a youth friendly finance system for enhancing self-employment. We also recommend the need to conduct research using primary data for designing development interventions that can benefit the youth at the local level.

**Key terms:** Agriculture, Development interventions, Livelihoods, Opportunity structures, East Hararghe

## 1. Introduction

Youth are an important productive force in the population of Ethiopia. Youth in the Ethiopian context falls between the age of 15- and 29 years accounting for more than 28% of the total population of the country (USAID, 2017). Youth unemployment is one of the major problems in Ethiopia. Youth unemployment in rural areas was estimated at 12% (CSA and IOM, 2021). The proportion was reported to be highest for female youth which was estimated at 16.5%. The report indicated that the rate of unemployment is higher for urban youth (23.1%) compared to the rural youth. The report further indicated that the rate of unemployment for urban female youth was much higher which was estimated at 28.8%. The high level of unemployment was attributed to low literacy (USAID, 2017).

Youth aspiration is one of the most important aspects of transforming rural youth's livelihoods. Aspiration is one of the factors affecting livelihood choices made by the youth. A study in Ethiopia found a strong connection between youth aspiration and education (Gella, 2013). Several studies have also shown that the youth's interest in agriculture is declining from time to time due to the lack of support from the government and other organizations in Ethiopia (Endris and Hassen, 2019). However, a report by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Africa indicated that the rural youth are engaged in agriculture and food systems (Mabiso and Benefica, 2019). This contradicts with other studies that have shown rural youth abandoning the agriculture sector (Bezu and Holden, 2014). This study suggested more investment in agriculture in Africa to improve the livelihoods of the rural youth. Both the male and female youth in rural areas have shown interest in actively participating in post-harvest activities such as marketing, processing, and packaging (Endris and Hassen, 2019). The literature on rural youth across Africa agrees on the need to invest in agriculture in Africa for positive livelihood outcomes for rural youth.

Youth rural-urban migration has increased in Ethiopia due to various factors. This is attributed to growing opportunities or expanding urbanization, and limited employment opportunities for rural youth in the rural area (Tsegaye, 2021). The author further indicated that poverty, land fragmentation, land scarcity, and climate are other driving factors for youth migration to urban areas. He emphasized that searching for a job is the primary reason for the outmigration of the youth from rural to urban areas. The opportunities available may vary across rural and urban areas due to variations in terms of existing resources, infrastructure, and development interventions. This study was initiated to systematically analyze the aspirations and opportunities for youth livelihood transformation in Chinaksen and Midega Tola woredas of East Hararghe.

A range of actors that have the potential to transform youth livelihoods in East Hararghe were identified by Oromia Low-land Resilience Project (LLRP). Key transformation agencies that can create opportunities for male and female youth along with the crop and livestock value chain may include producers, marketing cooperatives, financial service providers, rural saving and credit associations, and agricultural extension workers. Provision of state-of-the-art human / veterinary health care services through strengthening animal/human health extension systems and building the capacity of healthcare providers is considered very important. The use of financial service has been envisaged as one way of promoting technology transfer, while the use

of recommended farm inputs is regarded as key to rural development and youth transformation (Tomoya and Takashi, 2010). Therefore, the provision of sustainable financial service for pastoral and agro-pastoral areas is one of the most effective strategies for improving livelihood of the resource poor pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. Thus, financial service providers, and rural saving and credit associations are identified as key stakeholders. These suggested that transformation of youth livelihoods requires improvement in institutional, social, physical, and financial service.

The rest of this paper is organized into three main sections. The methodology used in this study is presented in the next section. The second section presents the main results of the study. The results section of the report is organized into various sub-sections. First, the background of the study is presented based on the literature. Second, the ecological environment of the district is presented. Third, the economic, social, and institutional conditions of the district are presented. Fourth, livelihood shocks that have the potential to influence the livelihood transformation of the youth are presented. Fifth, the enabling environment for youth livelihood transformation is identified and discussed in detail. Finally, youth occupational opportunities and aspirations are presented. Conclusions and recommendations are presented.

## **2. Methodology**

This project was conducted based on a review of literature from various sources such as journal articles, proceedings, reports from governmental and non-governmental offices, websites of institutions, and working papers. The literature was selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria developed for the purpose of this study. First, the geographic focus of the literature was used as a criterion. Hence, literature focusing on Chinaksen woreda, Midega Tola woreda, east Hararghe and Ethiopia or sub-Saharan African countries was selected for the purpose of this study. Second, literature focusing on topics related to the issue of interest (development interventions, youth opportunity structures and aspirations) were selected for the purpose of this study. Third, unpublished reports and documents from woreda and zonal offices and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) focusing on the study areas are selected. Fourth, the most recent literature (year of publication) was included in this study except only in some cases where some old literatures are used to give background information to the leader. Fifth, literature from peer-reviewed reputable journals and original studies were used for this study. Documents that meet the above-mentioned criteria were included or used in this study while literature that did not meet the criteria was excluded. Google Scholar was used as a search engine for gathering relevant literature from the web following the criteria indicated above. Publications that are low quality are excluded. Some documents such as performance reports, external evaluation reports, project reports, and NGO reports were gathered from relevant offices. These documents were gathered from woreda, zonal and NGO offices. Other publicly available data (CSA, USAIDS, IFPRI and FAO websites) related to the topic are gathered. After selecting the relevant literature, the issues were thematized into various topics or categories. Relevant information related to the topic was synthesized and analyzed based on parameters or key indicators. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was employed for this study. After systematically analyzing the data, synthesis results are presented, and discussions are made in detail.



### 3. Background to the study areas and Ecological Environment

#### 3.1. Background of the study areas

##### East Hararghe Zone

East Hararghe Zone is located in Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia. The zone has twenty districts of which five are agro-pastoral woredas. It is bordered by Somali Region to the north and east, Bale zone to the southwest while it is bordered by West Hararghe Zone to the west and Dire Dawa administration to the north (IDPs, 2019). The capital of the zone is Harar town. It has two rainy seasons (i.e., the main rainy season and the belg season). Two third of the agroecology of the zone falls under low land agroecology and one-fourth of the geographical coverage of the zone falls under midland agroecology while a small proportion of the geographical area falls under highland agroecology with an altitude ranging from 1200 to 3405 meters above sea level (MASL). (Zelege *et al.*, 2021). The authors further indicated that three fourth of the crop-producing areas are covered by sorghum and maize. Cash crops such as khat, coffee, groundnut, and vegetables are grown in the zone. Vegetables such as Irish potato, onion, cabbage, beetroot, carrot, sweet potato, etc. are grown in East Hararghe (Emana and Gebremedhin, 2007). The authors reported that a considerable number of respondents grow fruits in the zone. Irrigation is used to grow vegetables and fruits. More recently, farmers in the zone started to grow wheat in the lowland agroecology using both irrigation and rainfed. In terms of land use, nearly one-third of the land of the zone is covered by shrubs/range, while nearly one-fifth of the land was covered by agricultural land. Forest coverage was estimated at 13.65%; the remaining one-fifth of the land was covered by grassland, woodland, and bare soils (East Hararghe Agriculture and Natural Resources Office, 2020). The zone is divided into Wabishebele and Awash drainage basins where a large majority (90%) of its geographic area is under the Wabi Shebelle basin.

##### Chinaksen Woreda

Chinaksen Woreda is located in the East Hararghe Zone of Oromia Regional State. The woreda is one of the five agropastoral woredas in the zone. It is located 133 km to the east of Harar town and 659 km to the east of Addis Ababa. The woreda is in close proximity to Jigjiga town, the capital of the Somali Regional State. The total population of the Woreda is 112,530, out of which 49.1 % (55,219) are male while 50.9% (57,311) are female (Chinaksen Woreda Finance and Economic Development Office, 2013/14; East Hararghe Zone Pastoral Development Coordination Office, 2020). A large majority of this population (83.7%) reside in rural areas while the remaining 16.3% of the population reside in urban areas. The number of youths in the woreda is estimated at 25,300 (12,524 male and 13,276 female). In terms of households, a total of 16,009 households reside in the woreda, of which 85% are male-headed households while the remaining 15% are female-headed households (East Hararghe Zone Pastoral Development Coordination Office, 2020). The woreda population density was estimated at 101 persons/KM<sup>2</sup> (Woreda Economic Development Report, 2020/21). The woreda has 49 rural kebeles and three urban kebeles (Chinaksen Woreda Finance and Economic Development Office, 2020/21; Zemedkn, 2016). Of these, 45 kebeles are lowland while the remaining 4 kebeles fall in midland agroecology. Chinaksen District is bordered by Gursum District to the south, Jarso Woreda and Dire Dawa Administrative Council to the west, and Somali Regional State to the north and east (Zemedkn, 2016). It is located at a distance of 133 kilometers from Harar town and 655 kilometers to the east of Addis Ababa. It has a total area

coverage of 1119.6 km<sup>2</sup>. In terms of hectares, the total area of the woreda is estimated at 258,859 ha. Its altitude ranges from 1,600 to 2,670 m.a.s.l.

In terms of facilities, the woreda has 75 schools, 9 health posts, 238 health service providers, 65 hand-dug wells, and 41 shallow wells of which 95% were functional (Chinaken District Finance and Economic Development, 2013/14). This shows educational opportunities and other available facilities for rural youth in the study area.

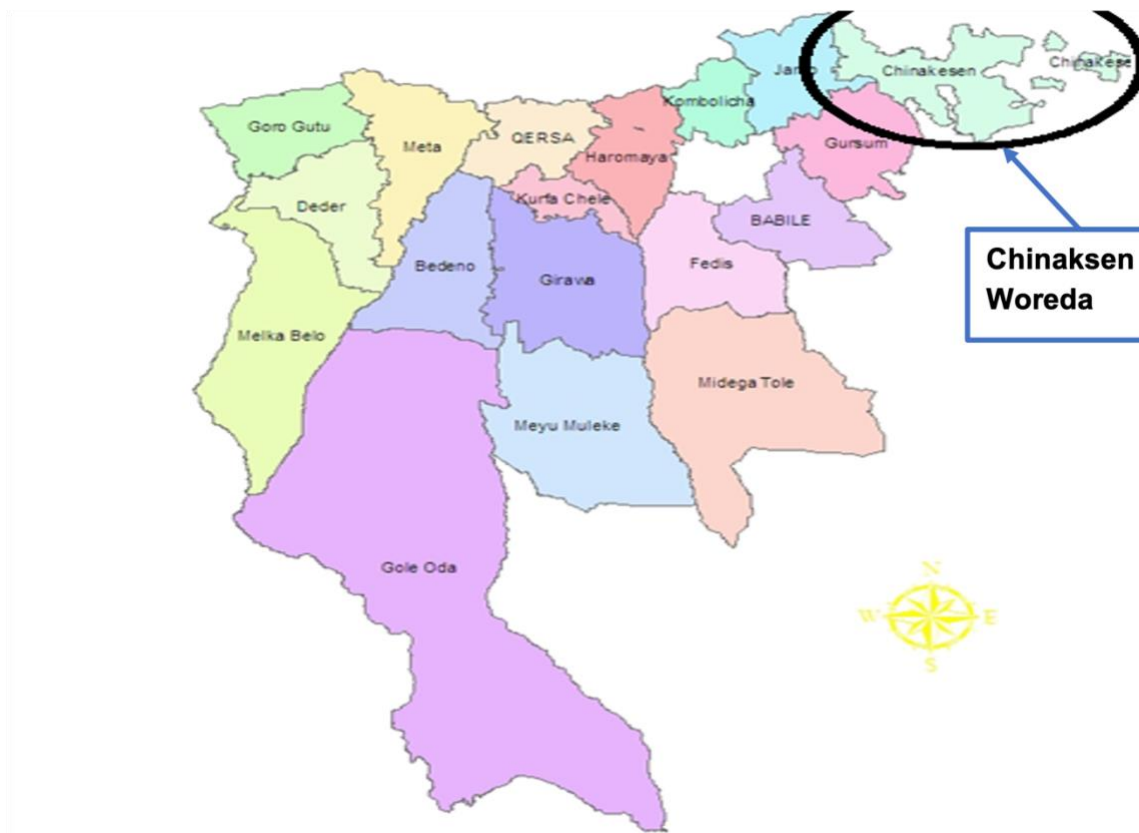


Figure 1: Map of Chinaksen Woreda

Source: EHZFED OFFICE, 2014/15

### **Midega Tola Woreda**

Midega (Midhega) Tola is one of the districts in East Hararghe Zone of Oromia regional state and it is located 56 km to the South of Harar town and 611 km distance from Addis Ababa. It is divided in to 18 rural kebeles and one urban kebele (the smallest administration unity in Ethiopia) administrations and is located in the range of 8 030'0'' to 90 '0'0''N latitude and 4200'0' to 42030'0'' E longitudes. The district borders with Fedis district in the North, Babile district in the northeast, Gurawa district in the West, Meyu Muluke in the southwest, and with Somali regional state in the East and southeast (Omer, 2019).

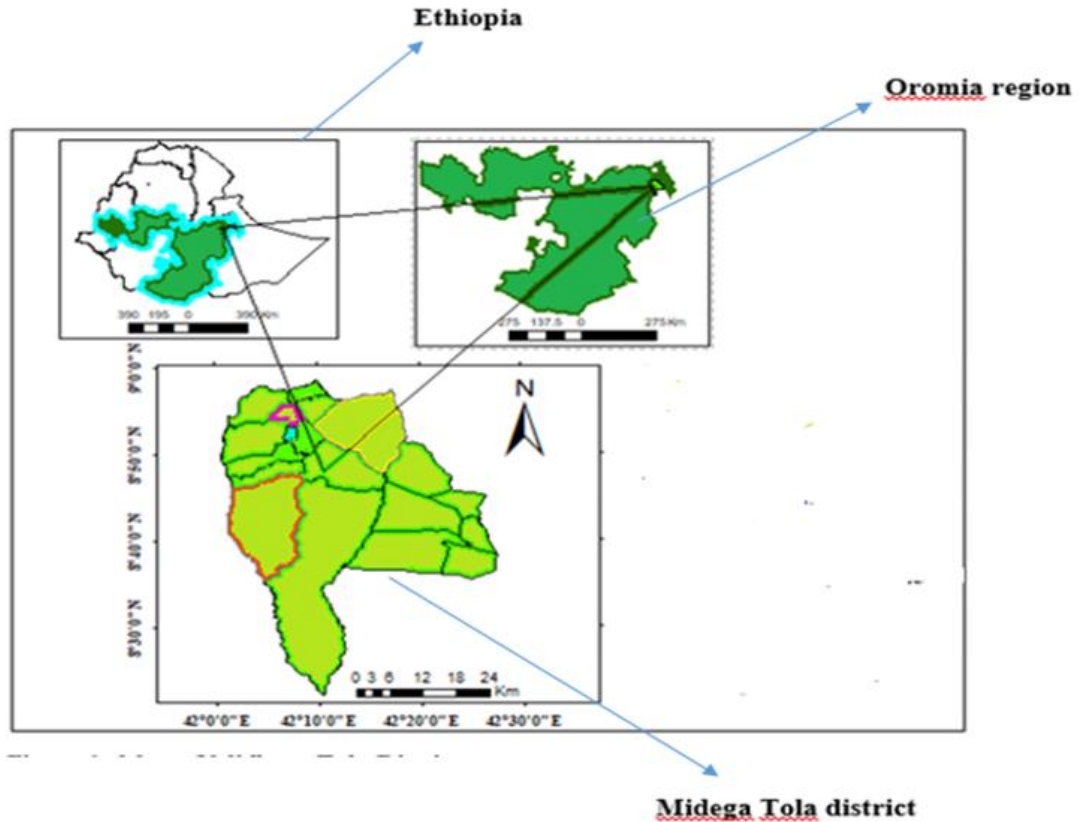


Figure 2: Map of Midega Tola Woreda.

Source: MTFEDO, 2017

The projected population of the Midega Tola district is 106,981 out of which 51.3% (54,834) were males and 48.7% (52,147) were females (CSA, 2021). The average family size is 5 per household (Omer, 2019). The average household size is higher than the national average. As to CSA (2021), the average household size in Ethiopia is 4.7 persons. The annual population growth rate is estimated at 2.85% (MTFEDO, 2017 as cited in Omer, 2019). The age distribution of the woreda is characterized by a higher proportion of young (0-14) and a low proportion of old age (above 65), reflecting a higher fertility rate. Regarding religious composition, 99.75% of the population are Muslims and 0.25% of the population are followers of other religions. The major ethnic group of the district is Oromo, which represents 98.5% of the population and 1.5% are others (MTFEDO, 2017).

### 3.2 Ecological environment

Chinaksen has predominantly low land agroecology characterized mainly by plains with few mountain hills and valleys as well as gorges. It obtains its drainage from Gololcha, Kobo and Gobe. In terms of climate, lowland covers 87%, highland covers 5% and midland covers 8%. The following graph presents the various agroecologies in the district. The woreda has bimodal rainfall (Chinaksen Woreda Irrigation and Pastoral Development Office, 2014). The main rainy season is

from Mid-March to May which accounts for 60% of the total rain while the remaining 40% is from September to October. The presence of ‘Dawwe Irressa’ river is one of the existing potential opportunities for the woreda for irrigation and water supply in the area. The following figure presents the agro-climate condition of Chinaksen woreda.

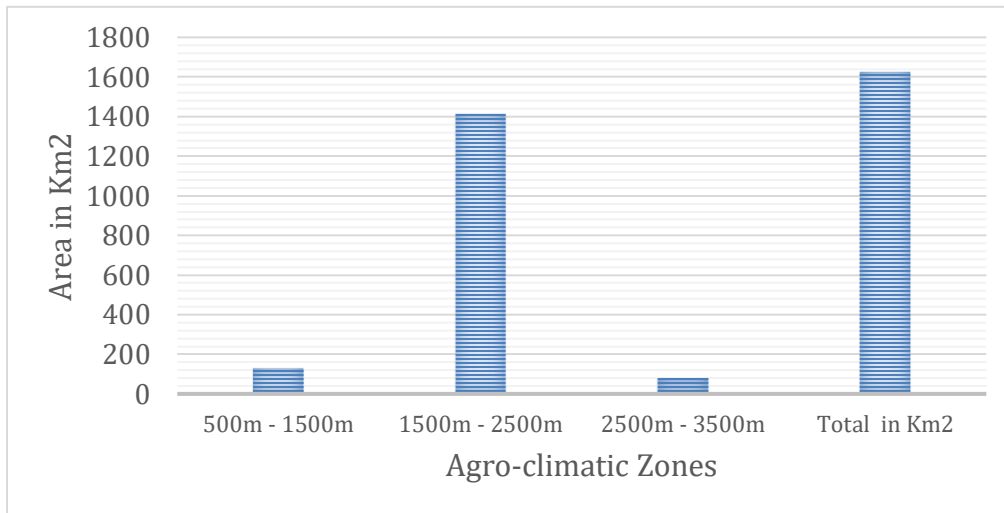


Figure 3: Area of the agroclimatic zones of Chinaksen District

Source: EHZFED Office, 2014/15

In terms of vegetation and wildlife, it has junipers, procure, podocarpus gracilior, acacia, shrubs, and bushland as well as eucalyptus trees which are the major forests prevailing in the area. Wild animals such as spotted hyenas are available in the district.

The ecological condition of Midega Tola in terms of topography, temperature and rainfall is presented here. Topographically, a large majority (85%) of the area falls into low land agro-ecology while the remaining 15% falls into midland agroecology which is slightly undulating. The total land area falls within altitudinal ranges from 870 -1856 m.a.s.l (Omer, 2019). Some parts of the low land in the district are slightly covered by natural bush and shrub. In terms of temperature, Midega Tola district ranges between 15.5 and 32°C, while annual rainfall varies between 500 and 800 mm. The area has four distinct seasons including the dry season (locally known as Bona) (December to February), the short rainy season (locally known as Badhessa) (March to May), the main rainy season (locally known as Ganna) (June to of September), and the autumn season (locally known as Birra) (September to November) (MTANRO, 2017). The majority of the land of the district is shrubland (89,589.7 ha) followed by grazing land (61,535 ha).

Both Chinaksen and Midega Tola Woredas obtain water from various sources. For example, Chinaksen district has 8 boreholes, 4 ponds, and one dam for supplying water to the community. Water is supplied to the community from deep and shallow wells in this district. Similarly, deep wells and ponds are sources of water for the community in Midega Tola Woreda. They also obtain water from rivers. These include 5 deep wells, 46 ponds, and two perennial rivers (Gobebe

and Erer). Figure 5 shows the sex disaggregated number of beneficiaries. It was also found that a total of 880 households (690 male-headed and 190 female-headed) are benefiting from the two rivers. These resources are important for transforming youth aspirations and transformation. The sources of water in Midega Tola Woreda are indicated below.

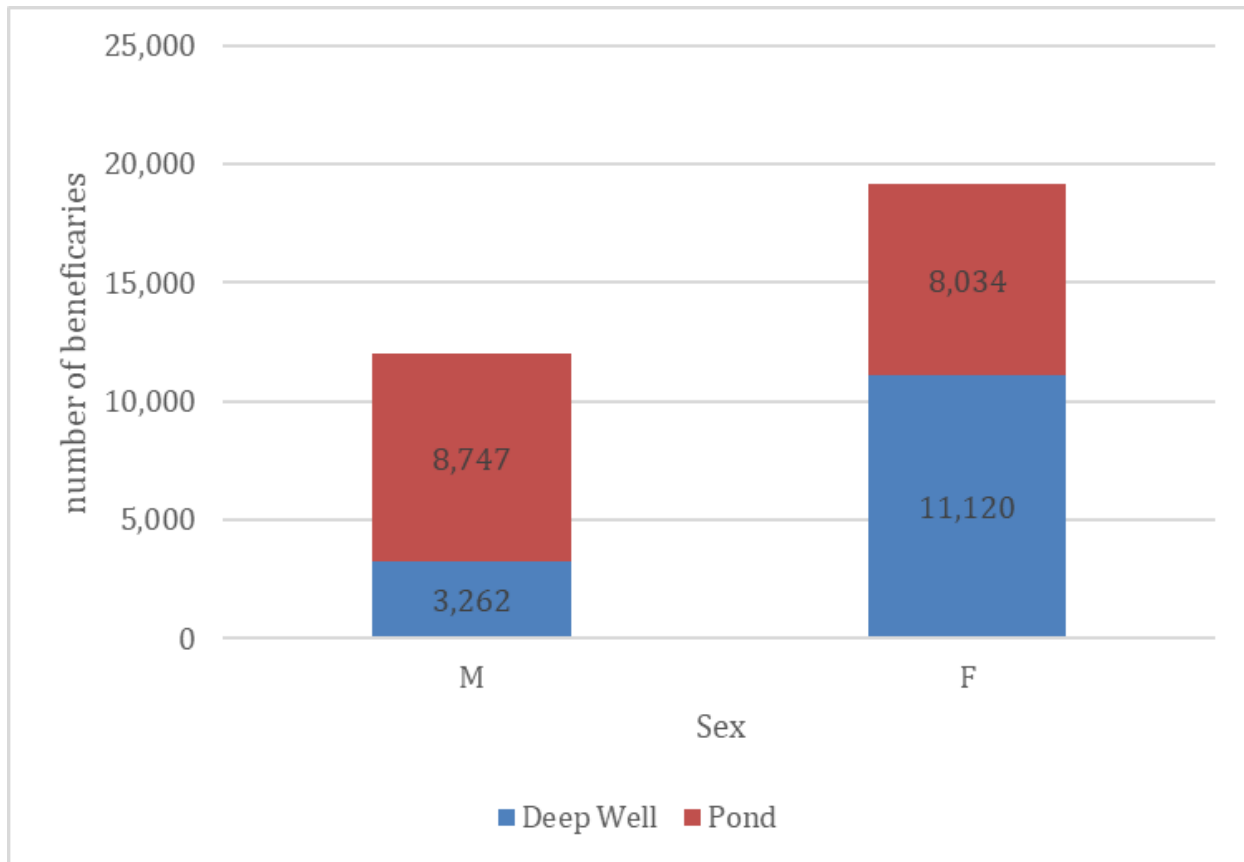


Figure 4: Sex disaggregated beneficiaries of water supply sources.

Source: East Hararghe Pastoral Development Office, 2021

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Economic, social, and institutional conditions

Chinaksen and Midega Tola Woreda are characterized by mixed crop-livestock production systems. Crops are mainly produced using rainfed agriculture while some parts of the districts use irrigation to produce crops (Tamiru, 2020). Cereals such as sorghum, maize, wheat, barley, oat, and teff are produced in Chinaksen woreda (Chinaken District Finance and Economic Development Office, 2013/14) while crops such as sorghum, finger millet, groundnut, sweet potato, maize, sorghum, chickpeas, haricot beans and chat are major crop grown Midega Tola Woreda (MTANRO, 2017). Farmers also produce pulses and oil seeds such as horse bean, field peas, lentils, groundnut and linseeds which are mainly produced as cash crops. Perennial cash crops such as khat and coffee are produced in the area. A wide range of vegetables and fruits are

produced in the area such as sweet potato, potato, onion, tomato, carrot beetroots, banana, papaya, guava, and mango. Sugarcane is also grown in the district. Farmers use inputs such as fertilizer, improved seed, and pesticides for producing the major crops such as cereals.

Table 1: Major crops grown in the area.

Types of crops	2013\14	
	Land (ha)	Prod (KUN)
Barley	4000	96000
Wheat	14610	356065
Sorghum	4304	103296
Maize	5391	166300
Oats	1100	24200
Horse bean	912	10012
Chickpea	400	4800
Haricot bean	150	8450
Ground nut	122	2301
Lentil	80	1040
Onions	212	15593
Garlic	140	10900
Green beans	74	7104
Beetroot	179	15500
Potato	179	16201
Sweet Potato	75	8103
Chat	350	3500

*Source:* Chinaken District Finance and Economic Development Office, 2013/14

Livestock production is an integral part of the farming system in both districts. Cattle, goats, sheep, donkeys, and camels are raised by the population. A considerable number of the population rely on livestock production for their livelihoods. Honey is also produced in Midega Tola Woreda. Veterinary services are provided through animal health clinics and health posts. For example, Chinaksen woreda has one veterinary clinic to provide services to livestock producers and 9 veterinary health posts. Producers in the district use crop residues and grass from grazing fields for feeding their livestock. Improved forage feeds such as elephant grass, cowpeas, sesbania, and leukopenia are used by some livestock producers. Overall, both female and male youth are actively engaged in livestock and crop production. The following graph presents the types of livestock owned by households in Midega Tola woreda.

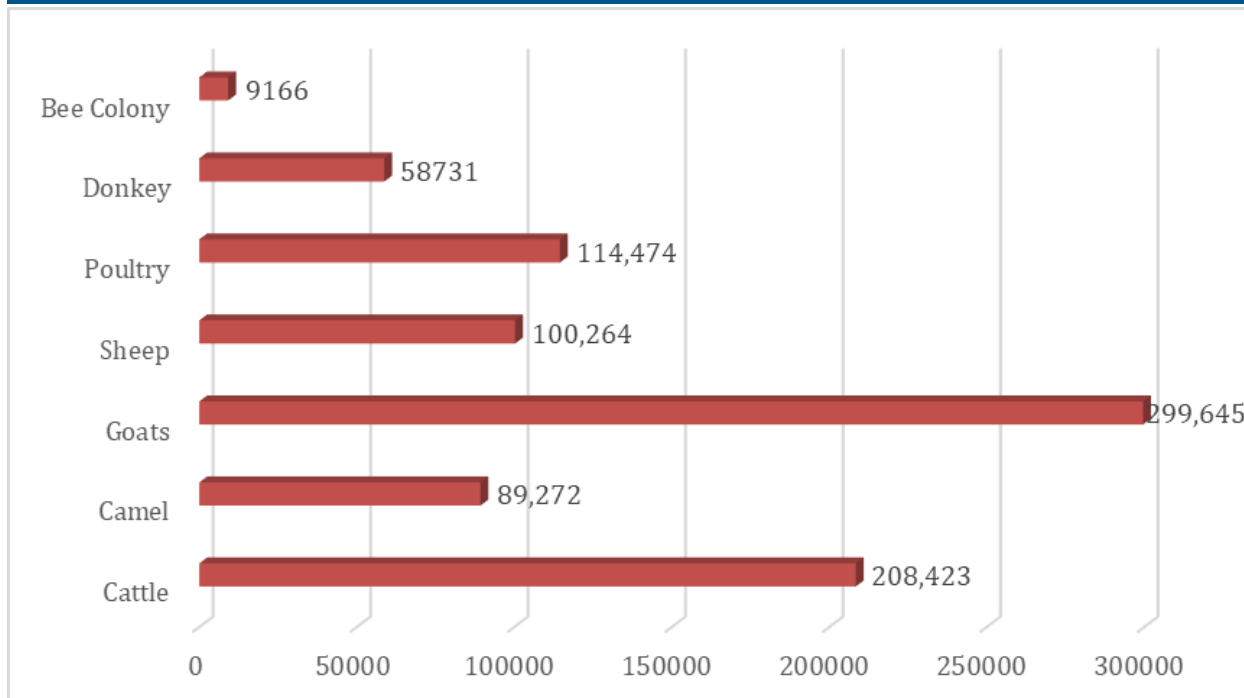


Figure 5: Livestock population in Midega Tola district

Source: East Hararghe Pastoral Development Office (2021)

**Non-farm activities**

The population across the two districts are engaged in various non- farm activities such as petty trade, carpentry, milling machine, pottery, weaving, blacksmith, livestock trade, retailing chat, preparing local food and drink, traditional drugs trade, daily labor by moving to town, cereal retailing and transport service have been the activities the residents are involved (Zegeye and Ryang, 2016). For example, it has been indicated that 2.6% of the households sell firewood, 3% involve in manual labor, and 1.3% work on petty trading (MTANRO, 2017). A number of factors are leading them to participate in non-farm activities. These are land inadequacy, landlessness, to minimize the risk associated with crop failure, higher return on labor/or investment to supplement low income earned from farm income, decreasing soil fertility and productivity of land, and to generate cash to meet family needs (Zegeye and Ryang, 2016).

**4.2 Livelihood Shocks**

East Hararghe is one of the most food insecure zones in Oromia with 54% of its population vulnerable to food insecurity (Sileshi *et al.*, 2019). The study further indicated that a considerable number of households were found to be vulnerable to food insecurity though they may not be food insecure during the survey period. Another recent study in Babille district (East Hararghe) reported that nearly half the households were estimated to be food insecure with wider variation in terms of location and gender (Aweke *et al.*, 2020). In both cases, the level of food insecurity was higher compared to the national average.



A study in Eastern Ethiopia reported natural shocks, health shocks, and market shocks among the recurrent shocks influencing food security (Canali and Slaviera, 2010). Climate change is posing a greater threat to communities in arid and semi-arid areas in Ethiopia (Fekadu, 2016). For example, a recent study in East Hararghe showed that 73% of the total households were found to be vulnerable to climate variability (Zelege *et al.*, 2021).

Livestock is one of the major livelihood strategies in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas in East Hararghe. However, livestock production was reported to have been constrained by poor infrastructure, poor veterinary services, shortage of grazing land, and livestock disease. The major livestock disease in the agro-pastoral areas includes blackleg anthrax pasturolisis, internal and external parasites (cattle), anthrax and pasturolisis (sheep and goats), African horse sickness (Horse, mule, and donkey), and new castle and fowl cholera (poultry). The prevalence of invasive weeds was also reported as one of the major constraints for agricultural production in agro-pastoral areas (Chinaksen and Midega Tola Woredas) of East Hararghe Zone (Tamru, 2020). Drought is one of the major constraints for livestock and crop production in Chinaksen and Midega Tola Woredas. Recently, drought has resulted in the loss of livestock in the target territories. The following figure shows animals lost due to drought in Chinaksen Woreda.



Figure 6 Partial view of animals lost due to drought.

*Source:* Chinaksen Irrigation and Pastoral Area Development Coordination Office (2014)

Conflict is one of the major shocks prevailing in Chinaksen and Midega Tola Woredas. This conflict mainly emanates from resource competition (Joint Mission Report, 2020). The conflict resulted in the loss of life, disabilities or sustained injuries, and damage to houses and basic infrastructures (school, health, and water facilities) as documented in this report. A study in the Chinaksen district also revealed the destruction of development interventions due to the inter-



communal conflict that has happened in the area (Hussien *et al.*, 2017). The study further indicated that farming operations were also hampered by the conflict. Some of the development interventions were either partially or fully damaged as conflict is a frequently and seasonally occurring shock which negatively impacts the livelihoods of rural youth in the area (Joint Initiative Report, 2020). These inter-communal conflicts were attributed to ‘territorial and administrative’ claims from both sides (Hussien *et al.*, 2017). Conflict is therefore one of the factors affecting livelihood transformation and youth aspirations in the target district.

The rural youth in the study area are also constrained by several interwoven factors such as unemployment, limited marketing opportunities, lack of access to financial services (limited access to credit), inaccessibility of some areas, and lack of access to land. The government’s limited capacity to address the needs of vulnerable people such as rural youth is one of the major constraints in the district (Joint Mission Report, 2020), especially in terms of meeting the needs of displaced people in the district. Food shortage and shelter were listed as one of the major shocks in the study area. Limited investment focus on the improvement of rural youth livelihoods was stated as a major bottleneck for youth in the areas (Servin, 2018). Land fragmentation was also mentioned as one of the major constraints for rural youth in Eastern Ethiopia (Endris and Hassen, 2019). Early marriage is one of the major problems the youth are facing in Chinaksen Woreda. It was reported that the district was one of the top hotspots for child marriage in Ethiopia with 23.5% of children from the age of 10-14 girls married (Marshal *et al.*, 2016). This report further indicated a high percentage of child marriage among all girls from the age of 10-17 years.

Human health-related problems are one of the major risks posed to rural youth in the Chinaksen and Moidega Tola Woredas. For example, a recent study reported that diseases such as measles are adversely affecting the population in the Chinaksen Woreda (Zemedkn, 2016). The same was reported among children and youth in the woreda. Unemployment is one of the major bottlenecks for rural youth in Ethiopia in general and in the study areas in particular. Nearly one-fourth of the youth population was estimated to be unemployed (Servin, 2018) which can contribute to youth migration to urban areas and beyond.

Overall, youth livelihood transformation can be influenced by a range of factors such as unemployment among youth, conflict, high population growth, corruption, lack of good governance, land fragmentation, climate change, limited capacity of the local economy to absorb the labor force and low productivity of agriculture (Mulugeta and Mekonnen, 2017). More importantly, the low land areas of Ethiopia are disproportionately constrained by economic, social, and environmental risks compared to other agro-ecologies of the country (Presler-Marshall *et al.*, 2022). This suggests the presence of multifaceted and complex factors constraining the rural youth livelihoods.

### 4.3 Enabling environment for youth livelihood transformation (local actors and networks)

#### 4.3.1 Agricultural Extension Services

Agricultural services are mainly provided by public agricultural offices in Ethiopia. The agriculture office through its structures at the Kebele level or Development Agents Stationed at Farmer Training Centers (FTCs). FTCs are available in all Kebeles in the district. The pastoralists in the district are also obtaining training in the 23 Pastoralist Training Centres (PTC) which are found in the district. In the district, there are 109 development agents (97 men and 21 women). There are also 9 livestock health posts with 24 livestock health service professionals (23 men and 1 woman). Similarly, 17 pastoral training centers/ farmer training centers, 1 livestock clinic and 10 animal posts were functional in Midega Tola woreda. These structures are opportunities for rural youth to engage in the agriculture sector. Some NGOs operate in the area and provide extension services for some agro-pastoralists. They obtained agricultural inputs and capacity-building training from such organizations. However, advisory services are constrained by climate variability (Gebreyes, 2018). The following table presents the agricultural facilities available in Midega Tola woreda.

Table 2 Agricultural service and beneficiaries in Midega Tola district

Description		Bene. (M/F)	PTC (FTC)	Livestock Clinic	Animal Health Post	Livestock Market Center
Total	Quantity		17	1	10	1
	Beneficiary (HH)	M	12515	1028	8179	13841
		F	1773	871	1111	12501

Source: East Hararghe Pastoral Development Office

#### 4.3.2 Farmer cooperatives and farmers association

Various farmer cooperatives have been established in Chinaksen and Midega Tola Woredas and the number has increased over time. For example, in Chinaksen Woreda, the number of primary cooperatives has increased from 3 in 2005 to 33 in 2014 operating in various kebeles of the district (Chinaksen Woreda Agriculture Office). Of these, 3 were multipurpose cooperatives while 30 were saving and credit cooperatives. For example, nine new cooperatives have been established with financial support from ICRC and Haramaya University. Many of the cooperatives indicated above include youth as members. Moreover, there are a total of four youth associations with 171 members in Chinaksen. Besides, there are primary cooperatives in Midega Tola woreda but only one youth association with ten members was reported in the woreda. The existence of cooperatives at the local level can be used as an opportunity for rural youth to engage in agriculture and other activities.

**4.3.3 Public services**

Infrastructure such as roads, telephones, and transportation facilities are fundamental for facilitating the mobility of goods and services in the area. People have access to rural roads and a mobile network is operating in the district. A total of 332-kilometer rural roads were reported in the district. The district has a road network to Jigjiga and Harar town (Zonal Capital). A total of 15 kebeles with a population of 3,900 people have access to electricity. It was reported that 35% of the population had access to electricity. Postal services are also available in the district. The following graph presents the types of schools available in the district.

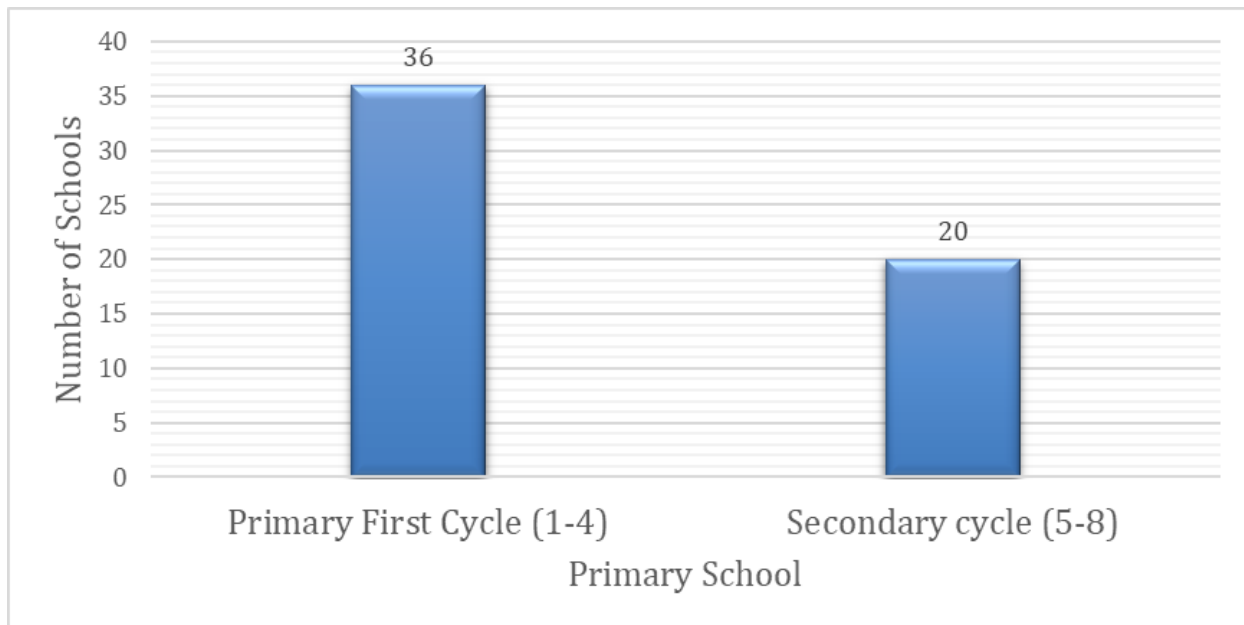


Figure 7 Schools in Chinaksen woreda

Source: Chinaksen Woreda Finance and Economic Development Office (2013/14)

The district has 56 primary schools, one junior high school (9-10), and one preparatory school (11-12). A total of 48,959 students were enrolled in 2020/21 (Woreda Planning Office, 2021). In terms of health facilities, the woreda has 8 health centers, 3 clinics, 47 health clinics, and 3 pharmacies. These facilities are utilized to provide health services in the area.

Midega Tola woreda also has a total of 47 schools. The number of second cycle primary schools (grade 5-8) are higher than all the other schools. A total of 22,995 students (13,466 boys and 9,529 girls) were attending class in the 2019/20 academic year in all the schools across Midega Tola district. The highest number of students were found in the first cycle (grades 1 to 4). In all the grade levels the number of girls was less than that of the boys. The proportion of female students also decreased with increase in the levels. For example, the proportion of female students in grades 1 to 4 was 43.4% whereas in the preparatory level the proportion declined to 33.2%. In the district, health facilities are among the services that are needed to take care of the health of the residents. There are 19 health posts and 3 health centers in Midega Tola district.

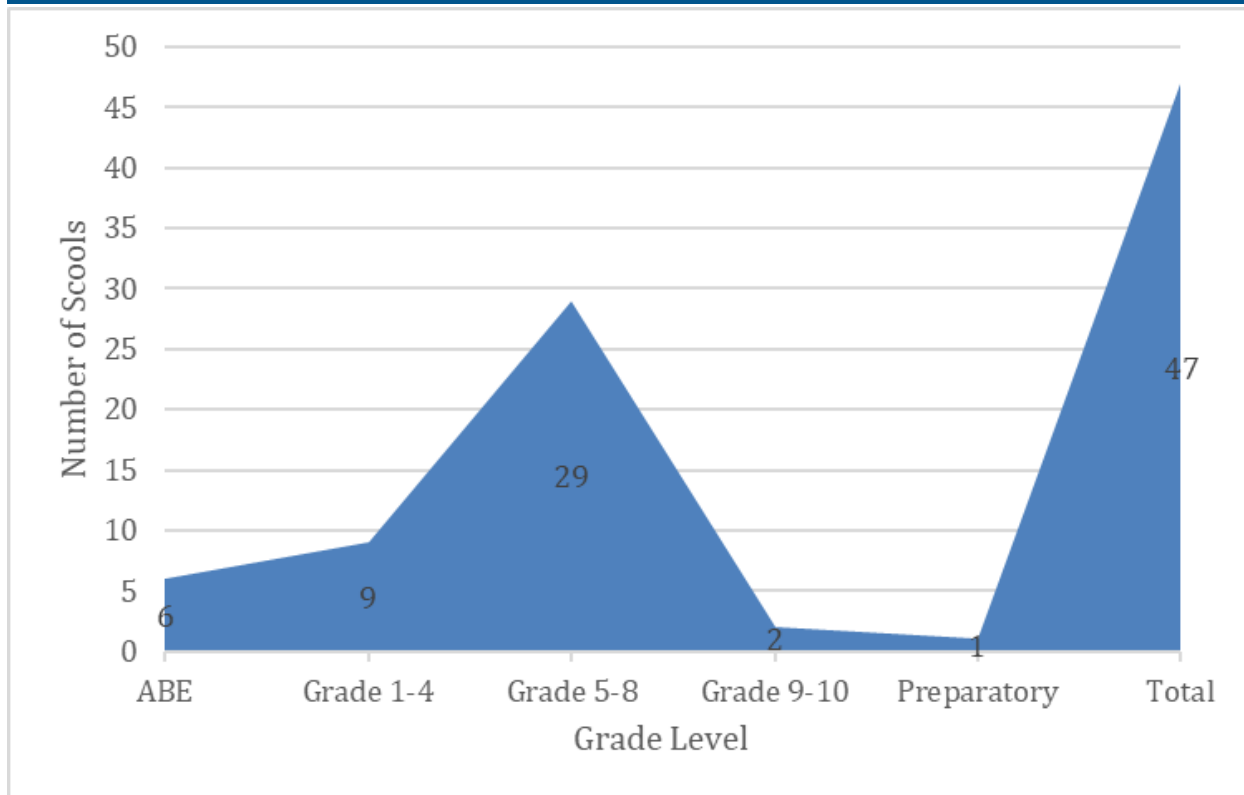


Figure 8 Schools in Midega Tola

Source: East Hararghe Pastoral Development Commission (2021)

Fedis Agricultural Research is also operational in Eastern Hararghe Zone with the purpose of conducting agricultural research in East Hararghe. It has released several agricultural technologies that are suitable for East Hararghe including Chinaksen Woreda. Various organizations are currently distributing technologies that best suit lowland areas.

**4.3.4 Local Market**

Agropastoral households in Chinaksen Woreda use a range of marketing options for selling their agricultural produce. Both crop and livestock production are major sources of livelihood for these households. Sale of crops and livestock are the major sources of income for rural agropastoral households in the district. Trade is also one of the most important livelihood activities in the district due to its proximity to the border (Somali Land). The existence of a district market, proximity to Jijiga town, and its proximity to Somali land can be considered as opportunities for marketing their agricultural produce and obtaining inputs for their products or businesses. The presence of rural roads connecting Jijiga town and Chinaksen District is one of the marketing opportunities for rural agropastoral households in the study area. Similarly, Midega Tola district has a market that operates every day from 9am-6pm but the largest market is two-times per week which is Saturday and Wednesday. Both food and non-food items are available in the market. The Kebeles are located 1-20km from the market center. On average it costs 30-50 birr to travel to the district town using public transport. The suppliers buy the local material from adjacent woredas of Harowach and industrial material from Harar and Dire Dawa city (CRS, 2019).

#### 4.3.5 Financial institutions

In Oromia region there are a number of functional financial service providers. Micro-finance institutions (MFIs) that have been operating in the regions are Oromia Credit and Saving Share Company (OCSSCO), Metemamen MFI, Gasha MFI, Meklit MFI, Vision Fund MFI and Busa Gonofa MFI. Among the MFI in Oromia region, Oromia Credit and Saving Share Company (OCSSCO) is operating both in Chinaksen and Midega Tola woredas (CRS, 2019b). Financial institutions such as Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and microfinance institutions are operational in the district. Oromia Rural Saving and Credit Cooperatives also provides financial services to its members in the district.

#### 4.4 Opportunities for Rural Youth

Family farms are the major source of employment for rural youth in Ethiopia (Endris and Hassen, 2019). Similarly, rural youth are mainly engaged in family farms in the context of East Hararghe in general and Chinaksen district in particular. The existence of family farms is one of the major opportunities for the rural youth in the area. The suitability of the land for agricultural mechanization is one of the opportunities for rural youth. The proximity of the woreda to Jijiga town and Somaliland is another opportunity for rural youth in the area that can create a market for their produce and ease of access to inputs for their business.

The proximity of the woreda to Jijiga University and Haramaya University are among the potential opportunities for rural youth in terms of capacity building and training for rural youth in Chinaksen. These institutions can be used as knowledge centers for understanding rural youth aspirations and opportunities. These institutions can provide technical backstopping and technologies for the rural youth. Haramaya University has an Agricultural and Rural Incubation Hub that can capacitate the rural youth in terms of their entrepreneurial capacity and business skills.

The Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) is one of the flagship programs targeting several households in the district. The PSNP has been operational in the district for over ten years and is still operational in the district. PSNP program has been implemented with the overall aim of increasing community resilience and creating employment opportunities for rural youth (Servin, 2018). The author further indicated that Mercy Corps has initiated a five year program in 2016 with the purpose of enhancing the resilience of vulnerable communities in Ethiopia (including in selected woredas in East Hararghe).

Several NGOs are operating in the district. The existence of these NGOs is another important opportunity for youth to obtain support and build their capacities. Various NGOs such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Hararghe Catholic Secretariat, World Lutheran Federation, and International Medical Corps (IMC) are supporting important sectors such as agriculture, health, education, etc. in the woreda (*OPaDCC, 2021*). For example, the ICRC provided medical supplies to health centers in the district with a focus on mothers (ICRC, 2021). It also provided food supplies and cash to families affected by violence in the district. Recently, the ICRC in collaboration with Haramaya University has supported nine producers' cooperatives in the district in producing wheat. The support was made in terms of agricultural inputs such as seeds and provision of technical backstopping. Similarly, the International

Medical Corps (IMC) was operational in Chinaksen Woreda in 2014 undertaking interventions in the areas of Nutrition and Wash with the objective of reducing morbidity and mortality which in turn reduces malnutrition and improves nutrition (*OPaDCC, 2021*). Another local NGO (Charity and Development Association) has been operational in the area over the last two decades with the aim of emergency relief distribution in the target area and rehabilitation of climate and drought-affected areas such as Chinaksen and Midega Tola. Lutheran World Federation was one of the NGOs operating in Chinaksen Woreda from 2004 to 2007. Its service focused on water supply (Jema *et al.*, 2010). Other NGOs such as Action Africa Help-International, CARE International, Government of Ethiopia - Oromia Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission, International Medical Corps, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, World Food Programme, and ZOA International were operational across various woredas in East Hararghe.

Table 3 NGOs Operating in Chinaksen and Midega Tola Woredas

	Name of NGO	Projects Implemented by the NGO				Donor	Sectors	
		Project Name	Level of Agreement	Direct beneficiaries				
				Male	Female			Total
1. 1.	Ethiopian Catholic Church - Social and Development Coordinating Office of Harar. (Local)	Community Recovery & resilience project (CRRP)	Regional				CRS/HCT	Water, Agriculture & Health
2. 2.	SOS Children Village (International)	Initiative to Support Democratic Governance and Peaceful Coexistence in Ethiopia.	Zone Level				European Commission (EC)	Security Adm Office & Finance and Economic Development.
		Joint Force for Africa	Regional	25,590	26,840	52,430	European Commission	WYCAO
3.	Action Against Hunger	Emergency Cash Response to Population affected by desert locust and others in East Hararghe Zone	Regional			5,405	CIAA	DRM
4.	Oromia Development Association (ODA)	ECW-MYRP (SEED - Safe Educational Environment Development) for IDP/returnee and host community children	Regional				GGE/UNICEF	WCYAO, EO, DRMO (Meyu, Chinaksan, Midhaga & Babile)
5.	Medecins Du Monde France (MdM-F)	Emergency Response to contribute to the reduction of morbidity and mortality of population affected by inter-community conflicts and humanitarian crises	Regional	117,367	111,827	229,194	DG ECPHAO*	Health Office
6.	Cooperazione Internazionale-COOPI	Emergency Response for access to quality health services for populations affected by crises	Regional	26,675	27,773	54,448		Health, Water & Finance

Source: East Hararghe Zone Planning and Economic Development Office (2021)

\*DG ECPHAO - Directorate General European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation



There are growing opportunities for rural youth in the district. These include available cultivable land, favorable conditions for growing crops and rearing animals, growing interest from GOs and GOs targeting the youth, and small enterprises that engage and employ rural youth. The growing market potential in the district and its location advantage are opportunities available for rural youth in the area. However, youths who chewed khat, drank alcohol, smoked shisha, and did illicit drugs were found to have higher gender-based violence compared to those who are involved in these activities and married (Beyene *et al.*, 2021). This suggests the need to educate and change the behavior of the rural youth in this regard.

#### 4.5 Youth Aspirations and Agriculture

Aspiration refers to the dreams/expectations or choices that youths would like to achieve in their future career (Leavy and Smith, 2010). Youth aspirations are affected by their environment, culture, exposure to social media, and political realities according to a study in Ethiopia (Endris and Hassen, 2019). This study further indicated that youth aspirations vary between male and female youth due to culture and related factors. Another study (Muasech *et al.*, 2021) also indicated that youth aspirations are influenced by local context (including current status and resources). A study conducted in Oromia found a strong association between education and youth aspiration (Tatek, 2020). A large gap was found between what youth aspire to and the actual labor market or reality in Africa (Lorenceanu *et al.*, 2021). It showed that job security was one of the most valued issues by the youth across ten African countries. It further indicated that agriculture is one of the least valued jobs by the youth in these countries. Rural youth in Africa are more likely to pursue non-agricultural livelihoods in urban areas (Schewel and Fransen, 2018). This was attributed to growing opportunities from the industry and service sectors despite the limited capacity of these sectors to employ the large youth population. The literature has shown a greater gap between what the youth aspire to and the actual youth realities. The studies also have also clearly shown that aspirations can vary across locations and age groups within the same locality (Muasech *et al.*, 2021). These studies suggested policy options for bridging the gap between what the youth aspires to and actual available opportunities. Creating awareness about aspirations for rural youth can help shape their aspirations.

In Ethiopia, in most cases, youth are mainly employed on their family farms (Endris and Hassen, 2019). The authors further revealed the limited rural economy in terms of employing the youth while a limited number of youths were engaged in small enterprises, small shops, and working as daily laborers in construction in the nearby towns and cities. The authors further indicated that almost all youth interviewed in the study preferred to live in cities and towns while they lack interest in agriculture and rural life. Another study in Ethiopia indicated that rural youth are reluctant to pursue agriculture as their livelihood activity (Schewel and Fransen, 2018). Their dreams are influenced by land scarcity, conflicts, drought, erratic rainfall, pests and diseases, and limited job opportunities.

Another study in Ethiopia (Oromia) showed that youth participation in farm activities declined over time both for male and female youth while the degree of participation may vary between the two (Gutu, 2016). It further indicated that youth involvement in agriculture in terms of trend and pattern varies considerably between male and female youth as well as location. A study in southern Ethiopia (SNNPR) also revealed that the youth was found to ‘abandon agriculture’ due



to land scarcity and increasing rural population (Bezu and Holden, 2014). The authors indicated that less than ten percent of the rural youth would like to continue working in agriculture while a large majority of the rural youth want to pursue a livelihood strategy other than agriculture. The study further indicated that youth out migration had increased which was also confirmed by another study which indicated youth engagement in off-farm activities increased over time (Gutu, 2016). The latter reported an increase in youth involvement in off-farm and non-farm activities. The increase in out-migration was attributed to a decline in land size and an increase in population growth. These coupled with limited employment opportunities for rural youth in the Ethiopian context further influence youth aspiration and livelihood transformation in rural areas.

## **4.6 Policy and legal frameworks on youth and women empowerment in Ethiopia**

### **4.6.1 Legal frameworks for women empowerment**

Women's empowerment is integrated into the country's development process, legal frameworks, and policies documents. Ethiopian government policies, documents and legal frameworks gave greater attention on women's empowerment and gender equality. Accordingly, the current constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) lays the basic legal ground for gender equality and women's empowerment. The Constitution explicitly recognizes the equal right of men and women in all matters including cultural, social, economic and political spheres, and women's equal rights to acquire, administer, control, use, transfer and sell property including equal treatment in the inheritance of property.

Article 25 of Ethiopian constitution (Right to Equality) put that all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this regard, the law shall guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection without any discrimination including sex. Article 34 (1) and (2) also indicated that men and women, without any distinction as to race, nation, nationality or religion, who have attained marriageable age as defined by law, have the right to marry and found a family. In addition, marriage shall be entered into only with the free, full agreement of the intending spouses as well as they have equal rights at the time of divorce.

In addition to the above articles, the whole Article 35 of the constitution provides rights for women. Accordingly, this article reads "women shall, in the enjoyment of rights and protections provided for by this Constitution, have equal right with men" together with affirmative measures due to the historical legacy of inequality and discrimination suffered by women in Ethiopia. The Constitution also clearly indicated that women have the right equality in employment, promotion, pay, the transfer of pension entitlements as well as to acquire, administer, control, use and transfer property. Moreover, they also have the right to full consultation in the formulation of national development policies, the designing and execution of projects, and particularly in the case of projects affecting the interests of women.

On top of the country's legal frameworks, the government of Ethiopia has adopted major international conventions, treaties, instruments and programs aimed at supporting women's economic empowerment. Article 9(4) of the Ethiopian constitution recognizes the following international conventions, as part of the law of the land. For instance: The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is part of the

International Human Rights Laws which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1978 and entered into force on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1981. The convention was established to prohibit all discrimination against women and to ensure their human rights and freedom on a basis of equality with men. Beijing Platform for Action imagines a world where each woman and girl can exercise her freedoms and choices, and realize all her rights, such as to live free from violence, to go to school, to participate in decisions and to earn equal pay for equal work. In addition, the government of Ethiopia strongly supports the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which have succeeded the MDGs. Specifically, the fifth goal aims to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Moreover, regionally, the government of Ethiopia has also adopted key conventions, treaties, protocol and plan aimed to ensure right of women in all matters including cultural, social, economic and political spheres, and equal rights to acquire, administer, control, use, transfer and sell property including equal treatment in the inheritance of property. Some of regional conventions treaties, instruments and programs are the Maputo Protocol; The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA); The Africa Women's Decade (AWD) (2010–2020) Plan; The Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods; The Declaration 2015 Year of women's empowerment and development towards Africa's Agenda 2063; The AU Agenda 2063; The Declaration on "African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women; African Union Gender Strategy 2018 and Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security.

In general, the constitution, and international and regional conventions, treaties, instruments and programs have provided special attention to women's empowerment and equality in order to enable them to compete and participate in political, social and economic life as well as in public and private institutions. However, women in Ethiopia, particularly in rural parts, are still a marginalized and disadvantaged group, and women's rights are not protected as it was spelt in constitution and other legal and policy provisions.

#### **4.6.2 National youth policy and plans**

The Ethiopia National Youth Policy (NYP) was formatted in 2006 as a framework to provide common aspirations and priorities for youth development across Ethiopia (Aman, 2021). The Policy seeks to ensure that all young women and men are given meaningful opportunities to reach their full potential, both as individuals and as active participants in society. The national youth policy recognizes the importance of young people for all development initiatives and to achieve national goals. The policy also values young women and men as a key resource and national asset and highlights the significance of youth development to nation building and the creation of a democratic, productive and equitable society (MoYCS, 2004). The vision and broader objective of the NYP is "to create an empowered young generation with democratic outlook and ideals, equipped with knowledge and professional skills, get organized and built on ethical integrity; and to bring about the active participation of youth in the building of a democratic system and good governance as well as in the economic, social and cultural activities in an organized manner and to enable them to fairly benefit from the results", respectively.

The NYP has targeted the society who are the age between 15-29 years. Accordingly, standing point of beneficiary NYP was founded on the following four basic principles:

1. Ensuring youth to be active participants and beneficiaries from democratization and economic development activities.
2. Bringing about unity through recognition and respect of diversity.
3. Organized freely and make coordinated move to protect rights and interests; and
4. Capacity building.

A wide range of policy priority areas of action were identified, including democracy and good governance, economic development, health, education, training, environmental protection and social services, internationalism as well as culture, sport and entertainment. Moreover, special attention shall be given to females, pastoralists, those living with HIV/AIDS, the physically and mentally disabled in order to achieve the above objectives.

Furthermore, the main national development plans, namely, the Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) (2005–10), the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) I (2010–15) and GTP 2 (2015–20), and the Ten Years Prospective Plan (2020/21-2029/30) were the strategies implemented in the country. Although in different ways, each addressed youth issues and particularly youth employment. For example, PASDEP focused on youth issues in line with NYP. Although it has no clear indication how youth employment would be addressed, GTP I outlined three strategies for youth empowerment and development: increasing youth centers at district level; youth mainstreaming in development programmes; and increasing the number of youth volunteers. The GTP II had the broad objective of enhancing meaningful youth participation in the socioeconomic and political arenas. The current Ten Years Prospective Development Plan has six main strategic pillars which aim to be a prosperous country that will provide a quality of life for all its citizens. Out of the six strategic pillars, “Equitable participation of women and children” focus on women, youth and children; women and youth empowerment through the participation of women and youth at all levels of education, asset ownership, fair participation of women and youth in leadership and decision-making positions, creating awareness among citizens about the role of women and youth in the country’s overall development are the main agenda. However, the Central Statistical Agency (CSA, 2018) reported that the rate of unemployment for youth” stood high at 25.3 % and that this rate was higher than that of the total, adult and older age categories. Furthermore, the report indicated that female youths are characterized by a higher percentage of unemployment rate (30.9%) in both urban and rural areas compared to their male counterparts (18.6%).

#### **4.7 Impacts of existing development interventions on rural youth livelihoods and empowerment**

Various studies have examined the impact of different development interventions on technical efficiency, crop productivity, food security, and household income. For example, regarding rural microfinance, a study on the impact of credit in the Oromia region, Ethiopia shows that access to credit increased productivity by increasing the use of improved seeds and fertilizer (Gebeyehu et al. 2019). Koricho and Ahmed (2021) found that access to agricultural credit in Ethiopia has improved technical efficiency and helps smallholder farmers to achieve the maximum possible output level from a given set of inputs used. A review of existing literature (Tadele *et al.*, 2018; Bezabih, 2017; Berhanu et al., 2021; Tarozzi et al., 2015) indicated that access to microfinance

(savings, loans, insurance, and entrepreneurship training) have been found to enhance the poor's living conditions, household income, increase consumption (food security), accumulate assets, and improve the education of impoverished children. This situation demonstrates that microfinance institutions play an essential role in reducing household food insecurity. Similarly, according to Geremew (2019); Abera, and Asfaw (2019); Chomen, 2021, reveals that access to microfinance financial services can help poor and low-income customers raise and stabilize their incomes, acquire assets, invest in their future, and allow clients to boost their household expenditure.

Regarding small-scale irrigation schemes, Tesfaye *et al.*, (2008) and Jambo *et al.*, (2021), in their study of the impact of small-scale irrigation schemes in Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia, found that access to small-scale irrigation enabled the households to grow crops more than once a year; to increase crop production, consumption and revenue generation which all together improve their food security status. Elsewhere in Ethiopia (Adela *et al.*, 2019), also found that access to small-scale irrigation resulted in better living conditions (farm income, per-capita consumption expenditure and poverty status) for both current users and non-users when compared to their counterfactual situations. The studies by Sisay and Fekadu (2013); James and Maryam (2014) Mengesha (2017) in East Hararghe, Ethiopia also found that farmers who access irrigation significantly increased their farm income, food consumption and dietary diversity compared to those other. In another study, Getaneh, 2011 and Hussain, 2004; also confirmed that access to irrigation in Ethiopia increased new employment opportunities, both on-farm and off-farm, and thus benefiting farm communities.

Other development interventions, like the Productive Safety Net Programs (PSNP) have been introduced and implemented since 2005 in selected chronically food insecure districts. The main goal of these programs is to improve the food security status of chronically and transitory food insecure people complimentary community investment, including public works projects like, natural resource rehabilitation and road construction. Previous studies have analyzed the impact of PSNP on livestock and tree holdings, household vulnerability and resilience, asset accumulation, sustainable land management, food security, welfare and labor supply using a variety of econometric tools. Adimassu and Kessler, (2014), confirmed that PSNP significantly invested more in sustainable land management such as compost as compared to a control group of households. Using a marginal structural modeling approach and matching estimation approach, Bahru *et al.*, (2020) and Hailu and Amare (2022), respectively, assessed the impact of Ethiopia's productive safety net program on household food security and child nutrition. They found that PSNP improved household positive impact on child meal frequency (Bahru *et al.*, 2020) and household calorie intake (Hailu and Amare, 2022). Zewdu, (2015) using matching with DID estimator confirmed that participation in the program had a significant effect on the change in livestock accumulation in TLU. Moreover, , Mohamed and Haji, (2017) and Abay *et al.*, (2021) indicated that PSNP significantly impacted kilocalorie consumption, resilience to negative welfare shocks, and household asset accumulation of the program participants in Ethiopia. In contrast, Bahru *et al.*, (2020) and Andersson *et al.*, (2009), in their study of the impact PSNP have no significant effect on livestock assets, household income, poverty, asset accumulation. However, a study on the impact of the safety net program on household food security indicated that the program increased food availability of the target beneficiaries while its role in reliably creating community assets was found to be limited (Bokora, 2016). The fourth

phase of the PSNP program apart from cash and food transfer, included maternal and child health and nutrition (DFSA, 2018). Cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth and economic livelihoods are included in the current phase of PSNP. Unlike the previous PSNP programs, the current phase of PSNP clearly targets the youth which shows a shift in targeting. The PSNP can be used as a venue for creating employment opportunities and capacity building for rural youth livelihood transformation.

The Low-Land Resilience Project (LLRP) has been implemented in both Woredas. It organizes youth groups and provides capacity-building training to the youth groups. It also provides credit to youth groups for supporting their livelihoods. The project has been implemented across agropastoral woredas in Oromia Regional State. It promotes enterprises such as poultry production, livestock production, youth and women empowerment as well as capacity building for rural youth. Youth groups are engaged in businesses such as cattle and goat fattening and mining activities with financial support from the government and NGOs. But its sustainability has been challenged due to a lack of commitment from the side of the youth and funding organizations. Another project titled, Development Food Security Activity (DFSA) which was implemented by the Hararghe Catholic Secretariat (HCS) has been implemented in Midega Tola with a clear focus on the youth and women with the financial support from USAID (Gedamu, 2020). Micro and Small Enterprise Offices is one of the offices funded by the government to create small businesses by the youth across the two districts. Overall, very few interventions were reported to have clearly targeted the rural youth in their development interventions.

Pastoral Community Development Projects (PCDP) represents an important component of pastoral area transformation in the country. In the study area, a total of 13 such projects were operational in the two districts. However, data on the number of beneficiaries and impact were not available in the context of the two woredas.

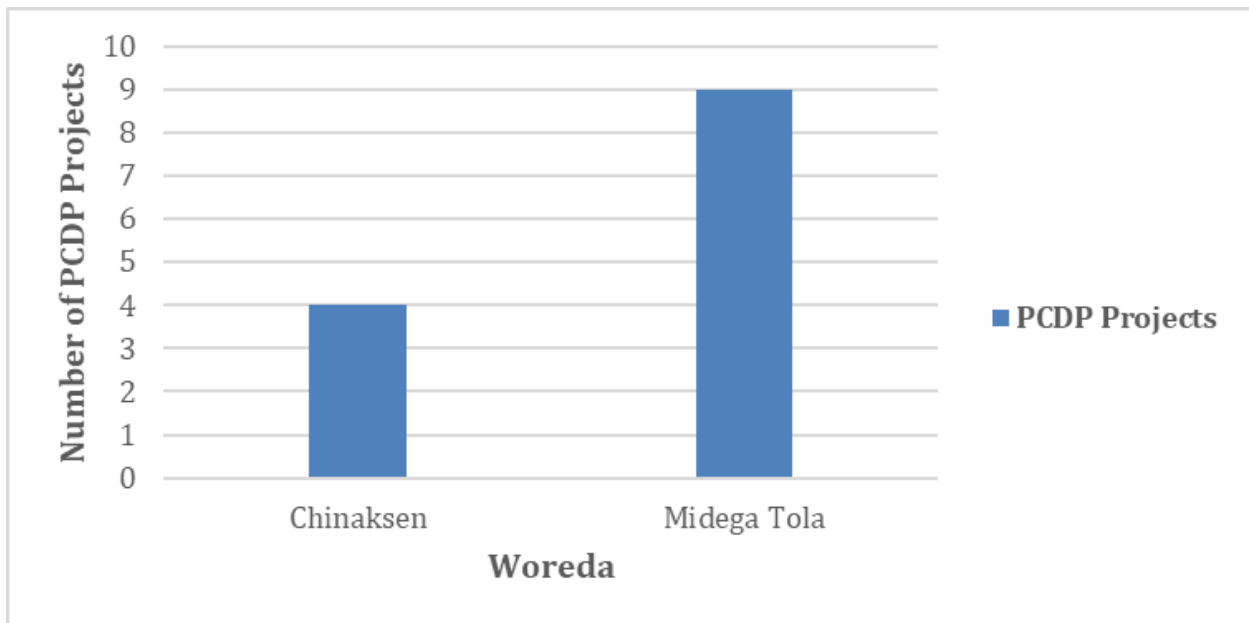


Figure 9 Number of PCDP Projects Implemented in the two woredas.

Source: Wordofa et al. (2020)



## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This systematic review was conducted in Chinaksen and Midega Woredas of East Hararghe Zone of Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia. The study reviewed development interventions, opportunities, and aspirations focusing on rural youth. Relevant published and unpublished documents were reviewed using a systematic review. Peer-reviewed articles, office reports, working papers, proceedings, and other relevant documents were selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria developed for this study. Relevant documents from CSA, IFPRI, USAID, and government offices were used in this study. The issues were thematized into pre-defined indicators and synthesized using thematic analysis.

Several findings emerged in this study. One of the key findings of the study is that only a few development interventions (PSNP, LLRP, RFSA, and Cooperatives) targeted rural youth clearly in their project objectives and interventions. However, the other development interventions both by the government and other development partners lack focus in terms of clearly targeting the youth. Another important finding in this study was that youth aspirations in pursuing agriculture as their livelihood strategy have declined over time. Rural youth would like to pursue their livelihoods in activities other than agriculture. In terms of youth aspiration, rural youth would like to have a secured job and be employed in the public sector in most cases in the context of Ethiopia. But family farms still remain the major source of livelihood for the rural youth in the area and beyond.

The study areas have several opportunities for rural youth to transform their livelihoods such as the existence of youth-focused cooperatives, the proximity of the area to market centers and border markets, the presence of educational institutions such as colleges, universities, schools, and presence of NGOs operating in the area. These enabling environments can create capacity and support self-employment for rural youth in the study area. However, rural youth are constrained by a range of factors such as limited investment and lack of focus on youth-related interventions, limited capacity of the rural economy to absorb the youth as well as the limited technical skill of the youth. Self-employment is limited for rural youth. This further contains the youth's aspirations and pushes them to migrate to cities and other areas where they can secure employment and generate income. It can be concluded that the development interventions lack focus in terms of targeting the youth. This suggests that development interventions need to clearly target the youth for realizing meaningful development in the area. Interventions focusing on rural youth in the target area need to understand the existing resources such as human, social, physical, natural, and financial resources available at the local level for transforming the livelihoods of the rural youth instead of focusing on what they do not have. Interventions need to give emphasis both on agricultural and non-agricultural opportunities that can create employment for rural youth.

Based on this study, the authors recommend that the agriculture office and other local stakeholders need to consider youth realities and target the youth in their interventions, and support knowledge and skill development of the youth on how they can tap the available opportunities. The concerned offices need to provide a youth friendly finance system for enhancing self-employment in the study areas. We also recommend the need to conduct research using primary data for designing development interventions that can benefit the youth at the local level.

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