

A gender sensitive study of perceptions and practices in and around
Bale Mountains National Park, Ethiopia

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2000

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Keywords: gender, gender roles, women, inequality, marginalisation, governance, forests, national parks, protected areas, local communities, agriculture, population, livelihoods, recommendations, Ethiopia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was commissioned by WWF International and funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS).¹ Sincere thanks go to Tom McShane for supporting me in this project.

I am also extremely grateful to the communities in and around Bale Mountains National Park who made this study possible and so enjoyable, by sharing their time, perspectives and on a number of occasions their barley porridge, hot potatoes, cups of milk and coffee. Special thanks are due to my guides/interpreters Hussein Adem and Zegeye Kibret, particularly for their patience and enthusiasm.

I would also like to thank the large number of people in Addis Ababa who facilitated my visit, especially Dr Ermias Bekele, Tsehay Abera and Abebe Haile of WWF Ethiopia together with Ato Tesfaye Hundessa and Almaz Tadesse of EWCO. Finally, I should like to thank Emiliana for her generous hospitality and good company.

¹Funded through Project Number 9Z0709.01 - Interregional Support to Conservation of Tropical Forests and Local Peoples Forest Management. Research on Gender in Ethiopia.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the findings of one in a series of studies which aim to assess the linkages between the issues of 'gender' and a DGIS-WWF supported 'Integrated Conservation and Development Project' (ICDP) set in and around the Bale Mountains National Park (BMNP), Ethiopia.

The project is still in its early stages, and therefore it was considered to be of most value if this particular study aimed to obtain a better understanding of the *local* socio-economic, political, cultural and environmental context in which the project will be set. The study placed a particular emphasis on gender issues, focusing on gender roles and differences in mobility, social organisation, current livelihood practices and perceptions/views of the Park and 'conservation'. Through understanding these differences and gender 'domains' it was anticipated that areas of intervention would be highlighted, so offering some direction and ways forward for the project, to take account of its objective of addressing gender issues and including marginal groups, such as women.

The study took place in four villages - Gojera, Karari, Gofingria and Soba - and one town - Dinsho - situated on the northern unfenced boundaries of BMNP. The research involved semi-structured interviews with village/town inhabitants and/or key informants; a survey of women traders in the market place; and the use of Rapid Rural Appraisal techniques such as mobility/resource mapping and transect walks.

The town and villages are currently undergoing a process of change and 'modernisation', with Dinsho slowly growing in prosperity and size. This is reflected in the recent input to the provision of services in the town, such as a new market and the community-supported project to supply mains electricity. Both traditional and modern systems of governance run concurrently, and religion and culture still play an important role in influencing people's lives. The majority of the local community is Muslim and Oromo.

The local communities live in a relatively harsh and often unpredictable environment. Local services are few and those that exist are poorly resourced. Agriculture is mainly subsistence barley farming, supplemented by vegetable

growing, semi-nomadic pastoralism and the diversification of livelihoods. The grazing of cattle and collection of fuel wood from inside the Park's boundaries is illegal, yet it occurs on a regular basis. The increasing population of both people and cattle in recent years has added to the pressure on the Park and its natural resources. This is particularly the case for the village of Gofingria.

Women and girls are marginalised groups in the society. Large gender inequities exist in schooling, health care and institutional support. Women are mainly responsible for the household and men for agriculture. However women often work on the land as well, but despite this, gender stereotypical roles are encouraged by the local institutions. In addition, women's mobility is severely restrained and there is little formal support for their organisation or ways to challenge the inequities they experience. Informally, the self-help groups or *iddir* that have been established, appear to offer an opportunity for providing 'space' to promote women's interests.

The BMNP was established in 1970, and since this time it has had a profound effect on the lives of those living in both Dinsho and the surrounding villages. During the time of the Derg (1974-91) many households were expelled from the Park, and today, attempts are being made to force similar evictions. This has encouraged a very negative view of the Park within the local communities and has added to their insecurity.

Indeed, the majority of the local communities sees no benefits from the Park, yet incur costs from the damage of crops by wild animals and restrictions on the use of natural resources in the Park. A small number of the local population, that live in the villages close to the Park, do obtain benefits from it through employment as scouts or within the Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Project, and through the hiring of horses and as guides for tourists. In addition some awareness of the importance of the Park in protecting the local environment and biodiversity was perceived.

In conclusion, it is suggested that there are a number of areas that could be targeted by the WWF project for future intervention. These include the promotion of the growing of indigenous trees; support for the provision of local services in the villages; support through a micro-credit system; tourism; and the promotion of better relations between the Park and the local communities.

More specifically, in relation to women and the establishment of projects which target them, there are a number of existing institutions that already provide a good basis for moves forward. Firstly, the presence of supportive legislation, secondly the existence of self-help groups in some areas, and thirdly the beginnings of community support for increased gender equity. In addition suggestions for projects are made, focusing on a diversification of women's livelihoods. These range from handicrafts, honey and butter making to sustainable enterprises based on the planting of fruit trees and the

collection of wild herbs and flowers. However, it is stressed that if such projects are to be instigated, WWF must be cautious not to add excessively to women's daily work load and to promote unwanted gender-stereotypical roles.

Finally, it is suggested that the most appropriate of the villages studied, for targeting by WWF as a pilot village for the project, would be Karari. Reasons for this include its geographical situation, the already existing support in the village and the need for resolving present conflicts with the Park.

1. Introduction

This study is the first in a series of studies which aim to assess the linkages between gender issues and a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) 'integrated conservation and development project' (ICDP) set in the Bale Mountains National Park (BMNP), Ethiopia.² The project is funded by the Netherlands government (DGIS), and is one of seven international projects which form the Tropical Forest Portfolio, coordinated by WWF International, Geneva. The project is managed by WWF Ethiopia, based in Addis Ababa, with a field office in Goba.

²The objectives of this research project are to assess a) how gender differences influence perceptions and use of biodiversity and its conservation, in relation to particular livelihood strategies in local communities; b) to what degree does gender influence the participation of members of a local community in the planning, implementation and monitoring/evaluation of ICDPs, and why; c) what effect might the exclusion of marginalised groups, such as women, have on the successful implementation of ICDPs; and d) how might these exclusions be resolved, so that women, the communities and biodiversity conservation benefit.

The project is still in its early stages. Since its inception in 1998, its immediate objectives have been to: *firstly*, strengthen the institutional capacity of the institutions involved in the management of Ethiopia's important protected areas, with an emphasis on forests. This is to be achieved through support to the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organisation (EWCO) and the Oromiya State Regional Bureau of Agriculture (the department responsible for the management of the protected areas in the region). And, *secondly*, to conserve and manage sustainable forest and wildlife resources in the BMNP and the adjacent Mena-Angetu National Forest Protection Area. This will be achieved through the adoption of improved and sustainable community-based natural resource management practices, with a focus on the four *woredas* (or districts) which overlap the Park and/or 2-3 pilot villages.

Due to difficulties encountered during the project start-up, it was decided that initially the emphasis would be placed on the first objective - so laying a solid foundation for the rest of the project to be built on.³ As a result little has been achieved so far in relation to the second objective, that is, the part of the project involving the local communities and their natural resource use.⁴ It is

this part of the project that this study is particularly interested in, because it is here that gender issues and problems are most likely to occur.

³WWF Ethiopia (2000), WWF Technical Progress Report - Ethiopia ET0026.03/January to June, 2000.

⁴In fact just before this research took place a project executant was employed who during September set up the field office in Goba, so initiating this part of the project.

As a result, and to avoid further delays in the research, it was considered to be of most value, if a pilot study was carried out in several villages situated on the boundaries of the Park to provide a better understanding of the local socio-economic and environmental context, in which the project is to be set. This would also provide baseline data for future research. In addition, it was expected that the study would give some indication of the suitability of the villages for further involvement in the project.

As such, the objectives of this pilot study were:

1. To gather background information on the local, political, historical, economic, cultural and social context within which the Bale Mountains National Park and the DGIS-WWF supported project are set.
2. To establish gender roles within households (including the decision-making processes), differing degrees of mobility between men and women and the presence of formal and/or informal means of support and/or social gatherings. In particular an understanding of the position of women in the local community and the household was emphasised.
3. To assess the degree of pressure on natural resources in and around the Park from the local people and their livestock.
4. To understand current livelihood practices in and around the Park and assess the possibilities for future expansion of such practices and/or suggest alternatives.
5. To assess the current perceptions and views of the Park (and conservation practices in general) including the presence of costs and/or benefits to the local communities due to the presence of the Park.

The study took place on the northern boundaries of the Park in four villages - Gojera, Karari, Gofingria and Soba - and one town - Dinsho - close to where the Park Headquarters are situated (see Figure 1). It occurred between the 6th and 28th September, 2000. The research team was made up of myself and two male guides/interpreters who came from the local area. It became clear during the study that in future it would be necessary to include a female interpreter in this team, as some women became shy and unwilling to talk in the presence of men.

Semi-structured interviews took place either in the respondents' place of work or their homes. Those interviewed in the villages (other than the Chairmen), a total of 16 females and 16 males - approximately 3% of the population (see Appendix 1) - were all chosen at random. An attempt was made to achieve a good geographical representation within the village boundaries. The interviews were based on a number of pre-prepared questions (as listed in Appendix 2), however these were readily adapted to reflect different circumstances and the people involved. Several other, more practical, Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) techniques were used including transect walks; resource and mobility mapping; and seasonal calendars. In addition a short, structured survey was carried out to question 41 female traders on the goods they were selling in the market. Finally, 14 people with key positions in the district/town were interviewed (see Appendix 3).

This document relies entirely upon the information gathered through the field work, other than the occasional footnote verifying data or providing additional information. The purpose of this study was to better understand the *local* viewpoint and has therefore relied almost entirely on the conversations, oral histories, observations and knowledge of the local people. It is recognised that some of these may have become distorted over time, by different circumstances or even through translation, however it is felt that its value should not be undermined because of this.

7. Analysis and conclusions

7.1 Local society, politics, economics and culture

7.1.1 *Systems of governance and local institutions*

The systems of governance in the local communities around Bale Mountains National Park are complex. Both traditional and modern systems exist and run concurrently. The traditional system remains rooted to traditional Oromo cultural practices, reflected in the existence of the Elders as the main authoritative body in the villages. However, it would appear that many traditional practices are no longer carried out. For example there was no further evidence found of 'age-classes' or *gadda* as can be found in other Oromo groups, such as the Borana, situated further south.

The modern system, based upon the election of Village/Town Chairmen and Committees appears to be democratic. The majority of both men and women interviewed stated that they had voted in the most recent elections. In addition, many spoke highly of their Chairman, both in the villages and the town. This was especially the case in Dinsho, where it was clear that the Chairman and his committee had had a profoundly positive effect on Dinsho in the recent provision of services and in promoting a strong community spirit amongst the people.

Though officially, it would appear that Peasant Associations (initially set up in the time of the Derg) still exist as government demarcated areas of rural people and their land, in practice their role appears to be little more than to act as cooperatives for buying goods in bulk or accessing credit for the farmers. At the same time, though it was suggested that Women's Associations are still active in the district, there was no evidence of them in any of the villages visited.

It was clear that the local communities are undergoing a slowly developing process of 'modernisation'. However, though people are certainly 'changing with the times', the more traditional ways of life still play an important part in people's lives. Both culture and religion greatly influence the way people go about their daily business, for example the traditional coffee making process was carried out in all households visited, despite it taking at least an hour to complete. In addition, religion is very important. As stated above, the area is dominated by Muslims, whose devotion is reflected in a large number of ways. For example, Muslims were seen praying in the fields several times a day; a number of households send their children to the school connected to the Mosque rather than the state schools; and several respondents suggested that their ambition is to visit Mecca.

7.1.2 Growing prosperity

The growth of Dinsho since the 1930s has been greatly influenced by the town's position on the well used Goba-Dodola-Shashamene road. Though this particular road is of poor quality, the roads leading from Dodola and Shashamene onto Nazret and Addis Ababa are undergoing a large project of improvement. This can only aid the flow of traffic and trade through Dinsho and open up further opportunities for its prosperity, for example, through tourism - an industry that is poorly organised and/or resourced at the moment.

In addition, it was clear that the two weekly markets in Dinsho are a vital contribution to the welfare of the town, the surrounding villages and the local communities. The majority of respondents indicated that they regularly visit the markets either to sell or buy goods. They also offer an opportunity for men and women to come together and exchange news and information.

Dinsho appears to be a town that is moving forward with the times. The community spirit and support that exists is an important factor in this. This is reflected in the community's re-building of the primary school and its work in and financial contributions to the electrification project. However, the general opinion is that the Park resents this growing prosperity, and is concerned that continuing growth will encourage more immigrants into the area. This in turn has promoted resentment from the people, for the Park. Such resentments need to be resolved and a better working relationship between the Park and the community encouraged.

7.2 Gender roles and degrees of mobility

7.2.1 *Lack of opportunities and education*

Though life was certainly harsh during the time of the Derg (1974-91), the communist regime that was inflicted on the local population did allow some space for women to play a more dominant role in decision-making processes, both at the local and household levels. It also offered them greater opportunities to contribute and benefit from a more equal society than would appear to be available at this present time. For example, in the past, the Women's Associations set up by the Derg did offer a more formal means of support for women in times of stress or problems. In addition, the Community Skills Centre offered a means of attaining additional skills, and the fact that it was obligatory for all to go to school meant that the majority of girls were educated.

Today, however there are far more boys attending school than girls, at both primary and secondary levels. At Dinsho primary school, the number of boys who attended during the year 1991 EC (1998/9) was 63% and girls equaled 37% of total numbers; at secondary level the attendance of boys during the year 1992 EC (1999/2000) was 66% and girls equaled 34%. Cultural reasons have been given as the major reason for this divide, though it was suggested that things are improving. Certainly, there was support for more equality both in the schools and with the leaders of the local communities. It would appear that federal government policies have been an important factor in leading these changes. However, only if more opportunities are established for enhancing women's economic contribution to the household, will their value beyond the garden fence be recognised and more encouragement for their education be observed.

In addition, many families cannot afford to send either boys or girls to school. Though education is free, a number of families said that they could not afford to pay for books. But more importantly, the children are needed to watch grazing cattle, work on the farm or in the home. Many of the households in the villages studied are sited some distance from Dinsho (up to 15 km), and only two - Gofingria and Soba have a primary school. Dinsho supplies the only secondary school (which it should be noted only educates up to Grade 10). It is therefore necessary for many children to spend their week staying in Dinsho if they are to be allowed to continue their education - for many families this is just an impossibility. The need for more schools or some form of education system in the villages was given as a priority for the future by many of those interviewed. In addition, the schools that exist desperately need more funds to improve their facilities.

7.2.2 *Continuing inequalities in the local communities*

Within the primary school in Dinsho, 50% of the teachers are female, however in the secondary school, there is only one female teaching typing part-time. In addition, all positions of authority in the town and/or villages are held by men. No women are employed at the Health Clinic, nor are there mid-wives available, though it was suggested that each village has its own traditional mid-wife. The most common causes of death in the area are due to diarrhea related illnesses and respiratory tract infections, the most treated illnesses are those related to the removal of parasitic worms. AIDs does not appear to be considered a serious issue, the Clinic being unaware of any cases in the town/villages. 10% of the women in the town are using contraceptive methods of birth control, however, it was declared that men generally do not.

In the past, the role of women in agriculture has been largely ignored. Though certainly, it is a male domain, women do however contribute greatly to it, getting involved in all aspects other than ploughing. In addition, many female heads of household were encountered. Though these do rely on male relatives to help with some aspects of farming, in general they carry out most of the work themselves. Despite this, there is no formal education or support for women in this area. There are no female agricultural extension workers based at the local agricultural office, and when female extensions do visit from Robe/Goba, they focus on home economics training.

7.2.3 Gender differences in mobility

Women generally, are less mobile than men. Their work revolves around the home on a day to day basis, with occasional visits to Dinsho and when necessary to Robe/Goba. Very rarely will they travel further afield and in fact one female respondent stated that she never leaves the vicinity of her hut. Men however, not only go to their fields on a regular basis, but also to Dinsho - some stating that they go every day. In addition, a number regularly travel to Robe/Goba for trading purposes, and several make occasional trips further afield, for example when taking sheep to Nazret and/or Addis Ababa.

Horses are generally used for transport purposes. It was noticeable that where there was one horse between a man and woman traveling to town, it was more often than not the case that the woman would be riding it. However, women were often seen carrying heavy loads themselves, and even young girls were seen struggling with sacks of barley or flour, fuelwood and water. In addition, some of the female respondents stated that they spend a large proportion of their day walking to the fields transporting food for their husbands, collecting the harvest, and taking the oxen to and fro.

7.2.4 Women's views of their marginalisation

The majority of those interviewed gave the impression that it was a hard life for both women and men. However, one can not ignore the fact that women

have far more tasks to complete in a day, many of which are extremely physically exerting. In addition, women's work-load is heavy all year round, whereas there appeared to be times in the agricultural calendar when men's work-load was less great. In addition arranged marriages are still very common and polygamy is still present.

Despite this, few women showed any strong feelings that they felt underprivileged or the dominated sex. They indicated that they do go to meetings and contribute to them. In addition, there seems to be a growing support for women to play a greater role in the community, gender equity being promoted at the Committee level in the villages. In the town, also, there is some support for women, for example there appears to be an increasing number of women working in the local businesses - for example in shops, hotels and liquor stores selling local beer - *talla*.

However, as has been indicated above, women certainly do remain a marginalised group, and a more in-depth study with female interpreters, over a longer period of time may confirm this further. For example, it was indicated that though women do go to meetings and say that their opinions and contributions are valued, they do not have power to really influence or direct any decisions made (Temune Worku, pers. comm., 2000).

The lack of resistance to such marginalisation and the absence of any organised movements to confront it, can perhaps be attributed to the long history of such marginalisation; the lack of legislative and government support for equality in the past; the strong Muslim religion in the area promoting male domination; the fact that many women are uneducated and illiterate; the relatively little contact that many women have with each other, other than their close neighbours; and the fact that women just do not have time or space to think beyond the provision of the next meal.

7.2.5 Strengthening informal support for women

However, though there have been no formal means of support for women, nor insurance against risks and problems, some informal support groups have grown. Their influence and role depends on local circumstances and since they are community level organisations, they deal with relatively minor shocks that affect the household. It was not clear whether there were any church based groups present, however a large number of female respondents mentioned the presence of self-help groups or *iddir*. Originally developed as a 'funeral insurance system' only this century, *iddir* has been spreading rapidly across the country extending its scope of action towards sickness and health problems, unemployment, weddings and to promote relationships among members. It has thus developed into an important community-based social network, and perhaps may provide the means and 'space' for women to promote their interests and greater gender equity in future.

In addition, it is possible that women may rely on more 'subtle' strategies to promote their interests. Studies in other parts of the world suggest that where women are not prepared to challenge inequities in a confrontational or high profile manner, it may prove more successful if their confidence and involvement in the local society and politics is built up over time. Once their spiritual strength is established, the focus of support can then turn to training in more practical skills, health, literacy and agriculture. The advantages of such strategies are that they can result in strong undercurrents of change without being too confrontational, so that they do not attract unnecessary attention and opposition to the changes being made.⁵

⁵See Regina Scheyven's work in Solomon Islands - Scheyvens, R. (1998), 'Subtle strategies for women's empowerment. Planning for effective grassroots development', pp235-253 in TWPR, Vol 20, No 3.

7.3 Pressures on natural resources

7.3.1 *Agriculture and cattle*

Agriculture in the area is dominated by the growing of barley. In recent years, there has been a move to plant fewer and more modern varieties. Attempts are being made by the local Agriculture Development Officer to keep the traditional varieties in use, so preserving the agro-biodiversity of the area, however he has been given little, if any, support. In addition, as population pressures on the land have increased, there has been a slight growth in the use of inputs such as fertiliser. However, due to high costs of such inputs and the low price of barley, such a move is not economically efficient. Dung is used on the fields as an alternative source of fertiliser, though much of this is lost due to the cattle being grazed far from the home.

The average number of cattle per household interviewed can be estimated as 17 (see Appendix 1), though numbers given by some respondents were as high as 30, 40 and even 50. Taking the number of households for the four villages as being 905, one can therefore suggest an approximate number of 15,555 cattle in and around the four villages. Though indeed, not all these cattle are grazed in the Park, a large number certainly are, despite this being illegal. In addition, households own sheep, goats and horses. The pressure on the Park and its surrounding areas is therefore great. This pressure has been recognised by some in the communities, and one respondent stated that, as a result, he would be reducing his cattle numbers in future and intensifying his arable farming. Cattle numbers are generally controlled by the occurrence of events that force people to sell them. The majority of those who own cattle stated that they are only sold in times of need - effectively they act as the people's 'saving accounts' and a means of coping with the risks and problems of living in a relatively unpredictable and difficult environment.

7.3.2 Reducing the pressures on the forests

The pressures on the indigenous forests are great. Despite it being illegal to remove wood from the Park, it occurs on a regular basis. Though there is more control over this in the villages close to the Park Headquarters, in the villages further away, for example in Gofingria, the forests are being heavily utilised in an unsustainable way.

Few people are planting trees, though the promotion of eucalyptus growing by the school Nature Clubs has encouraged this to a certain extent. This lack of tree planting is due to a number of factors, relating to poverty; a lack of control over the use of natural wood; a lack of foresight or care for the future of the land; the problem of roaming, grazing livestock; and perhaps most importantly, the continued lack of security that people have in relation to their land. All land is owned by the state and there is as yet, no means of introducing community tenure arrangements. However, experiments are being carried out in community forestry and supported in other areas of the region and indeed, the country. For example, the GTZ project in Ababa-Dodola is proving successful and in Addis Ababa, several NGOs - SOS Sahel, GTZ and Farm Africa - are involved in 'round table' discussions with the regional and federal governments in an attempt to encourage institutional and legislative support for such projects.

The electrification of the town should provide some relief for the need of fuelwood in the long-term. However, it seems unlikely that initially and in the short-term, any great decrease in the use of wood will be seen. Alternatives such as fuel-efficient stoves could be looked into, however, paraffin stoves have been available for sale in the town for some time, yet the majority of people still cook over the fire. Indeed, a fire also provides warmth, a gathering place, and soot which helps insulate the huts - these are advantages not easily replaced. Occasionally dung is used as a fuel source.

7.3.3 Increases in the local population

The population of Dinsho is increasing by approximately 5% per year. The exact population of the villages visited during this study was not available. The number of households in the four villages in 1992 EC (1999/2000) were as follows - Gojera, 189; Karari, 213; Gofingria, 289; and Soba, 384. If one was to assume that an average household is 8 people (a conservative estimate as numbers in one household could reach as high as 20), then the population of the four villages equals approximately - Gojera, 1,512; Karari, 1,704; Gofingria, 2,312; and Soba, 3,072. From the interviews it would appear that the majority have lived in the area for at least one generation, however particularly in Gofingria there seemed to have been more recent immigration into the area. It

would appear that the Village Committees regulate such immigration to a certain extent, and thus perhaps, have prevented further increases in population.

A number of people involved with the Park suggested that there are certainly more people living there today than, for example 10-15 years ago (Yilma Dellelegn, pers. comm., 2000⁶). When the Derg was overthrown, a period of what has been described as 'anarchy' (*ibid*) followed, when many animals were killed and the people evicted from the Park moved back in. Since that time, others commented that things have greatly improved and wildlife numbers have increased.

⁶Yilman Dellelegn was Park Warden at BMNP for 7 years during the time of the Derg. He is now Wetlands Programme Coordinator for IUCN-Nairobi.

7.4 Current livelihood practices and possible alternatives

7.4.1 The importance of the local markets

The establishment of the new market area in Dinsho has greatly enhanced the possibility of opportunities to increase sales of produce and find alternative ways of earning a living. Many of the new houses surrounding the market square are rented by people living in the villages situated around Dinsho, who come to the town on market day to trade and provide services such as tea shops, tailoring or leather work.

Both women and men sell, buy and trade goods at the markets. There was a clear divide in the selling of some goods, for example only women sold dairy products and only men sold livestock. The trading of goods bought in bulk from e.g. Goba/Robe provides important supplementary income for many people, especially during the times of the year when there is more time available in the agricultural calendar to invest in such practices.

7.4.2 Moves to diversify and increase livelihood opportunities

Few people invest time in making implements, furniture and handicrafts for sale. Traditional items are still very much in use, for example milk carrying containers which have a strong cultural significance for women. Indeed, some implements, such as these containers, are only made by women, others such as cow horn spoons are only made by men. However, all these tend to be made only for personal use. An exception was a man who made and sold traditional wooden bowls (from hagenia) used for serving barley porridge or *maarka* in.

In other ways, however, many local people have diversified from simply relying on farming into business and employment in the labour market as well. This appears to be more common amongst the villages situated closer to Dinsho -

that is Karari and Gojera. Examples of such diversification include the ownership and/or employment in tea-shops and hotels, employment in the Park or the EWCP (Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Project), and trades such as tailoring. None of the women interviewed in the villages are employed in Dinsho, however several are involved in money making enterprises such as the production of butter and honey.

7.5 Local perceptions and views of Bale Mountains National Park

Since its establishment, the Bale Mountains National Park has overshadowed the lives and livelihood strategies of the local people of Dinsho and its surrounding villages. Many of those living within the boundaries of the Park and close to the Park Headquarters have been evicted from their homes and land on at least one occasion. That is during the time of the Derg, in the 1980s, when all inhabitants were moved out. Despite this many respondents continuously denied that they actually lived within the Park boundaries, even though the authorities had told them otherwise.

The evictions that are presently being carried out are leading to a very negative feeling towards the Park and 'conservation' in general. In addition the lack of support in resettling the people and the absence of any compensation for lost land and/or crops has added to their discontent and indeed their hardship. These continuous attempts to remove people from the Park has added to the insecurity that the people feel, and as a result it is not surprising that they do not invest time and resources in planting trees, for example. Little resistance has been shown by the people to the evictions other than their waiting until being forced to move, and then moving to an area close by rather than to the area allocated.⁷

⁷Such 'resistance' could be described as 'foot-dragging' and can be likened to other forms described by James Scott (1985) in *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press.

The local communities see few benefits accruing from the Park. It is appreciated that the Park has built the new Health Clinic in Dinsho, however, the Clinic is very poorly stocked (in both medicines and equipment) and quickly falling into a state of disrepair having no excess funds for maintenance. Only minor operations can be carried out there, anything more serious involves a two hour journey to Robe/Goba, assuming transport is available. It was mentioned that in emergencies, the Park authorities will provide transport, on the understanding that the fuel is paid for. It would appear that the Park also made promises for further support to the Clinic (namely in the provision of an incinerator and a water supply), however, this has, as yet, not materialised. In addition, conflicts with wild animals were cited as a major problem to those living in the area, especially involving hyenas.

The Park is extremely badly resourced - the annual budget for this year is approximately 90,000 Birr (£9,000) (Diro Bulbula, pers. comm., 2000). The Park only employs 37 scouts and 8 other members of staff, and as a result patrols and control over the Park is only possible in the areas close to the Park Headquarters (Assistant Park Warden, pers. comm., 2000). The Regional government has stated that illegal settlers must be removed from National Parks and as such the authorities in Dinsho and the Park have been issued with instructions to comply with this as far as is possible (Diro Bulbula, pers. comm., 2000⁸). The attempts to remove households from the villages described above, is part of this process. However, the lack of resources available to carry out such a process effectively and the ethics behind it raises important questions as to whether it is the right approach. Perhaps the promotion of the WWF project and its emphasis on attaining both conservation and local development will open up opportunities for a different approach to be implemented.

⁸Diro Bulbula is Department Head of the Forestry and Wildlife Conservation Department, Oromiya Agricultural Development Bureau, Addis Ababa.

7.6 Concluding suggestions

In conclusion and in reflection of the points raised in this study, it is possible to make suggestions as to which areas in the local communities could be targeted for future intervention and/or support within the WWF project:

7.6.1 *Promotion of indigenous trees*

Though the promotion of sale and distribution of eucalyptus seedlings by the school Nature Clubs and certain far-thinking individuals is certainly commendable, there would appear to be an opportunity for experimentation and investment in the growing of indigenous trees as well. Indeed, the UNCDF (United Nations Capital Development Fund) supported Sustainable Development Project based in the buffer zones of Simien Mountains National Park is carrying out work in this area. However, if the WWF project was to introduce such a project, there must be adequate long-term support and/or training to maintain it. This should include education about the care of the trees once they have been planted on the land, and ways to prevent their destruction by roaming livestock. Perhaps, this could be achieved in collaboration with Dinsho Agricultural Office. It should be noted that the Chairman of Karari village was particularly keen to receive support for planting trees.

7.6.2 *Provision of local services*

There is a great lack of services in the villages studied - only two, Gofingria and Soba, have a primary school, while none have a secondary school, water-pipes, health clinic or grinding mill. As a result, the people have to travel long distances to use the services in Dinsho, and for example queuing to use the

grinding mill can take more than a day. Where water is concerned, though it seems to be readily available from natural sources at not too great a distance for most people, there were complaints that during the dry season many of the springs dry up and often the supplies are polluted and/or dirtied by livestock.

It was suggested by several respondents that if the conservation authorities were to help provide such services in the villages, then the people would be more supportive of the Park. However, if this is to be the case, care should be taken in providing exactly what is promised – the people have been promised things in the past, whether by the Park or the government, which have not materialised.

7.6.3 Support through micro-credit

Several of the respondents suggested that they would like financial support to diversify their livelihoods. One way of supporting this would be through a micro-credit scheme, and a recent series of workshops held by the UN in Addis Ababa in September, discussed this in relation to the Ethiopian context (van Oudenhoven, pers. comm., 2000⁹).

⁹Harm van Oudenhoven is Programme Officer for UNCDF, Ethiopia.

However, experience from India shows that though there are certainly benefits to micro-credit schemes – namely, it acts as an entry point to other activities; brings social cohesion; builds up social mobilisation; and the social impact of the whole activity can prove very effective – there are certainly negative aspects that need to be accounted for, understood and avoided. These include – the fact that the poorest of the poor are likely to miss out; banking principles and their application seem not to be practical and are alien to many people; economic impacts are not very positive; and livelihood integration must be linked to the savings and credit scheme (Satya Murty, pers. comm., 2000¹⁰).

¹⁰Satya Murty works for Action Aid, India on micro-credit schemes in relation to farmers.

7.6.4 The possibilities of tourism

There are certainly opportunities for promoting tourism in the area. At the moment it is happening in an unorganised and haphazard manner, with little if any advertising of the Park and its facilities. For example, the only information available on the Park in the Ethiopian Tourism Office in Addis Ababa is an out of date, poorly photographed brochure that provides no information on how to travel to the Park nor what facilities are available. In addition, the facilities in the lodge could be improved, for example the kitchen is in a state of disrepair, the Park generator is regularly breaking down and some of the stuffed animals in the lodge are looking a little ‘moth eaten’!

Admittedly, because of the recent conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, there have been few international travelers to the country. However, even without these, there is a large ex-patriot community and an increasingly affluent population of nationals in Addis Ababa that could be targeted.

However, if tourism is to be encouraged, the infrastructure for getting to the Park must be recognised as inadequate and the problems involved overcome. For example, transport must be made available to allow people to travel from Robe/Goba where the airport is situated, to the Park. At the moment travelers must either use irregular and untimely local buses or hitch a ride on top of a truck. The Wolf's Den Café has made some effort to overcome this by providing a transport service on request.

Also, links should be made with the other tourist attractions in the area, for example, the GTZ supported project at Ababa-Dodola. This particular project has been extremely well marketed with advertising leaflets distributed throughout Addis Ababa and in all the local hotels.

7.6.5 Promotion of better relations between the Park and local communities

There appears to be a continuing rift between many in the local communities and the Park. There is resentment that some villages and households appear to be favoured over others in receiving support from the Park and that many promises have been unkept. To promote better relations, conflicts with wild animals need to be addressed, particularly the continuing problems with hyenas. In addition, there needs to be a better education programme on the benefits of the Park, moving beyond the view that the Park is only good, because the government says it is good. Lessons can be learnt from the work of the Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Project, which has done much work in promoting support for the wolf, and the domestic dog vaccination/castration programme that they instigate.

7.6.6 Introduction of projects targeting women

There are a number of policies which support a more gender equitable society in Ethiopia. Not only is there the *National Policy on Ethiopian Women*, introduced by the government in 1993, but there is also a process underway to 'mainstream' the *Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia*. As a result of this there are a number of comprehensive documents being produced by the Environmental Protection Agency (led by Asmeret Kidanemariam) which provide a wealth of information and suggestions on how to address gender issues in connection with the conservation of natural resources and the environment.¹¹ These documents can be used as an official sanction on any moves to address gender issues and promote a fairer and more equitable treatment of women in the local communities.

¹¹See Strategy of Mainstreaming Gender and Ensuring the Effective Participation of Women in the CSE Process. Draft. February, 1999. Produced by PET Consultants, Kenya and GENESSIS Consultants, Ethiopia. In addition, a document was produced reporting on a workshop held to review the above document. Unfortunately, the whole process has been held up by the illness of one of the authors (Asmeret Kidanemariam, pers. comm., 2000).

As described above, there are no formal means of support for women at the community level. However, the system of self-help groups or *iddir* which exists in the area, offers an opportunity for building a more formal system based upon it. In addition, there needs to be more support for the attendance of women and their involvement in *all* community meetings. Though it would appear that women certainly contribute to some meetings through voicing their opinions and voting, it was not clear to what extent their views influenced any decisions being made. Opportunities also exist for promoting a better exchange of information and knowledge at the times when women come together, for example, at the market place, grinding mills, washing places and at weddings/funerals. If meetings are to be arranged specifically for women, or indeed for the community as a whole, perhaps these could be arranged to coincide with these occurrences/events.

Both the Village Chairmen interviewed - in Karari and Gojera - stated that they themselves promoted gender equity in their villages. Both were aware of the national policy for women. Indeed the general opinion seemed to support the idea that community-based projects could be set-up that would specifically target women and promote their participation. It was unclear whether this support would continue if such projects were put into practice, or whether such projects would perhaps be 'hijacked' by the male members of the community as they became more economically successful. However, such support certainly warrants strong attempts to promote, encourage and instigate such projects.

This leads to the question of what exactly should these projects be and/or involve. To answer this, there is first a need for more in-depth research to understand the many factors involved including where would be the best starting point and what has been successful in other areas. However, this study does raise a number of issues which could form the basis for such research and deserve further investigation, including:

1. There is a lack of handicrafts and hand-made household implements for sale - both for use by the local people themselves and for tourists. Admittedly, the tourist market has little to offer at the moment, however, in time perhaps this will be developed. There is therefore, the possibility of introducing support for handicrafts¹² (such as baskets, jewellery, pots, wooden items, storage containers and carrying vessels) - the making of which is already supported by the Community Skills Training Centre in Dinsho. Indeed many women already have the skills to make such goods, but only do so for their own use. A possible outlet

further afield for such handicrafts could be the NGO bazaar held once a month in Addis Ababa.

2. A number of women make and sell butter, used both as a food item and for dressing hair. An ICDP being implemented in the Awash National Park by CARE is introducing support for butter making and other dairy products at a more commercial level.¹³ Perhaps this is something that could be introduced in the villages around the Park, in conjunction with a micro-credit project for example, to support 'set-up'.
3. Honey has been mentioned as a product produced in the area on a small scale. It is considered a luxury good and sells for a high price. Two of those involved in its production saw a direct relationship between it and benefits from the Park - the Park protecting the flowering trees producing nectar for the bees. There are many examples in other countries where such small-scale production has been developed, with the help of more productive and environmentally friendly hives, to provide a much more commercial enterprise. For example a long standing project has been running in Nyika National Park, Malawi.¹⁴
4. As suggested above, there is a need for a promotion of the planting of trees for fuelwood and building materials, including indigenous species. It is also suggested that the possibilities of planting some types of fruit trees should be investigated. No fruit trees were seen in the area and the only fruit seen in the market were oranges, bananas and prickly pears, brought from the low lands. Though the climate is unlikely to be conducive to the growing of these particular fruits, there are several fruits that would be suitable, and could be grown in the garden areas around the huts.
5. In addition, a more efficient and commercial market in wild herbs could be instigated. Many of the women collect herbs for their own use and for sale in the local market, though it was unclear if these were sold further afield. Certainly the same herbs were seen for sale in the markets of Addis Ababa, though the source of them was not indicated. One herb - wild thyme - was dried and sold by children to people in the passing trucks and buses.
6. The same could be said for flowers. The Park and its surrounding areas are alive with a wide range of spectacular flowers, including everlasting varieties, especially after the rainy season (in late August-October). In fact this coincides with a number of the prominent festivals in Ethiopia including the New Year and Maskel. There appeared to be no trade in the flowers, so again, perhaps this is something that could be investigated further. Indeed, in many other parts of the world, such as the Brazilian savannas (or *cerrado*), the sale of wild flowers proves a very lucrative business. Such a trade however, as with the use of other natural resources, would have to be controlled so it was environmentally and indeed, economically sustainable.
7. There needs to be a greater promotion of the employment of women in the Park and in the businesses and projects connected with the Park.

Though indeed the Park Warden is female, there are no women employed as scouts and/or guides. Two women are employed as cleaners in the Tourist Lodge. At the very least, there should be a concerted effort made by the WWF project to employ women in the jobs available, as is stressed in the project documents.

¹²Such a project has been introduced in Agarfa, with Italian government support - The Agrafta Handicraft Pilot Project as part of the Arsi-Bale Rural Development Project (Roberto Calzà, pers. comm., 2000). Important lessons could be learnt from this project which is currently undergoing restructuring. A number of documents are available setting out the progress achieved so far, see Evaluation of the first phase of the Agarfa Handicraft Pilot Project (September 1998-February 1999) and Hadda. Labour and income generation division on gender bases in household: the Priority Pas of Agarfa Woreda (Bale Zone) case. Both are produced by the project which has offices in Asella and Addis Ababa.

¹³Shimelis Beyene, Project Coordinator, CARE Awash Project (pers. comm., 2000). Gender dimensions of the project are discussed in Muderis Abdulahi (2000), Gender Dimensions of CARE Awash Conservation and Development Project. A Paper presented on the gender workshop (Feb 11-14, 2000), Nazret.

¹⁴See - Banda, A. & H. de Boerr (1993), 'Honey for Sale' pp229-232 in Kemf, Elizabeth (Ed.) 'Indigenous Peoples and Protected Areas - The Law of Mother Earth' Earthscan, 1993; IIED/ODA, (1994), 'Whose Eden? An Overview of Community Approaches to Wildlife Management' London: International Institute for Environment and Development for the Overseas Development Institute; Mbanefo, S. (1993/4), 'Hive of Activity' pp5 in WWF News, Winter 1993/4.

It is vital that any projects targeting women must only do so with a good understanding of how the work involved will be accommodated by them in their already very busy working day. Ways and means must be found that allow women to get involved in such projects without adding excessively to their labour or time. In addition care must be taken not to promote unwanted gender-stereotypical roles - it must be up to the women to decide what projects would be suitable for them and how best they could get involved. What WWF can do is to provide opportunities for this to happen, encourage 'space' for women to make the decisions, and support them in what they decide to do.

7.6.7 A possible pilot village - Karari

Finally, in an attempt to give some indication of which of the four villages studied would be most appropriate for targeting by the WWF as a 'pilot' village for the conservation and development project, it is suggested that **Karari** village would be the most appropriate. The reasons for this decision are several, but include:

1. The village is located reasonably close to Dinsho allowing both access to the opportunities that Dinsho holds for the local people and diversification of their livelihoods, as well as easy access into the village itself.
2. Many of the households are situated either close to the Park boundaries or, in fact, actually in the Park. Therefore the village and its people

- have a direct effect on the Park and its resources. Some of these households are being moved out of the Park and resettled outside the boundaries. The attitude to the Park is therefore extremely negative at the moment, and needs improving.
3. The Village Chairman is particularly supportive of developing more sustainable use of natural resources in and around the village.
 4. There is a need for services in the village such as a primary school and/or piped water supply.
 5. The Village Chairman and several of the people interviewed were supportive of the idea that gender equity was important and that projects could be developed that specifically target women. In addition, there appeared to be several self-help groups present in the area that could be used as a basis for women's organisation.
 6. There appears to be a certain degree of diversification in many of the people's livelihoods that could be developed further, such as trading in goods, cultivation of honey, wooden pot making, and the provision of guides for the Park.
 7. A number of people interviewed expressed the desire for more support to be given to such diversification through, for example, accessible credit to encourage trading and other business.
 8. Conflicts with wild animals from the Park are common in the village, especially with hyena.
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Notes to readers

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