

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACORD	Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
AETU	All-Ethiopia Trade Union
AEUDA	All-Ethiopia Urban Dwellers' Association
APAP	Action Professional Alliance for People
CARE	Cooperative Agency for Relief Everywhere
CBISDO	Community-based Integrated Sustainable Development Organisation
CBOs	Community-based organisations
CETU	Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions
CCRDA	Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Association
ChSA	Charities and Societies Agency
CRDA	Christian Relief and Development Association
CSOs	Civil society organisations
CSP	Civil Society Proclamation
DST	Department of Science and Technology
DKA	Democratic Alliance of Austria
E.C.	Ethiopian calendar
EC	European Commission
ECCSA	Chamber of Commerce and Sector Associations
EEF	Ethiopian Employers' Federation
EEWs	Education extension workers
ELA	Ethiopian Lawyers' Association
EHRC	Ethiopian Human Rights Commission
EPRDF	Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front
ETB	Ethiopian Birr
EU	European Union
EWLA	Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGAE	Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia
GDP	Gross domestic product

GPDF	Gurage People’s Democratic Front
GPDM	Gurage People’s Democratic Movement
GPSDO	Gurage People Self-help Development Organisation
GRCO	Gurage Road Construction Organisation
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HBC	Home-based care
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IHA-UDP	Integrated Holistic Approach- Urban Development Project
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KKSC	Kolfe Keranio Sub-city
MA	Master of Arts
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoNCD	Ministry of National Community Development
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
NHG	Neighbourhood groups
NRF	National Research Foundation
OSJE	Organisation for Social Justice in Ethiopia
OVC	Orphans and vulnerable children
PA	Peasant association
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PLC	Private limited company
PLWHA	People living with HIV and AIDS
SARCHI	South African Research Initiative
SRH	Sexual reproductive health
SNNPR	Southern Nations and Nationals People Region
TSDA	Tesfa Social Development Association
UDA	Urban dwellers’ associations
UN	United Nations
UNISA	University of South Africa
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

GLOSSARY OF AMHARIC TERMS

<i>Chat</i>	A cash crop, stimulant leaf chewed commonly in parts of the low lands of Ethiopia
<i>Derg</i>	A military group that toppled the government of His Majesty Haile Selassie I
<i>Ensete</i>	A false banana plant the roots of which are used and consumed as a staple food
<i>Equb</i>	A ‘traditional’ rotational money saving scheme in Ethiopia
<i>Fitawrari</i>	A high-ranking military official during the feudal system in Ethiopia
<i>Iddir</i>	A ‘traditional’ burial society
<i>Injera</i>	A staple food made of a grass-type plant called <i>teff</i> in Ethiopia
<i>Kebele</i>	The lowest administrative organ(county) in Ethiopia
<i>Ketena</i>	The cluster of <i>Kebeles</i> in Ethiopia
<i>Mahiber</i>	A ‘traditional’ self-help association in Ethiopia
<i>Sebat Bet</i>	Seven houses of the Gurage clans
<i>Sefer</i>	Hamlet
<i>Senbete</i>	A ‘traditional’ parish-based association of the same congregation
<i>Tureta</i>	Pension

NOTES ON THE USE OF ETHIOPIAN LANGUAGES

Ethiopian languages contain several vowels and consonants that are not used in English, and there is no standard transcription of the Ethiopian alphabet in English. Where I use words in Ethiopian languages I have used the English vowels, which most closely correspond to the Ethiopian vowels. I have not attempted to mark the ‘explosive’ consonants in the Ethiopian languages. Where I refer to a plural of a noun in an Ethiopian language, I have used the singular (e.g. Woreda) rather than the actual plural (e.g. Woredawoch), which is likely to lead to confusion for English speakers, or adding an ‘s’ as in English (e.g. Woredas), which would be inaccurate.

Furthermore, Ethiopian names consist of a given name followed by the father’s given name. As such, there is no family name and thus it makes little sense to cite authors by their second name, as is usually the case in western academic publications and media. Instead, in this thesis where Ethiopian authors are referenced, the author’s full name is cited and the bibliography is sorted by the author’s first name.

It is important to state that in this thesis, the terms ‘northern’, ‘western’, ‘modern’, and ‘international’ denote one category of civil society organisations (CSOs) for which I use the term ‘modern’ for consistency purposes; while ‘indigenous’, ‘traditional’, ‘African’ or ‘local’ represent another category of CSOs for which I use the term ‘traditional’ for the same purpose.

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PART ONE

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Several African countries have a century-old history of volunteerism and civic institutions, which have contributed to the formation and functioning of ‘traditional’ civil society organisations (CSOs). These ‘traditional’ institutions have continued to provide services to their respective communities despite experiencing protracted famine, war, ethnic conflict, colonialism and political instability. They have thus remained active despite the difficult experiences that have affected their dynamics and functions.

Ethiopia is unique in Africa in that it has never experienced a colonisation process, except for the five years of Italian military occupation. It has subsequently maintained a strong civic culture and hosted diverse types of CSOs. While the country is among the ancient nations with unilateral modern authoritarian statehoods, and has traditions dating back to 3000 years for most of its political history, its ‘traditional’ CSOs still play an important role in communal life and grassroots collective activities. They are also known for promoting a culture of self-help and social solidarity during emergencies, food crises, conflict and political instability, most notably, in and around the peripheral areas and the marginalised rural and urban communities.

The influx of hundreds of ‘modern’ international NGOs like CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Concern, Oxfam, Save the Children and World Vision into Ethiopia has been a comparatively recent phenomenon, mainly induced by the major drought and famine situations of 1974 following the collapse of monarchical rule under His Majesty Haile Selassie I and later as a result of the famine of 1984 under the military-socialist regime of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam. Most of these ‘modern’ NGOs assumed predominantly ‘interventionist’ roles and implemented various humanitarian, rehabilitation and food security projects in the most vulnerable parts of the country. While many of the interventions of these organisations were instrumental in saving life and reducing disasters, they tend to implement ‘chains’ of projects that rarely play a catalytic or transformative role in Ethiopia.

The downfall of the socialist-military regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam and the coming to power of the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front, under the late Melese Zenawi, in 1991, coincided with the end of the Cold War and heralded a new chapter in the history of CSOs. This was evidenced by the proliferation of ‘modern’ CSOs.

However, the civil society space is arguably being controlled by the government deriving its power from the promulgation of the Charities and Societies Proclamation in 2009 and the subsequent policy instruments in 2011. At the same time, the Government of Ethiopia has been criticised by western governments and ‘human rights’ focused organisations for favouring the creation of mass-based organisations loyal to the political party while closing down human rights focused non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This creates a crisis of allegiance for both the government and the NGOs and, in turn, the communities under their care.

Undoubtedly, the presence of such legal impediments and policy restrictions challenges the role that CSOs play in societal transformation in the country. It is essential to harness the contributions of the ‘traditional’ CSOs, which form the bedrock and social fabric of associational life and collective action, as it is evident that this is where sustainable social change is embedded. This thesis is, therefore, concerned with CSOs and the challenges they face in their actions to facilitate sustainable societal transformation in Africa, focusing on the case of Ethiopia.

In this chapter, the motivation for conducting the study, the research problem, and the aim and the objectives of the research are briefly outlined. This is followed by the sections on the methodology and field experiences, as well as the theoretical perspective and conceptual framework. The important ethical considerations taken in this thesis are also highlighted.

1.2 Motivation for and rationale behind the study

The research ideas for this thesis came out of my twenty-five years of work experience in the civil society sector among diverse communities in Africa, ranging from dry land pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities to high-land smallholder farmers and urban slum dwellers.

The motivations for this study were, therefore, both academic and practical. Firstly, the researcher has been deeply concerned and puzzled by the fact that Ethiopia, a country

that is endowed with rich cultural resources and that maintained unitary statehood long before many countries in the West, has evidenced such a slow societal transformation process. Secondly, in his professional capacity, the researcher was challenged to ascertain why Ethiopia, a country that has hosted thousands of ‘modern’ CSOs that have collectively spent billions of dollars on humanitarian and development projects, has not attained the required level of sustainable social change. Thirdly, the researcher, being inquisitive, was keen to explore the reasons why African ‘traditional’ CSOs are marginalised from mainstream international development assistance and why their methods and unique approaches have not been included in development studies and social science research. Fourthly, the researcher was interested to explore the extent to which the dominant western paradigm of civil society inhibits ‘traditional’ CSOs in Africa and the way in which the recognition of traditional approaches can bring new ideas to the discourse on civil society. The researcher was also intrigued by the uniqueness of ‘traditional’ CSOs in Ethiopia, where by some ‘traditional’ CSOs that started in certain localities among small communities or ethnic groups expanded nationally to provide multiple civic functions encompassing diverse social groups and transcending multiple ethnic, religious and political backgrounds.

These intellectual enquires and the challenges related to having sufficient citizen-led development practices on the ground has moved the researcher to study CSOs and societal transformation in Ethiopia. As a civil society activist and a development worker who has worked for the past 25 years in various parts of Africa and the Caucasus region of the former Soviet Union, the researcher was puzzled by the absence of self-critical analysis and the limited efforts exerted by the civil society sector itself.

The research has significant value for social sciences and development studies as it critically examines the existing discourses on civil society studies and generates alternative perspectives and a new outlook in relation to the conceptual understanding of CSOs and their critical role in facilitating societal transformation.

1.3 Statement of the research problem

Ethiopia may be considered unique as it was able to maintain its sovereignty during the colonisation of Africa, thus depending on its 'traditional' CSOs for its grassroots social welfare and community action.

Despite their successes in building social capital, the space and functions of 'traditional' CSOs in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa are increasingly being challenged to adopt the mainstream western view on the governance of civil organisations in the country.

The successive governments of Ethiopia have been politically unilateral and have reportedly restricted 'traditional' CSOs from fully participating in mainstream nation-building processes through legal restrictions, the detention of activists and control of their civic space. Their members have been subjected to living under authoritarian social systems and political regimes without enjoying freedom from domination and social injustice. Nevertheless, these 'traditional' CSOs have survived these challenges and still enjoy the support of ordinary citizens.

The proliferation and expansion of 'modern' NGOs in the country is a relatively recent phenomenon but nevertheless has had an impact on the civil society landscape. Following the 1974 Ethiopian famine, which claimed the lives of thousands of people, hundreds of international NGOs invested significant external financial flows in the country in the form of humanitarian, development and advocacy focused projects. However, many of the international NGOs were criticised for becoming involved in piecemeal and fragmentary project interventions with a limited timetable, budget and target groups, instead of facilitating broader social action that brokered societal transformation at various levels. The fact that many 'modern' NGOs, unlike the 'traditional' CSOs, are reliant on international donor assistance and external resources, leads many to believe that they undermine the power of 'traditional' CSOs. In turn, local communities and government bodies perceive these 'modern' CSOs as being an extension of these western-based donors and promoters of their interests.

There are a few instances where some 'traditional' associations have fostered partnerships with 'modern' NGOs in their quest for societal transformation. Yet their partnerships have often been defined by short-lived projects focused mainly on saving lives and reducing human suffering and not on brokering social transformation at the community

level. Instead, they tend to produce ‘specialised’ cadres of aid workers and intermediary organisations that are loosely connected to the home grown and citizen-owned CSOs.

The marginalisation of ‘traditional’ CSOs from the mainstream nation-building process has, therefore, its own implications for the empowerment of ordinary citizens and the facilitation of collective social action that can result in societal transformation.

On the academic front, the civil society sector in Ethiopia has attracted a very little attention of scholars so that there is a dearth of academic research material providing scholarly and comprehensive accounts of CSOs in Ethiopia and their roles in societal transformation.

In the intellectual discourse of civil society studies, the western-led conceptualisation of civil society has given legitimacy to the operation of ‘modern’ and western-based NGOs in Africa. They have been used notably by proponents of the liberal and neoliberal approaches in the 1980s and 1990s as instruments to weaken not only the state apparatus but also the ‘traditional’ civil society associations. For this reason, the neoliberal perspectives and the discourse of using ‘modern’ CSOs as vehicles for creating ‘good governance’ in Africa wrongly assumed that Africa did not have its own home-grown CSOs. Such civil society discourse and action has systematically excluded and marginalised ‘traditional’ CSOs from the mainstream development endeavours, labelling them as narrow-minded, primitive and weak in their organisational practices.

As Africa is now rising in economic spheres and moving into a post-colonisation, post-apartheid and globalisation era, such civil society discourses have become more controversial in explaining the roles of ‘traditional’ CSOs in the nation-building process and facilitating societal transformation. Therefore, the relevance of the western-based civil society perspectives that have continued to shape the thinking and the practices of CSOs since the Enlightenment period shall be re-examined in the contexts of the associational life of African and other societies of the world, which have been perceived by the discourses of the western world as ‘uncivil’. Furthermore, the coexistence of African ‘traditional’ CSOs in parallel with their counterparts in Europe should be recognised and the driving force in state formation, the civil society landscape and societal transformation shall be analysed in the context of their own socio-political and economic pathways.

Given that many nations in Africa have had their own rich culture and ‘civilisation’, which have been the soil for generating and nurturing healthy human societies and CSOs,

there should be an alternative discourse that explains the concepts, meanings and practices of CSOs and societal transformation from an African perspective.

This particular study is driven by an academic enquiry to resolve such research problems by closely studying CSOs, which play a pivotal role in societal change and sustainable development practices in Ethiopia. This study makes its own unique contribution to the expanding knowledge on African ‘traditional’ CSOs and their role in facilitating societal change by examining the political history, genesis and grassroots experiences of these organisations and their contributions to societal transformation in Ethiopia. It will demonstrate how ‘civility’ within the history and functions of African ‘traditional’ CSOs across diverse social groups was possible; how the different CSOs coexisted for years until their existence and functions were restricted or limited by the policy and legal instruments imposed by recent political authorities and the ‘modern’ CSOs that have begun to control and dominate the civil society landscape in Africa.

To this end, three CSOs were identified and their origins, functions and contributions to societal transformation were examined. These were the Gurage People Self-help Development Organisation (GPSDO), the Tesfa Social Development Association (TSDA) and the Community-Based Integrated Sustainable Development Organisation (CBISDO). The ways through which local communities organise their ‘traditional’ associations and collectively engage in social action to transform their communities were analysed. The challenges related to the use of developmental approaches for societal change and transformation and the efforts to attain equal partnership with ‘modern’ NGOs and government counterparts are highlighted, and the way forward regarding the thinking and actions of African ‘traditional’ CSOs is suggested.

1.4 Research questions

The research focuses on examining the roles of ‘traditional’ CSOs in facilitating sustainable societal transformation by investigating the functions they have historically performed since their formation. The nature of their relationships with society are examined as these are essential in establishing a well-functioning society that respects the rights of citizens to transform themselves. Consequently, the following research questions are posed in order to address the research problem:

- How did the history and genesis of CSOs unfold and facilitate transformative social action in Africa, specifically in Ethiopia, under the main political regimes?
- How do current civil society support programmes implemented by both ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ CSOs and supported by international donors, support transformative social action in the country?
- How do the ‘traditional’ CSOs relate to the local people and do they play a pivotal role in facilitating positive social change at community level?
- How are the current relationships between government and CSOs manifested and to what extent are they conducive to facilitating sustainable social change?
- How do the implications of such relationships respond to the quest for transformative social action and the effective functioning of ‘traditional’ CSOs?
- What alternatives are there for CSOs in catalysing social change for the future of Ethiopia and the rest of Africa?

1.5 Aim and objectives of the research

1.5.1 Aim

The aim of this research was to make a contribution to the expanding frontiers of knowledge on CSOs and examine the roles of ‘traditional’ civil society organisations in facilitating sustainable societal transformation in Africa through the re-examination of concepts, meanings and practices pertaining to CSOs in the Ethiopian context.

1.5.2 Objectives

The objectives of this research were to

- examine the political history and genesis of CSOs in Ethiopia, and the role they play in social action
- identify and critically examine cases of Ethiopian communities, and analyse the way they organically organise their ‘traditional’ associations and collectively engage in social action that can change their communities sustainably
- critically review selected cases of partnership between ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ CSOs and examine their instrumental role in enhancing social change
- illuminate the implications of the current state of CSOs in Ethiopia for the future of the country

- draw an intellectual scheme based on the context of Ethiopia that conceptualises CSOs and their functions in facilitating societal transformation.

1.6 Theoretical perspectives and the conceptual framework

This study acknowledges that scholars who have attempted to study CSOs have drawn epistemological schemes based on different worldviews. Some were primarily concerned with their origins and historical development, accordingly examining the genesis and evolutionary paths of CSOs. Others were concerned with the meaning, essence and elements of civil society, making diagnoses of what civil society constitutes and does not constitute. Others meanwhile focused on the roles and functions of CSOs and their mandates in development practice and the facilitation of the social transformation process.

However, the theoretical perspectives for these studies were mainly influenced by western-based theories and their social realities. There are very few studies that connect and transcend the various features of CSOs from an African perspective by taking the local people's worldview into account.

This thesis deals with the challenges presented by the one-sided conceptualisation of civil society and the drawbacks of attaining transformative social action on the ground in Africa. The dominant thinking and conceptual frameworks on CSOs discourses are critically examined and attempt is made to bridge the gap between the different schools of thought and draw alternative paths that are relevant for explaining the critical role of civil society in the African context.

The thesis begins with an operational definition of civil society organisation (CSOs), although the term 'civil society' is illusive and sometimes foggy in its academic essence. The study identifies the term 'civil' as a starting point and then attempts to construct and extend its meanings in the context of CSO development. In an attempt to clarify the conceptualisation of civil society, the thesis begins by establishing the roots of the concept from the English word 'civil', which is derived from the Latin word *civilis* and, broadly, denotes the ordinary life of citizens, as distinguished from military, legal or ecclesiastical affairs. It refers to what relates to or belongs to citizens or public life and what befits citizens. This makes it synonymous with the popular, affable and courteous acts of citizens.

The definition can be contextualised for this study by distinguishing equivalent terms from Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia. Accordingly, one of the most common

Amharic terms that describes associational life is *Mahiber*. Many of the local and international NGOs which are relatively recent in the history of the country are categorically known as *Gibre Senay Dirigit*, which literally means a welfare-oriented charity organisation. Equally, a common phrase *civil mahibereseb* is used in Amharic to describe this sector of society, implying a civic community that is exclusive to the military and business communities. It should be noted here that the Ethiopian Ministry of Transport assigned official vehicle plate code of 35 under the code name of *Irdara dirigit*, meaning aid organisation; while all types of Ethiopian civic associations are labelled under the plate code of 5, tagging them as *Mahiber*. Likewise, the Amharic phrase *Mengistawi Yalhonu Dirigitoch* is increasingly being used in the public domain to explain the generic meaning of NGOs.

From these definitions, it becomes clear that while the Amharic phrase *Mengistawi yalhonu dirigitoch (Meyad)* generally connotes the broad category of civic society which is independent from the government sector, the phrase *Gibre Senay Dirigit* focuses on the not-for-profit functions (particularly the charity and welfare orientation) of these organisations. Similarly, the Amharic phrase *Irdara dirigit* generally signifies the aid function of these organisations and the term is often used to generically describe international NGOs. The Amharic word *Mahiber* generally implies the associational life of people and is commonly applicable to grassroots community-led organisations that have clear identities and a membership base.

In light of these basic concepts and a review of the definitions used by other scholars, the study attempted to show how the Ethiopian definitions clearly distinguish between local associations and NGOs, while, at the same time using common definitions to describe their generic humanitarian and social welfare functions. Therefore, this study identified CSOs as entities that play a critical role in citizens' associational lives, and which are guided by voluntarism, operating outside of government and business circles, standing for non-profit purposes, uniting individual citizens outside of their families for common civic causes. Such organisations may be informal or registered legal entities whose size can range from a tiny territorial-based grassroots community group to a large global virtual community or civic movement.

The study provides an extensive outline of and deals with the various theoretical perspectives that have contributed to the conceptual understanding of CSOs, ranging from the early classical period to the current era of globalisation. Most importantly, it points out

that the concept of civil society has acquired various connotations and meanings under different scholarly discourses. The study underlines the fact that the space for civil society both in Ethiopia and in other parts of Africa has been contested, with the subsequent influences of external ideologies being oriented by liberal political systems, socialist-military regimes, the global economic order and, most recently, the developmental state approach.

After outlining the relevant theories and discourses on civil society, the main arguments and scholarly discussions of the thesis revolves around two dominant discourses: the ‘modernist’ and the Africanist/ ‘traditionalist’ views. While the modernists take inspiration from various Eurocentric realities, including the eastern European uprisings of the late 1980s, they view civil society as an embryonic and marginal construct in Africa. They attempt to study civil society as an ‘exotic’ subject and construct the concept of civil society as if it ‘originated’ in the western world despite the rich and diverse African cultures that boast a century-old history of volunteerism and civic institutions. Even some African scholars tend to legitimise these assertions and argue that civil organisations are incompatible with the life patterns of African and other ‘tribal’ societies of the world on the grounds that Africans are less civic and find it difficult to relate beyond their clans or ethnic boundaries. Africanist/traditionalist scholars portray civil society as the flesh and blood of the African social fabric but its roles have been marginalised in the public policy and practice domain.

While the modernist suggests a liberal solution, calling for a regime that champions rights and locating politics in civil society, the Africanist solution is to put Africa’s age-old native communities and ‘traditional’ CSOs at the centre of the African public policy and practice domain by searching for a space that defends African culture.

It is evident that these perspectives and worldviews have had implications for sustainable development discourses and practices, notably in terms of facilitating transformative social action in Africa. The thesis does not support the choice of one dominant discourse over the other. Instead, both approaches are outlined, critiqued and affirmed by reorganising the role of ‘modern’ institutions in the light of cultural resources provided by modernity’s ‘Other’, which Odora Hoppers calls it ‘second-level indigenisation’ (Odora Hoppers & Richards 2011:35–36).

At a community action level, the study examined the contributions of selected cases of three civil societies to societal transformation in light of discharging the following multiple roles, which are interdependent in nature. This includes the followings:

- The **coordination and mediation role**, which is the function of representing multiple interests of society, acting as an intermediary between state, family and the individual, and providing mediation activities.
- The **communicative function**, which is the capacity of communicating people's concerns to the public sphere and broadening civil society's contributions in the public sphere.
- The **protective role**, which is about the capacity for creating space which is independent of the state.
- The **control function**, which refers to the capacity to build a countervailing power, inhibiting states from dominating powers.
- *The socialisation role*, which refers to the capacity of CSOs to mobilise societal resources and 'teach' democratic behaviours.
- The **solidarity function**, which is about the capacity for building identity and solidarity.
- The **service delivery role**, which refers to the capacity for delivering more efficient social services than the state and the market.
- The **global citizenship function**, which is about the capacity to mobilise citizens virtually across common global causes such as climate change and adaptation, HIV and AIDS, global peace.

It is important to highlight that in the analysis of the functions of the CSOs in this study; the multifaceted functions are interdependent and are not mutually exclusive. They are influenced and determined by the type of relationships that exist between civil society, the government and the private sector in any given country at a given period in time. What is important in the empirical investigation is how these functions can be fulfilled and counterbalanced or complemented by the way CSOs, government and the private sector operate in facilitating societal transformation and advancing equitable and sustainable growth and positive social change in a given country.

1.7 Research methodology and field experiences

The study acknowledges that diverse epistemological and ontological orientations have led to the prominence of four major research paradigms, including positivist, interpretive, transformative and indigenous research. Given the main tenet of this research and the complex nature and dynamics of civil society, this study outlines the challenges of the research methodology pursued by a positivist orientation from its outset. This does not mean that the study entirely dismisses some of the merits of quantitative research instruments, which are even used to enrich the empirical analysis and presentations of this research finding.

Taking the normative nature of the civil society concept and the various ideological debates associated to it, the positivist approach is less relevant since it rationalises research by discovering laws that can uniformly govern the universe through ontological assumptions of realities that can be determined by probability calculations. This orientation is not however fully applicable to this study, since the identities, collective actions and functions of CSOs are greatly influenced by specific cultural contexts, political histories and community resources.

In this regard, the study shares the views of Odora Hoppers and Richards (2011:94–96), who describe the challenges of “the positivist illusion” and the limitation of the positivist research method, which is not receptive to the study of indigenous knowledge systems and indigenous institutions such as that of ‘traditional’ CSOs, since what the indigenous people know and own is not considered scientific or (according to positivist labelling) does not qualify as scientific research method tests.

Instead, this research acknowledges the growing body of knowledge and research methods that address the shortcomings of positivists over the past three decades and it highlights the relevance of these qualitative research methods for CSOs and societal transformation. In particular, the methods for this study were influenced by interpretative, transformative and indigenous research paradigms and their related methodologies.

The study does not attempt to completely dismiss the merit of quantitative research methods. Instead, the study employed the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods, when appropriate, to describe, analyse and present empirical findings and field observations of the three communities working with the Tesfa Social Development Association (TSDA), the Gurage People Self-Help Development Organisation (GPSDO)

and the Community Based Integrated Sustainable Development Organisation (CBISDO). The researcher approached each of these CSOs with open-mindedness and a willingness to learn without preconceived opinions or hypotheses. The research experience by itself had transformative value in helping and empowering local key informants and respondents (resource people) in reconstructing knowledge that carries hope, promotes transformation and facilitates social change.

It is evident that any phenomena to be researched can be contextualised and studied in various ways, each generating distinctive kinds of insight and understanding (Morgan in Odora Hoppers 1998:6).

Accordingly, this research process was highly iterative and employed multiple qualitative methods, which were flexible in terms of time, space and types of association. However, the research also used quantitative research instruments such as frequencies, percentages, and graphs for presentation and augmentation of the qualitative research methods.

The fieldwork for this study was conducted by the researcher with the help of three field assistants from July 2011 to August 2012.

The researcher approached the identification of the respondents and the selection of the case study organisations for this particular study by seeking the opinions of 12 key informants (seven men and five women), who were independent of the researcher. Two key informants from each of the following cross section of social groups were identified and they also participated in the study:

- civil society activists who had been active in the history of CSOs and had worked in various capacities in the civil society sector
- academicians/researchers who had engaged extensively in the study of the civil society sector
- government officials who had strong contacts and working relationships with the civil society sector
- donor representatives who had experience in managing civil society grants
- businesspeople who were famous for their support for the civil society sector and sponsorship of programmes

- founders or senior citizens of the Gurage people who were known for their leadership roles and lifetime participation in the foundation and organisational history of the Gurage Road Construction Organisation.

The researcher had to explain the purpose of the study at frequent meetings that often involved both bilateral and group discussions with informants drawn from each of the organisations used as case studies at field level. In focusing on the historical and detailed accounts of three CSOs that have been operating in two urban slum communities in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, and a rural township of Imdiber in the Gurage Administrative Zone of the Southern Nation, Nationalities and People's Regional State, a case-based analysis was used to critically examine the functions of these historically distinct types of CSO and their roles in societal transformation in Ethiopia.

The first case study organisation was a network of 'traditional' associations or a union of *Iddirs* called the Tesfa Social Development Association (TSDA). The fieldwork for this union of *Iddirs* or association was conducted in the Kolfe area, a poor urban community in Kolfe-Kernaio Sub-city of the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.

The second case study organisation was a community-based development association initiated by Gurage migrants and local business elites and supported by rural local people that had managed to survive three political regimes. It was called the Gurage Roads Construction Organisation (GRCO) but had been renamed the Gurage People Self-help Development Organisation (GPSDO). The fieldwork for the case study was carried out in the town of Imdibir (Gurage Zone Administration) in the Southern Nations and National People Regional State (SNNPRS).

The third case study organisation was the Community-Based Integrated Sustainable Development Organisation (CBISDO). It is a resident charity organisation which originated from its mother organisation, the Integrated Holistic Approach Urban Development Organization. The fieldwork was conducted in Tekle Haimanot, a poor urban slum community in Addis Ketema Sub-city in Addis Ababa.

A total of 216 (110 male and 106 female) people participated in the data collection, analysis and reflection for the three case study organisations. Of these, 80 people participated in the discussions and self-review sessions for the GPSDO, followed by 70 for the TSDA and 66 for the CBISDO. In order to ensure consistency, six focus groups were conducted with cross sections of the constituencies for each of the three cases

organisations studied. Participants for these focus groups were identified by the key informants. These cross-sections of participants included: (1) ordinary general assembly members, (2) non-association members but ordinary community members who live in the operational areas of the associations, (3) current and past executive board members, (4) local/zonal level government representatives, (5) 'traditional'/local leaders, and (6) people from the business sector.

1.8 Ethical considerations

In order to ensure that this study was carried out in an ethically sound way, it was important for me to safeguard the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of the study participants. The researcher accordingly obtained their consent to participate and protected their confidentiality.

1.8.1 Consent

In the course of the study, the researcher obtained written consent from the individuals and institutions that participated in it without coercing or unfairly pressurising anyone. The researcher informed them in detail what participation entailed, and reassured them that declining to participate in the study would not affect any rapport they might have with the researcher. Nevertheless, providing their written consent seemed to frighten a few individuals, notably the older respondents and key informants. Consequently, the researcher obtained at the very least their verbal consent and agreed with them that their real names would not appear in this thesis or in future publications.

1.8.2 Confidentiality

It was important to protect the identity of the people from whom the researcher gathered information. Thus the researcher did coding their names in codes while keeping a list of their real names in a secure file. In addition, this list was not included in the annexures to this thesis.

1.9 Limitations of the study

One of the challenges of the study is its sample size and representativeness as it is informed by a case-based analysis of three CSOs. Indeed, a sample of three out of hundreds of CSOs in the country could be considered very small and may not be fully

representative of the experiences of the civil society movement. However, it was assumed that the participants were not objects providing numerical data but intelligent, purposeful and resourceful individuals with a rich knowledge and experience of their environment.

The three organisations for the case studies were selected on the recommendations of the key informants. The level of historical analysis and detail provided by each of the three organisations was, therefore, considered sufficient to gain a proper understanding of civil society's contribution to societal transformation. Understanding the processes that generate transformational outcomes was also fundamental for analysis, instead of just collecting a set of accomplished tasks and generalising on the basis of this. For this reason, this study is consistent with the social research literature, where it is stated that a small sample size with in-depth data is likely to provide rich information from which reasonable conclusions may be drawn. (Patton 2002:10–14). In addition, the results of the community-level information-sharing and validation workshops were used to triangulate and validate the data and fine-tune the findings of the fieldwork.

As the researcher is a civil society activist and development practitioner who is very familiar with the study area, certain biases and prejudices could have influenced the data collection, analysis and reporting –albeit unconsciously. However, the involvement and guidance of independent key informants at all stages of the study process minimised possible biases and prejudices.

Another important limitation of the study is its replicability. Reliance upon the researcher's ingenuity, the absence of standard procedures to follow, being dependent on locally available historical records, and cultural differences are some of the aspects that make qualitative data collection and analysis problematic in serving as a blueprint for and replicating the study elsewhere.

1.10 Organisation of this thesis

This thesis is organised into eight chapters clustered into three parts.

Part 1 consists of chapters 1, 2 and 3. The first chapter contains the background to the study, the significance of the study, the statement of the research problem and research questions, the aim and objectives of the research, the research methodology and the fieldwork experience. It also includes the geographical coverage and descriptions of the profile of the target groups of the study.

In Chapter 2, a conceptual explanation of CSOs is given and the key theoretical framework is discussed. The chapter shows that the theories and perspectives on CSOs have different meanings and dimensions, as social, political and economic contexts differ globally. These contexts, in turn, shape and reshape the role of CSOs and their relationships with the government and other sectors of a given society. The concepts and theories that constitute the essence of CSOs are examined and their differences and similarities are investigated in different socio-political and economic contexts through key theoretical lenses. The concept of civil society is explained and the fact that it has acquired various connotations and different meanings in different scholarly discourses is underlined. The discussion shows that the space for civil society in Africa has been contested and is influenced by external ideologies oriented by liberal or neoliberal political systems, socialist military regimes, globalisation and, most recently, the developmental state approach. The chapter further analysed the conceptualisation of ‘civil society’ and the scholarly discussions on Africa’s current civil society predicament, which revolves around two dominant discourses: the ‘modernists’ and the ‘traditionalists’ views. It is argued that while the modernists take inspiration from various Eurocentric realities (including the eastern European uprisings of the late 1980s), they view civil society as an embryonic and marginal construct in Africa. They attempt to study civil society as an ‘exotic’ subject and construct the concept of civil society as if it ‘originated’ in the western world despite the rich and diverse African cultures that boast a century-old history of volunteerism and civic institutions. In the final section, the chapter analyses the way these dominant theoretical discourses are related to the practical situations and contexts in which CSOs find themselves in different parts of Africa.

Chapter 3 focuses on a methodological examination of the complex nature and dynamics of CSOs and their role in societal transformation, taking into account the normative nature of the concept itself and the various philosophical assumptions and ideologies that inform it. In exploring the dynamics of CSOs and their role in societal transformation, the importance of four major research paradigms or worldviews which have implications for the research methodology and process of this study is acknowledged. These are positivism, interpretive research, transformative research and indigenous research. In this chapter, capitalising on the study of an indigenous knowledge system approach, the importance of indigenous knowledge research in the study of human

associational life and its contribution to the development of civil societies, social change and social cohesion are also acknowledged.

Part 2 presents the historical and empirical findings and consists of Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Accordingly, Chapter 4 contains an analysis of the genesis and development of the civil society sector in successive political environments (the legal and regulatory framework, political economy and ideological perspectives) in Ethiopia. It begins with a discussion of the state of CSOs during the Feudal Monarchical Regime (1930–1974), focusing on the implications of the 1963 civil code for the country and its impact on the rise and development of ‘traditional’ CSOs. This is followed by a review of the situation experienced by the civil society sector, focusing on the influx of ‘modern’ CSOs, notably international NGOs, in response to the devastating famine of 1984/1985 and the mushrooming of Marxist-Leninist-oriented mass organisations during the Military Socialist Government Regime led by Lt Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam (1975–1990). The last section of the chapter deals with the state of CSOs and the dynamics of their functions under the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) led government which came to power in May 1991 and still rules the country today. The focus here is on the promulgation of the Charities and Societies Proclamation in 2009 and its implications for the current operation of the various groups of CSOs in Ethiopia.

Chapter 5 focuses on the state of social transformation in the light of the Gurage Road Construction Organisation, which was founded in 1961 by Gurage communities and renamed the Gurage People’s Self-help Development Organisation (GPSDO). The organisation has been engaged in various development activities for the past half a century, targeting the rural communities of the Gurage land. In this chapter, the Gurage land and its people are briefly introduced, followed by an analysis of the history of the GPSDO and its contribution to the societal transformation process in the Gurage land. A discussion on the associational life and civic responsibilities of Gurage communities as brokered through the GPSDO then follows. The collective civic actions and their impact are also examined, focusing on the key functions of CSOs.

In Chapter 6, societal transformation in terms of the context and experiences of the Tesfa Social Development Association (TSDA), a union of Iddirs in the Kolfe area (Kolfe Kernaio Sub-city) in Addis Ababa is examined. This chapter explores the way this network of ‘traditional’ associations, which was initiated by ‘traditional’ Iddirs and run by ordinary citizens, transformed itself from providing funeral-focused services to performing

multifaceted social functions in both urban and rural areas of Ethiopia. The chapter also examines how the association, which at the outset had no external technical and financial resources, has facilitated societal transformation and maintained principled partnerships with relevant government bodies and international donors.

In Chapter 7, the Community-Based Integrated Sustainable Development Organisation (CBISDO) is examined. This organisation originated from the Integrated Holistic Approach –Urban Development Project (IHA-UDP) which was reregistered as an ‘Ethiopian residents charity’ in accordance with the Charities and Societies Proclamation no. 621/2009. The state of societal transformation and the experiences of the CBISDO in Tekle Haimanot (Addis Ketema Sub-city) in Addis Ababa are analysed. The challenges of brokering societal transformation through CBISDO’s client oriented and project interventionist approach is examined.

The last part, Chapter 8, summarises and concludes the study and provides pathways for the future. This chapter links the empirical findings to the theoretical discussions and draws a number of implications for the future. It proposes the importance of bridging the theoretical divide between ‘modernist’ and ‘traditionalist’ perspectives on civil society. It shows the critical pathways that should be following in order to harness the catalytic roles of ‘traditional’ civil societies and enhance principled partnership between civil and political societies in the future course of societal transformation in Africa.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework and Theoretical Approaches

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by defining the concept of civil society and constructing a conceptual understanding of civil society organisations (CSOs), although there is no consensus among scholars regarding the meanings of the term and its applications. My first aim is to simplify the term, to understand how local people in the study areas conceive it from their own perspectives in their own languages and relate it to the operational definitions of CSOs used by different scholars. It is no less challenging to establish a frame of reference for the study while relating the concepts to their theoretical roots, lenses and frameworks. It would appear that the theories and perspectives on CSOs acquire different meanings and dimensions as the social, political and economic contexts change and the ideological orientations of scholars, governments, donors and CSOs differ. It is thus important to examine the diverse socio-political discourses under which CSOs are conceptualised, their roles are defined and their shapes in any given society are moulded.

Therefore, the concepts and theories that constitute the essence of CSOs, their identities and functions in major historical and socio-political discourses were critically examined. I explored the way in which the civil society space in Africa has been contested and subsequently influenced by major external ideologies and political orientations in terms of the classical period, liberal and neoliberal political systems, socialist military regimes, globalisation and developmental states.

In the last section of this chapter, two dominant civil society discourses are identified: the ‘modernist’ and the Africanist/‘traditionalist’ views, and these are subsequently critically examined. Finally, the chapter highlights the main discussion points.

2.2 Review of dominant theoretical discourses on civil society organizations

The concept of civil society is as old as humankind, yet it has recently become a popular subject in daily newspapers and magazines. I argue that the history of civil society started when human beings began to do what they wanted to do collectively in their associational lives, including the way they produce, socially associate, spiritually worship,

culturally promote, politically empower and individually relate with others to gratify their needs. On the other hand, the subject of civil society can be said to be fresh since it has earned new currency in the 'development' sphere and has attracted the attention of 'international' development scholars, practitioners and international donors.

It is increasingly observed that the new international 'development' agenda is concerned with political conditionality in exchange for a stronger civil society that can contribute to 'democratic' governance and human rights in the south, notably in Africa. The role of international development aid agencies in such an equation has become so critical that such agencies have geared their resources to the strengthening of 'modern' CSOs in their quest for genuine citizen participation in sustainable development and dealing with the challenges of working with the insufficiency of government and market circles, notably in the global South and East. This complicates the already existing ambiguity, bias and lack of consensus on the conceptualisation of civil society and the role of CSOs in societal transformation.

Scholars who have attempted to approach the study of CSOs have also drawn up epistemological schemes based on their different worldviews, focusing on how things (structures, organisations or identities) come to be made real, defined and understood. Other scholars on the other hand focus on ontological approaches to studying CSOs, defining what things 'are', charting out their existence and finding methodology to uncover the truth of their being (Corry 2010:12).

Some scholars were primarily concerned with the origin and historical development of these organisations, examining the genesis and evolutionary paths of CSOs. Others were concerned with the meaning, essence and elements of civil society, subsequently making a diagnosis of what civil society constitutes and does not constitute. Others still focused on the roles and functions of CSOs, and drew attention to their mandates in development practice and the facilitation of the social transformation process.

When it comes to Africa, civil society studies that connected and transcended the various features of CSOs from non-Western perspectives have been limited. Even these scarce studies have focused mainly on their operational issues and internal businesses.

As mentioned previously, the theories and perspectives on CSOs take on different meanings and dimensions as the social, political and economic contexts change globally. These contexts, in turn, shape and reshape the role of CSOs and their relationships with the government and other sectors of a given society.

In this section, I attempt to critically examine the concepts and theories that constitute the essence of CSOs, and investigate their divergence and convergence in different politico-historical discourses through key theoretical lenses. This exercise definitely helps one to understand the state of civil society and its special place in the philosophical and ideological underpinnings that determine power relations in civil society, the polity and the private sector. Despite the very extensive literature and debates on the subject, scholars have not reached consensus on a single theory of civil society; consequently, this research explores the diverse theoretical discourses and perspectives on civil society that influence practice.

2.2.1 *Defining the concept of civil society*

There is wide range of conceptualisations and definitions of civil society used in the literature (Jensen 2006: 40; Ljubownikow, Crotty & Rodgers 2013:154; Lewis 2010:1060). The meaning of ‘civil society’ is illusive and sometimes foggy owing to its diverse theoretical origins, disciplinary traditions and political economy discourses (Obadare, 2014:475; Mati, 2014:215). I, therefore, prefer to start by defining what ‘civil’ is and then construct and extend its meanings in the context of CSOs. I explore the operational definitions of CSOs as applied by different authors in recent years. I also outline the common treatment of these definitions in order to establish a working definition of a CSO for the purpose of this study.

The English word ‘civil’ is derived from the Latin word *civilis*, which broadly denotes the ordinary life of citizens as distinguished from military, legal or ecclesiastical affairs (*Collins English dictionary*, 2011). It relates or belongs to citizens, public life or what befits citizens. This makes it synonymous to the popular, affable and courteous acts of citizens.

It is relevant to use the different terms which are widely used in Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia, to understand the conceptualisation of civil society in Ethiopian context. One of the most common Amharic terms used to describe associational life is *Mahiber*, while most local or international NGOs which are relatively recent in the history of the country are categorically labelled as *Gibre-Senay Dirigit* (which literally means welfare-oriented charity organisation). The common phrase *civil mahibereseb* is used in the Amharic language to describe the civic sector of society, implying the sectors excluding the military and the business communities. It is relevant to note that the

Ethiopian Ministry of Transport assigned vehicle plates under the code of *Iridata dirigit*, meaning aid organisations and implying the roles of international non-government organisations and those registered as Ethiopian resident charities. Likewise, the Amharic phrase *Mengistawi Yalhonu Dririgitoch* is used to refer explicitly to NGOs. From these Amharic definitions, we can conclude that while the Amharic phrase *Mengistawi yalhonu dirigitoch* (NGOs) mainly connotes the broad category of a society which falls outside the government and the profit-making spheres, the phrase *Gibre-Senay Dirigit* focuses on the not-for-profit and charity functions of these organisations. In addition, the Amharic phrase *Iridata drigit* signifies the aid function of these organisations and the term generically refers to international NGOs that often come up with financial assistance from international sources. The Amharic word *Mahiber* commonly refers to local, people-owned and membership-based grassroots associations.

Wassie, Melese and Dessalegn (2011:25) identify ‘traditional’ CSOs that have been in existence across five ethnic groups in Ethiopia by different names to fulfil civic functions, or promote social welfare and mutual support functions of their respective communities in Ethiopia.

Table 2.1: Matrix of ‘traditional’ CSOs among cross-sections of ethnic groups in Ethiopia

Types of civil society function	Oromo	Kambatta	Amhara	Gurage	Sidama
CSOs for labour cooperation	Dabbo	Gezma	Wonfel	Gaze	Dabo
CSOs for social mutual support and funeral societies	Dabare	Hera	Iddirs	Iddir	Iddir
CSOs for promoting social welfare and social assistance	Eeba Ogdi	Goggota	Mahiber	Kicha	

(Source: Adapted by the author from Wassie, Melese & Dessalegn 2011:25)

It is evident from Table 2.1 that all the five ethnic groups in Ethiopia have developed their own ‘traditional’ CSOs under different names to advance their associational life, promote labour cooperation and social welfare or extend mutual support and social assistance among their respective societies.

De Oliveira and Tendon (1994:27) point out that human beings have always come together for a common cause and this compassionate nature of humankind is expressed in an associational life of diverse character and objectives. These acts of collective and associational life institutionally constitute civil society.

Makumbe (1998:305), on the basis of the realities in East Africa countries, defines 'civil society' as "an aggregate of institutions whose members are engaged primarily in complex of non-state activities – economic and cultural production, voluntary associations, and household life – and who in this way preserve and transform their identities by exercising all sorts of pressures or controls upon state institutions".

Similarly but loosely, Clayton (1996:7) defines 'CSOs' as diverse forms of organisations that exist outside the state and the market to provide counterbalancing functions to both the state and the market.

Migdal (1988:13) considers 'civil society' as a group that is freely created on the basis of common interest to serve as a bridge between society and government. Similarly, Gramsci (1971:11) refers to 'civil society' as those groups which are freely organised outside of the political sphere on the basis of common interests and which work towards protecting their relative autonomy and realising the interests and wishes of their members.

A definition of 'civil society' by the London School of Economics views it as an arena of unforced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values, whose institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market – though in practice the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often blurred and negotiated (Anheier2000:6–8).

The European Commission (EC) considers 'civil society' as non-state and not-for-profit structures (such as membership-based, cause-based or service-oriented organisations) through which people organise themselves to pursue shared objectives and ideals. They can be local, national, regional or international. They can operate in urban and rural areas and through formal and informal organisations (EC 2012:3).

In his assessment of the work of CSOs in Ethiopia, Dessalegn (2002:104) refers to CSOs as institutions that commonly include a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms and that vary in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. He portrays civil societies as organisational spaces populated by various forms such as developmental NGOs, registered charities, faith-based organisations, community groups, women's organisations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups.

In the light of the above definitions and for the purpose of this study, I prefer to identify CSOs by their dominant features in any given society so that they refer to citizens' associational lives that are guided by volunteerism and operate outside of government and

business circles, standing for non-profit purposes that unite individual citizens outside of their families for common civic causes. They can be informally or formally registered legal entities whose sizes range from a tiny territorial-based grassroots community group to large global virtual communities or movements.

In the next section, I will outline and discuss the key conceptual understanding of CSOs in the context of the various theoretical perspectives, which in some cases are disconnected or overlap with each other, depending on the political, economic and social realities that generated the thoughts and shaped the dominant discourses.

2.2.2 *Civil society during the classical period*

Civil society was understood by classical scholars as a political association governing social conflict through the imposition of rules that restrained citizens from harming one another. The concept was used as a synonym for the ‘good’ society and was seen as being indistinguishable from the state (Edwards 2005:6).

The understanding of the classical period thinkers simply stemmed from the assumption that all human beings are inherently rational and can collectively shape the nature of their respective societies. They also thought that human beings have the capacity to voluntarily gather for common causes and the power to maintain peace in their respective societies.

As highlighted in the work of De Lue (2002:59–60), early classical philosophers like Aristotle and Plato attempted to characterise ‘civilised’ society as a society that defined rights and obligations and whose politics were guided by ethics and principles instead of violence and barbaric acts. Like these philosophers, Socrates believed in dialogue and negotiations underlying the importance of public debates, dialectical discussion and persuasion as mechanisms for the resolution of competing differences among individuals or groups. De Lue (2002:60).

Although not in the same vein and passion of the former Greek society, we can say that Cicero’s work *Societas civilis*, together with Roman law, was prominent in influencing the extensive use and wider application of the notion of a ‘good society’ and individuals’ civil culture in ensuring peace and order not only among a small community of citizens but also in the entire Roman Empire (DKA 2010:4–11).

For the classical period philosophers, therefore, the state was a civil form to fulfil societal needs, while individuals had to demonstrate ‘civility’ as the sign and manifestation of good citizenship.

Nonetheless, the emergence of territorial-based units of a feudal political system and the need for maintaining class relations and sovereignty among communities and nation states in Europe during the Middle Ages superseded and could not live with the ideal of civil society in the classical period. As stated in the human rights and civil society policy paper of the Austrian Development Cooperation Agency of Catholic Children’s Movement(DKA 2010:4–11), a dominant feudal political system emerged and the monarchs of western Europe were able to exert pressure on ordinary citizens by forming national armies, deploying professional bureaucracies and setting up tax and fiscal departments which helped them to control the economy and maintain direct control and supreme authority over their subjects. This led to what was called absolutism, which was the manifestation of state power over the citizenship. It is evident that with the advancement of scientific discoveries and the Enlightenment period, the classical school of thought gradually faded and the debates on civil society took on a different shape, as reviewed in the following section.

I argue that the classical period view of civil society is applicable to explain the state of ‘traditional’ CSOs and the absolutist power that prevailed extensively in Ethiopia under the successive feudal monarchs. The partnership between the successive feudal political regimes and the Orthodox Church was very strong such that the monarchs enjoyed absolute authoritarian power over the masses and, unfortunately, unlike their European counterparts, this dominant political system was sustained for many centuries up until the 1974 socialist revolution.

2.2.3 Civil society during the Enlightenment period

Kaviraj (2001:289) states that the absolutist nature of the state in the classical period was disputed and replaced by the essence of humanism and the findings of the scientific revolution during the Enlightenment period. Scholars of this period were best known for their belief in the inherent goodness of the human mind and the importance of equality among all human beings. Unlike the classical period, they questioned the legitimacy of a heredity-based political system and challenged the moral and divine powers that the feudal political system used to legitimise and consolidate its power. They challenged the

partnership between the state and religion on the grounds that such conditions were the enemies of human progress and well-being. While the coercive apparatus of the state curbed individual liberty, the religious apparatus legitimated monarchs to impose their absolute divine power over their people. Therefore, both the political and religious systems were deemed to be against the will of the people to unite themselves and form strong civic structures.

As pointed out by Kaviraj (2001:289), the political philosophers of the Enlightenment period (like Hobbes and Locke) worked towards the re-ordering of social relations and made a distinction between natural and human law. Some of their attempts led to the emergence of social contract theory, which contested social relations existing in accordance with human nature. The proponents of the Enlightenment period argued that human nature can be understood by analysing objective realities and natural law conditions. They endorsed a contractual system whereby all human beings were rationally governed by established positive laws that determined and marked the boundaries among the people as well as between the state and the people. Therefore, for the proponents of the Enlightenment period, it is the rationality and self-interests of human beings that persuade them to live together and enhance their coexistence under common terms and conditions, for which civil society has important binding functions.

In this regard, Kaviraj (2001:289–291) points out that it was during this period that John Locke, one of the scholars of the time, forged a social contract theory with dual scenarios. Kaviraj argues that the following two conditions make the role of civil groups highly relevant for maintaining social equilibrium. First, he argues that ordinary people come together to sign a contract that constitutes and submits to a common public authority. This political authority has the power to enact and maintain laws but shall respect and advance the basic rights of human beings, which include the democratic values of preservation of life, liberty and property. Second, he adds that the state can consolidate its power over and above the will of its civil groups and can be an autocracy if it is not brought under reliable restrictions. It is under both these conditions that the roles of civil groups become relevant to social equilibrium.

In view of the above arguments, one can conclude that the social contract perspectives by both Hobbes and Locke set forth a system where by peaceful coexistence among human beings could be ensured through social pacts or contracts. They considered civil society as a community that maintained civil life, the realm where civic virtues and

rights were derived from natural laws. However, they failed to mark a separate realm between the state and civil society. Instead, they overemphasised the coexistence of the state and civil society.

To sum up, civil society during the Enlightenment period was understood as entities whose nature and purpose were defined by virtue of individuals' 'social contract'. Their significance in a given society was recognised as mutually beneficial to advancing common social causes in partnership with the government and, in turn, creating a state that existed for the advancement of civil liberty.

2.2.4 Civil society during the industrialisation/modernisation period

Civil society discourse changed during the modernisation period since the scholars of this period such as Hegel were triggered by the emergence of a 'market' society in addition to the existence of just 'modern' nation-state institutions.

Mamdani (1996:14, 15) acknowledges Hegel's notion of civil society and his contribution to the rise of a 'modern' liberal understanding. Placed in between the patriarchal family and the universal state, Hegel understood civil society as the historical product of a two-dimensional process in the 'modern' state. On the one hand, the spread of commodity relations diminished the weight of extra economic coercion, which resulted in freeing up the economy from the sphere of politics. On the other hand, the centralisation of means of violence within the 'modern' state stood alongside the settlement of differences within society without direct recourse to violence. Therefore, the peaceful and non-violent contractual relations among free and autonomous individuals could only be covered by civil law recognising the unequivocal rights of citizens. Hence, civil society for Hegel was the symbol of a 'civilised' society, where the distinct character of the 'modern' state was to recognise the rights of citizens and ensure that the citizens adhered to and ruled by law-governed behaviours (Mamdani 1996:16).

Another proponent of the civil society discourse during the industrialisation period was Karl Marx, who was supportive of the role of the market in modern society, but his analysis was different from Hegel's in that he rejected the positive role of the state put forth by Hegel (Marx 1976). He considered civil society as the collection of relations embedded in the market, where the agency that defines its character was the bourgeoisie. In other words, he considered civil society as the base where productive forces and social relations took place while political society was the superstructure. Marx did not regard the

state as a neutral problem solver since the superstructure represents the interests of the dominant class and the executive arms of the bourgeoisie socioeconomic and political systems and not the workers (Mamdani 2006:14, 15).

It is worth noting that this outlook on civil society was rectified by Gramsci, who departed somehow from both Hegel and Marx since he did not equate civil society only with two contradictory interests: the market and the public opinion. Sjögren (2001:30) points out that Gramsci attributed the good functioning of society to three actors: the state, the economy and society. For Gramsci, civil society represents the public opinion and the culture so that its agents are intellectuals, and its hallmarks are voluntary associations and free publicity. Gramsci further stated that civil society cannot stand by itself and the guarantor of the autonomy of civil society can be none except the state. Instead of viewing civil society in a capitalist economy as a problem, Gramsci saw it as part of a problem-solving agent which plays a key role in defending people's interests against the state and the market by asserting the values of democratic will (such as the ideas, values and ideologies of the people) in uplifting, stabilising or influencing the state (Chambers 2002:90–102).

Therefore, as Sjögren (2001:29) indicates, the problem-solving process by CSOs can bring about what Gramsci refers to as a passive revolution, which is a form of incomplete alteration but a reconstruction of a society resulting from external forces without completely altering the old order by dealing with anomalies and inadequacies. This creates a social equilibrium where the new order fails to establish hegemony while the old order is incapable of reinforcing its former power; the outcome is an impasse between the old and the new orders. In Gramsci's view, this occurs through a quasi-transformation process which involves the absorption of oppositional forces by the dominant power and the assimilation or gradual incorporation of the potentially dangerous organised opposition through the construction of a broad coalition (Cox 1999:7–15).

2.2.5. *Civil society and the liberal approach*

Under the liberal approach, civil society is conceptualised as a realm outside of the state, focused on guaranteeing the freedom of individuals and aiming at fighting despotism. The concept of civil society is, therefore, established as “a space in which social groups could co-exist and move – something which exemplified and would ensure softer, and more tolerable conditions of existence among social groups” (Hall 1995:11).

As a defender of free citizens against authoritarian and dictatorial rule, the liberal concept is inevitably rooted in the spirit of individualism (Hall 1995:15). A civil society may not be feasible without an individual person who can take individual promises and commitments seriously by standing for common associational causes without being partial to blood or kinship ties (Gellener 1995:41), and with “civil qualities” that demonstrate a sense of civic responsibility to all humankind (Shils 1997:71). In other words, the concept of civil society implies the inseparable multiple roles of individuals who stand for civic causes; they simultaneously represent a private family member, an economically active businessperson and/or a political citizen (Arato & Cohen 1992:219).

Provided that civil society is seen as the sphere in which the rights of the individual to a private life, freedom and property are protected from state arbitrariness, the liberal view is that it is only in areas where free individuals transfer parts of their rights to the government that the state can intervene in individual life in the spirit of ensuring the security of life and the property and freedom of individuals. Liberals tend to limit the prominent role of government to just maintaining peace and stability, while upholding the social order approved by the majority.

It is for this reason that the liberal approach does not consider civil society as opposition to or in control of the state. It simply views civil society as standing outside a minimal state, yet it determines the boundaries of governmental rule. In this sense, Shils (1997:74) points out that “civil society is the governor which regulates both the economy and the government although both are, to some degree, autonomous”. From this viewpoint, we can note that the presence of civil society signifies the privacy of individual rights, the right for a public sphere (free speech and association) and the equality of all before the law.

As liberal thinkers, both De Tocqueville and Montesquieu have conceptualised civil society based on their notion of freedom of association (Foley & Edwards 1996:39). They underline that civil society is more than a sphere outside the state protected from governmental rule since it also acts as a countervailing force which balances and subsequently controls state power (De Tocqueville 1968:11). According to this perspective, civil society counterbalances despotism and controls the state, which is essential to complement democratic state institutions, to ensure the functioning of democratic rules and regulations, and to prevent the centralisation of state powers (Keane 1988b: 35-72).

According to the views of De Tocqueville (1968:10–14), the equality and the rule of the many undermined the achievements of cultural life and endangered the freedom of the individual. His solution entailed the reinforcement of liberal institutions such as local self-government, free press and independent associations in order to balance the power of the state. He therefore extolled civil society groups as classrooms for democracy, and institutions for inculcating democratic political culture among their members (Kew 2005).

This view is also evident in Gellener's (1995:32) analysis, where civil society is understood as the set of institutions that constitute diverse non-governmental institutions which are strong enough to counterbalance the state but cannot prevent the state from fulfilling its peace-keeping role or from acting as an arbitrator between major groups or from dominating the rest of society.

Similarly, Walzer (1995:7) points out that a 'modern' civil society is created through forms of self-constitution and self-mobilisation. It is institutionalised and generalised through laws. It constitutes the space of un-coerced human association and the set of relational networks. Parsons, a prominent liberal sociologist whose work has had an impact on the current civil society debate, not only differentiates civil society from the state but also from the economy and the cultural sphere valuing its autonomy. This distinction is a dissociating reaction on Hegel's work, which influenced him. Parsons regards civil society as superior to the state and as giving the state legitimacy, which makes the state dependent on civil society (in Cohen & Arato 1992:117–132). The main task of civil society is, therefore, to protect its citizens from state power and its most important function is to integrate a differentiated social system by institutionalising cultural values and norms which in turn are socially accepted and used (ibid.130–32).

In summary, the liberals consider civil society as institutions or organisations that are autonomous from the state and primarily exist to represent the interests of citizens and to counterbalance the power relations with the government. This approach is criticised for an over focus on formal associational life, neglecting the informal dimension of associational life which might exist instead (Hann & Dunn 1996:5–7). It also implies that the civil society sector represents a homogenous space, overtly focusing on the autonomy of civil society rather than its intermediary nature. The liberals' promoters such as the Tocquevilian followers also neglect the economic dimension and functions of civil society (Evers & Laville 2004:15).

2.2.6. *Civil society and the pluralist approach*

The pluralist approach to civil society is slightly different from the view point of the liberals. Sjögren (2001a:21–22) points out that the pluralists underline the importance of multifaceted CSOs and the value they add to building democratic blocks in the construction of a vibrant democratic nation. They focus on the role of intermediary organisations and associations and their facilitating functions between society and the state spheres in pursuit of the enhancement of democratisation process.

Unlike the liberals, the pluralists argue that the basic element that supports the democratisation process and links the civic with the political society is not just an individual citizen. Instead, it is the presence of plural organisations and their mediation functions with the state that contributes to the presence of accountable government. The pluralists have, therefore, made it highly conditional that the presence of equal opportunity available for CSOs influences decision-making processes; moreover, the equal representation of CSOs in various interest groups make political power holders accountable to citizens. Sjögren (2001a:23–48), who extensively analysed the pluralist approach, believes that a well-organised civil society has the capacity to resolve conflict peacefully by mediating various competing interests. Without strong civil society roles, social group conflict undermines the democratisation process and this can lead to social instability and the disintegration of a given society.

Lipset (1981:34), on his part, points out that democracy becomes unstable and society tends to be less tolerant whenever historic cleavages fail to mix with and accommodate the differences of incompatibilities. In other words, they argue that a society that is organised in a way that crosscuts major historical cleavages and that consists of members from cross sections of associations with united plural features stabilise the creation of a democratic system. To this end, the pluralist approach advocates for the presence of multiple memberships across diverse types of organisation, which leads to the formation of a strong social mechanism for compromise and for the integration of diverse interests. The plurality of CSOs is, therefore, regarded as a guarantor of peaceful and stable democracy in any given society.

In relocating this approach to the African context, I argue that the pluralists view supports and values the presence of multitudes of CSOs and their representation

contributes to the peaceful coexistence and stability and the democratisation processes of the nations.

2.2.7. Civil society and the neoliberal approach

The emergence of ‘neoliberal’ democratic regimes at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s has contributed to the revitalisation of the concept and role of civil society as the primary locus for the expansion of democracy. Arato and Cohen (1992: viii) state that the neoliberals viewed civil society as a means of self-organisation and self-government for searching for solutions to problems inherent in contemporary democratic systems that are endangered by neo-corporatist arrangements and influential interest groups.

Habermas (1996:65–67), a prominent scholar of the time, points out that civil society is one of the potential ways of achieving deliberative and stable democracy. Indeed, it is a social sphere in which citizens can debate freely and independently of the state and other authorities. It serves as a conduit to connect private citizens in the public sphere, which is often dominated by mass media and large corporations.

Mamdani (1996:15), in his reflection on the theories and practice of Habermas, points out that Habermas’ approach accentuates both structural processes and strategic initiatives in explaining the historical formation of civil society. In the context of a structural change embedded in the transformation of state and economy, the strategic initiatives of an embryonic bourgeoisie class shape an associational life along voluntary and democratic principles. In other words, in complex societies the public sphere consists of an intermediary structure between the political system, on the one hand, and the private-sector functional system on the other.

Thus, for neoliberals, civil society represents the third sphere, distinct from political and economic society and independent of both state and market. It is private in content and public in character, and consists of the public spheres of societal communication and voluntary association. This can comprise the network of associations that institutionalises problem-solving discourses on questions of general interest inside the framework of organised public spheres. Therefore, civil society is an enabler for citizens to contribute to and shape the discourse which is taking place within the political public sphere. It has the potential to legitimise democratic decision-making, enhance the acceptance of democratic procedures and contribute to deliberate decision-making.

This implies that the neoliberals assume civil society to play a radical democratic and emancipator role by influencing policy and moulding political culture without direct entry into the field of political power without necessarily endangering liberal or democratic institutions.

They also opt for supporting social movements and initiatives led by intellectuals, concerned citizens and radical professionals, which have the advantage of sensing, detecting and identifying new problem situations by mobilising the public by way of mass protests and public campaigns.

Nonetheless, the neoliberals still admit that the public advocacy function of civil societies could become effective so long as their voices pass through the filters of the institutionalised procedures of democratic opinion and are channelled through parliamentary debates and transformed into what Habermas calls “communicative power” (Habermas 1996:65–67).

At practice level, the neoliberal supporters, particularly the western-based governments and international donors, have attempted to prescribe the neoliberal approach in Africa as a mechanism for the reduction of the state and increase of the space for civil society. This has made civil society the right policy prescription under the banner of ‘good governance’ to improve the performance of African states. Such policies and international aids have resulted in African states being perceived as bad and the civil society sector as inherently good. Thus, civil society was seen both as a counterweight to a “bad state” and as a replacement for a “reduced state” (Lewis 2002:569–586).

Mati (2014:221), in his analysis of neoliberalism and forms of civil society discourse over the past two decades, states that there has been a deliberate attempt by neoliberals to delegitimise the African state by framing it in the language of good governance and economic liberalisation.

In Mati’s view, this twin push has gradually resulted in increased financial support for NGOs, most of them exclusively foreign owned and/or created and funded with no organic roots in Africa. For him, the twinning of political pluralism and economic liberalisation came at a great price, especially for the African states and the ever-present organic grassroots or ‘traditional’ forms of associational life in Africa. He concludes that most foreign-owned or created NGOs in Africa share common orientations with their paymasters regarding the states in Africa. As a result, they often attempt to delegitimise the state and the African grassroots CSOs.

Mati (2014:220–221) further argues that the neoliberal world outlook has given rise to the legitimacy of the work of western-based ‘modern’ CSOs and continues to undermine the development of ‘traditional’ African CSOs. It has given such international NGOs an upper hand to frequently receive aid from overseas donors to carry out governance building, advocacy work and basic service delivery within the African states.

Shivji (2007:34), who is critical of the motive of the neoliberal approach, argues that the sudden rise of western NGOs and their extensive presence in Africa is part of a neoliberal project to change Africa in their own way without understanding it. Robbin (2002:128) adds that the expansion of western NGOs is the result of the neoliberal economic and political agenda of the western world that seeks to minimise the role of African states and want to govern development from a remote location.

In summary, the proponents of the neoliberal democratic approach consider ‘modern’ CSOs as consisting of citizens who are capable and willing to stand up for their rights and participate in democratic politics. CSOs can, therefore, be taken as vehicles and schools for democracy by the neoliberals and they expect them to play constructive roles in the democratisation process by socialising their members through developing the civil qualities that are essential for democracy. However, the neoliberal approach has neglected the roles and powers of ‘traditional’ African CSOs which have emerged more organically out of African social contexts. Thus the use of neoliberal systems and procedures that empower the role of ‘modern’ CSOs in the design and delivery of policies and practices that affect African people only reflects and legitimises the influence of western governments and international donors, which in the end do not yield sustainable solutions in answer to citizens demands and their empowerment in democratic nation building.

2.2.8. Civil society and the social capital approach

The proponents of the social capital approach argue that social capital is the basic glue that holds society together. This is possible because as Patnam (1993:167) puts it, “social capital constitutes features of social organisations such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions”.

It is evident for the followers of the social capital approach that the presence of social trust and horizontal networks of civic activities contribute to economic and institutional success by facilitating coordinated actions and generating spontaneous cooperation for mutual benefit.

Putnam (1993:173) further argues that networks of civic commitment have a powerful effect because they increase the potential costs of individual transactions, foster robust norms of reciprocity, facilitate communication and improve the flow of information about the trustworthiness of individuals. This means that social networks, voluntary associations or organisations are the important vehicles to facilitate social cooperation and nurture democratisation culture.

In light of this, I argue that the social capital approach is highly relevant for explaining the situation of civic society organisations in Ethiopia and the rest of Africa. For example, horizontally ordered civil groups such as *Iddirs*, *Equbs*, and *Mahibers* among the ‘traditional’ CSOs or sport clubs, cooperatives and farmers’ unions among the ‘modern’ CSOs are important institutions that serve to help ordinary citizens build mutual trust, set shared goals, facilitate collective action and promote good governance.

Therefore, as per the proponents of the social capital approach, these diverse forms of CSOs build social capital, trust and shared values, which can be transferred to the political sphere and help to hold society together by facilitating the shared understanding of the interconnectedness of society and the interests within it.

This means that social capital in any given society can play a significant role in building democracy and promoting collective action from below. As Putnam (2000:89) argues, failure to capitalise on the social capital of any given nation would mean that they have little hope of constructing a stable democratic order, enhancing sustainable social change and facilitating societal transformation.

2.2.9. *Civil society and the communitarian approach*

The communitarian approach is very similar to the social capital approach but it is different because of its focus on the ability to create identity and solidarity and to promote the interests of individuals at a community level. Walzer (1995:33) points out that communitarianism evolved from the criticism of liberalism, since the liberal approach undermines the inherent link between the individual and the community that produces the individual.

Walzer (1995:34–61) argues that individuals are seen as sole creative beings without locating the individual as a social being whose identity is formed in communities. The proponents of this approach highlight that the very basis on which individuals and

individual rights rely can be undermined without an interest oriented at the common good and without a civic virtue, civic commitment, solidarity and encompassing interests.

Therefore, communitarianism seems to have been concerned with the deteriorating associational life in 'advanced' capitalist and social democratic countries (Walzer 1995:29–31). The steady decrease of everyday cooperation and civic friendship, as well as networks through which civility is produced and reproduced, has been neglected in societies that solely capitalise on individual rights. The proponents of communitarianism argue that social networks and communities have nothing but the capacity to build social character and civic virtue elements, which are essential for the collective life and democratic culture of a nation (ibid. 32).

For this reason, communitarians underscore the importance of small communities and networks in shaping the collective identities and characters of social groups. They comprehend civil society as the revitalisation of social networks with collective identities which are oriented towards serving the public good and encompassing the social needs.

Based on this premise, I argue that the communitarian approach is highly relevant to explain the social realities of Ethiopia and the rest of Africa, as the existence of a multitude of CSOs, their solidarity functions and multifaceted roles in binding communities during good and bad times is evident. The approach can be equally applicable to explain the situation in the Western world and the importance of building community groups to serve diverse interests, regardless of who they are, in pursuit of promoting collective action.

2.2.10 Civil society, postmodernism and the third-sector approach

The perspective on civil society was further changed by postmodern scholars. In particular, the postmodern way of understanding civil society arguably developed from political opposition in the former Soviet bloc and eastern European countries in the 1980s. According to Howell (1996:185), the postmodernism perspective had its climax in the 1990s with the expanded growth of NGOs as a third sector and the emergence of global social movements.

Van Rooy (1998:12–34) argues that this trend was supported and propagated by international donors and money-lending institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the 1990s. He goes on to explain that the Washington Consensus of the 1990s, involving conditional loans by the World Bank and IMF to debt-laden developing African states, created pressure on the part of the

governments of poorer countries to shrink and channel funding through northern-based international NGOs.

Wright (2012) and Werker and Ahmed (2008) write that as the number of NGOs has grown exponentially worldwide over the past three decades, so has the amount of funds that has been channelled through these organisations for various types of ‘development’ projects.

This, in turn, has led to the perception that NGOs have a comparative advantage in more effectively managing development assistance than governments in developing countries (Edwards and Hulme 1996). For this reason, Clark (1991:61–76) points out that there has been a strategic shift in the role of NGOs and their use as instruments for the construction of an “alternative social and world order” and a mechanism for promoting good governance and providing basic social services to their citizens.

It is in line with this spirit that Fowler (1991:53–84) identifies the role of civil society in a ‘democratic’ political culture as vital. He states that the political element of many voluntary organisations facilitates better awareness and a more informed citizenry by enabling them to make informed choices about political agendas and holding their governments more accountable. He attempts to illustrate this by maintaining that the statutes of these civil organisations serve as micro-constitutions to inform their constituencies and prepare them for the process of democratic decision-making.

Critics, notably from the developmental approach, hold that such a perspective on advocacy and the political role of civil society actors can cause tension between politicians and government entities, and challenge their ‘legitimacy’, as Western-supported local NGOs are often self-appointing groups with little constituencies in the south, notably in Africa.

Along with the postmodernism approach to civil society, the ‘third-sector’ approach became highly popular during the 1990s. Fowler (1997:20, 21) identifies third-sector organisations as ones that are formally structured, independent, voluntary, self-organised, and non-profit NGOs.

Unlike critical democracy theory that stresses the participatory potential and political role of NGOs, the third-sector approach originally argued for the comparative advantage of the third sector with regard to efficiency in the provision of services.

Hulme and Edwards (1997:6) indicate that NGOs have a comparative advantage over the state and the market sectors. On the one hand, they enjoy a higher level of public

confidence and trust than the market and the government. On the other hand, they are seen as more flexible, innovative and cost-efficient than the state when it comes to the provision of services (Levitt 1973:49). This has become more evident in countries that have diminished capacity to address the basic rights of their people. The scope of their roles has also widened in policy fields such as HIV and AIDS, climate change, minority rights and poverty alleviation issues (Hulme & Edwards 1997:7).

Despite the shift of the third-sector approach from an exclusive focus on NGOs as the saviour of the welfare state to the democratic potential of CSOs, an important advantage of NGOs is believed to be their relative efficiency in quality programme implementation. This perspective has made ‘modern’ CSOs, notably NGOs, the most preferred channels of international aid.

However, Bond (2000: 18) criticises the fact that NGOs are often imperialist in nature, that they sometimes operate in a ‘racialised’ manner in Third World countries, and that they fulfil a similar function to that of the clergy during the high colonial era. Similarly, Peter Dwyer and Leo Zeilig (2012:150) point out that some international NGOs often backed up by the funding of international donors tend to create new civil society networks in Africa with little grassroots ownership or linkage with ‘traditional’ CSOs to endorse and legitimize neoliberal policies with the stamp of civil society participation.

In light of such growing criticism, some scholars like Hulme and Edwards (1997:5–20) point out that the propagation of the postmodern and the third sector approach sparks questions on the part of ‘modern’ CSOs since they lack legitimacies and democratic credentials. Clark (1991:61–76) argues that postmodern thinking and practice have sparked new dangers for nation-state relations in developing countries, notably in Africa. He, therefore, emphasises that the use of ‘modern’ CSOs as alternative groups to and a panacea for solving the problem of autocratic governments particularly in Africa needs to be revisited.

2.2.11 Civil society and the globalisation approach

It is recognised that the globalisation approach has become popular since mid-1990s with the growing concept of ‘global citizenship’ and ‘global civil society’ by social activists who have been inspired to create a better world by tackling global challenges. The proponents of this approach believe in interconnectedness of global issues such as climate

change, HIV and AIDS and international trade governance affecting countries across the globe, for which the solution requires the active engagement and commitment of citizens beyond the boundaries of individual countries and across different territories (Hyslop 1999:3–5).

Kefir (1998:14–18) indicates that global civil society manifests a previously unknown human capacity to self-organise on a global scale in pursuit of inclusiveness, appreciation of diversities, promotion of shared leadership, enhancement of individual initiatives and cultivation of collective responsibilities.

Kasfir (1998:19–21) further considers globalisation as a social phenomenon that expands the sphere of liberal values, which ultimately loads greater responsibilities on the shoulders of civil society at the expense of politically-driven state institutions. For him, global civil society can be engaged on many fronts advancing multiple common causes due to its diverse nature, which is a reflection of the complexity of its tasks. Its strategies may constitute the essential elements of breaking dominant empire cultures and defending global citizens against dominant political, military, cultural and economic powers.

Kasfir (1998:22) points out that an important feature of global civil society is the formation of local alliances to create local cultural zones of freedom within which people can experiment in creating authentic living cultures, democracies and economies as building blocks of living societies. It has an element of enlarging and connecting individual zones of freedom to create ever-expanding social spaces in which the emergent processes of cultural, political and economic innovation can flourish. Engaging in the liberation of contested institutional terrain is also an important trend.

In this regard, it is significant to note that global civil society, which is the largest, most international and potentially powerful social movement in human history, is not identified with any individual leader or group of leaders. As Kasfir (1998:23) argues, the deep strength of global civil society comes from the fact that it is a self-organising, mutually empowering movement of millions of leaders. They lead in different ways and they differ in the scope of their influence and public visibility, but virtually every participant contributes in some way to the leadership of the whole. Understanding this reality is essential to understanding the nature of this unique social organism and its emerging role. It is the product not of an individual leader or ideology, but rather of an emergent value consensus that gains its power from an awakening of human possibilities yet unrealised. These qualities may make the organising processes of global civil society

appear chaotic, but they are also the source of its distinctive strengths and mechanisms that are resistant to anti-democratic structures.

One can learn from the global civil society approach that virtual communities have been very useful for lining their local actions with global actors and vice versa, so that civil society can effectively contribute to global actions that help to create a safer and fairer world. An illustrative example that shows the power of global civil society has been the recent Arab uprisings in countries such as Egypt and Tunisia, which demonstrated the powerful resources of social media for organising on a supra-national level a range of individuals and social groups to defend their rights and transform their societies.

In light of this approach, I argue that making distinctions between the ‘traditional’ and the ‘modern’ CSOs in evolutionary ways is no more useful. Instead, it is important to understand the interconnectedness that exists among the diverse types of CSO and the links that exist between the local and the global actions in light of creating a better world for the future.

2.2.12 Civil society and the developmental state approach

Mkandawire (2001:3–5) states that the developmental state approach has become popular in the mid-1970s as an alternative to the neoliberal approach. This approach has been implemented in some Asian countries such as South Korea and Japan, as well as in African countries such as Botswana, South Africa and (to some extent and more recently) in Ethiopia. Mkandawire (2001:3) further points out that a developmental state approach ideologically attempts to construct and deploy its administrative and political resources to the task of economic development. It is often identified by its institutional characteristics. One of these key organisational features is the ‘autonomy’ of state institutions, that is, the presence of high degrees of coherent state agencies that are able to formulate and implement its strategic developmental goals. Another important feature of a developmental state is its embedding nature, which is the formation of alliances with key social groups in a society that helps a developmental state to achieve its goals.

Mkandawire (2001:4) argues that although some African states have attempted to follow a developmental state approach, most experiences indicate that weak internal institutional capacity and lack of genuine participation by the people account for their inability to sustain developmental agendas. To address such shortcomings, developmental scholars argue that the democratisation process in Africa should include popular

participation by enhancing the role of grassroots-based associations, which have been far from the mainstream decision-making structure. It should strive to foster productive economic activities and economic growth, and qualitatively improve the living conditions of its people and reduce poverty.

In this context, critics argue that developmental states such as the one in Ethiopia has been challenged by the dilemma of reducing poverty and promoting economic growth at the expense of individual rights and freedom. The centrality of the government in the nation-building process has also resulted in the government becoming highly authoritarian thus permitting limited space for civil society growth and development (Feleke 2009:10).

I argue that government-planned economies with state control over the material base of society in countries like Ethiopia can encapsulate civic action. In the Ethiopian context of developmental state settings, there is a risk that ‘independent’ women associations, youth groups, trade unions, sport clubs, writers’ associations and other similar groups are forced to become affiliated or allied to the dominant ruling party, and may even be dependent on the will of the government for their financing and actions.

This in turn may pose challenges to long-term national security, unless the mission of the developmental state centres on human security with the involvement of citizens in all spheres of life and facilitates their equitable benefits from national economic growth.

Given the revolutionary democratic political ideology and the developmental state nature of the current Ethiopian government (EPRDF, 2012), I further underline the importance of shifting from a narrow focus on macroeconomic stability, military security and electoral democracy to one that is inclusive and promotes poverty alleviation and direct participatory governance. The role of CSOs should not be limited to gap-filling functions as prescribed by the government. Instead, CSOs should be given sufficient civic space to grow, participate in and contribute to the mainstream development process as fully-fledged partners.

2.2.13 Civil society and the Africanist/‘traditionalist’ perspective

At the outset of this chapter it was explained that associational life and collective civic actions are not new concepts and ways of life for Africans. As Lewis (2010) and Banks and Hulme (2012) argue, the way in which civil society was conceived, propagated and practised by international actors in Africa created multifaceted challenges. In this regard, Fowler (1997:13) argues that one of the challenges for civil society movements in

Africa has been the domestication of the concepts of civil society as if they only originated in Europe during the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries with similar mind-sets of injecting the very model of 'modern' western societies and their paths towards what they call the 'matured' level of nation states. The second challenge is the fact that today's views of civil society were largely shaped and reshaped by the global geopolitical agendas which mainly used western perspectives to shape the civil society landscape in Africa.

For instance, Azarya (1994:97) argues that the colonial heritage left a weak contemporary state, destroyed the social fabric and surpassed the 'traditional' civil society movement in Africa. Subsequently, the popularisation of the concept of civil society by Western liberals through international donor organisations contributed to not only limiting the range of state power but also popularising the role of NGOs instead of community-based 'traditional' CSOs.

On the other hand, the liberal approach and its propagation in 'traditional' African civil societies have been challenged by critical Africanists (Obadare 2014:184; Robinson & Friedman 2007:644). They criticise scholars, mostly liberals, for having underrated the role of kin-based and ethnic organisations in the development of pressure groups, for failing to appreciate the power stored in the 'traditional' structures to bring about new forms of governance and for overlooking the impact religious groups can have in generating new normative orders.

Obadare (2011:15) argues that the neoliberal perspectives and the discourse of using international NGOs as vehicles for 'good governance' and the prescription to Africa to 'build' its civil society must have assumed that Africa does not have a 'civil society' and undermined the presence and the historical legacy of 'traditional' CSOs that have existed in the continent. Robinson and Friedman (2007:643) and Obadare (2011:16) further point out that the use of international NGOs by western-based donors has systematically excluded African organisations, labelling them as institutionally weak and having a tendency to organise themselves along the lines of kinship, ethnicity, and local 'tradition'.

Similarly, Mamdani (1996:13) points out that civil society exists as a fully formed construct in Africa as it did in Europe, and that the driving force of democratisation everywhere shall be the contention between civil society and the state. Thus, Mamdani challenges the way in which the concept of civil society has been deployed as a normative concept, which is expected to operate as a counterforce to the state. Instead, Mamdani

(1996:19) proposes to deploy the concept of civil society as an analytical and historical tool to understand civil society in its actual formation.

In this regard, the prepositions by Comaroff and Comaroff (1999:3) seem to have a solidarity message since they suggest the importance of moving away from the Eurocentric tendency to limit civil society to a narrowly defined institutional arena. They advocate for the acknowledgment of ‘traditional’ African CSOs, often perceived as ‘uncool,’ ‘partisan,’ ‘parochial,’ or ‘fundamentalist’ in donor policy discourses.

Similarly, Karlström (1999:101–110) suggests that it is essential to look beyond the customary preoccupation with NGOs and other organisations to empower civil society on the African continent. He condemns the liberal perspective on the grounds that its definition of civil society does not capture the historical, social and cultural realities which have made their own contributions to the construction of both the state and the civil society.

Karlström (1999:109–111) further argues that there is no gulf between the actors found within the state and its outside actors in Africa. By examining the kinship structures in Uganda, he dismissed the supposed split that one could have expected to exist among the public, the private and the civic societies. He points out that there is no such distinction in the local realities of rural Uganda. Based on his study in Uganda, Karlström describes the relationship between the public and the private as being as interconnected as they are different. He suggested that it is not the identification of the missing link that is helpful for a well-functioning society but nurturing the inter-locating forces that exist among the government, civil society or the public sphere.

Although ‘traditional’ CSOs in Africa have been suggested as an alternative route for a genuine civil society movement in Africa; several critical Africanist thinkers have themselves challenged the shortfall in ‘traditional’ civil society resulting from the nature of patron–client networks. Orvis (2001:27–29) argues that hierarchical structures that exist within and among ethnic groups – in which clients provide their patrons with support and loyalty, while patrons provide their clients with fundamental resources – always challenge genuine democracy and healthy civil society growth and development in Africa.

Similarly, Berman (2004:38–53.) argues that social networks in Africa are often hierarchical, ill-defined and unequal –with regard to both the relationship between the patron and the client and the relationship between citizens vis-à-vis the state. Since the relationship is personal, and individual) – to fit the conventional view of civil society.

According to this view, civil society does not possess the ability to counteract the existing structures of state power in a conventional manner because of the reproduction of patron–client networks in Africa.

Chazan, Lewis, Mortimer, Rothchild and Stedman (1999:112–113), writing extensively on the patron–client nature of networks, argue that patrons commonly occupy advantageous positions within the state or closely tied to the state, which makes the mobilisation of their clients for political purposes possible. However, to a certain degree, there exists a reciprocal state of dependence which pressurises the patrons to meet the demands of their clients since they can choose the patrons that can offer them the most beneficial set of resources considering their circumstances. The patrons' long-term interest is also dependent on their client network, even if they gain official positions within the state and they can use their positions to distribute resources to their clients and fulfil primarily the demands of their ethnic groups.

In light of these critiques, it would seem that building a transparent and vibrant civil society sector in Africa is challenging. However, scholars like Cox (1999:24–25) suggest the relevance of self-help groups in African civil societies, arguing that many of them have formal structures and democratic decision-making processes. These self-help groups are related but conceptually distinct from patron–client networks, and their main functions are to articulate and deal with the daily needs and interests of the local population in most African communities.

Orvis (2001:17–38) supports the view of Cox and argues that self-help groups are a vital part of African civil society. They are, to a certain extent, autonomous from the state since they interact with each other; ask for resources from the state; and often have leaders who are closely connected to the political elite. He describes the appearance of self-help groups as a reaction to the historically inherited colonial regimes that had no connection with ordinary citizens and were characterised by the interference of international donors and foreign investors in the lives of indigenous people. The emergence of self-help groups and their relationship with the government can reduce mistrust and the feeling of enmity towards the state; therefore, they can develop into a counter-hegemonic force that, in the long run, could be the new foundation for creating a higher form of civil society (Cox 1999:24–25). Yet Orvis (2001:31) does not rule out the risks of amplifying the role of self-help groups in public affairs, since state leaders might use these groups by co-opting them to their own political agenda to undermine local opposition.

As to the effective functioning of a society in Africa, Mamdani (1990:7–11) considers the relationship between civil society and the state as crucial. He suggests the need for sufficiently questioning civil society theories, particularly the rampant liberal programmes which were initiated by external agencies on the ground that such CSOs do not scrutinise the concrete social processes in African society. Instead, they run for solutions that come from the outside and not from the inside out. His fundamental critique, though, is the implicit neglect of conditions and relationships in rural Africa as well as the African institutional specificities of urban and rural state forms.

Therefore, in regard to nurturing a genuine civic society movement and facilitating societal transformation, I share the suggestion of Mamdani (1995:602–616), who points out that to nurture genuine democracy and societal transformation which are useful to the bulk of the African population, both a pluralised civil society and a legitimised state apparatus are important. A western-constructed concept of civil society and modes of relating are less useful and hardly relevant templates to understand how societies function and how state and society interrelates in Africa.

2.2.14 Locating the civil society theoretical constructs in the context of the civil society trajectories in Africa

The preceding sections highlighted the main civil society theoretical discourses that shape and influence the state of CSOs that exist under ranges of ideological orientations and historical circumstances. In this section, specific consideration is given to analysing the way in which these dominant theoretical discourses are related to and manifested in the formation and development of CSOs in Africa. It is evident that CSOs have played an important part in communal life and civic cultures across Africa. It is not uncommon to find African societies that have organised themselves either in age, labour, parish, faith or other forms of civic groups to advance their common interests (Priscilla Wamucii 2011:109–110). Nonetheless, these African ‘traditional’ CSOs have gone through various trajectories, which, in turn, have shaped and re-shaped the functions of CSOs depending on the circumstances of each country or region.

In this regard, the governing political ideologies in Africa have a strong influence on the CSOs, their functions and places in societal transformation. Opoku-Mensah (2007:71–72) points out that CSO in most parts of Africa have existed in the pre-colonial period in

various forms such as self-help and solidarity groups to strengthen collaboration and mutual assistance among members of similar localities.

Nasong'o and Murunga (2007:19–20), in their close examination of the histories of CSO development in the East African countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, reveal that combinations of associational life such as kinship, age groups, lineages, self-help groups, trade associations and communal labour groups were important institutions that formed the social fabric of the pre-colonial periods. The pre-colonial African political systems were also gave due recognition to these civic groups to promote civic functions and primarily gain public legitimacy to sustain their political governance.

Nasong'o and Murunga (2007:23) point out that the 'traditional' regulation of public affairs in Kenya was, for instance, reportedly dependent on its relations with the horizontal networks of kinship rights and obligations. These 'traditional' CSOs were recognised and encouraged to play an instrumental role in the management of land and common natural resources.

As the colonial masters and their ruling system became dominant in Africa, the horizontal links with 'traditional' African CSOs were disconnected. Instead, the colonial period injected and categorically supported the use of newly formed 'modern' CSOs, which were transplanted in the replica of their European counterparts such as 'modern' intermediary NGOs (NGOs), church-based organisations, trade unions, professional associations, youth scouts, elite women groups, dance clubs, sport associations and business interest groups.

Nonetheless, it is very important to note that the undermining of the 'traditional' African CSOs did not completely wipe the 'traditional' CSOs off the landscape of the civil society sector. Interestingly, some of these CSOs managed to cope with such dominant discourse by reacting to the negative policies and practices by transforming themselves into resistance social movements. In this regard, Nasong'o and Murunga (2007:119–121) cite the case of Kenya, where the 'traditional' civic groups such as the Young Kavirondo Association and the Young Kikuyu Association gradually transformed themselves into resistance civic movements like that of the Mau Mau movement in Kenya.

Uganda's civic history was not very different from Kenya's and Tanzania's. For instance, Oloka-Onyango and Barya (1997: 113–115) note that civil organisations such as the Uganda African Civil Servants Association, resisted the discrimination of Africans from the colonial government bonus system that was established to separately benefit

workers of European and Asian origin. The civic reaction from Ugandans was also very strong against unfair taxation, limited labour rights and the monopoly of Indian communities, subsequently forming rural based cooperatives whereby they challenged the then Indian community's monopoly of the cotton and coffee processing business. Such civic resistance and disobedience measures were later extended to religious groups when civic resistance groups protested against the domination of Christianity over African cultural belief systems and 'traditional' religions (Oloka-Onyango & Barya 1997:116–118).

As the 'modernisation' process grew, the colonial governments responded to these African civic resistance groups by enforcing legislation that promoted tighter control over African civic associations. Lange, Wallevik and Kiondo (2000:10–11), for instance, state that colonial authorities barred African civil servants in Tanzania from joining African civic movements on the pretext that such societies were serving as a cover for advancing political movements against colonial masters. Similarly, the colonial regime in Uganda promulgated statutes such as the 1946 Cooperative Act under state close supervision to suppress rural cooperatives and civic movements (Mamdani 1975:26–27).

Therefore, the colonial period was characterised by the domestication of European-rooted CSOs and the suppression of the 'traditional' African civic society organisations by promulgating punitive legal and policy measures. It was also known for maintaining confrontational relationships between the 'traditional' African civil societies and the colonial political systems. Such confrontational measures against these societies generated vibrant civic movements that exerted excessive pressure on colonialists to relinquish power, which finally led to the political independence of most of the African countries, notably in the 1960s.

The pressure on 'traditional' CSOs was not only driven by the colonisation agents. It is evident that the wave of freedom immediately after the independence of most African states, did not yield the hopes that were aspired to and instead narrowed the space for the engagement of CSOs. The post Independent politicians themselves wanted to promote the ideology of one-party system and replicate the development paths of 'modernisation' using the prototypes of European institutions. Maxon (1996:110) states that the founding presidents of most of the then newly independent African nations, under the banner of building a national unity, did not favour the formation of a pluralistic society. In this regard, Kanyinga (1998:40–41) argues that, in Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta's motto of

'Harambee' was initially experienced as a motivational tool for mobilising citizens, promoting self-help and building national unity. However, the good intentions of Harambee were gradually hijacked by the political system through the infiltration of political agents. In addition, the Kenyatta government went on restricting, banning or co-opting African CSOs through the promulgation of punitive laws against CSOs.

As noted by Lange et al. (2000:12), Tanzania's post Independent political situation was not very dissimilar to Kenya's. They point out that in post-independence Tanzania, even the most popular President Julius Nyerere arguably restricted civic participation and confined them to remain active within the civic spaces, which were considered by the state and the ruling party as safer. As a result, some vocal CSOs were banned and replaced by associations that were controlled or co-opted by the government. The government also banned the chiefdom system, which contributed to the diminishing of some 'traditional' organisations.

Ngowi (2009:259), on his part, notes that although Nyerere's adoption of Ujamaa (African socialism) through the Arusha Declaration of 1967 was initially welcomed as a popular model to promote rural development and citizens' participation, the process of Ujamaa was heavily controlled by the central government and prevented ordinary citizens from fully exploiting the benefits of working with 'traditional' African civic society organisations in rural development endeavours

'Traditional' African CSOs in Uganda also passed through difficult terrain, as documented by Oloka-Onyango and Barya (1997:114–115). They point out that the post-independence government of Uganda propagated the formation of a 'One Nation, One People' nation, suppressing diversities so that the government narrowed down the space for civic engagement and open political system. This was partly responsible for the highly dictatorial regime of Idi Amin, who was known for his record of unprecedented human rights violations which effectively divided the country and severely curtailed CSO activities. Mwenda (2007:23) also points out that the state of relationships between the Ugandan government and African CSOs continued to be confrontational up until this time. Kasfir (1998:49) indicates that the relationships with CSOs in Uganda were never smooth even after Yoweri Museveni came to power, owing to the controlling measures he implemented under the pretext of ensuring national security, stability and unity. He placed restrictions on civil society groups in order to control the political environment, as public criticism has become more open and challenging to corrupt practices by government

officials (Human Rights Watch, 2012). Security forces have threatened and harassed civic associations with punitive laws, including a recent NGO registration amendment act that requires civil society organisations to reregister with the government every three years, increasing bureaucratic hassles that the government exploits to its own advantage. The government has also become more intolerant of public debates stimulated by civil society groups and tough measures are being instigated to silence dissenting voices that incite public protest (Kew, 2013).

The state of civil society–government relationships has undergone important trajectories since the 1980s when the neoliberal approach became more dominant in shaping the policies of most African countries. As Robinson and Friedman (2007:643) point out, neoliberal influence in Africa has been pronounced since the 1980s when international donors like the World Bank and the IMF prescribed the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). As a result, ‘traditional’ African CSOs were side-lined; leaving the civic space for ‘modern’ and ‘western’ based NGOs. Donors have used them as one of their preferred aid delivery mechanism rationalising their effectiveness over the African governments and ‘traditional’ African CSOs.

In this regard, Matanga (2004:9), citing the example of Kenya, points out that when Kenya’s President Moi was under pressure from international donors to open up the democratic space for its citizens in 1992, many international donors threatened his political system by diverting their funds to urban-based NGOs, notably human rights activists. Thus, the backing up of NGOs with financial aid has contributed to the mushrooming of western-based NGOs in Kenya, where the NGO sector grew fivefold from fewer than 5,000 in 1980 to 26,000 in 1988 (Fowler 1991:55). Such prescribed international agenda and the use of western-based NGOs has marginalised and diminished the contributions of African CSOs.

In a comparatively similar period, Obadare (2014:183) states that the Government of Tanzania was forced by neoliberal ideologists to undertake constitutional reform allowing the registration of new political parties and CSOs in the spirit of embracing capitalism, expanding social markets and promoting social welfare for the public. This has resulted in an increase in the number of ‘modern’ CSOs, notably western-based NGOs and their local counterpart NGOs in Tanzania.

A slight difference in the history and focus of the CSOs happened in South Africa since, the motivation behind the formation and functions of African civil societies were

driven by the ideology of inclusion and exclusion in relation to the issues of citizenship and civic engagement (Hammett 2008:657).

Lewis (2002:572–574) points out that CSOs in Southern Africa have arguably played an important role in the struggle over the politics of belonging and the mobilisation of ideological approaches. These practices have shifted and evolved over time in relation to changes in socio-political structures, balances in political power and shifts in ideological hegemonies.

Young (2004:23) states that although government legislation and authority severely curtailed the scope of civil society during the apartheid period, organised civil society movements and their actors have promoted the political, social, human and economic rights of the disenfranchised majority in South Africa and contributed their own share to the transition to independence.

However, the landscape of CSOs in the post-apartheid period of Southern Africa has been dominated by non-governmental development organisations, which have been considered as agents for democratisation (Hammett 2008:652). Such practices and rhetoric have been evident in both policy pronouncements and funding provision, which diverted resources away from state bodies and channelled them through specific NGOs. These ‘modern’ CSOs have been viewed as more suited and better located to promote and sustain democracy than their ‘traditional’ counterparts (Hickey 2002:842).

Robinson and Friedman (2007:643) argue that such an international donor agenda of using ‘modern’ CSOs by transnational development actors does nothing but transmit the narrow neoliberal agenda to ‘developing’ countries, particularly Africa, instead of exploring and supporting alternative forms of social democracy.

Critiques of this western outlook on civil society and using it as the locus for promoting progressive politics and democracy raises concerns that such engagements reduce civil society to a homogenised subset of this arena, which overlooks the multiplicity of power relations and flows. It also creates the risk of perpetuating a particular politics of belonging. Such practices also promote neoliberal approaches that ignore the pressing concerns of poverty alleviation, inequality and social justice in Africa (Hearn 2001:43).

In West Africa, the landscape of CSOs has assumed the meaning of a specific type of non-state organisation distinguishable from others by its structure, purpose, functioning and relations with donor organisations (Obadare 2014:144). Civil society in West Africa is not, however, a homogenous entity agitating in a unified way for the same kind of social

change. Compared to its more humble predecessor(s) the current civil society landscape is dominated by elitist middle class and urban-based NGO staff that are oriented to attract a certain kind of client and are disconnected from the rural people (Obadare 2014:144).

Obadare (2014:145) points out that one of the reasons for the dominant role of 'modern' CSOs in the development discourse and space in West Africa has been their professionalization by attracting eloquent, well-educated and connected personalities. They prefer to work with them on the grounds that these types of high-profile NGO are legally recognised by governments and can be held more liable for their actions than the more loosely structured CSOs.

However, this approach displays some contradictions since it undervalues informal civil society actors that are doing important work within communities across West Africa. Obadare (2011:183) criticises such an unbalanced focus on formally registered and often western connected NGOs on the grounds that they have low ownership of change agendas and processes on the ground, and that their interventions are driven by external perceptions of what change is needed even when this does not match the reality on the ground, which amounts to putting a local face on foreign interests.

Furthermore, the capacity of West African NGOs to influence policy and change has become minimal since West African states remain suspicious of these CSOs owing to their connections with and influx of foreign support. Therefore, the paradigm shift for having societal transformation take place through independent, vibrant, representative and truly 'civil' African civil society is at stake (Moyo 2009).

The case of Ethiopia differs from most African countries as the country has never gone through colonisation or post-apartheid experiences. The various feudal states in Ethiopia were strong and they had absolute power over the ordinary people. The legitimised hereditary-based feudal political system had strong collaboration with the Orthodox Church which consolidated its power (Merara, 2003). Under these conditions, citizens perceived the state as having absolute power over their lives. Thus, the 'traditional' civic organisations were mainly formed to serve the social welfare needs of ordinary citizens and promote mutual support. In the past, the various monarch systems coexisted with these organisations which recognised the power of the government and, owing to strong religious values, almost all parishes in both urban and rural areas organised themselves in a multitude of institutions. This strong social capital across the

diverse ethnic groups has contributed holding society and the nation together (Teshale 1995).

I argue that the presence of multiple civic institutions reflects the relevance of the pluralist and communitarian approaches to civil society in Ethiopia. The plurality of these 'traditional' CSOs has been the guarantor of a peaceful and stable nation even when the nation was experiencing violent political transition, such as the overthrow of His Majesty Haile Selassie I in 1974 and the downfall of the Mengistu Haile Mariam, which led to a socialist military regime in 1991 (Merara, 2003).

As discussed in Chapter 4, I argue that the liberal approach has never gained strong ground in the Ethiopian political system since the country moved directly from a monarchical feudal system to a socialist military regime where the state has been controlling the pace of citizens' engagement. Instead, the socialist government put pressure on the independent local civil society groups and watched notably the western-based NGOs as an extension of the imperialist ideology or the neoliberal agenda. The socialist Government of Ethiopia, therefore, kept the 'traditional' civic associations at arm's length to promote welfare work; while it permitted space for organisations to mobilise the masses in line with the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the Government. The number of 'modern' CSOs from the western world was increased following their responses to the famines of 1974 and 1984, but most of the organisations were forced to work in humanitarian response and recovery projects instead of with human rights and social justice focused agendas.

The current state of the EPRDF-led government promotes what it calls a developmental state approach, which entails locating the government at the centre of driving the nation-building process by focusing on attaining fast national economic growth, improved physical infrastructure development and increased access to basic social services (Dessalegn 2009:15). Therefore, it perceives CSOs as gap fillers to the development endeavours prioritised by the government and restricts them from being engaged as watchdogs or advocates of the poor. The government also opposes the neoliberal approaches and labels those human-rights focused international NGOs as agents of the 'western agenda'. Self-help groups and other forms of 'traditional' CSO are kept at arm's length without institutional support so long as they engage in charity work.

To sum up, the landscape of CSOs in Africa has been dependent upon the availability of enabling space by the prevailing political system. The propagation of the liberal and neoliberal approaches has contributed to the growth and expansion of the 'modern' CSOs,

notably western-based NGOs and their local partners in Africa as opposed to the African 'traditional' CSOs. African 'traditional' CSOs have been sandwiched between surpassing African political regimes, on the one hand, and the western-based international donors, on the other. Nonetheless, despite the policy which tends to favour the growth and expansion of 'modern' western-based NGOs, 'modern' CSOs generally face legitimacy problems in promoting sustained citizen-led community action, which may lead to the implementation of short-span and disconnected project interventions that do little to facilitate societal transformation at large.

2.3 Summary

In the preceding sections, it was pointed out that the concept of civil society has acquired various connotations and different meanings in scholarly discourse. The space for civil society in Africa has been contested and subsequently influenced by the external ideologies of liberal political systems, socialist military regimes, the global economic order and, most recently, the developmental state approach. Even so, the conceptualisation of 'civil society' and scholarly discussions on Africa's present civil society predicament revolve around two dominant discourses: the 'modernist' and the 'traditionalist' views. While the modernists take inspiration from various Eurocentric realities, including the eastern European uprisings of the late 1980s, they view civil society as an embryonic and marginal construct in Africa. They attempt to study civil society as an 'exotic' subject and construct the concept of civil society as if it 'originated' in the western world despite the rich and diverse African cultures that boast a century-old history of volunteerism and civic institutions. Even some African scholars tend to legitimise these assertions and argue that civil organisations are incompatible with the life patterns of African and other 'tribal' societies of the world on the basis that Africans are less civic and have difficulty in relating beyond their clan or ethnic boundaries. However, 'traditionalist' Africanists view civil society as the flesh and blood of the African social fabric, but its role has been marginalised from the public policy and practice domain. The modernist suggests a liberal solution, calling for a regime that champions rights and locates politics within civil society.

In this thesis one or the other dominant discourse is not chosen. Instead, an attempt is made to 'sublet' both approaches by critiquing and affirming the dominant viewpoints, and reorganising the role of 'modern' institutions in light of cultural resources provided by

modernity's other, as argued by SARCHI second-level indigenisation (Odora Hoppers & Richards 2011:35–36). It is important to underline the importance of bridging the theoretical divide between the 'modernist' and the 'traditionalist' views on civil society. The drawing up of a common pathway for harnessing the roles of 'traditional' civil societies and avoiding the 'interventionist' roles of 'modern' CSOs to facilitate citizen-led community action that can lead to societal transformation in Africa is proposed.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology, Methods and the Fieldwork Experiences

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the research methodology, the methods, the fieldwork experiences and the ethical consideration involved in undertaking this study. It outlines the way in which epistemological and ontological orientations influence research methodology. It highlights the importance of four major research paradigms or worldviews – positivism, interpretive research, transformative research and indigenous research – which have implications for the choice of methodology and the process of undertaking social studies. The importance of a qualitative research methodology and indigenous knowledge research is discussed at length given the focus of this study, which is on civic society organizations and societal transformation.

The chapter further explains how the fieldwork for this study was conducted using the case-based analysis of three types of CSOs: the Tesfa Social Development Association (TSDA); the Gurage People Self-Help Development Organisation, (GPSDO) and the Community Based Integrated Sustainable Development Organisation (CBISDO). It also presents the process of data collection and analysis employed in the study, highlighting three main stages: orientation and rapport building, data collection and data analysis. Finally, the limitations of the study and the ethical considerations are outlined.

3.2. Research methodology

3.2.1 Epistemological and ontological orientations

From the outset, it is important to acknowledge that there are four different underlying philosophies and worldviews held by researchers, including positivism, interpretive research, transformative research and indigenous research, in any given study (Chilisa 2005:15–37). These worldviews in turn influence the methodology, the methods and the process for undertaking a research.

Neuman (2000:14) argues that if one places social research on a continuum, two dominant epistemologies can be applicable, quantitative and qualitative research. While the quantitative view is described as ‘positivist’, the worldview underlying qualitative research is viewed as being ‘subjectivist’. The positivists take the view that what research does is to

uncover an existing reality since ‘the truth is out there’, and it is the job of the researcher to use objective research methods to uncover that truth (Neuman 2000:17). This means that the researcher needs to be as detached from the research as possible, and use methods that maximise objectivity and minimise the involvement of the researcher in the research. Taken largely from the natural sciences, which are then transposed to social research settings, positivists believe that the world works according to fixed laws of cause and effect so that scientific research is used to test theories about these laws in order to either reject or accept them.

Indeed, research methodology in the social sciences has remained dominated by positivism, which rationalises the relevance of research by discovering laws that can uniformly govern the universe through ontological assumptions of reality that can be determined by way of probability calculations (Manyena, B,2009:23). In the social sciences, the positivist approach was first proclaimed by Auguste Comte in the 19th century. Over the past two centuries, it has gone through various mutations and dominant pathways without being challenged by alternative philosophical thought (Hughes & Sharrock 1990:9–16). Except for some variations in their theoretical focus, philosophers and social scientists like Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim and Karl Marx argued that societies should be studied with the same principles, procedures, ethos and laws of the natural sciences (Hughes & Sharrock 1990:9–16).

Similarly, Clarke (1999:12–28) points out that even today, proponents of the positivist approach still operate on the assumption that social researchers can establish the truth of social phenomena by applying objectivity, rationality and rigorous scientific methods of enquiry. They emphasise that the researcher is always expected to be objective in the research process by either accepting or disproving predetermined hypotheses which are examined through the collection and analysis of thick data.

As a research methodology, positivist researchers only employ survey methods and experimental designs which limit the interaction between the researcher and the researched (Clarke 1999:12–28). The research instruments are decided on in advance, including highly structured questionnaires with predetermined and standardised categories into which individuals’ responses are fitted. Systematic sampling techniques and probability approaches are applied to control bias and ensure internal validity (Bryman 2001:18–25; Patton 2002:28–34). However, the positivist approach has gradually been challenged by qualitative and indigenous knowledge researchers. Odora Hoppers (1998:6), citing

Morgan, argues that phenomena to be researched can be contextualised and studied in various ways, each generating distinctive kinds of insight and understanding.

In this regard, Odora Hoppers and Richards(2011:94–96) describe the challenges of applying such inquiry as “the positivist illusion”, arguing that proponents of the positivist approach equate science with a method that is based on observed fact. They further argue that the positivist illusion is not friendly to indigenous knowledge systems since what the indigenous people know is not considered scientific or, to use a positivist label, does not pass the test of scientific research.

Chilisa (2005:36–37) points out that growing bodies of knowledge and increasing numbers of research methods have sought to address the shortcomings of positivist thinking, notably over the past three decades. The emergence of subjectivists, which broadly include the proponents of interpretative, transformative and indigenous research paradigms, argues that proving causality with certainty in social phenomena is problematic, given the nature of social phenomena and the existence of multiple realities.

Patton (2002:28–34) argues that reality is not ‘out there’ to be objectively and dispassionately observed by a researcher but it is at least in part constructed by the researcher. The process of observing realities may change and transform the initial reality. For subjectivists, knowledge or truth is relative rather than absolute since it is an interpretation of lived experiences and the product of constructed ideas in the mind-sets of individuals. Therefore, as Bryman (2001:18–25) indicates these qualitative researchers approach social realities with an open mind and a willingness to learn without proclaimed questions or hypotheses.

Accepting the complexity of social realities has gradually provided impetus for researchers like Guba and Lincoln (2005:191–215), who considered the ‘human’ element as the centre of social studies where the researcher is viewed as a co-creator of knowledge. This thought has been developed through various qualitative research methodology and participatory approaches, which have been widely applicable in dealing with power relations, poverty and injustice.

The interpretive paradigm, for its part, acknowledges the dynamics of multiple socially constructed realities in the generation of knowledge. Proponents of this paradigm like Chambers (1996:15–18) argue that multiple realities in this world are shaped by diverse social dynamics, including the indivisibility of fundamental human rights. This paradigm, therefore, values research in the spirit of its transformative value to help and

empower people to change themselves. They call for all sciences to begin with a position of values. In development practice, the approach has become highly popular since the late 1980s in pursuit of postcolonial discourses, neo-Marxism and participatory development.

Chilisa (2005:31–32) argues strongly that the growth of the indigenous knowledge research paradigm has begun to challenge positivist thinking by questioning the pathological descriptions of formerly colonised societies and attempting to reconstruct a body of knowledge that carries hope, promotes transformation and facilitates social change among the historically oppressed. Hence, for Chilisa (2005:33–37) the philosophical underpinning puts indigenous knowledge at the centre of the research process in view of multiple realities and social constructs which are shaped by sets of multiple connections produced and reproduced by human beings through their relations with their environment and cosmos and their interactions with the living and the non-living.

Odora Hoppers and Richards (2011:97) remark that there are strong rationales for including indigenous knowledge systems in science fields. As thinking and systems of thought organise social relationships, the denial of the science of ‘traditional’ society means denial of their way of thinking and, by implication, their social cohesion. They point out that “there is no way to separate the cultural structures that organize relating to nature from the cultural structures that organize relating to other human beings. Humans are metaphysical animals. Their ways of classifying and understanding being are complex and patterned. The thinking that organises relationships is inevitably epistemological and ethical at once” (Odora Hoppers & Richards 2011:97). This implies that the study of the organising practices of indigenous knowledge systems is as important as the study of other sciences.

Therefore, the methodology for this thesis was influenced by qualitative research focusing on transformative and indigenous research orientations and designed within the framework of UNISA’s doctorate guidelines, drawing on synergies of the author’s personal experiences and the transformative research orientation of the SARCHI in Development Education (Odora Hoppers 2009; Odora Hoppers & Richards 2011:94–96).

I found out that the application of qualitative research methods is highly relevant to my study of CSOs and the examination of their contribution to societal transformation. I realised that there is a strong link between the cultural structures that organise relationships and produce CSOs to relate them both to nature and other human beings in any given society. I understood that the dynamics of these social relationships and the distinctive

associational life of each CSO are context, time and culture specific so that the events, patterns and experiences that are studied in this thesis are unique and can be better explained through a qualitative research methodology.

Accordingly, my research process was neither a fixed nor a straightforward venture. I identified key milestones, which define the significant stages in the life cycle of the CSOs under scrutiny. The study also followed an iterative process; analysing the interaction between and among the key milestones and exploring the implication of organisational turning points at the various stages of the study. I do not attempt to completely dismiss the merit of quantitative research methods. Indeed, I employed some quantitative research methods such as frequencies, percentages and graphs, when appropriate, to describe, analyse and present the empirical findings and field observations. Therefore, multiple qualitative methods, design flexibility and researcher reflexivity are the invaluable methodological features of this study.

3.3 The fieldwork and the research process

The fieldwork for this study was conducted by the researcher, assisted by three field assistants, from July 2011 through to September 2012. The researcher's interest in the subject of civil society and the societal transformation process emanated from his academic and professional experience. As a civil society activist and international development worker, the researcher has accumulated a wealth of experience in the work of CSOs across different parts of Africa and the Caucasus region of the former Soviet Union countries spanning over 25 years. He has been a participant observer in the implementation of various activities by diverse groups of CSOs in these countries.

The identification of the respondents and the selection of the case study organisations for this study was done through twelve key informants (seven men and five women) who were independent of the researcher for their opinions. There were two key informants from each of the following cross sections of social groups:

- civil society activists who had been active in the history of CSOs and had worked in various capacities in the civil society sector
- academicians/researchers who had extensively engaged in the study of the civil society sector

- government officials who had strong contacts and working relationships in the civil society sector
- donor representatives who had experience in managing civil society grants
- businesspeople who were famous for their support for the civil society sector and sponsorship of programmes
- senior citizens of the Gurage people who were known for their leadership roles and lifetime participation in the foundation and organisational history of the Gurage Road Construction Organisation.

The researcher had to explain the purpose of the study at frequent meetings that often involved both bilateral and group discussions with informants, whose selection criteria and screening process were decided and conducted by the key informants. Efforts were made by the key informants to identify study participants for the following three types of CSO.

3.3.1 Tesfa Social Development Association (TSDA)

The first case study organisation is a network of ‘traditional’ Iddir associations. The TSDA is an umbrella organisation constituted of like-minded Iddirs that have been founded by ordinary community members to support each other in the case of deaths. The TSDA was instrumental in the transformation of the functions of burial service-oriented civil organisation into a multipurpose social organisation connecting multiple communities by creating a vertical structure for the union of Iddirs that were active in both urban and rural areas of Ethiopia.

The TSDA was legally registered as a not-for-profit and non-governmental Iddir-based organisation on 23 September 2000 and was established primarily to combat the negative impact of HIV and AIDS on poor communities and Iddir members. At the time of the study, the TSDA had a membership of 105 Iddirs comprising over 8,000 members in total.

The TSDA’s initial community development initiatives began in the Kolfe Keranio Sub-city of Addis Ababa. It gradually expanded its operational bases to the Finfine Special Zone and West Shewa Zones of the Oromia National Regional State, as well as to the West Gojam Zone of the Amhara National Regional State.

The TSDA’s programme portfolio over the past five years has focused on improving the lives of impoverished senior citizens, orphans and vulnerable children, and

marginalised women/youth through social protection services, employment generation schemes and representational functions.

3.3.2 The Gurage People's Self-help Development Organisation (GPSDO)

The second case study organisation is a community-based development association initiated by Gurage migrants and local business elites as well as elderly rural people. The association was initially founded as the Gurage Roads Construction Organisation (GRCO) in 1961. It was renamed as the Gurage People Self-help Development Organisation (GPSDO) in 1988 and re-registered as an Ethiopian resident charity in 2009. The fieldwork for the study was carried out in Imdibir town (Gurage Zonal Administration).

It is important to highlight that the GRCO was first founded by local people in seven houses of Gurage and Gurage migrants living outside Gurage Land in order to mobilise financial and other human resources for the construction of roads, health care and schools in their homeland. This initiative rapidly acquired wide support from all Gurage people, who at the time of this study were living in the nine Woredas of the Gurage Zonal Administration, located about 150 kilometres south of Addis Ababa, the Capital of Ethiopia.

3.3.3 Community-Based Integrated Sustainable Development Organisation (CBISDO)

The third case study organisation is an externally funded, local NGO Initiated, 'modern' multipurpose community-based organisation called CBISDO. The fieldwork was conducted in Tekle Haimanot sub-city of Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital.

CBISDO was originated out of the Integrated Holistic Approach – Urban Development Project (IHA-UDP), which was re-registered by the Charities and Societies Agency (ChSA) as an 'Ethiopian resident's charity' in accordance with the Charities and Societies Proclamation no. 621/2009.

CBISDO is a community-based organisation established for the provision of integrated health services, educational services and programmes for the elderly in 1999 when the IHA-UDP, which was heavily funded by mostly European donors, was phased out after ten years of operation. It organises communities (particularly children and youth) to benefit from vocational training, library services, literacy support, education and recreation programmes, child sponsorship, kindergarten and special education, primary

school upgrading, a programme for the elderly, a day centre service, a home care service, services for people with disabilities, and a job creation and income generation scheme.

The organisation has a management committee which is hired to look after the day-to-day operation of the organisation. It has various locally created development committees and neighbourhood groups to link the organisation with communities at grassroots level.

3.4 Research methods

3.4.1 *Secondary data review*

In order to enrich the historical analysis, learn the historical paths and understand the circumstances attached to the various functions of the three CSOs, it became necessary to conduct a secondary data review. Accordingly, I accessed public and/or private records, including project documents, correspondence, newsletters, research papers, photographs and biographies that narrate or depict the activities and organisational practices of the three case study organisations. In particular, unpublished documents, survey results and project files at the research sites were found very useful for obtaining deep insight on the background of the three CSOs in terms of their history and their operational areas.

3.4.2 *Primary data collection methods*

As shown on figure 3.1, a total of 216 (110 male and 106 female) people participated in the data collection and analysis of the three case study organisations. Accordingly, the number of study participants in the in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and self-reflection and analysis sessions amounted to 80 for the GPSDO, 70 for the TSDA and 66 for CBISDO. In order to ensure consistency, six cross sections of constituencies for each of the three case study organisations were used and the key informants of these were approached to be involved in the research process. These clusters included ordinary general assembly members (60), non-association members, that is, ordinary community members who live in the operational areas of the associations (60), existing and past executive board members (24), local/zonal level government representatives/service providers (24), older people/local leaders (24), and local businesspeople or petty traders (24).

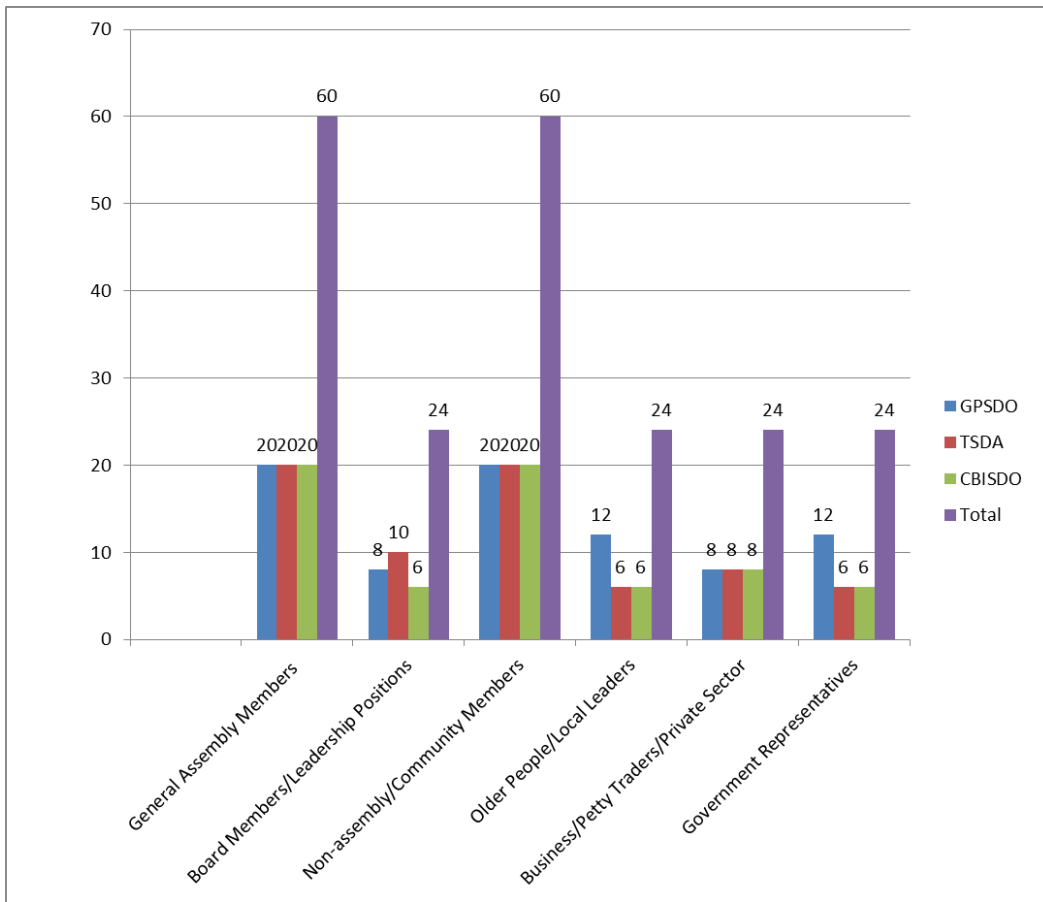


Figure 3.1: Distribution of study participants and their composition by type of organisation and gender

Figure 3.2 indicates the distribution of the study participants by age. Accordingly, the majority of the study participants (67) fall in to the age group of 46 to 60 years, followed by those in the age category of 31 to 45 years (65), 16 to 30 years (45) and above the age of 60 years (39).

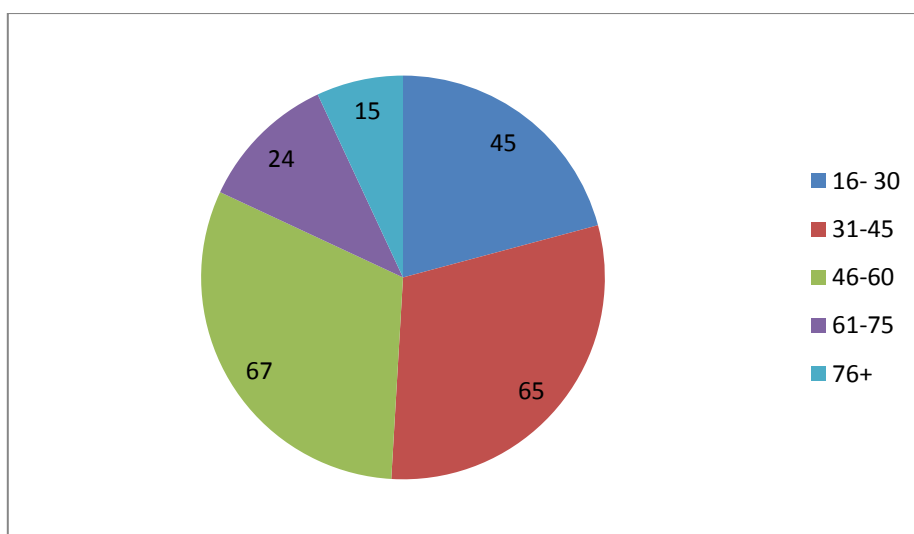


Figure 3.2: Distribution of study participants by age

The rationale behind the composition of the cross section of study participants was that the data had to be compatible with the natural growth and experiences of the organisations and reflect the diverse views of cross sections of each community that the organisations had worked with. While the ordinary members of the general assembly were very close to and active in the day-to-day operations of their respective organisations, there were non-association members who are ordinary community members whose lives in one way or another were touched by the actions of each of the organisations. Therefore, the participation of both groups ensured balanced and authenticated views about the dynamics and outcomes of the organisations at grassroots level. Likewise, the participation of three types of leader (board members, community senior citizens/local leaders and government representatives) was believed to offer triangular dimensions about the leadership process and experiences of the three organisations. Indeed, the inclusion of the private sector, mainly local business people, was believed to have added value in terms of obtaining information about the financial resources mobilisation and income generation activities of the organisations, which were closely linked with the presence and engagement as well as relationships of the private sector. The key informants and these cross sections of participants were also responsible for identifying and analysing critical issues which they thought demonstrated significant changes or social action that led to societal transformation resulting from the CSOs. They were familiar with these aspects through local workshops.

The semi-structured interviews and the focus group discussions with each of the groups were similar, except that there was a supplementary discussion on points which were important to some clusters such as government-specific urban land policies for government representatives, the economic viability of income generation schemes for the private sector representatives or the history of the early formation of each organisation for the past or current board members.

Although an effort was made to maintain gender balances, in reality this became impossible. While it was easier to keep the gender balance for the general assembly members or ordinary community members, it was difficult to do the same for board members or local leaders, business representatives and government representatives. This was generally a direct reflection of the gender dynamics of these organisations and it did not have a significant impact by biasing the findings of the discussion.

Once the key informants agreed on the composition of the informants/participants of the study, individuals were selected through a purposive sampling process. For example, a list of the board members and government representatives was easily obtained from the official project documents and based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study, the list of study participants were assembled. Likewise, constructing the list of participants for the general assembly members was not difficult, even though the lists varied from one organisation to the other. In the case of the GPSDO, there was no active list but the community leaders/senior citizens were quickly able to pick names from each of the neighbourhoods in the Imdiber area. The participants on the list for the TSDA were selected randomly from the Iddirs list, while the NHG file served as a base from which to randomly select participants from each of the neighbourhoods for CBISDO. The researcher and the key informants were able to use other community meetings as opportunities to invite and obtain interested beneficiaries or residents from the three communities for focus group discussions, or later for in-depth interviews or the facilitation of local workshops to validate the discussion points and findings of the study for each organisation.

The key informants were also responsible for identifying issues and research agendas that demonstrated social transformation. They identified the following key functions in line with the CSOs and their contributions to dynamic social transformation in any context. The functions were:

- The **coordination and mediation role**, which is the function of representing multiple interests of society, acting as an intermediary between state, family and the individual, and providing mediation activities.
- The **communicative function**, which is the capacity of communicating people's concerns to the public sphere and broadening civil society's contributions in the public sphere.
- The **protective role**, which is about the capacity for creating space which is independent of the state.
- The **control function**, which refers to the capacity to build a countervailing power, inhibiting states from dominating powers.
- **The socialisation role**, which refers to the capacity of CSOs to mobilise societal resources and "teach" democratic behaviours.
- The **solidarity function**, which is about the capacity for building identity and solidarity.

- The **service delivery role**, which refers to the capacity for delivering more efficient social services than the state and the market.
- The **global citizenship function**, which is about the capacity to mobilise citizens virtually across common global causes such as climate change and adaptation, HIV and AIDS, global peace.
- **The innovative function-** which is the capacity to innovate new ways of applying, adapting or developing an existing initiative, or the ability to implement an initiative or a collective action for the first time in a particular community, locality, cluster or region.
- **The transformative function.** This refers to an initiative, collective action or technology which results in improving the lives of women and men or in finding sustainable solutions that lead to long-lasting change for individuals, families, communities or society without depending on external assistance.

It was agreed during the key informants' meeting that each CSO would not necessarily meet all the above functions at any time in practical terms. As one function could overlap with another, it was agreed to use and analyse the important functions and the societal transformation process attained at community level in relation to the respective CSOs.

The researcher greatly benefited from the knowledge and wisdom of the key informants in the entire design and implementation of the research process, while the local workshops were instrumental in boosting the participants and the studied organisations or communities' ownership of the research findings. This implies that, as the researcher, I was able to benefit from the information, which did not only answer the research questions but also enabled me to analyse the contexts behind the answers in the perspective of the communities themselves in order to capture the full sense of the grassroots development initiatives in both their historical settings and current realities on the ground.

It is evident that the key informants and the way in which the interviews were conducted were crucial in obtaining accurate data. To begin with, the interviewees were allowed to choose the location and time for the interviews. This proved to be advantageous since it caused the least disruption to their daily routines. Interviewing in the work environment enabled me to observe the individuals or group of civil society leaders while they performed their daily routines. Accordingly, most of the interviews were conducted

on farms, at local markets, and in mosques, churches or private residences, with great care and in the spirit of providing a relaxed atmosphere for the interviewees.

Initially, the informants were very sensitive about the purpose of the research. They often asked if the research was for the government or other political parties. In the first few weeks of the fieldwork, the distrust was very prevalent. Therefore, guarantees had to be given to the respondents that the study was aimed at understanding their associational lives, the history of their CSOs and the transformations that they thought had occurred. They were informed that the research had nothing to do with any political agenda and the confidentiality of the respondents' data was guaranteed by way of avoiding the use of their real names. Instead, nicknames were used throughout for the sake of this document.

As the fieldwork progressed, more rapport was created and the respondents became active participants in the research process; they felt relaxed to discuss subjects which could otherwise be seen as sensitive and critical for their constituencies and the country at large.

The interview methods that were employed for the study were narrative interview techniques, which were data collection techniques aimed at reconstructing the stock of experiences and orientations of the participants without the judgement of the researcher determining what was relevant and what was not in the mind and hearts of the study participants.

Similarly, as May (1997:14–25) points out, qualitative research and narrative interviewing are important techniques for repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and the participants, since it enables the participants to have a focused understanding of the subject and helps them to narrate their perspectives about their lives, experiences or situations in their own words.

These interview techniques helped me a great deal in cultivating a sense of partnership and creating an informal environment for conversations instead of conducting question-and-answer sessions with the respondents. By doing this, it was possible to offset imbalances in the social, educational and economic backgrounds between the researcher and the research subjects, which is often lacking in structured questionnaire methods.

The frequencies of the interview sessions with each interviewee varied from three to six times, depending on the issues of the CSO that were studied. Each interview session lasted from one to two-and-a-half hours. Throughout the interview, field notes were taken to record the statements of the interviewees and their non-verbal expressions were observed. All the interviews were conducted in Amharic, an official language of Ethiopia.

To triangulate the veracity of the statements made, the researcher cross-checked critical information from each of the interviewees with the key informants.

3.4.3 *Cases study analysis and experiences during the qualitative research*

It is evident that a growing number of development studies are being conducted in Africa using the case study approach, notably since the 1990s. The growing body of literature illustrates the richness and vitality of information generated through case studies on institutions or the life histories of individuals on often sensitive and delicate social issues such as CSOs in Africa. That is why Patton (2002:10) states that case studies “have all the elements of a good story. They tell what happened, when, to whom, and with what consequences”.

In this study, the case study approach was adopted to examine three CSOs; namely, the TSDA, the GPSDO and CBISDO. The purpose of the research was not so much to assess the impact of the CSO programme work, but rather to analyse their organising practices, functions and outcomes in facilitating societal transformation.

In order to examine the process of societal transformation that occurred through or due to the three CSOs, the researcher used institutional stories as tools to learn about the experiences and contributions of each of the CSOs in their quest to promote collective action or civil acts. The histories of these institutions were instrumental in uncovering invisible and untold experiences about the past. This method was also highly effective in enlisting the past of these civic organisations, whose accounts are seldom found in written documents. The experiences of ordinary citizens with these organisations were very useful in constructing the important events and experiences of each person in relation to their relationship with or participation in the CSO in his or her own words. However, in constructing the testimonies, the researcher assembled the stories in such a way that they captured each person’s feelings and worldview.

An important stage in the writing of the various experiences was the editing of the testimonies to produce a coherent document. Because the interviewees varied in their use of words and their ability to express themselves, the different stories involved different kinds of editing. But in trying to make the organisational histories authentic and readable, I took great care not to put words into the research subjects’ mouths. In order to give the inside view of the research subjects, which was my primary interest, I only gave my own interpretations and comments in the introductory and conclusion chapters.

As I collected the historical settings and organisational paths of the CSOs, I had to ensure that I covered everything and that no important facts or events in the honest interpretations and perspectives of the participants were lost. I therefore focused on the individual organisational stories and the role of each individual in the formation of the respective organisation, mobilisation of resources and leadership experiences in sustaining their collective actions, experiences and testimonies with legal-administrative bodies and in the business sector. The abilities of members to act in a concerted fashion, as well as the experiences with the state and the degree to which the CSOs relied on external assistance, resources and advice, were among the most important issues for the study of civil society development and the role CSOs play in societal transformation. In other words, stories or experiences that dealt with the ability and confidence of civil society activists in raising their voices and striving for increasing citizen participation, as well as lobbying for the enhancement of the legislative environment, were all found to be important issues that could be modestly documented through the life-story exercises. The researcher also had the resources and capacity, and in particular the local language skills, to engage in what Geertz (1973:3–30) calls a “thick description” of the three selected CSOs for the study. This allowed the field experiences to take place relatively smoothly.

3.5 Process of data collection and analysis

The research process had three main stages: orientation and rapport building, data collection, and data analysis.

3.5.1 *Orientation and rapport building*

The researcher was assisted by three fieldwork facilitators, who were given a two-week iterative training session at which the purpose and methodology of the research were discussed. The initial orientation covered perspective sharing on interviewing techniques, focus group discussions and record-keeping using simulations and role play.

The researcher spent three months with each of the three CSOs. The first four weeks were used for rapport building; informal discussions with community members and local authorities; and understanding the cultural, socioeconomic and political dynamics within which the CSOs operate. The second month was used for conducting interviews with the key informants and respondents, including community leaders and ‘ordinary’ residents. The third month was used for facilitating focus group discussions with cross sections of

community members. A special effort was made to include older people, local officials and traditional leaders, poorer members of the case study organisations/communities, and women and youth. During this study phase, transect walks, mappings and systematic observations were made to inspect the collective actions of the CSOs' work on the ground.

3.5.2 The research questions

As stated by George (1979:43–50), it is important at any stage of a research project to “examine general questions and understand that each of the cases of civil society development are semi-structured and harmonised to guide the data collection and analysis”.

In line with this, the interview guide that was used for the collection of information was semi-structured. The reason for choosing this type of interview was that the required information had to be profound to allow for both the interpretation of the data and a comparison between the information the study participants gave. The semi-structured nature of the interviews implied that the subject fields of interest were indicated in advance but the sequence of questions and the exact framing of these were not fixed. This allowed me to reformulate the questions when needed during the interviews, and to focus on central questions or repeat earlier questions if needed.

As semi-structured interview questions tend to be open and not closed, there were no pre-written categories the study participants could choose from. The study participants were encouraged to think ‘out of the box’ (laterally) and to reflect their views when dealing with each set of questions and points of discussion.

I realised that there is an advantage to using semi-structured interview questions, since in using this type of question, I did not lead the study participants to agree with any preconceived answers. There was nevertheless some scope for detailed and nuanced discussions and answers. This gave me a better chance of learning and understanding expressions or feelings such as honesty, fear, nervousness or frustration. This was found to be very important, especially when interviewing representatives from government offices and members of the senior leadership of the respective CSOs.

The research questions

The following research questions were identified in line with the objectives of the study.

- How do the history and genesis of CSOs unfold in and facilitate transformative social action in Africa, specifically in Ethiopia, under the main political regimes?
- How do the current civil society support programmes implemented by both ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ CSOs and supported by international donors support transformative social action in the country?
- How do the ‘traditional’ CSOs relate to the local people and play a pivotal role in facilitating positive social change at community level?
- How are the current relationships between government and CSOs manifested and to what extent are they conducive to facilitating sustainable social change?
- How do the implications of such relationships respond to the quest for transformative social action and the effective functioning of ‘traditional’ CSOs?
- What alternatives are there for CSOs to catalyse social change for the future of Ethiopia and the rest of Africa?

3.5.3 *The unit of analysis*

Civic institutions are the major units of analysis for this research but the CSOs were clustered into two major clusters: the ‘traditional’ and the ‘modern’. It was not the aim of this study to make a comparative analysis of the organisations; instead it focuses on analysing how local people organise civic societies, cultivated civic virtues and engage in facilitating societal transformation under different historical and political contexts in their organisational development paths.

3.5.4 *The measurement techniques*

I have so far clarified the key questions that guided the analysis and determined the main units of analysis for the study. The question now is how I analysed the case studies and how they brokered societal transformation. It should be borne in mind that the study relied on different sources of information as well as qualitative and quantitative research methods. The case studies relied heavily on qualitative methods of measurement. However, this does not imply that quantitative methods of measurement were neglected. In line with the recommendation of King, Keohane and Verba (1994:40–48), I was able to find valid quantitative measures for what I wanted to know. Thus, the study drew on statistical material such as evaluations, population surveys and perennial reports (when available) as important sources to complement the qualitative analysis.

However, collecting quantitative data were only partly suitable to shed light on the key questions of the study. The informants' contributions and benefits from their participation in civic work, the continued existence of the CSOs, and the degree to which informants changed themselves and their associational life were variables that were extensively discussed. It was more difficult to depict the effectiveness of specific experiences of the organisations in acting as carriers of civil society, especially with regard to what has been called the transformed organisational culture and positive change process. A horizontal relationship inside civil society groups that was based on tolerance and trust and that was capable of resolving major conflicts in local communities was not easy to pinpoint as a change in the vertical relationship between CSOs and the state. These aspects of the CSOs were not easily open to empirical analysis.

Therefore, it was important to focus on historical paths, organisational turning points; ground-breaking moments and unique transformational processes; and careful interpretations of these discourses in the eyes, ears and spirits of the local people themselves. I, therefore, gave sufficient consideration to interpretative qualitative case studies and narratives that allowed me to trace complex processes and produce "understanding through richness, texture and detail" (McDonald 1996:10).

3.6 Limitations of the research

The limitations of the research are mainly related to the aspects of the research process and outcomes in light of their representativeness and replicability as discussed below.

3.6.1 Representativeness

I recognise that there is a need for being cautious when making conclusions based on the analysis of the three case studies. Indeed, a sample of three out of hundreds of CSOs in the country could be considered very small in size and may not be fully representative of the civil society movement experiences. However, the historical analysis and organisational paths of selected CSOs were found to be more insightful than using a larger number for cross-sectional analysis. The research process was also not extractive in nature. It assumed that the participants were not objects providing numerical data but were viewed as equally resourceful, purposeful and rich in their knowledge and experience of the subject matter. The level of detail and participatory reflection sessions for all the three

organisations were therefore considered sufficient to gain a proper understanding of the internal and external dynamics of each of the CSOs and their contributions to societal transformation. Understanding the processes and the contexts that generated transformational outcomes was also fundamental to nurture analysis instead of just collecting and generalising the information obtained from the participants as sets of accomplished tasks. For this reason, this study was consistent with the social research literature which indicates that a small sample size with in-depth data is likely to provide rich information from which reasonable conclusions can be drawn (Patton 2002:10–14; May 1997:14–25). In addition, the results of the community-level information sharing and validation workshops were used as instruments to triangulate and validate the data and the fieldwork findings.

As the researcher is a civil society activist and development practitioner who is very familiar with all three studied organisations, certain biases and prejudices (albeit unconsciously) could have influenced the data collection, analysis and reporting. However, the involvement and guidance of independent key informants minimised possible biases and prejudices.

3.6.2 Replicability

Reliance on the researcher's ingenuity, the absence of standard procedures to follow, being dependent on locally available historical records and cultural differences are some of the aspects which make this qualitative data collection and analysis problematic to replicate elsewhere.

Despite these limitations, the research process that involved key informants' interviews, focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and analysis of the three case studies – coupled with the participant observation experiences of the researcher and the secondary data reviews – generated reliable, appropriate and authentic data which was quite sufficient to examine the histories and genesis of the three CSOs selected for the analysis and the way in which their experiences contributed to societal transformative actions in Ethiopia.

3.7 Ethical considerations

In order to ensure that this study was carried out in an ethically sound way, it was important for me to safeguard the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of the study participants. I have obtained their consent and protected their confidentiality.

In the course of my study, I freely obtained the written consents from the individuals and institutions who participated in the study, without coercing or unfairly pressurising them. I informed them in detail about what participation entails, and reassured them that declining to participate in my study would not affect any rapport with me. When written consent frightened a few individuals, notably the older respondents and key informants, I obtained, at the very least, their verbal consent and agreed with them that their real names would not appear either in the thesis or in future publications.

It was important to protect the identity of the persons from whom I gathered information. I did so by rendering their names in code, recording their real names in a heavily protected file, and not including a list of their real names in this thesis.

PART TWO

Chapter 4

The State of CSOs in Ethiopia: Historical and Contextual Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the state of CSOs in Ethiopia and relates to one of the concerns of this study, which is how the history and genesis of CSOs unfold and facilitate transformative social action in Africa, especially in Ethiopia under different political regimes.

In order to fully understand the complexities of CSOs in Ethiopia, where this study was grounded, an understanding of the Ethiopian past is pivotal. The political and cultural-historic influences are very strong and ‘traditional’ CSOs have an important place in all walks of communal life and grassroots collective actions, despite the restrictions imposed on them by successive political regimes. Many have become marginalised, a few others have ‘transformed’ their functions in order to respond to the social realities and the rest have coexisted along with ‘modern’ CSOs.

In this chapter, I delineate and analyse three major political periods, which have had a significant impact on the dynamics of the present-day Ethiopian civil society sector. I begin with the first political period by examining the state of CSOs during the Emperor Haile Selssie I Monarchical Regime (1930–1974). I focus the analysis on the last decades of the Emperor period (1960–1974), since this specific period was considered to be a significant landmark in the history of CSOs as it was connected to the promulgation of the civil code of 1963. This is followed by a review of the civil society sector during the socialist military regime (1974–1991) with a focus on the influx of international NGOs, since their entry to the country was a landmark at the time. This entry was precipitated by the famines in 1974 and 1984 which claimed the lives of thousands of people. This period was also known for the growth of Marxist-Leninist-oriented mass organisations, which came into the picture as part of the socialist doctrine under the Military-Socialist Government Regime led by Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam. The third period that is discussed relates to the state of CSOs and the dynamics of their functions under the current EPRDF-led government, which came into power in May 1991. Particular emphasis

is given to the promulgation of the 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation and its implications for the operation of diverse groups of CSOs in Ethiopia.

4.2 Civil society organisations and the Emperor Haile Selassie I monarchical regime (1930–1974)

This subsection reviews the state of CSOs during the Ethiopian monarchical regime; notably, in the last one and half decades of the Emperor Haile Selassie I period. Although Ethiopia is a country of antiquity with cultures and traditions dating back over 3000 years (Teshale 1995:32), it has a legacy of authoritarian statehoods that prevented it from opening up the necessary space for the rise and development of autonomous CSOs (EC 2004:5).

The various successive autocratic governments of Ethiopia, including the last monarchic regime of Emperor Haile Selassie I, who ruled the country from 1930 to 1974, accorded limited space for the growth of the civil society sector (Merara, 1993:157). During these regimes, ordinary citizens were not the subject of the political and nation-building process. The state was considered as the good and the sole agent responsible for guiding and directing society in a civic way, while ordinary citizens were expected to conform to government expectations (Feleke 2009:10).

This was pronounced during the imperial government of Emperor Haile Selassie I, whose political governance was characterised by a top-heavy, secularised bureaucracy and imperial myths. The Imperial regime was historically perceived as the sole provider and actor in the nation-building process, while the public was mostly expected to be subservient to state hegemony (Bahiru 1991:56). Alternative and free opinions were often conceived as deviations from the norm and disobedience to the monarchs (Gebru 1996:15). This resulted in the emergence of a dominant feudal political system that exerted pressure on ordinary citizens by enforcing a hereditary-based land tenure system, forming national armies, deploying professional bureaucracies, setting up a tax system and appointing government officials on the basis of their loyalty to the imperial regime. This gradually gave the monarch absolute and unquestionable power (ibid. 16).

A similar study (Teshale 1995:42) indicates that the hereditary-based monarch system did not believe in the inherent goodness of the human mind and the equality of all citizens. It is, therefore, evident that ordinary citizens during the Imperial period were not active in collective civic actions that led to societal transformation. If there were civic institutions,

they were found mostly in peripheral areas of the country among local communities where ‘tradition’ was strong enough to govern indigenous ethnic groups at grassroots level without challenging the political status quo at the centre (Merara 2003:156).

In relation to the important role that had been played by ‘traditional’ CSOs, notably among those people on the political periphery, Bahiru (2002c:17–18) studied the Gurage people and pointed out that the *Yajoka* and *Gordanna*, ‘traditional’ institutions among the *Sebat Bet* and the *Kistane* Gurage communities respectively, have a significant role to play in the cultural, legislative and judiciary functions of local communities. Both systems developed what they called *Yajoka Qicha* and *Gordanna Sera* legal governance and ruling functions that basically deal with marriage, divorce, homicide, arson and communal resources management (ibid. 19–21). These ‘traditional’ institutions have been widely accepted and deeply rooted in the social fabric of the Gurage communities as their functions are applied equally to the rich and the poor, the titled and the untitled, except for their limitations in addressing gender equalities and the rights of minority social groups. Bahiru (2002:22–28) states that these civic institutions and their governing systems have been functional for over 80 years despite the external political pressures. Since the 1960s, these assemblies have even been used to mobilise the Gurage communities for the construction of the main road systems under the Gurage Road Construction Organisation and the Alem-Gana Wolayta Sodo Road Construction Organisation.

Adland (2002:29–44) in his study of the *Sera* of the Sidama people in southern Ethiopia discloses that *Sera* has been used as a web of relations and interrelations that regulate the communal social structure and governance system among the Sidama people. Although it remains unwritten law, he points out that the *Sera* constitute the morality and the conscience of the individual and the community by providing social security to members and decision-making through consensus. It obliges the individual to accommodate the majority and seek harmony. Adland (2002:43) also points out that the *Sera* institution used to be very active in facilitating social collaboration among community members during house construction, funeral services and caring for patients.

A similar study was conducted by Yacob (2002:45–55), who studied the *Seera* of Kambata, and indicates that *Seera* (meaning commitment to the truth) is one of the most important ‘traditional’ institutions, serving the Kambata people as a civic institution to guide the code of conduct and several sets of norms which are practised and internalised by them. *Seera* also deals with the normative realm within which individuals and groups are

expected to behave in relation to marriages, family relations, work cooperation, entertainment events, games and sports, child care and socialisation, circumcision, care and support for older people and environmental management (ibid. 47–48)

Yacob (2002:54–55) points out that the *Seera* of Kambata was given little legitimacy by successive Ethiopian political regimes. However, it has survived and remains morally authoritative in protecting the rights of the Kambata communities. For Yacob (2002:55), the functions of the *Seera* institution go beyond serving the social needs of the people and they were instrumental in mobilising people for the resistance struggle against the incorporation of the Kambata people into the Ethiopian nation during Emperor Menelik II's unification project.

On the positive side, the Emperor Haile Selassie I period should be credited for introducing moderate policies on community development since 1960s. Mekuria (1973:55–60) points out that the then imperial government of Emperor Haile Selassie I did an about turn on policy in the 1960s with the popularisation of the concepts and practices of community development across the different parts of the country.

In this regard, the enactment of the civil code of Ethiopia and the subsequent establishment of the Ministry of National Community Development provided practical legal provisions and institutional arrangements on issues related to association formation, legal personality, legal procedures, the rights and duties of the association and its members, and the legal role of the government department concerned (Mekuria 1973:56–57).

Following the promulgation of this law, His Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I himself took a special interest in the subject and encouraged the public by making a historic speech in 1963. He stated:

Although great effort is being exerted by our government by way of planning and formulating ways and means of eradicating community problems, it is not sufficient for the people to rely on government support alone... the people themselves must ... try to solve their problems through participation and collective actions (Alemayehu 1968:14).

Subsequent to the proclamation, the Office of Associations was established within the Ministry of the Interior in 1963, while the Association Registration Regulation Legal Notice 321/66 was promulgated in 1966. The imperial government also introduced new directives for the coordination of Iddirs at Woreda, Awaraja and the municipal levels (Kebebew 1978:15–29).

Subsequently, numerous Iddirs were assisted in forming a federation of Iddirs, which was in charge of collecting extra funds and materials and organising communal labour to

work on selected development projects (Kebebew 1978:15–29). Pursuant to this national initiative, ordinary citizens (mostly in urban areas) were encouraged to form community-based associations to meet the social welfare needs of their members and mobilise their resources in support of community development activities in marginalised communities. Accordingly, various types of ‘modern’ CSOs began to emerge in the country, and legitimacy was accorded both to the old and the ‘traditional’ self-help groups such as *Afossha* (economic support group); *Debbo, Jigge and Wonfel* (labour exchange groups); *Ezen* (funeral service for Muslim mosque members); *Senbete* (Sunday church followers’ club) and *Yager Shimaglewoch* (elders’ councils). The main common institutional features of these organisations were local resource mobilisation, mutual trust, shared identities and a high degree of member participation at community level. These ‘traditional’ CSOs have survived the pressure and suppression of the Imperial government and have carried on through the different political regimes (Costontinos 2006).

Fecadu (1970:13–14) argues that Iddir has been one of the most common and widely accepted and organisationally transformed community-led ‘traditional’ CSO in Ethiopia. It has transformed its institutional setup from serving members after death to helping members during and before death. In addition its composition has transformed from being local and monolithic to being regional/national and multi-ethnic.

The transformation of Iddir is emphasised by Fecadu (1970:15–23) and he underlined the fact that Iddir, which was meant to serve members during the death of relatives, has transformed itself in terms of its ethnic composition, territorial coverage and level of institutional arrangements. Iddir, which was reportedly started by early Gurage urban migrants and early urban settlers who were evicted from rural areas, has transformed itself into a multi-ethnic association uniting various cross sections of urban communities to promote civic causes (ibid. 24–25).

The transformational functions of Iddirs have attracted the attention of other scholars who note that Iddirs have changed their organisational composition on the basis of ethnic origin, residence/neighbourhoods, employment/occupations, gender composition and specialised functions (Feleke 1998:9–15; Pankhurst 2001:11–12; Dejene 2001a:2). These researchers have documented the existence and functioning of multiple types of Iddirs, including community Iddir (*Yakababi/YeKebele/ewendoch*) which is based on locality and consists of people living in the same vicinity or *Kebele* neighbourhood; tribal or ethnic (*Yegosa*) Iddir which is based on ethnic affiliation and home areas; institutional

(*Yemesriabet*) Iddir which is based on workplace, including factory Iddirs; friend Iddir (*Yegwadegnoch/Abroadegnoch/Yeqologwadegnoch/Wondimamachoch/Ehitimamachoch*), which are for former schoolmates or close friends who grew up together or went to school together; family Iddir (*Yebeteseb/Yebetezemed*) for blood relatives, kin or very close friends; women's Iddir (*Yesetoch/Yebaltina/Yeguada*); youth Iddir (*Yewetatoch*); Iddir for displaced people (*Yetefenaqay/Yetemelash*); squatters and settlers Iddir; and church or mosque Iddir. New types of Iddirs such as *Ye-buna Iddir* (coffee); *Ye-Tiratire Ina ye-Magedo Iddir* (cereals and fuel wood), which refer to the provision of fuel and cereals for hosting mourners on their return from burial services); *Ye-Mamsha Iddir* or *Mamasha* and *Yeakababi Amshi Iddir* (for company and services provision in the evening); and *Ye-Kolo Ina Ye-Tella Iddir* (roasted cereals and local beer) have reportedly begun to emerge in most urban areas of Ethiopia.

Fecadu (1973:18–32) and Mekuria (1973:23–60) report that Iddirs have begun to play a social integration function since the 1960s not only in linking the urban masses together horizontally but also in linking them vertically to the bureaucratic structure. Iddirs have also become instrumental in promoting public social welfare and extending social security assistance in different parts of Ethiopia.

ACORD (2010:6–7) indicates that growing number of Iddirs have been involved in citizen-led community development initiatives such as the construction of schools and roads and the support of families infected with and affected by HIV and AIDS, and in serving as a conduit for accessing savings and credit services for members engaged in informal business.

Beyond the extensive engagement in community development work, a study conducted by the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ 2002:7) revealed that as many as 39 million people were reported to have been members of one or more types of Iddirs in Ethiopia. This indicates how these associations expanded, became popular among various cross sections of communities and served as instruments for mobilising human, financial and material resources for the common good of their members and communities.

Although this organisational transformation and the inclusion of new functions for Iddirs were perceived positively as the right trend towards creating greater civic space for the ordinary citizens to participate in and benefit from community development endeavours, there were traditional leaders and some Iddir representatives who were sceptical about these policy measures on the ground and felt that they could expose Iddirs

in the extracting of the financial resources collected from the poor people to offset the budget deficits encountered by government (Mekuria 1973:11).

Similarly, scholars like Kohen (in Ottaway 1978:384) were critical of the Imperial government's administrative steps for the formation of Iddirs coordinating committees at Addis Ababa city administration level on the grounds that the real motive of the government was to use such structures for co-opting Iddirs leaders and advancing their political agendas.

Similar reservations were noted in the studies of Alemayehu (1968:9) and Mekuria (1973:10), who argued that Iddir associations were compelled to state in their statutes that they did not pursue any political activity or interfere in any administrative affairs of the government. They were also required to make their meetings known to security agents well in advance. This has forced Iddir leaders to live with an atmosphere of political suspense and to develop sense of insecurity (Alemayehu 1968:14).

According to Kebebew (1978:23), the inclusion of new community service functions on top of the original objectives of Iddirs gave new opportunities for Iddirs to mobilise their members and undertake diverse social and economic activities. However, such new functions attracted the attention of local authorities and exposed them to manipulation. Kebebew (1978:24) further points out that the incorporation of new community development functions on top of the original purposes of traditional associations such as Iddirs generated new challenges, since the management of more resources and the execution of broader functions created rooms for embezzlement, threatened the execution capacity of officials and induced conflict among the leadership team of Iddirs.

In addition to Iddir development, the Emperor Haile Selassie I period was noted for the proliferation and coexistence of other types of 'traditional' CSOs. Dejene (1993:11–32) underlines the fact that the formation of *Equb* (a traditional money rotating scheme) among business people in most urban areas of Ethiopia became common along with the expansion of banks and insurance companies. GTZ (2002:11) reports that about 21 million people were reported to have been members of *Equbs*, while an additional nine million people were reportedly active in the membership of other forms of self-help groups (such as *Afossha*, *Debbo*, *Wonfel*, *Jigge*, *Ezen*, *Senbete*) or elders' councils.

Furthermore, 'modern' CSOs, such as membership organisations representing the economic and business interests of their members, including associations in the private sector like the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sector Associations (ECCSA) and the

Ethiopian Employers' Federation (EEF), and farmers and consumer cooperatives, emerged and became part of the civil society landscape during the Emperor Haile Selassie I period (Kebebew 1978:24).

Among the local NGOs that have been vibrant since the Emperor Haile Selassie I period were the Ethiopian Teachers' Association, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie I Foundation and Agri-Service Ethiopia. Until the end of the Imperial period in 1973 there was only a handful of international NGOs (such as Save the Children Sweden, Hope Enterprise) in the country (Feleke 2009:14).

To sum up, the Emperor Haile Selassie I period was not open to creating a positive enabling environment for the germination of independent CSOs, although the promulgation of the Civil Code of Ethiopia was a significant legal step in its own right. The analysis indicated that the Emperor period was sensitive to the emergence of 'independent' and citizen-led CSOs, since their strength and solidarity functions were perceived as posing apolitical threat to the absolutist power of the Imperial government and having an undermining effect on the government, which was the sole provider of services in the country. If there were some community development and self-help initiatives, they were sporadic and often promoted by influential leaders who happened to have strong links to the political authorities.

The analysis further indicated that some Iddirs appeared to have extensive acceptance by cross sections of communities among the diverse types of 'traditional' CSOs. They have tremendously transformed themselves from being mono-ethnic to multi-ethnic in their membership composition and expanded from local to regional interlocking multiple communities through community development. The entry of most 'modern' CSOs from the west was witnessed towards the end of the Emperor Haile Selassie I regime in 1973/1974, following the famine that claimed the lives of thousands of people in the country. Their core-functions focused on relief assistance and the rehabilitation of famine affected communities.

4.3 Civil society organisations under the military-socialist government (1974–1991)

This subsection deals with the situation of CSOs during the military-socialist era. The ascent to power of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (*Derg*) on 12

September 1974 removed Emperor Haile Selassie I, the king who had dominated Ethiopian history for almost half a century and whom the people obeyed as quasi divine (Teshale 1995). This changed the political landscape of the country completely and in itself had an impact on the growth and development of CSOs during the *Derg* (Merara 2003:78). The political ideology of the *Derg* was influenced by the growing number of civilian politicians on the left, who were the proponents of Marxism and Leninism. It followed a Stalinist approach as was applied in a different context in the Soviet Union. This generated a socialist ideological path, which showed little tolerance for the rights of citizens to form independent CSOs and undertake social action free of political governance (Gebru 1991:86).

Kassahun (2002:120–125) reports that the *Derg* did not have either a clear-cut civil society policy or the goodwill to encourage the creation and growth of ‘independent’ CSOs in fear of counter-balancing its political agenda. This became evident as early as 1976 with the enunciation of the Programme for the National Democratic Revolution. This programme, among other things, compelled the military-socialist regime, the *Derg*, to introduce new socialist institutions to implement and legitimise its policies. Therefore, ordinary citizens had limited space to organise themselves and promote collective action. Merara (2003:201) points out that the *Derg* enforced the establishment of mass organisations among people from various walks of life. Various politically charged and less independent mass organisations, such as the All-Ethiopia Trade Union (AETU), the All-Ethiopia Urban Dwellers' Association (AEUDA) and the All-Ethiopia Peasants' Association, the Revolutionary Ethiopia Youth Association and the Revolutionary Ethiopia Women's Association, were founded during this time and were given the space to operate as part of the *Derg* political measures to dominate the civil society landscape.

Furthermore, Merara (2003:47) argues that the *Derg* stretched its community organising and social administration bureaucracy across all administrative regions and Awraja administrative structures in the country. Its control over the institutions was very strong and the structure finally encompassed all parts of the country through the formation of Peasant Associations for rural areas and Urban Dwellers' Associations (*Kebeles*) for urban residents. Merara (2003:47) reports that there were more than 20,000 Peasant Associations throughout the country in 1990, a year before the military-socialist government collapsed. There were 291 Kebeles in the Ethiopian capital (Addis Ababa) alone that were linked to the government throughout the country. Merara further states that

government's control over the space for associational life was not only limited to these newly created and politically charged mass organisations, but also extended to the creation of the All Ethiopian Trade Union, a confederation of 1700 unions whose members numbered in excess of 300,000 people at the time (Merara 2003:158).

Gebru (1991:86) states that these socialist-oriented associations became very powerful in controlling and ruling citizens at a local level. The creation of all these politically charged associations resulted in the demolition of viable civic actions by ordinary citizens and side-lined the role of 'traditional' CSOs (Merara 2003:179). This became less tolerated by various cross sections of communities and subsequently contributed to the rise of armed struggles against the incumbent socialist-oriented military government, the *Derg*.

De Waal (1997:11–13) points out that the influx of international NGOs to the country became more pronounced during the *Derg* period following the 1973/1974 famine that reportedly affected 7.7 million people and claimed the lives of 40,000 to 60,000 people.

Dessalegn (2010:81–134) indicates that about 22 international NGOs were registered in the country and they became directly operational in assisting people primarily affected by the famine in the Wollo and Tigray regions through humanitarian assistance, including relief food, water supplies and basic health interventions. Among the most notable and concerted famine relief and rehabilitation services during this period were the founding members of the Christian Relief Fund (later called the Christian Relief and Development Association, CRDA) in 1973.¹

Most faith-based international NGOs were primarily involved in the delivery of substantial famine relief assistance to people whose livelihoods had been seriously ravaged. Since this great famine period, almost all of these 'modern' international NGOs have established permanent field offices to carry out rehabilitation and development processes. Again, the influx of these 'modern' international NGOs paints its own dominant picture on the landscape of the civil society sector, which was controlled and directed by socialist-oriented mass organisations (CCRDA 2013:17).

¹Adventist Development & Relief Agency, Baptist General Conference Mission, Baptist Mission/Ethiopia, Catholic Relief Services, Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, Kale Heywet Church Development Program, Lutheran World Federation, Norwegian Church Aid, Oxfam/United Kingdom, Society of International Missionaries, St. Mathew's Church and Swedish Philadelphia Church Mission.

To sum up, the various studies indicate that, throughout its 17 years of political power (1974–1991), the military-socialist government of Ethiopia was known for its repression of freely and independently formed CSOs. During the military-socialist period, social, economic and political activities were closely controlled by the state. This allowed the political regime to suppress formal autonomous organisations and the development of mass movements other than the Workers Party. Close control of all social organisations was perceived by the political regime to be an effective manipulating tool to create ‘good socialist citizens’ outside the official political party framework. This is not to say that ‘traditional’ associations did not exist but they were marginalised and kept under security surveillance. The ever-increasing number of international NGOs witnessed since the beginning of the socialist regime focused their actions on humanitarian response and disaster mitigation work, which the military-socialist government was comfortable with.

Unlike ‘modern’ western-based civil society arrangements, the realm of mass-based organisations representing civil society was not separate from the state. Such arrangements left a legacy of paternalistic state–society relations. Contrary to the Tocquevillian tradition and despite assertions to the contrary, I argue that these organisations were not based on voluntary participation and their leadership formed a crucial part of the political elite of socialist Ethiopia.

As part of the vertical power structures of the military-socialist regime, mass organisations coerced participation in order to monopolise public discourse and constrict autonomous collective action. These institutions mostly served as vehicles to establish within them the social control mechanisms needed for the regime’s stability, allowing the state to have peer surveillance and manage any individual’s social life. Under such circumstances, both ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ CSOs were weakened in terms of providing a protective function. As a result, they were unable to create a space independent of and protected from the military-socialist state. They were unable to offer a protective function as their ability to build a countervailing power, inhibiting the centralisation of state powers, was limited. These CSOs were less capable of communicating people’s concerns in the public sphere and reflexively stabilise or widen the scope of civil society functions.

4.4 Civil society organisations under the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) (1991–2014)

This subsection reviews the situation of CSOs under the current political system. It was hoped that the deposition of the socialist military regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam and the coming to power of the EPRDF-led government in May 1991, under the late prime Minister Meles Zenawi, would offer the creation of a greater space for the civil society sector in Ethiopia.

Kumulachew and Debebe (2012:16) state that the promulgation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's new constitution in 1995, the ratification and incorporation of international human rights instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in Ethiopian law and its alignment with the African Charter on Human and People's Rights were cause for optimism and were considered to be positive signs for guaranteeing the rights of all citizens to freedom of association and the formation of diverse forms of CSOs. This had resulted in the growth and expansion of 'modern' NGOs (ibid. 23).

Dessalegn (2010:95–101) and Abbink (2006:173–175) point out that until the controversial national elections of 2005, there was some proliferation of 'modern' CSOs that were both autonomous and committed to social justice and right-based programmes. There was also increased space for professional associations, independent think-tanks and research bodies. Religious organisations worked far more freely than in both the Imperial and the socialist military periods. There was an explosion of churches, mosques and protestant chapels in the country. Similarly, a considerable number of print media and a growing number of opposition parties were legally permitted to exist (Dessalegn & Meheret 2004:5–11).

This positive trend was documented in the study conducted by Dessalegn (2010:81–110), who revealed that an accelerated growth in the number of NGOs in general and the rapid expansion of local NGOs in particular was observed over a period of one decade (1997–2007) as presented in the following table:

Table 4.1: Distribution of local and international NGOs between 1997 and 2007

Types of NGO	1997	2007	Balance/increase	% Increase
Local NGOs	96	1742	1646	1714%
International NGOs	96	234	138	143%
Total	192	1976	1784	929%

(Source: Own calculation, adapted from Dessalegn [2010] and MoJ [2007])

A further analysis of the composition and denominations of the NGOs in this period reveals that the number of local NGOs increased almost eighteen fold, while the number of international NGOs increased 1.5times.

A recent study by CCRDA (2014: 20) indicates that the total number of CSOs in Ethiopia that has registered with the Federal Charities and Society Agency is 3,119 and their registration category is shown in the following table.

Table 4.2: Number of CSOs by category of registration in Ethiopia

Type of charities/CSOs	Number of charities and societies (2013)
Ethiopian residents	2075
Ethiopian charities	121
Foreign charities	422
Societies	501
Total	3119

(Source: CCRDA 2014:20)

Kassahun (citing Dessalegn 2010) indicates that CSOs in Ethiopia contribute over eight per cent of the annual GDP of the country, which amounts to a significant share of financial resources. He further points out that the CSOs engaged in service delivery and development activities between 2004 and 2007 were making a total financial investment worth ten billion Ethiopian Birr, implementing over 2,000 projects across different parts of the country. A similar study by CCRDA (2011:6) indicates that in the year 2011 alone, a total of 310 member agencies of CCRDA implemented 4,193 projects in education, health, food security, capacity building, skills training, women and child support, water development, livestock development, relief aid, natural resources management and

environmental protection. This amounts to a total outlay of over Birr 12 billion, benefiting 17 million people across all the regions of the country (CCRDA 2011:6).

Nonetheless, the development of the civil society sector and its role in promoting rights-based programmes did not last long. Most local CSOs that were active in advocacy and policy influencing work were weakened and their core functions were aborted following the promulgation of the Charities and Societies Proclamation in 2009.

According to a European Union (2008) report, the civil society sector of Ethiopia has been crippled by the presence of legal and operational impediments to the genuine development of the civil society sector. This report argues that these impediments have mainly derived from the wish of the current government to maintain a powerful state hegemony, the perpetuation of the historic attitudes of the public associated with Ethiopian statehood, and the lack of skills and commitment of the individuals who are running the CSOs (EC 2008).

A study conducted by TECS Consulting (2011) found that the Charities and Societies Proclamation of 2009 was the first comprehensive law governing the registration and regulation of NGOs. However, the report indicates that the proclamation was considered by many CSOs to be a punitive instrument to strengthen the controlling power of the government. Similarly, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association has commented that the proclamation and the enforcement of subsidiary guidelines have had a devastating impact on individuals' ability to form and operate associations effectively. Moreover, it is not in compliance with international norms and standards related to freedom of association, notably with respect to access to funding. (Maina Kiai 2013). Studies conducted by the International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law, Ethiopia-NGO Law Monitor-Research Center (2009), TECS Consulting (2012) and Kumulachew and Debebe (2012) have identified the following legal and administrative restrictions on the current civil society landscape in Ethiopia.

Table 4.3: Legal restrictions on the registration and operation of CSOs in Ethiopia

Type of barrier	Description of barrier
Restrictions on registration	Excessive government discretion in the mandatory registration of charities and societies. It is mandatory that all charities and societies register. If the charity is a foreign organisation, then it is required to obtain a letter of recommendation from the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Charity and Societies Agency has the power to deny registration if it considers the charity to have unlawful purposes or to be a threat to public peace, welfare or good order in Ethiopia.
Restrictions on the promotion of human and democratic rights focused programmes	The Charities and Societies Proclamation restricts foreign and Ethiopian resident charities from engaging in human rights, equality of nation states, gender justice and religious affairs. It also prohibits foreign and Ethiopian resident agencies from interventions related to the promotion of the rights of people with disabilities, children's rights, the promotion of conflict resolution, or reconciliation, as well as the enforcement of justice systems and legal services.
Restrictions on advocacy and policy influencing work	Ethiopian societies are eligible to conduct advocacy and policy influencing activities so long as they raise the bulk of their resources from local sources and t depend on foreign sources for only 10% of their funding.
Restrictions on budget proportion allocations	The restriction of a 30:70 ratio of admin and programme budget allocation hinders the implementation of capacity building and organisational development activities.

(Source: Adapted from TECS Consulting [2012], Kumulachew & Debebe [2012], and the International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law. Ethiopia-NGO Law Monitor- Research Center[2009])

Kumulachew and Debebe (2012:8) state that following the promulgation of the Societies and Charities Proclamation in 2009, the legal definition and category of CSOs was changed and they were broadly classified into two categories: charities and societies. The latter encompasses exclusively 'Ethiopian' societies, which are formed under Ethiopian law and consist exclusively of Ethiopians that shall not receive more than 10 per cent of their income from foreign sources. If these societies receive more than 10percentof their funds from foreign sources, they automatically lose their identity and shall be registered as 'Ethiopian resident charities' even if they are formed under Ethiopian law and run by Ethiopians or Ethiopian citizens who reside outside Ethiopia (Kumulachew & Debebe2012:9). Another category of charities is foreign charities, which encompasses NGOs, whose members include foreign nationals but were formed under foreign laws and receive funds from sources outside Ethiopia. Once an NGO is labelled as 'foreign' or an 'Ethiopian resident' under the above legal definition, it is prohibited from participating in the advancement of tasks related to 'citizen' rights, which include the advancement of

human and democratic rights, the promotion of gender equality and the promotion of the rights of people with disability and children's rights (ibid. 10).

A study conducted by Kumulachew and Debebe (2012:38–39) shows that Ethiopian societies had to reduce their programmes, shut down their branch offices or restructure their organisational setup in order to meet the requirements of the restrictive law. For example, the Human Rights Council had to close down 10 of its branch offices and terminate the contracts of 13 qualified staff members; its membership decreased from 300 to only 60. The law also had a negative impact on the Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association (EWLA), which was forced to terminate vital services such as pro bono legal services to many Ethiopian women who did not have the resources to retain lawyers. Without organisational assistance, it means that the legal aid services for over 17,000 abused poor women came to a halt.

The restriction on CSOs' engagement in human rights advocacy and monitoring and reporting work resulted in five nationally recognised human rights oriented CSOs (APAP, ELA, EWLA, EHRC and OSJE) withdrawing ceasing to submit shadow reports on human right situations in Ethiopia to United Nations treaty bodies (Kumulachew & Debebe 2012:53).

Further restrictions on the operations of both Ethiopian and foreign charities were promulgated when the ChSA Issued Guideline no 02/2003E.C., came into effect in July 2011, to regulate the administrative and operational costs of charities and societies. The guideline, among other things, forced all NGOs to comply with the 30% stipulated operational cost, the items of which included in the 30% ratio have failed to meet global/universal project management practices such as the cost of programme coordinator and project coordinator posts as well as the costs for programme consultancy and monitoring and evaluation activities (Kassahun 2013).

According to CCRDA report of 2013, only 62.1 per cent of the 1,824 charities and 56 per cent of the 1,020 societies were able to renew their licences in 2013. The same report indicated that there has been an increasing trend in the closure of charities and societies, from four 4 in 2011, to seven in 2012 and 51 in 2013. There has been a 40 per cent declining trend in the number of newly registered charities over the three-year period as well. Similarly, declining resource inflows to charities/societies were observed from as much as 916.9 million birr in 2008/2009, to 860.5 million birr in 2009/2010, 893.5 million birr in 2010/2011, and 600 million birr in 2011/2012.

According to CCRDA (2013), a multitude of factors have been cited as the reasons for such declining trends in the re-registration of CSOs and in resources flow to the sector. Of these, the entrenched mutual mistrust between the CSOs and government, the implementation of the punitive CSO bill and guidelines, the government's perception of international NGOs as organisational and ideological foot soldiers of the global neoliberal architecture, the global financial crisis and the multiple humanitarian crises in the world are among the critical factors that have contributed to the shrinking number of re-registered organisations and the reduction in grant flows to the civil society sector.

However, critics of the civil society sector argue that most of the resident charities have their own internal challenges and the non-registration of these organisations has partially been the result of their own organisational limitations. In this regard, they argue that although they claim to be centres of power in changing others, most of the registered CSOs have limited constituencies at grassroots level. These organisations have increasingly been concentrated on the provision of services or in filling the gaps perceived by the government, but have not had much impact in terms of their reach, innovation or financial investment. Some critics further argue that the majority of the resident charities have been led by founding directors, who have never demonstrated a commitment to successive leadership since their establishments (Personal communication, Mr M, September 2013).

4.5 Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the history of Ethiopia and showed how the history and genesis of CSOs were shaped and reshaped by major political regimes in Ethiopia. This was followed by a discussion of the challenges inherent in the facilitation of societal transformation in the current political environment of Ethiopia, given the restrictive rules and regulations enforced by the Government of Ethiopia.

It is evident from the historical analysis that Ethiopia, which has maintained its own 'traditions', has gone through successive dominant political regimes that have been authoritarian in nature. Citizens and citizen-led civil associations have been kept on the margins of the nation-building process, with limited space to actualise their potential. Moreover, many were silenced or forced to bow to various legal and administrative measures and procedures.

The successive political regimes cornered ‘traditional’ CSOs and forced them to play gap-filling roles instead of accepting them as one of the core development partners serving the collective voice of the poor, defending the civil rights of the poor and holding the government accountable. For decades, this has caused ordinary citizens to perceive government as the absolute master of their lives and they remain subservient to the political authorities. Deviators from the norms are often considered decadent and seen as opposition, which has prevented the country from progressing in terms of nurturing civil culture, democratisation and equitable economic development.

Overall, vibrancy in the civil society sector and civic activism has been lacking in Ethiopia, despite the political governance structures of successive governments. The civil society sector was not strong enough nor was it allowed to hold the various government bodies accountable to the people. The authoritarian political regimes have been so powerful that civil societies have to negotiate restrictive laws and show submissiveness to government regulations.

In this regard, the promulgation and implementation of the Societies and Charities Proclamation in 2009 had a negative impact on the identities and objectives of CSOs. It has weakened the human resources capacity, membership size and financial sustainability of most of the organisations that once were active in promoting civic rights, social change and social justice work. This may result in the perpetuation of weak societal transformation and the prolongation of an authoritarian political regime.

Chapter 5

The Case of the Gurage People's Self-help Development Organisation and Analysis of Societal Transformation

5.1 Introduction

One of the objectives of my study was to examine how 'traditional' CSOs relate to local people, whether they play a pivotal role in facilitating societal transformation at community level and, if this happens, to learn how such societal transformation has indeed occurred. This chapter, therefore, focuses on the examination of the cases of the Gurage People Self-Help Development Organization (GPSDO) (previously known as the Gurage Road Construction Organisation [GRCO]). This organisation has been engaged in various social development practices for the past 50 years, targeting the rural communities of the Gurage land. As pointed out in chapter 2, the analysis in this chapter was mainly informed by first-hand information collection from key informant interviews, focus group discussions and field observations held in Imbiber, Cheha Woreda, in the Gurage Administrative Zone for three months from April to September 2012.

As shown on Figure 5.1, a total of 80 people (38 female) participated in the study through in-depth interviews, five key informant interviews and six focus group discussions. The composition of the respondents included general assembly members (20), ordinary community members (20), older people /local leaders (12), government representatives (12), board members (8) and business owners/private sector representatives (8). This was complemented by a secondary data review of pertinent documents.

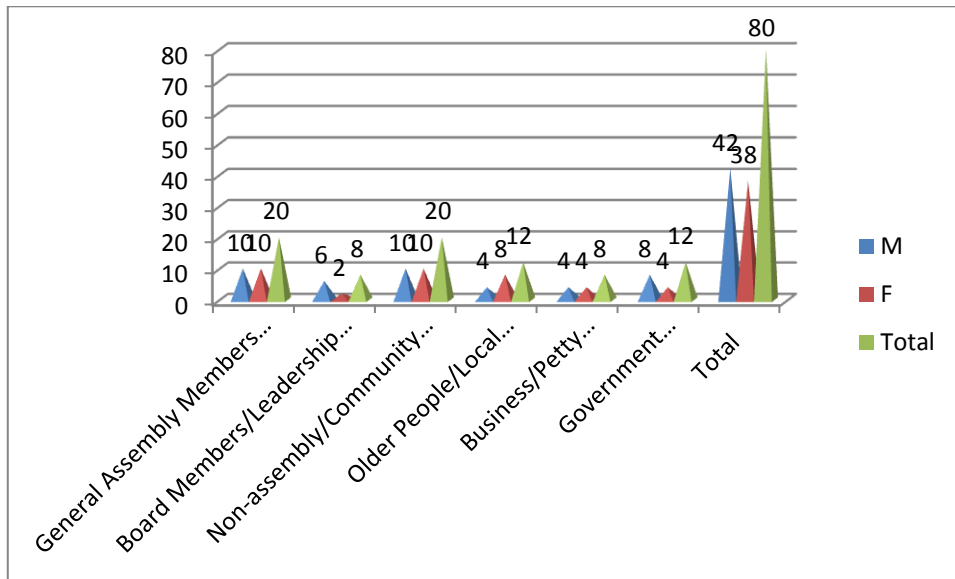


Figure 5.1: Composition of GPSDO study participants by responsibility and gender

Figure 5.2 indicates that the majority (35%) of the **GPSDO** study participants fall into the 46 to 60 year age group, followed by 61 years and above (25%), 31 to 45 years (23.8%) and 16 to 30 years (16.3%).

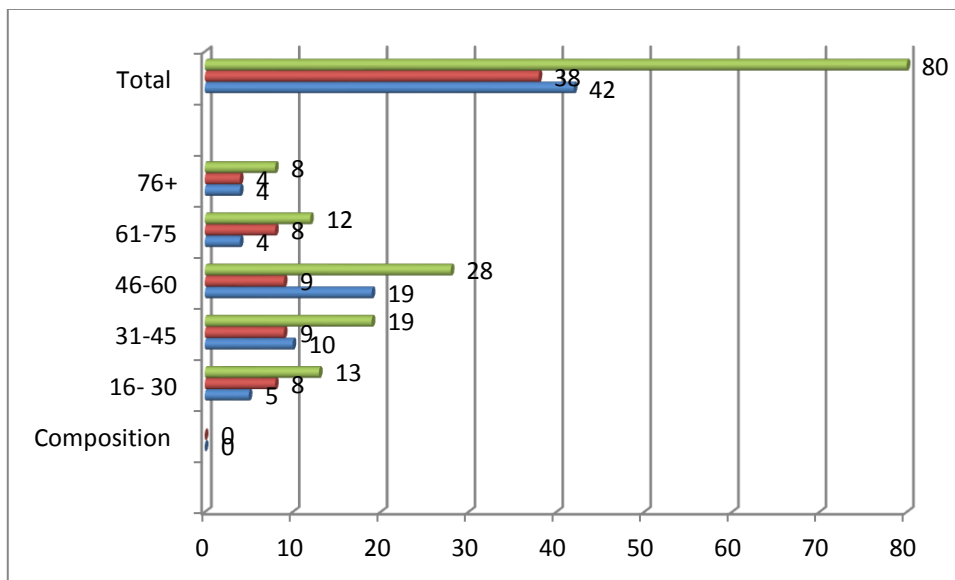


Figure 5.2: Distribution of GPSDO study participants by age

Imdibir, the study site and the historical nerve centre of the Sebat Bet Gurage, is located 180 kilometres from Addis Ababa and 30 kilometres from Wolkite. Imdibir town used to be the capital of the Chaha Gurage, which was one of the seats of the traditional political administration of the Sebat-Bet Gurage (Gurage of the seven houses). Bekalu and

Digafe (1996:3, 4) state that *Imdibir* means “mother forest” (*Im* means “mother” and *dibir* means “forest”); in the Gurage language this indicates that the area was known for its thick forest. However, the current coverage of forest in the area is estimated to be dwindled to 10 percent according to the Woreda Agricultural Office (Bekalu, 1996: 17).

This chapter provides a brief introduction to the Gurage land and its people, followed by a review of the history of the GPSDO and its contribution to the societal transformation process in the Gurage land. The way in which the associational life and civic responsibilities of the Gurage communities is brokered through the GPSDO is presented. The collective civic actions and their effects are examined by focusing on the key functions of the GPSDO, identifying the milestones and reviewing the process through which the organisation facilitated societal transformation. Finally, a summary of the key empirical findings is presented.

5.2 The Gurage land and its people

The Gurage Administrative Zone (see fig. 5) is located in the northern part of the Southern Nations and Nationals People Region (SNNPR) at $37^{\circ} 30'$ and $38^{\circ} 50'$ E and $7^{\circ} 40'$ and $8^{\circ} 45'$ N (Worku 2006:25). Its administrative capital (Wolkitte) is located across the Addis Ababa–Jimma Road, about 150 kilometres from Addis Ababa. The Gurage administrative zone is subdivided into 12 Woredas, which in turn comprise 401 Peasant Associations (PAs) and 14 Urban Dwellers Associations (UDAs). The total area of the zone is estimated to be 5932 square kilometres and the area is home to more than 1,670,000 people, of which 92.4 per cent is rural dwellers.

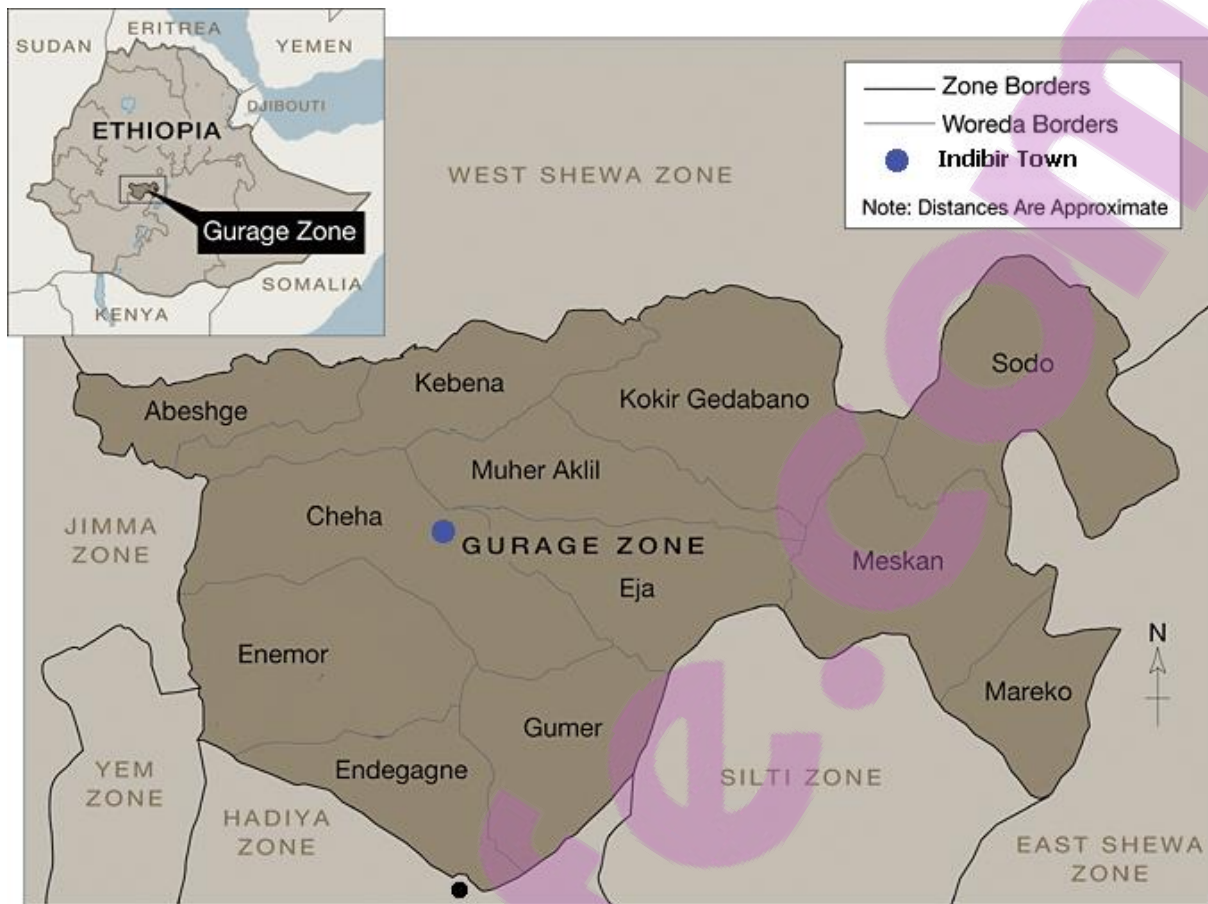


Figure 5.3: Map of Gurage Zone (Source: The Jama Network, *Journal of the American Medical Association* 1992)

The age distribution of the Gurage Administrative Zone population indicates that 54.4 per cent of the population is estimated to be comprised of people within the age range of 15 to 60 years. Children under the age of 15 and older people over the age of 60 are estimated to comprise 46.4 per cent of the total population. The average population density is 273 persons per sq.km, while the minimum and maximum population density is 159 and 536 persons per sq. Km respectively (GPSDO, 2012:6).

Worku (2006:25, 26) states that the Gurage people speak a collection of Semitic languages and dialects (collectively known as *Guragina*) that are divided into at least three subgroups which are known as Northern, Eastern and Western Gurage. While Eastern Gurage consists of Silti, Wolane, Ulbarag, Innekor and Zeway, the Western Gurage part consists of Chaha, Ezha, Enemor, Endegen, Gyeto, Muher, Masqan and Gogot, and the Northern Gurageside consists of Aymellel or Sodo. Among the Gurage lineage groups, this study focused on the largest one, which is called the *Sebat-Bet Gurage* (literally meaning

the seven houses of Gurage)andwhich consists of the clans of Chaha, Ezha, Geyto, Muher, Ennemor, Aklil and Wollene-Worriro (Shack 1966:18–30).

The rural economy is based on subsistence farming, with the main crop being *EnseteAdulis* (the false banana tree), which produces edible roots and stems. This is supplemented in some areas by the cultivation of cash crops, particularly *Chat* (a mild stimulant). However, in order to meet financial obligations such as land tax, the cost of festivals, and the cost of schooling and other basic services, one or more members of Gurage households regularly migrate to other areas of Ethiopia to generate income by working as traders and day-labourers (Bahiru 2002:19–21).

In his classic anthropological study, Shack (1966:45,56) points out that the Gurage people were among the Southern people who were incorporated into the state of Ethiopia during Menelik II expansion to the south and his Imperial building project in the late 19th century. Shack (1966:156, 157) focused his study on the *Cheha* Gurage and extensively discusses the *Ya Joka*, a civic institution which is highly respected by the local people and in which local elders play an important role in maintaining law and social order.

Bahiru (2002:21) attempted to trace the origin of *Ya Joka* and states that the name was believed to stem from the Baobab type of tree called *Zigba (Podocarpus)*, which served as the venue for the community assembly. While Worku (1983 E.C.:36–38) believes the *Ya Joka* has been functional since the 16th century based on his informants' oral history, Shack (1966:91, 92) instead reduced its functionality to the first half of the 19th century. In both accounts, it is evident that the *Ya Joka* served as a 'traditional' citizens-owned, inter-tribal council of elders to settle disputes, ensure social stability, maintain good social relations and enforce customary laws (*Kitcha*) in relation to marriage and divorce laws, punish criminals, and ensure peace and security among the Gurage people (Shack 1966:156–157; Bahiru 2002C:21; Worku 1983 E.C.:36–38).

The Gurage migration to urban areas soon after the Gurage land incorporation into the Ethiopian state by Menelik's forced by *Fitawrari* Habte Girorgis, which began as early as 1875 (Tsegaye 2006:75) is reported to have had a negative impact on the functioning of their important civil institutions. As Menelik's conversion of their traditional landholding system became operational, more Gurages lacked ownership of their rural land and they began to migrate to other locations. According to my discussion with the key informant Mr T, the founding of the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, in the mid-1880s reportedly coincided with the land dispossession of the Gurage in rural areas

and was one of the pull factors that motivated early Gurage migrants to move to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, mainly in search of a better life (particularly as unskilled labourers in the construction and trade sectors). According to Bahiru (2002:69), most Gurage migrants to Addis Ababa began to make a living as petty traders in the marketplace or as casual labourers on the streets after settling in the slum areas surrounding the Arada market around Merkato, Teklehaimanot, Sebategna and the Habte Giorgis areas, which can easily be traced now as the 'home' of the Gurages.

According to Woldesillase (1979 E.C.:16–19), although the Gurage Road Construction Organisation and the *Ya Joka* are distinct organisations in scope and nature, the *Ya Joka* reportedly provided an important social and cultural foundation and institutional arrangements for the establishment and sustenance of the road construction organisation, which was renamed the Gurage People Self-help Development Organisation in 1988. (Nishi 2003:14–17).

5.3 The Gurage people, associational life and the foundation of the Gurage Roads Construction Organisation

Available studies (Worku 2006:17–18; Tesgaye 2006:12) indicate that Gurage communities place great value on associational life. They tend to organise themselves into a multitude of CSOs in order to mobilise financial, material and human resources from their fellow members to strengthen their business and undertake the provision of basic social services to their fellow members. Among the civic associations that have played multiple functions and transcended three main political regimes has been the old GRCO, and the current GPSDO, which have been proactive in organising the Gurage people and their resources in order to transform various aspects of the Gurage land for the past half a century (Woldesillase 1979E.C: 4–5).

In my interview with Mr T (Interview with T, July 2012) he stated that, “the lack of transport facilities and the availability of limited basic road infrastructure among the seven houses of the Gurage land led to the establishment of the Gurage Road Construction Organisation”. Both the local communities and Gurage migrants who left their home communities found it very difficult to access basic social services and market facilities. Driven by an ambition to change this undesirable situation and in recognition of their strong social capital, the Gurages came together and formed an organisation that was entrusted with rural roads construction.

One of the founders of the association and its first chairperson stated that:

... based on the request of rural Gurage senior citizens and the entire Gurage people living in the seven houses and as well as the fellow Gurage migrants living in Addis Ababa that the formation of a CSO that was primarily responsible for utilizing the strong civic culture of the Gurages to mobilise resources for the construction of all-weather roads became very vital. Subsequently, based on the *Ya Joka* principles of self-organisation and mutual support, the Gurage Roads Construction Organisation, GRCO was established on 10 May 1961 (Woldesillase 1979 E.C: 5).

Accordingly, GRCO has become a household name supported by a high level of community participation across all the seven houses of the Gurage. The statute of the association was, therefore, broadly instituted to represent a federation of seven community-based development associations which performed similar functions and were interconnected through the mobilisation of local citizens (Woldesillase 1979 E.C.).

However, the GRCO was not accepted outright by government. Mr T, key informant and founder, still recalls that “the official registration process of the association took longer than initially anticipated as its establishment coincided with the *coup d'état* of December 1960, at the time of highest alert of the then Imperial Government to tolerate the emergence of these types of citizens led and independent CSOs”. Mr T further explained that the then government was very suspicious of the formation of regional civic organisations like the Mecha-Tulema Oromo Association, which was perceived by the then political regime as being a cover for political opposition to the imperial government of Emperor Haile Selassie I. Similarly, Woldesillase (1979 E.C:3) discloses that, after a long silence, the local people resumed their dialogue to secure official recognition for their association. GRCO underwent rigorous bureaucratic scrutiny but managed to become officially registered on 1 July 1962 with the Imperial Public Security Office. There was a series of preconditions that was imposed on GRCO, including the precondition of obtaining approval for conducting meetings in the presence of a security officer and that the Ministry of the Interior was informed well in advance of such meetings and all its fundraising campaigns.

According to Woldesilasse Bereka (1979 E.C.:34–35), GRCO had 55 initial founding members who were drawn from all the seven houses of Gurage and the migrant network in Addis Ababa. A cursory review of the statute of the association reveals that the village-based committees, under the macro-executive committee, acted as autonomous entities to follow the implementation of development endeavours in their respective areas. These

committees were well grounded and accepted at grassroots level and played a significant role in promoting negotiations between ‘elite’ Gurage migrants in urban areas and the ‘traditional’ leaders (local chiefs and elders) in the homeland. In addition, burial associations such as *Iddirs* which had been formed by urban Gurage migrants (including “non-elites”) worked very closely with the organisation to facilitate citizens’ participation and effectively mobilise domestic financial and material contributions (GRCO 1962:2–3). Woldesilasse (1979 E.C:35) points out that after about a decade, the GRCO had managed to construct all the work needed to link the roads and improve inter-community connections among all the seven houses.

The organisational development of the GRCO reached a turning point after it had accomplished the road construction work and it then turned its attention to dealing with other social problems. This time, it bought Land Rovers and mini-buses to expand the provision of public transportation, and it used the profit generated from these services to cover administrative expenses and augment its capital investment in other community services. As a result, it had to delegate and professionalise the day-to-day management of the GRCO through the establishment of its secretariat office.

When asked about the reasons for the change of organisational structure and practices, Focus Groups Discussant A identified the followings in order of importance:

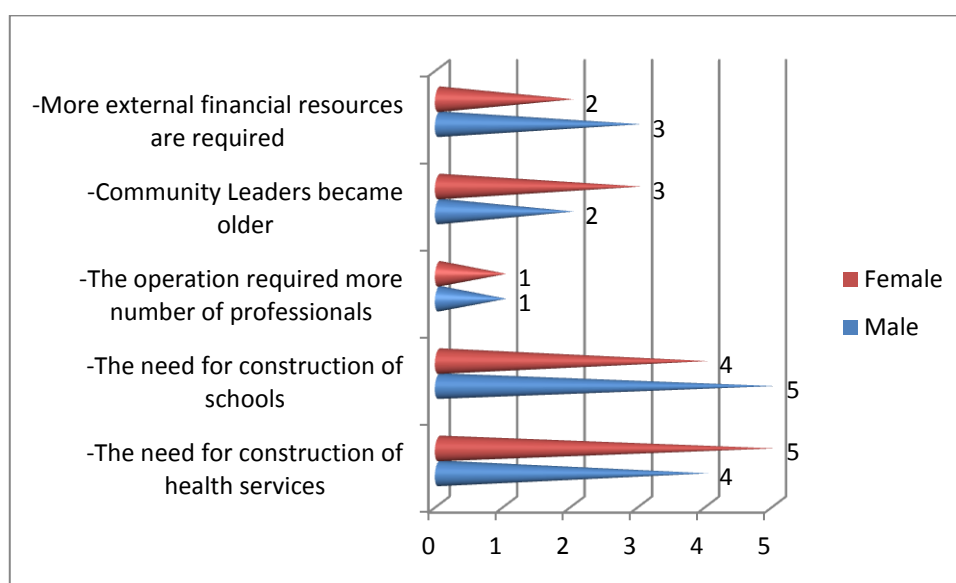


Figure 5.4: Reasons for the reorganisation of the GRCO as prioritised by study participants

Focus Group A discussants identified the fact that the construction of health and schools was critical after the roads were built. Such large-scale investments in education and health infrastructure were, therefore, found by community members to be important but beyond the communities' financial and technical capacities. This forced them to look for external assistance. On the other hand, the focus group discussants mentioned that their community leaders found it very complex to manage all the investments and oversee the day-to-day management of the transport operation on a part-time voluntary basis. This really induced the reorganisation of the management structure under a new set up.

Therefore, it is evident that the establishment of such citizen-led initiatives by cross sections of the Gurage people that catered for all the seven houses points to the natural growth and formation of a grassroots development movement brokered by 'traditional' civic associations. As GRCO's organisational setup grew and once it had accomplished the construction of various rural roads, the members of rural Gurage communities became highly motivated and continued to sustain their collective action to address other types of societal problem. This organisational transformation of GRCO is remarkable, as it had reached a crossroad where community action moved from a reactive to a proactive mode. Subsequently, the GRCO was reorganised and renamed as the Gurage People Self-Help Development Organisation (GPSDO) in 1988. Its organisational arrangements have subsequently taken on the character of a local NGO rather than a membership-based grassroots organisation. Following Proclamation no 621/2009 for the registration and regulation of charities and societies in the country, in 2010 the GPSDO was forced to re-register as an Ethiopian resident charity association since the greater proportion of its income comes from external sources, which, in turn, resulted in it dropping its advocacy functions and policy influencing work (GPSDO 2012:2).

The current important organs of the GPSDO are its general assembly, management board and secretariat. This arrangement departs from the previous structure which was mainly dependent on the voluntary services of senior Gurage citizens. The general assembly is the supreme organ of the GPSDO. The management board is the second highest governing body of the GPSDO and its members are appointed by the general assembly. The management board is made up of five elected members who are educated and experienced native volunteers committed to serving their people. The day-to-day operations of the organisation are executed under the guidance of a full-time, paid executive director. The management committee is composed of an executive director,

programme management officers, a public relations and resource mobilisation officer, a finance and administration head, and a zonal branch coordinator.

According to a GPSDO report, at the end of 2011, the organisation had over 40 permanent staff at its various offices. The GPSDO works closely with over 304 community-based reproductive health and development agents working at *Kebele* level.

The new institutional arrangement and the legal requirements for its operation forced the organisation to gradually reduce the voluntary service of fellow Gurage elites and substituted such free services with the full-time professionalization of its human resources. This professionalization, on the one hand, helped the organisation to employ more full-time staff but, on the other hand, it has lost the support of community leaders. Mr T (Personal Communication, July 2012) pointed out that the heavy dependence on secretariat staff has reduced its strong linkages to local people and most importantly loosened its interface with ‘traditional’ governance structures and instead it has begun to work with formal local government structures.

When Focus Group A discussants were asked what they considered to be the benefits of the association before its restructuring into the GPSDO; the discussion led to the following findings:

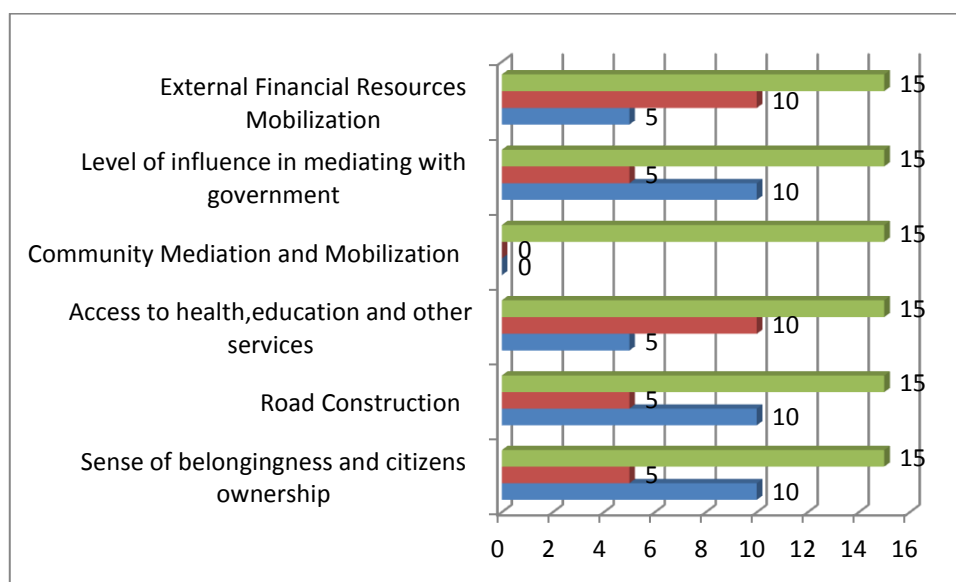


Figure 5.5: Benefits of associational life as identified by study participants

(Sources: Own study based on focused groups discussions, July 2012)

As indicated in figure 5.5, the GRCO was highly ranked for showing a high sense of belonging, having community mediation capacity and its mediation function with government.

The Focus Group A participants also strongly believed that the organisation had served as a vehicle for transforming the civil organisational experience of the local people and advancing their interests in community development until it was reframed and revamped to a typical intermediary local NGO model in 2010.

The findings from the Focus Group D discussants confirmed that “the association has been able to raise significant financial and labour resources to undertake community-based infrastructure because of the trust it earned from the local people and that the association was led by respectful local elders who earned reputation for their charismatic leadership and wisdom”.

The Focus Group E discussants further pointed out that the organisation has managed to facilitate inter-village road connections due to the construction of all-weather gravel roads, and also facilitated better access to education through the construction of elementary and secondary schools, and improved health through the construction of basic health facilities.

Overall, the focus group discussants pointed out that the GRCO was the only civic association that was organically formed by local Gurage people across the different clans and the seven houses, as well as their migrant associations located across the different parts of the country, advancing their common interests by mobilising their local human, financial and material resources. The GRCO (and in its subsequent form as the GPSDO), although it had to pass through turbulent political environments under the three political regimes, has managed to survive and promote the civic causes of the Gurage people and represent their interests with little external assistance from the government or outside donors.

On the other hand, the formation of the GPSDO was only perceived as having an advantage when its contributions to increase access to health and education services were taken into account, since it has managed to mobilise financial resources from international donors. However, in the process it has lost its strong community support and the community’s sense of ownership.

5.4 The Gurage people and an analysis of their civil values and organising practices

Knowledge of the civil values and attributes of a social group is important to understand the cultural and social resources available to communities and the function these values and attributes have in mobilising communities to various community actions. Accordingly, when Focus Group D discussants were asked to map out the civic values and attributes that they thought very important for the Gurage people in organising themselves, promoting civic culture and enhancing community-driven actions, they identified the following important traits.

Respect towards elders	Lack of respect for elders
Bravery,	Drunkenness
Sense of Humour,	Laziness,
Courtesy,	Smoking Cigarettes,
Honesty ,	Committing Crime,
Kindness	Lying,
Hard Worker,	Stealing,
Civic Traits	Uncivil Traits

Figure 5.6: Mapping of civic and uncivil traits by Focus Group D Imdiber

(Sources: Own based on Focus Group D discussants, August 2012, Imdiber)

According to Focus Group D study participants, “the civic traits identified as having civic values for organising the Gurage people were hard work, kindness, honesty and courtesy, a sense of humour, bravery, and respect towards elders”.

One can argue that these traits are not unique to the Gurage people. This might be true. However, I argue that it is not common to find hard work, a sense of humour, respect for elderly people and living for other causes as the main traits for defining ‘civic’ actions in many other societies.

On the other hand, the local people consider traits like “stealing, lying, committing crime, smoking cigarettes, laziness, and drunkenness, lack of respect for elders, switching from one religion to another as undesirable and uncivil act”. One can argue that this list of

traits can be the sign of uncivil acts among other social groups. Yet it is rare to find community groups that identify smoking cigarette, laziness and lack of respect for elders as uncivil acts.

During the discussions with Group D, it was learnt that there have been strong ‘traditions’ of respecting one’s religion and tolerance for coexistence of different believes and values. However, the Gurage people do not normally favour individuals who switch easily from one religion to another.

It is important to note that these Gurage civic values of the seven houses have been passed down from one generation to another and kept largely intact. One of the GPSDO founders and the key informant among the Focus Group Discussants A, indicated that:

... the core foundation for the civic traits of the Gurage people has been family. Families are the strongest social institutions among the Gurage and they play important socialisation functions through educating these civic traits. Children and young Gurage people who confirm and exercise these civic traits are given recognition and public rewards during various community events by way of tribute to their good work (Interview with Mr T 2012).

It is important to underline the fact that the value of work is deeply ingrained into the civic traits of the Gurage people through the diverse types of work that they have been engaged in. According to DM, a community leader from FG D:

For most Gurage youth, it does not matter whether they have lucrative job or whether they are engaged in jobs considered as “odd” by others, such as domestic maids, shoe shining or washing cars in urban areas. What is important for most Gurages is how much they earn from the jobs and tap opportunities for their future personal development. It is essential that the person earns social acceptance through hard work and discharging social responsibilities ... If someone fails to shoulder social responsibilities, the person is perceived as ‘socially deviant’ with uncivil traits. The tendency to hold uncivil values means that the person is dubbed as mean, selfish and socially irresponsible so that the person faces social isolation.

While one can argue that the engagement of young Gurages in odd jobs can be considered a violation of children’s right, the Gurage older people argue differently that “such civic values are instead mechanisms for grooming young Gurages with positive attitudes towards the value of work and becoming a person with strong sentiment to civic work”.

Worku (1996:58) argues that the inculcation of a strong work culture and positive attitudes among young Gurages has led most Gurage people, even if they migrate far distances, to develop a culture of working hard, sharing risks and maximising investment.

Another benefit of associational life which has remained a strong asset of the Gurage people and which this study underlined during the fieldwork is the engagement of the Gurage people in the reconstruction of a social world based on interdependencies of economic, cultural and social functions, regardless of their location, financial status or occupation.

For example, both FG-A and FG-B participants pointed out that they were members of multiple institutions and social networks. It is not uncommon for a Gurage person to be a member of a community-based financial self-help organisation *Ikub* (a rotating credit association), a village-level *Iddir* (a burial society) and *Senbete* (a church-based support group) at the same time. These civic institutions and networks provide members of the Gurage people with a range of benefits and social arenas to improve their well-being in different ways. This was confirmed by Mr Y, among the Focus Group E study participants, who became a wealthy timber wholesaler in Addis Ababa, Kolfe. He pointed out:

I had learned the profitability of the timber trade from my business peers, while I was attending Ekub meetings. I heard from their conversations that if someone gets access to financial resources from Ekub, it is easier to start up a business and the profitability of timber sale could be promising. This has motivated me a lot to invest and start a business. I like the work and fortunately I became lucky in making good profit out of my investment in the timber business.

I observed during my fieldwork and through my participation in a series of weekly Ekub meetings that unlike the conventional banking system, membership of Ekub opens avenues for the Gurage people and provides a financial network, which give easy access to rotational cash draws, based on the people's strong sense of mutual help, trust and social collateral to overcome their economic hardships and advance their business plans.

Therefore, as we learn from the above experience of Mr Y, the young Gurage's social world and the strong values attached to working hard often expands as its network diversifies and becomes proliferated based on multiple business and social contacts. It appears that outside the extended family and kinship ties; the formation and functioning of 'traditional' civil associations open the windows of opportunity for them to obtain information, start a business, promote civic responsibilities and advance self-help community development endeavours.

Hence, I argue that the rights that are embedded in membership of Gurage civic institutions are not automatically granted to people merely by virtue of their birth. It is rather the civil responsibilities of the Gurage that help them as individual Gurages to

construct a social world based on mutual interdependence, not only in their homeland but also in the places they migrate to, since they have to adopt a civic culture in order to live with people whom they did not know before or with whom they have no blood relationship.

As pointed out in the case of Mr Y, the civic responsibilities in Gurage communities emerge from web of institutions and social practices which serve the purpose of securing legitimacy for intervention, mobilising resources and demonstrating commitment. Civil leadership is broadly measured not only against the demonstrated skills of the Gurage person, but through the respect he or she has gained through demonstrated contributions to the advancement of the purposes of the web of institutions.

The participants in both Focus Groups D and E agree that:

...the social respect which a Gurage person potentially gains from his or her civic participation and contributions is measured not only by the person's age or clan of origin but also by his or her demonstrated actions in associational life. The main criteria for gaining respect are the person's commitment to those civic acts and traits that serve as binding glue for keeping the society together. FG A discussants argue that although clan heads command great respect in their communities, the participants argued that the real power of these clan leaders and their acceptance by community members depend on their commitments to these civic traits (Focus Groups Discussants, July 2012).

Unlike the leadership source of 'modern' CSOs, Gurage notions of citizenship – until the re-registration and reorganisation of the GPSDO in 2010 – was framed by the condition that civic leadership was voluntary but at the same time compulsory as unwillingness to accept such responsibilities could result in social sanctions.

According to Mr B, my key informant and one of the leaders of the GRCO in FG B, Gurage activism in associational life (including participation in development) has been considered as equivalent to "paying back one's social debts to their home community. It is a demonstration of fulfilling social responsibility and collective duties" (Personal Interview, July 2012).

Mr B recalled that there was a time when the general assembly of the GRCO decided to call on the services of professionally skilled Gurages. In line with these calls and an obligation to discharge their civic responsibilities, the Gurage elders exerted social pressure on 'elite' Gurage members to accept this call and serve the GRCO freely in a leadership capacity.

BT, another committee member, said:

When elders came to my office to request me to participate in the leadership, I was happy to consider their requests positively. Even if I could have thought to refuse, I knew that such negative reaction could have been taken as an offense against the Gurage culture and law, which could trigger in being expelled from associational life (Mr BT, personal communication, 2012).

A long-term Gurage migrant in Kolfe, Mr Z, pointed out that senior citizens who had gone to his office had requested him to serve in leadership positions in the GRCO. Although he repeatedly argued that he had no spare time to do so, the elders made him feel guilty on the grounds that he had been educated at an elementary school built by the GRCO. Therefore, he could not decline their calls as he had a social debt to pay back to his community, which had provided him with free education. He, therefore, had no grounds to refuse the request and he automatically became member of the governing body.

Based on these civic values and hands-on community development experiences, I argue that Gurage citizenship and civic virtue is about an individual person contributing everything within his or her capacity to the community. The attribute of being unselfish and the socially bound responsibility of an ordinary Gurage person contribute to the promotion of community or organisational leadership. The attributes of the leaders who accept the responsibility are, at the same time, perceived by community members as in-born qualities of the particular leader which were bestowed on the person by God for the good of the community. Therefore, both individual qualities and a sense of communal responsibility forms the civic culture of the Gurage people. This was ingrained deeply in the organisational culture of the GRCO and was harnessed in the road construction activities.

Hence, when I relate these realities on the ground to the theoretical perspectives on CSOs, such Gurage civic values and multiple community organising practices in the study areas are best explained by the “civil society and the social capital approach”, in terms of which the social capital of the Gurage communities binds the members closely together. It is evident that the presence of positive attitude towards civic responsibilities and the social bond among communities of the nine Woredas have facilitated coordinated actions. The Gurage Road Construction Organisation served as an important vehicle that facilitated social cooperation and contributed to a transparent working culture and collective community resource management practices.

Therefore, I argue that the strong civic virtues and citizen-led organising practices among the Gurage communities also demonstrate the relevance of the civil society and

communitarian approach. Indeed, the civic virtues in Gurage and the history of the Road Construction Organisation demonstrate its ability to harness a common identity and social solidarity.

5.5 Analysis of the functions of the GPSDO and its basic social services/collective civic functions

The main functions of the GPSDO can be divided into self-help support functions, communicative functions and basic HIV and AIDS social service functions. When asked about the most significant top three social changes or aspects of societal transformation that have taken place since the establishment of the GPSDO in 2010, the interviewees identified the following:

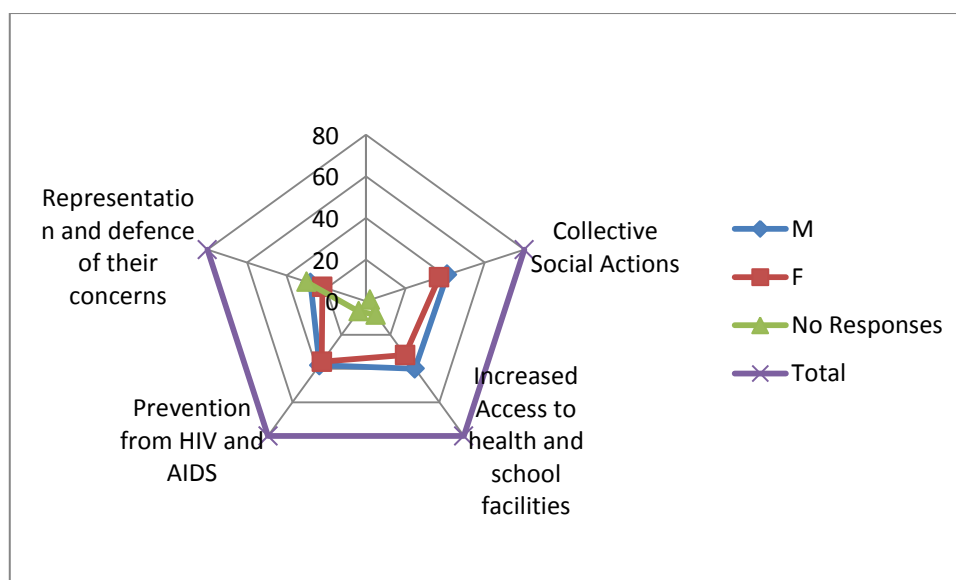


Figure 5.7: Distribution of most significant social changes as identified by GPSDO study participants

According to the respondents, collective social action, prevention of HIV and AIDS and increased access to health and school facilities are considered the most significant contributions of the organisation. Although representation and defence of community concerns was rated among the top, it was only rated by 60 percent by the respondents. The following section further analyses how these functions were promoted to serve the Gurage people.

5.5.1 *The GPSDO and its communicative functions*

It is evident that one of the CSOs' roles is their communicative function in the society in which they exist. This is mainly about the ability to communicate people's concerns to the public sphere and to reflexively stabilise or widen the role of civil society in the public sphere.

The study participants identified multiple changes as having occurred since they organised themselves. They reported an increased collective ability to organise themselves for development purposes and pointed out that their membership and participation strengthened the social networks among the Sebat Bet Gurages and boosted their proactive engagement in collective action.

When the participants in Imdiber were further asked about the role of the GRCO in mediating common interests and representing them before government bodies, they stated emphatically that the organisation had represented various interests of society, acted as an intermediary between the state and the individual, and provided conflict resolution mechanisms. They also pointed out that it had the ability to communicate people's concerns to the public sphere and to reflexively stabilise or widen the role of civil society in the public sphere.

The report by Woldesillase (1979 E.C.:12) notes that this function was cited and acknowledged as early on by the GRCO which mobilised financial resources from community members and migrants in the early years of its existence and demanded that the government allocate funds to leverage resources for the construction of roads in the various communities where the organisation had limited capacity.

In relation to the mobilisation of community participation, it is important to note that each community member in the target Woreda was expected to contribute financial or labour resources voluntarily according to his or her ability. This was done by the Ya Kitcha (the Gurage customary law) imposing self-obligations. There is a long history of the use of Yekitcha in Gurage development to mobilise resources for developmental purposes (Fekadu 1972) and it continues to be applied by some sub-committees. Failure to contribute, however, meant that a Gurage faced 'traditional sanctions' to ensure participation. These sanctions were often expressed through social stigma or by ostracising the person.

One of the founders of GRCO, Mr T, stated that:

... ostracism was the ultimate sanction that a Gurage person faces if not meeting social responsibilities. An uncooperative household can be expelled from the community and subjected to not being able to enjoy several forms of communal assistance such as labour cooperation during harvest time or protection of cattle during communal grazing. In rare cases, an individual can also be excluded from getting support for a decent burial. Non-attendance at a burial carried immense stigma for the household and was considered the ultimate sanction. Due to its severity, this sanction was very rarely applicable. Therefore, they used the threat of ostracism as an instrument to ensure participation in and contribution to the growth and development of GRCO (Personal communication, Mr T, 2012).

Therefore, community participation among Gurage people has been perceived as a civil call and a duty to the motherland. Failure to participate in communal affairs and to discharge such social responsibilities could result in social sanctions. This has helped the GRCO to mobilise voluntary services. However, the re-registration of the organisation in line with new government laws in 2010 has contributed such compulsory voluntary services no longer being imposed.

5.5.2 GPSDO and its social services functions

The gradual transformation of the GRCO and its reorganisation in 1988 under the GPSDO was found by respondents as having positive implications for social services delivery. Historically, the ground-breaking achievement of the organisation was witnessed in the increased access of all the rural communities to all-weather roads. The organisation was able to complete the construction of a total of 532kilometresof road (30 km asphalt, 389 km all-weather and 113km dry weather) within the seven houses of the Gurage land (GPSDO 2012).

During the focus group discussions the participants indicated that the construction of the roads primarily benefited inter-district linkages and encouraged the movement of Gurage migrants. On top of this, the road construction made a huge impact by helping pregnant women to access basic health facilities. The participants also pointed out that the improvement of the road network has made it easier for subsistence farmers to transport their agricultural products to nearby markets and transport fertilisers back to their farms.

After the reorganisation of the GRCO, the newly formed GPSDO gave priority to other social services, particularly education and health.

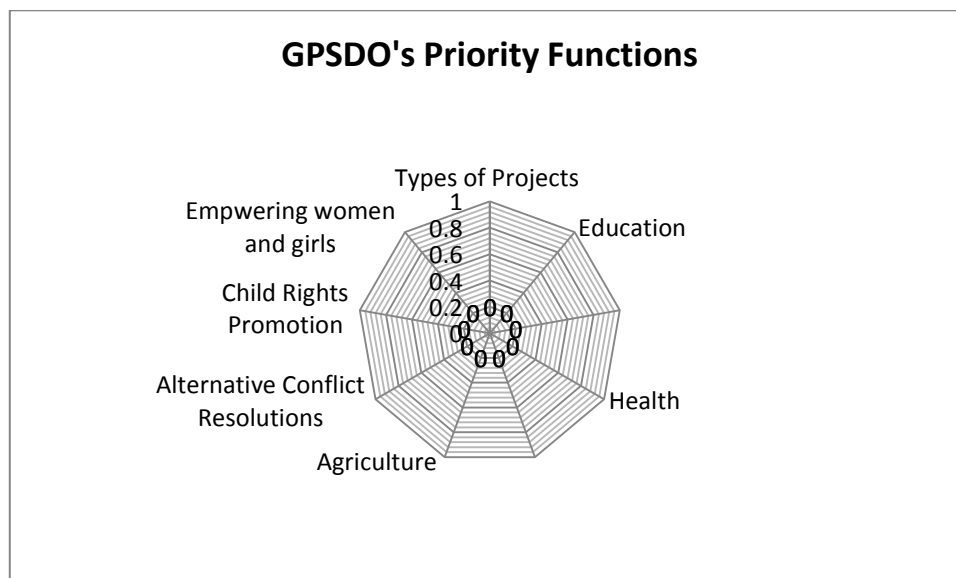


Figure 5.8: Distribution of GPSDO's priority functions and project types

(Source: Adopted from CRDA 2010; GPSDO Annual Report, 2011)

As indicated on Figure 5.8, the GPSDO paid particular attention to and invested in the promotion of non-formal basic education and increasing access to primary education by focusing on reducing illiteracy in young women and improving girls' enrolment at schools. The main areas of investment and support provided in the education sector included construction, expansion and renovation of pre-schools/primary schools; provision of required materials and supplies to school systems; establishing and managing non-formal educational facilities; and improving the competence of teachers (GPSDO Report 2011).

The GPSDO has also been at the forefront of the effort to mitigate the negative impact of the HIV and AIDS pandemic in most of the Gurage land. It provides support and care for people living with the virus. According to female participants in the focus group discussions in Imdiber, their participation in GPSDO health and HIV and AIDS education programmes has increased their awareness of harmful traditional practices and the protection of women against violence and abuse, including abduction, early marriage and sexual abuse. The female participants also disclosed that other social service interventions such as the provision of pre-natal and post-natal health care services and family planning services were useful interventions aimed at improving their health conditions.

This human development support work has been complemented by the GPSDO's contributions to the creation of food security and a safe environment. The focus group discussants unanimously disclosed that the GPSDO's environmental rehabilitation

programme has played a significant role in promoting participatory forest and ecological resource management, including the establishment of community tree nurseries and supporting soil conservation work like terracing and tree planting. The main components of their work in food security include the mobilisation of rural communities through the diversification of agricultural production and access to agricultural products and water harvesting techniques.

The work of the GPSDO in raising the awareness of communities, law enforcement bodies and school administrators about the negative impact of child labour, child trafficking, abduction, rape and early marriage has been equally important. It has also done its best to promote child-focused programmes that promote the participation of children in mitigating child trafficking and child labour exploitation.

Overall, both the GRCO and the GPSDO have played a significant role in the promotion of social services and collective civic functions for the Gurage people. However, the GPSDO functions have become more focused on service delivery than those of the GRCO, since the former was forced to drop its advocacy function after its re-registration in line with the 2009 civil society and charities law of the Ethiopian government.

5.6 The GRCO/GPSDO and their relationships with government

According to the information obtained from the focus group discussions with the Gurage older rural people and migrant urban people, the ‘traditional’ civic institutions and the unity of the Gurage people have been under serious threat since the politicisation of ethnicity and the political fragmentation that began in 1991 and resulted in the fragmentation of the various social groups in the Gurage land.

According to Tesgaye (2006: 90–91), the emergence of four political groups that claimed to represent the interests of the Gurages has contributed to the erosion of the collective spirit and identity of the Gurage. While the Gurage People’s Democratic Front (GPDF), which was formed in 1991, reportedly enjoyed the support of most of the ordinary members of the GPSDO mainly in the urban areas, the Gurage People’s Democratic Movement (GPDM) emerged as an active force in the rural areas, backed by the dominant ruling political party in power. These political rivalries have created ideological differences and orientations that have had a negative impact on the unity, self-governance and organising practices of the Gurage people.

Some Gurage elders argue that the erosion of the spirit of unity and the collective identity of the Gurage people began when a section of the Sodo Gurage was separated and ethnically manipulated to join the Oromo ethnic group, while the Silti section of Gurage detached itself as a separate group from the other Gurage people. These political stances and ethnic divisions led to the formation of new political parties and created unhealthy competition in the recruitment of followers, which increasingly threatened their cooperative spirit and collective identity. This resulted in tension in clan ties and a weakening of the collective Gurage spirit. This, in turn, resulted in a lack of support for the GPSDO, which was based on the old Gurage collective spirit and has continued to serve as a symbol of the Gurage's unity and which was independent of the interference of the successive government structures in the area.

While these values and organisational practices shaped the culture of the GRCO/GPSDO for most of its institutional existence, it was reported that local government officials have gradually perceived this independent citizen-led organisational arrangement as a threat to their official powers. Some local politicians reportedly went as far as threatening the lives of the GPSDO leaders (Mr BZ, Personal Communication 2012).

Since 1992, in order to break the collective spirit and undermine the influence of the GPSDO, the zonal government has backed the formation of a new association called the Gurage Development Association. This association has been working in isolation from and parallel to the GPSDO, with power accorded to it by regional and zonal government officials. It also enjoys financial support from business people who seem close to the political system. As a result of such external political pressure, it would see that the GPSDO should transform itself from a grassroots and voluntary membership organisation depending mainly on its own local resources to an intermediary organisation NGO with its own secretariat, tapping financial grants from external, mostly international, donors (Mr BZ, Personal Communication 2012).

The GPSDO, unlike the GRCO, which was known for its mass support and huge mobilisation of various forms of local resources, became dependent on external donor funds. This means that the GPSDO has to depend heavily on a project-based grant arrangement (donor driven) with a limited number of donors. In most cases, the available grants have never been proportional to the budget requirements in meeting the multiple needs of targeted communities and achieving programme objectives. This has confined the organisation to working in small, dispersed projects, which in turn has narrowed its service

coverage. Thus, the GPSDO has become increasingly weaker in its mass support and local resource mobilisation. Its current capacity to mobilise resources from domestic sources is very limited. The result is that unless the GPSDO mobilises its own funding and secures the voluntary support of the local people, its institutional sustainability may be at risk.

Another challenge is related to the internal organisation of the GPSDO. According to the key informants and focus groups participants, as the founding members grew older and stopped their voluntary service, some members of the successive leadership became involved in the management of income-generating schemes (particularly public buses) and the misappropriation of the revenue generated from local transport operations. This eventually led to a lack of replacement and maintenance of vehicles and, in the end, the bankruptcy of the income-generating schemes. This state of affairs partly contributed to the demoralisation of some Gurage individual donors and the shift to look for financial grants from alternative external sources. Nonetheless, the reorganisation of the GPSDO in recent years includes putting a strict financial and grant compliance system in place to reduce corruption and make the organisation highly professional and accountable to external donors.

5.7 Summary

The analysis in this chapter related to the second objective of my research, which was to identify and critically examine the case of Ethiopian communities and how they organically organise their ‘traditional’ associations and collectively engage in social action to transform their communities.

In this chapter, I therefore examined and provided answers to illustrate the emergence of the GRCO as a citizen-led community-based ‘traditional’ CSO and the mobilisation of available social, economic and cultural resources to contribute to the societal transformation process in the Gurage land, especially in the first years of its existence. I showed how the associational life and civic responsibilities of Gurage communities were used to broker the formation of the GPSDO as a community-owned CSO independent of government bodies and external donors.

I highlighted the fact that GRCO has been instrumental in integrating the Gurage migrants and Gurage local people, mobilising their own resources for promoting social services and voicing their concerns as an alternative community organisation to external bodies (including the dominant government bureaucratic structures).

Specifically, the analysis of the GRCO case in this chapter revealed that the civic associational experiences of the Gurage people stretch back to the King Menelik II period in 1898 (Worku 1996) when, as part of their collective responses and resistance to feudal suppression, they migrated to various urban areas of Ethiopia. This influenced their experiences and resulted in the adoption of survival strategies and the formation of multiple civic associations among the Gurage people.

Apparently, the values they attach to work and its consideration as a vehicle for change has served as a unique cultural resource among the Gurage people. An appreciation for the value of work forms part of the socialisation process and is inculcated in young people who often opt to improve their livelihood by migrating out of their respective communities to the urban areas. Subsequently, the migration experience in different contexts and their adaptation to diverse social groups have contributed to the various cross sections of Gurage people who create and/or participate in the various forms of CSO and social networks.

The GRCO was the product of this civil culture and responsibilities. For the past 50 years, prior to its renaming, it had proven itself to be a grassroots community association and built a reputation among both ordinary and elite members for addressing the collective interests of the Gurage people in collective action and enhancing the spirit of cooperation.

More specifically, the GRCO demonstrated that citizenship and the role of civic associations are as much about mutual support and collective effort as they are about occupying a space to claim rights from the state. The Gurage communities have accomplished several community-driven development tasks without seeking government assistance. This has put them in a strong position as an alternative source of development power in serving the basic service needs of their communities.

The GRCO has also proven itself to be one of the longest lasting civic associations, playing a significant role in mobilising tangible and intangible community resources such as talents and skills, leadership, human capital, and financial and material resources. In addition, local participation in activities has facilitated Gurage citizenship by promoting proactive participation in the decision-making bodies of the organisation and its various programmes and projects. The association has fostered effective ways of tackling local problems and, as a result, has enabled targeted communities to gain some degree of self-reliance. Furthermore, the local communities have acquired practical leadership and

organisational skills in the process. Over time, both an improvement in their living conditions and the overall development of community capability has been assured.

Nonetheless, the successive governments and their political apparatuses were not comfortable with the 'independent' nature and strong grassroots constituencies of the association, and they applied various manipulative mechanisms to erode the strong membership base and debilitate the vibrancy of the organisation. Although the founders and the members were resilient in the midst of the social and political pressure, they could not ultimately withstand this pressure.

Accordingly, the independent nature and the advocacy role played by the GRCO were gradually reduced when the GPSDO was formed and it has subsequently taken on more of an intermediary function. However, this was further diminished as a result of its re-registration in 2009 as a resident Ethiopian charity, with no legal grounds to advocate for the rights of the Gurage people except for the delivery of social services. In other words, the legal restrictions on the provision of services imposed on the GPSDO by the bylaws; the formation of an organisation that works to undermine and counteract their mass support and the restriction on their role to advocate for the rights of the poor are among the measures that have paralysed the vibrancy of the organisation.

These external pressures have gradually eroded the institutional strength of the GPSDO to facilitate transformative associational life among the Gurage people. The reorganisation of GRCO into an intermediary NGO under its new name of the GPSDO restrained it from promoting the development rights and freedom of the Gurage people. The organisation is therefore comparatively weakened in terms of mobilising broad-based human, financial and material resources and has had to dissociate itself from using 'traditional' institutions and customary practices for fear of the negative administrative and legal punishments. As a result, the organisation now exists on small financial grants from foreign sources and serves as a local intermediary service delivery NGO that focuses on health, HIV and AIDS, school construction and support to economic livelihood. The organisation has reached the point where it cannot promote or represent the rights of the Gurage people and it cannot do development work without external assistance – as it hoped to do in its early years.

Chapter 6

Tesfa Social Development Association and Analysis of Societal Transformation

6.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I examined the case of the GPSDO and its contribution to the societal transformation of the Gurage people. I analysed the social transformation initiatives that had been brokered as a result of the Gurage people's participation, self-initiated association and collective civic action.

In pursuit of furthering my second research objective, which is concerned with the analysis of the way in which 'traditional' CSOs organically organise their members and collectively promote societal transformation, I focus on the Tesfa Social Development Association and Societal Transformation, TSDA, in Kolfe, Addis Ababa.

My purpose in this chapter is, therefore, to explore how individual Iddirs have established the union of Iddirs and whether these larger networks of grassroots organisations have played a catalytic role in societal transformation. The TSDA (whose name in the Amharic language is *Tesfa Mahiberawi na Limat Akef Mahiber*, meaning hope) pursues social development initiatives in Kolfe, one of the poorest urban communities of Addis Ababa. I explore how and why this newly formed union of Iddirs has emerged without losing the original identities and functions of the individual Iddirs that confine their mandates to helping their members at times of death or to assist deceased family members during burial services. The contribution of the TSDA, as a pioneering union of Iddirs, to societal transformation and the mobilisation of the targeted communities is, therefore, critically analysed. I specifically look at the contribution of the association in supporting members affected by and infected with HIV and AIDS, since the key informants in my study felt that this function made the most significant contribution to the societal transformation of their communities. An equally important function of the association, which was felt to have had a significant effect on transforming local communities, was the creation of a financial support facility for the elderly poor and their families called the *Tesfa Be Kolfe* cooperative. The association's relationship with the government on the one hand and its collaboration with international NGOs and external donors on the other are also reviewed in the light of their protective, communicative and independent functions. Furthermore, the challenges experienced by the association in

relation to its internal and external environments are examined. A summary of the main analysis is given at the end of the chapter.

A total of 70 people participated in the study through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, and analysis and reflection sessions. The composition is indicated on the following chart.

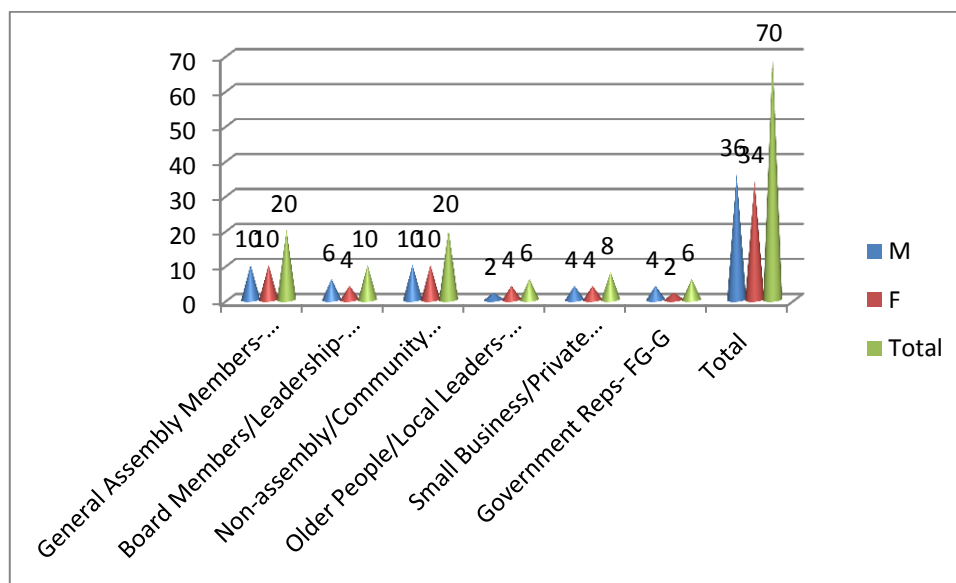


Figure 6.1: Distribution of TSDA study participants by responsibility and gender

(Source: Own based on the survey [2012])

As indicated on figure 6.1 out of the total of 70 study participants, females made up 34. Equal numbers of male and female participants were drawn from the general assembly (20), the non-assembly ordinary community members (20) and the private sector (8) categories. Male participants comprised six of the total ten board members and four of the six government representatives. The older people/local leader category consisted of four females out of the total of six.

Figure 6.2 indicates the characteristics of the study participants by age. The majority of the study respondents (24) fall into the 46 to 60 year age group, followed by 31 to 45 years (23), and 16 to 30 years (13). Ten participants were above the age of 60 and these were instrumental in sharing their stories and perspectives from a historical point of view.

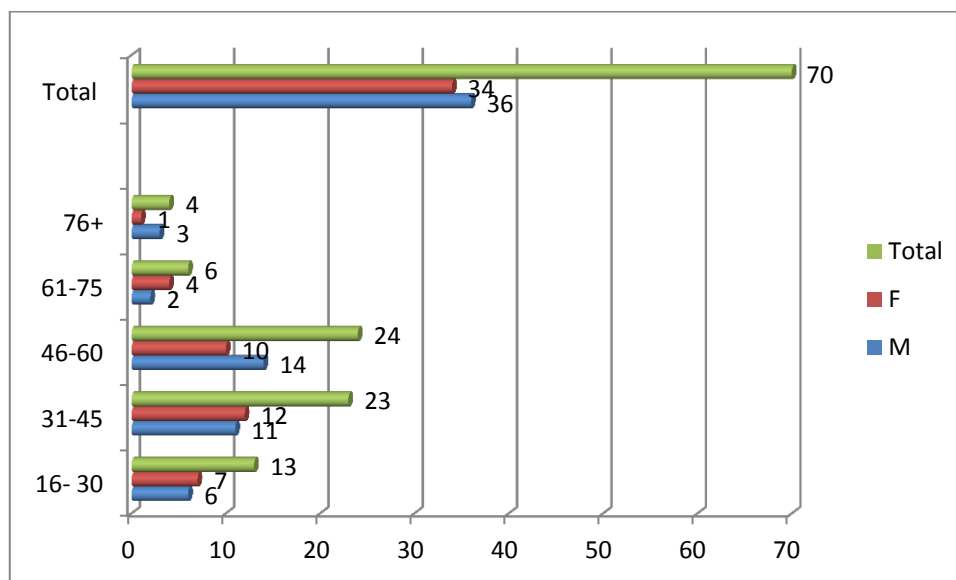


Figure 6.2: Distribution of TSDA study participants by age and gender

In addition to the focus group discussions, key informant interviews and in-depth interviews with study participants, I have used my extensive knowledge of the project areas to enrich my analysis and findings. In this regard, I provided over two years of voluntary service in Kolfe supporting the work of Iddir institutions. In addition to the first-hand knowledge of the area, I specifically spent three months living with the local people in order to understand in depth how the various civic institutions including the TSDA have been performing, relating and discharging their new functions in and around the Kolfe area.

6.2 The foundation of the TSDA, organisational transformation and civic cultures in Kolfe

The origins of Iddirs in Kolfe can be traced back to the different waves of settlement in the Kolfe area on the western edge of Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital. The first major settlement was reportedly during the Italian occupation in 1936, when the Italians allegedly designated the Kolfe area as one of the residential quarters for local residents who had been evicted from their homes in the Arat Kilo, Kebena, Senga Tera and Dejach Wube urban neighbourhoods (Feleke et al, 2007). The second wave of settlement in Kolfe reportedly happened after the Italian occupation around 1941 when the newly instituted imperial government of Emperor Haile Selassie I began the construction of new office

premises around Arat Kilo, Kebena and Sidist Kilo and resettled the original residents to Kolfe, which was then known for its uninhabited green areas (Feleke et al. 2007).

Kolfe emerged as a semi-slum urban neighbourhood with a famous open marketplace for second-hand clothes notably after the military-socialist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam in 1974 (ibid. 2007). The establishment of the Tatek Military camp and its proximity to the large open market of Merkato reportedly contributed to Kolfe's expansion, triggering the migration of thousands of people to the area to explore new business opportunities. According to the Sub-City Administration Office, Kolfe is now home to an estimated population of 600,000 residents, who originally migrated from almost all parts of the country (Kolfe Kernaio Sub-City 2012). The four major ethnic groups living in the area are Amhara, Gurage, Oromo and Gamo. The main religious groups in Kolfe are the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Protestants and Catholics (ibid.).

The discussions with the key informants revealed that there are more than 100 diverse types of Iddirs and associations in Kolfe. Accordingly, the researcher learnt that Kolfe hosts Iddirs ranging from the women's Iddir, which specifically engages in providing food at the home of a bereaved member, to the *Dinkwan Iddir*, which organises funerals for inhabitants of the same neighbourhood. There are also other forms of Iddirs that are named after the original location of their founders, such as the *Gullele*, *Arat Kilo* and *Kebena* Iddirs. It is not uncommon to find forms of Iddirs that are named after saints (like Saint Gabriel and Saint Michael) whose functions are the same as the other Iddirs (Feleke et al. 2007).

The TSDA, which is the focus of this chapter, was founded in 2000 by six Iddirs that were very concerned about the need to respond to the social care and economic problems of the poorest and destitute elderly who had been expelled from their respective Iddirs due to their inability to pay their membership fees and participate in the Iddirs' social activities. According to Mr B, the formation of the TSDA was partly triggered by "the absence of social services for grandparents who had lost their children due to the HIV and AIDS pandemic and who lived with their grandchildren under extremely difficult circumstances without support either from their extended families or other institutional care providers including Iddirs" (Personal Communication with Mr B, August 2012).

The participants in the Focus Group A further elaborated on this. They reported:

About a decade ago, the negative impact of the HIV and AIDS pandemic in the Kolfe area was so critical that people infected and affected by the virus were discriminated against and socially excluded from participating in and benefiting from existing social networks. On the other hand, Iddirs in Kolfe generally became bankrupted due to financial difficulties and arrears of payments that they were supposed to pay for members who had lost their relatives.

It was against this background and the need to withstand the negative effects and threats presented by HIV and AIDS that some influential and charismatic community leaders took the initiative to form an association of Iddirs that could collectively address the emerging social anomalies. They convinced their respective Iddirs that unless the social problems were collectively addressed, Iddirs could face the risk of collapse prompting the disintegration of their social relations. For this reason, they proposed the formation of a union of Iddirs to address the emerging problems; particularly the dire circumstances of the elderly who lived without support, the needs of the orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) affected and infected by HIV and AIDS, and the absence of economic support facilities for the younger generation who lived with the elderly.

The initial idea was later widely accepted by almost all the members of the Iddirs in Kolfe when they confirmed that the Iddirs' role in providing assistance during the death of a family member was not enough and had become less useful. Subsequently, individual Iddirs expressed their interest in forming an association that could cater for these social services on top of what they were already doing in the individual Iddirs to help families deal with the consequences of death.

As stipulated in the bylaws of the TSDA (TSDA, 2009), the main purposes of the association include the coordination of Iddirs' efforts in terms of community development and social support before the death of members; the representation of member Iddirs on external bodies; the mediation and arbitration of potential conflict among member Iddirs; the protection of the rights of Iddirs and their members; and the mobilisation of resources on behalf of member Iddirs from various internal and external sources, there by delivering social development services.

The TSDA membership is not limited to the original founding members. It is open to any Iddirs that is willing to join the association subject to a once-off registration fee of Birr 200 (about US\$8) upon admission and a regular monthly payment of Birr 2 (about US\$0.15) per member, as well as their commitment to engage in social development activities while their members are alive (TSDA 2009).

The TSDA, which commenced its activities with six Iddirs and a total contribution of Birr 10,000 (about US\$800) in 2000, has grown to a membership of 105 Iddirs, with 8,526 individual members and an annual budget outlay of Birr 1,5 million in 2012 (see annexure 7 for the details).

The Focus Group B discussion with the leaders of the TSDA confirmed that the governance structure of the TSDA was crafted to promote transparency and inclusiveness. They reported that the TSDA has an 'Iddir council' (*Ye Iddir Mikir Bet*) that comprises three elected representatives from the executive members (chairperson, secretary and auditor) of each Iddir. The representatives are entrusted with making strategic decisions and representing the general assembly, which consists of about 315 Iddir leaders who, in turn, meet on an annual basis to review and endorse the decisions of the council.

When ordinary members of the Iddirs– Focus Group C –were asked about their opinions on the governance structure, they responded that “the reorganisation of the council has been a necessary step in the administration of the association, given its multiple services and increased number of member Iddirs”. However, they underlined that “it does reduce the direct participation of ordinary members in decision-making”.

The day-to-day operation of the TSDA is managed by an executive body which consists of a managing director and officers in charge of the various components of the TSDA programme. Focus Group B discussants felt that the delineation of power between the governing council, the board and the secretariat was an appropriate institutional arrangement.

It became clear that the Iddirs' council has organised itself into different standing committees to execute its functions in a systematic manner. Among these committees, Focus Group B discussants stated that the Inspection and Control Committee is very important for accountability purposes as it is entrusted with auditing and examining the finances and property of the TSDA, the interpretation of controversial articles of bylaws and the approval of extraordinary expenditure. Another relevant functional unit that links the members to the day-to-day operations of the Iddirs is the Burial Execution and Support Committee, which provides burial and related services to the deceased's family members and facilitates the services by organising members into smaller neighbourhood units called *Ketena*. Another committee of the association is the Educational Committee, whose functions are to help the OVC in their localities to enrol in kindergarten and elementary schools at a subsidised cost or for free. The Development, Health and Environmental

Protection Committee is responsible for the mobilisation of domestic and foreign resources, and overseeing the maintenance or construction of primary infrastructure and communal facilities such as community stores, meeting places, toilets and the rehabilitation of dilapidated houses (TSDA 2009).

All focus group discussants pointed out that these functional committees have been instrumental in creating avenues for Iddir members to directly participate in and contribute to the attainment of the core business of the TSDA. The committees support the executive board members by giving on-going feedback and discharging their responsibilities diligently.

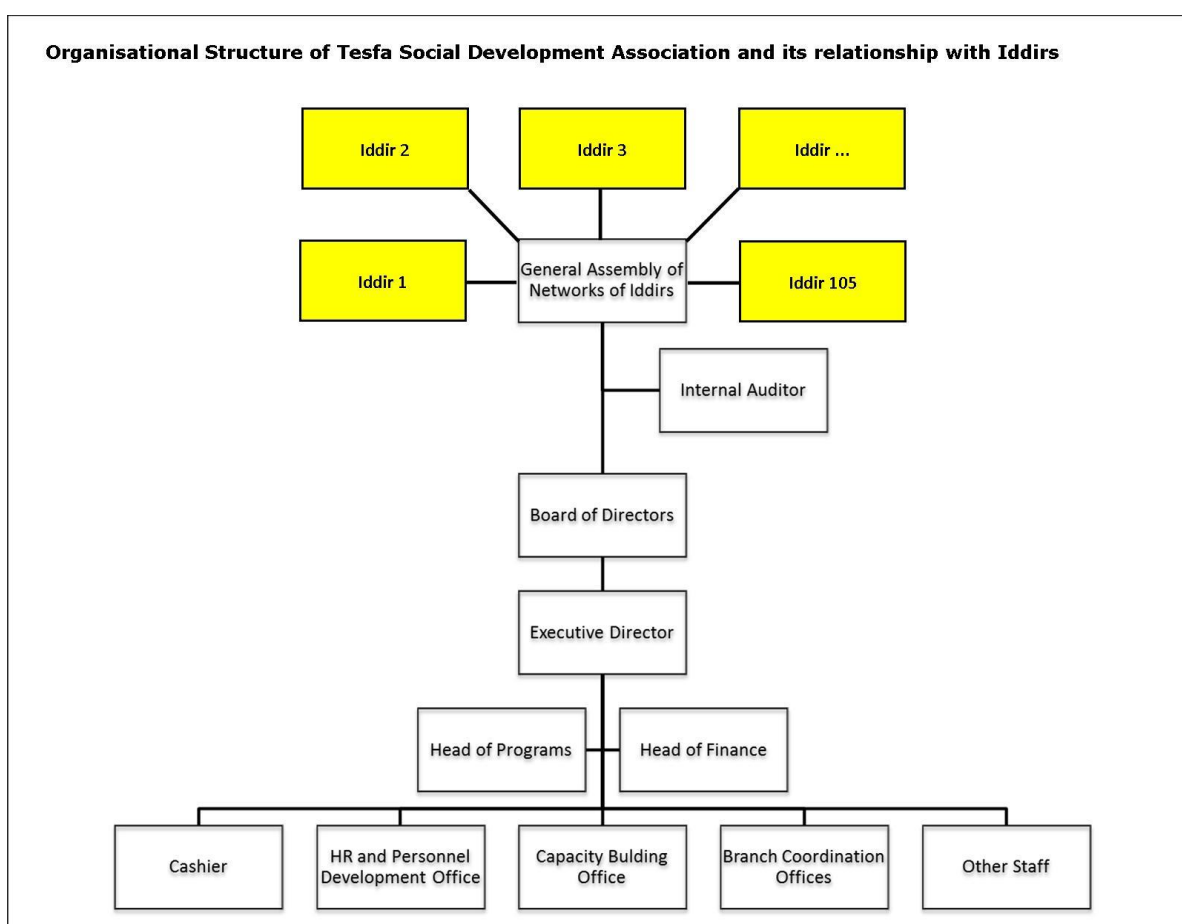


Figure 6.3: Organisational structure of the TSDA

When Focus Group A participants were asked whether elections were held periodically to ensure successive leadership, they pointed out that although they were conducted it had been very difficult for them to replace the initial founders and the

executive board members of the association. These participants pointed out that the founder and the chairperson of the board of the TSDA and four other executive members, out of nine members, had been in leadership positions since the association was founded, while the remaining four had been in their positions for between two and four years. Since most of the TSDA founding board members have played a significant role in leading the association to date on a voluntary basis without a regular salary, it had been, as the general assembly members of the Iddirs pointed out, difficult to replace them and, hence, only a few members who could not discharge their responsibilities for various reasons were substituted.

However, in its discussion, Focus Group B, which comprised the existing TSDA leadership team, recognised the need for succession planning. To this end, they reported that they had begun to implement a succession plan through the training and preparation of potential young leaders by creating forums for the youth in the community in which they can acquire experience in community service and development management.

A review of the TSDA list of Iddir members revealed that although female Iddir members have been the predominant beneficiaries of the new Iddir functions, they were not equally represented in senior leadership and key decision-making bodies. For example, only one of the seven seats on the board was held by a woman, while the council had only 18 women among the 72 members (TSDA 2009). Nonetheless, it was interesting to learn from the female participants in the focus group discussions that the TSDA had contributed a lot to improving the well-being of the female Iddir members and their low participation in leadership positions was mainly due to their low literacy levels.

While the TSDA structure is a new setup that has paved the way for promoting civic responsibility, the adoption of new social tasks has directly influenced individual Iddirs to revise their bylaws and reposition themselves to respond to new social realities. Based on the review of 12 sample bylaws of the Iddirs, it was found out that all of the Iddirs had incorporated 'development' interventions as one of their goals under the motto 'self-help before death'. Five of the older Iddirs out of the 12 had also planned and implemented various development initiatives in the past eleven years. Similarly, eight of the 12 Iddirs had incorporated new bylaws which condemn practices such as *Selist* (third-day mourning) in the church, *Hawilt* (construction of expensive tombs or expensive monuments) and organising expensive feasts in memory of the deceased.

Overall, the formation of a union of Iddir associations, such as the TSDA, and the incorporation of new developmental functions into the original bylaws of individual member Iddirs were clear indications of the organisational transformation that has happened in the age-old 'traditional' CSOs. The newly adopted civic and developmental functions of the TSDA demonstrate that the Association has responded to the new social realities by mobilising Iddir resources to overcome various social and economic problems among Iddir members. In particular, the role played by Iddirs in the prevention of HIV and AIDS and their community-based care and support services for OVC were identified as having a significant impact on the well-being of high-risk social groups. Similarly, the Iddirs' care and support programme for the elderly who live under difficult circumstances was identified by the focus groups discussants as having a positive effect on the life of the elderly and strengthening mutual support.

In the following sections, we will discuss the fact that the TSDA is protective of its members and has demonstrated the ability to create a space independent of and protected from the local government. It has successfully represented the various interests of the Kolfe community and has acted as an intermediary between the state and the member Iddirs. Its ability to provide social services was found dependable and innovative. Overall, the TSDA can be said to have performed a transformative function, which has resulted in improving the lives of poor women and men members of Iddirs alike. Specific cases are analysed as follows.

6.3 The TSDA's contribution to the mitigation of the HIV and AIDS pandemic

Ethiopia is one of the sub-Saharan African countries that have been hit by the HIV and AIDS pandemic (Ministry of Health 2012). The prevalence of HIV and AIDS in the Kolfe area is very high (TSDA 2012). In spite of the negative impact of HIV and AIDS on Iddir institutions, the dwindling financial resources as a result of the fees that are lost when members die of HIV and AIDS and the social burden that members of Iddirs face in coping with survivors, the TSDA has managed to introduce care and support functions for OVC in addition to the initial objectives of Iddirs in Kolfe.

During the Focus Group C discussions, grandparents who had lost their children and who lived with their orphaned grandchildren disclosed that the TSDA had created a community-level structure primarily to care for and support older people and orphaned

children who could no longer be cared for by their extended families or public service providers.

Similarly, Focus Group B discussants pointed out that the provision of care and support to orphans and vulnerable people was among the first of the new TSDA functions. This intervention was initially started in the five Kebeles of the Kolfe-Kernaio Sub-city and was later expanded to four additional Woredas (9, 10, 12 and 13) of the Addis Ketema Sub-city. It was disclosed that as the need for caring and supporting orphan children increased, the TSDA was forced to expand its geographic reach to the West Shoa Zone of the Oromia National Regional State and the Debre Markos, Bichena and Dejen towns in the West Gojjam Zone in the Amhara National Regional State (see annexure 2, for the political map of Ethiopia)

According to Mr B, the TSDA had mobilised Iddir members to provide care and support to OVC, as well as people living with HIV and AIDS in their neighbourhoods, as Iddir members had agreed to contribute Birr 1 per month to support these groups. The monthly contribution has been regularly delivered and the cash has been used to assist individual members of the association living with HIV and AIDS financially with monthly support of Birr 50 (about 2.5 USD) and an additional payment of Birr 100 during major holidays. OVC have also been helped with the supply of free school material (Mr B, Personal Communication 2012).

The records of the TSDA (2012) show that the association has supported 5,067 children, most of whom were orphaned as a result of HIV and AIDS. The support they received has helped them to meet their maintenance costs, attend school and reduce the traumatic effects of HIV and AIDS. It has also enhanced the Iddirs' commitment to taking care of OVC and other members affected and infected by HIV and AIDS.

Another important new function of the TSDA, which was identified by the Focus Group B, has been the provision of home-based care (HBC) services through the mobilisation of volunteers recruited from each of the member Iddirs. HBC entails the provision of comprehensive home care support to people living with HIV and AIDS. The services reportedly include bathing, washing clothes, cleaning homes and preparing food for the bedridden. According to the TSDA (2012), HBC services have benefited over 563 bedridden people living with HIV and AIDS through holistic support including medical, nursing, psychological and socioeconomic support.

The Focus Group B discussions with Iddir leaders further revealed that the institutionalisation of the anti-HIV and AIDS Committee was instrumental in creating awareness of the negative effects of HIV and AIDS, promoting the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS and reducing social stigma and discrimination against people affected and infected by HIV and AIDS. According to the discussants, the committee was working closely with youth associations and had extended technical and material support, such as the provision of indoor and outdoor game facilities for youth associations, in order to promote awareness-creation work on HIV and AIDS. During the fieldwork it was noted that the youth associations and the TSDA were conducting interactive youth-to-youth/peer discussions using formal and informal communication media such as the Ethiopians' 'traditional' coffee ceremonies, posters and presentations, pamphlets, plays and community entertainment.

The TSDA 2012 annual report indicates that 5,967 youth and 5,095 adults from the Kolfe-Kernaio Sub-city had attended the various awareness-creation programmes on HIV and AIDS. In addition, a total of 2,985 posters, 5,637 leaflets and 1,179 brochures had been distributed to the youth and other members of the target communities. Condom use was reported to have increased so that 4,560 youth members who live in the sub-city were reportedly using condoms. Although no complete survey had been done to gauge the impact of this awareness-raising work; the TSDA leadership felt that there had been positive changes in the behaviour of Iddir members (TSDA 2012).

Similarly, the discussions with both Focus Groups A and C involving community members indicated that the awareness-raising and peer education sessions that conducted by the TSDA through the active engagement of Anti-AIDS youth clubs had created platforms for the youth and other community members to openly discuss HIV and AIDS-related matters, clarify misconceptions about HIV and AIDS, reduce stigmatisation, promote safe sexual practices, and bring about attitudinal and behavioural change.

This was further confirmed by Focus Group B, which involved the leaders of the TSDA, who indicated that the expansion of youth-friendly HIV and AIDS education interventions has made a significant contribution to increasing the participation of the youth and reducing the rate of new HIV infections among the most productive age group (16–49 years). They pointed out that the awareness-creation programme conducted for members by peer-to-peer educators was highly instrumental in enhancing their awareness of HIV and AIDS. They also pointed out that once members had been trained, they were

able to serve as peer educators of other community members. The on-going peer-to-peer community conversation initiatives would hopefully be sustained in the future so that there would be more hope for the messages being spread across all age groups, including children, the middle-aged and the elderly.

When Focus Group C discussants were asked to identify the most significant societal transformation initiative within the HIV and AIDS education and prevention programme, they pointed to the introduction of HBC, and the social support services provided to bedridden. They felt that the deployment of volunteer HBC providers was pioneering work in that volunteers conducted regular home visits to provide home nursing, cleaning services and social support to HIV and AIDS patients. Equal appreciation was given to the work of volunteers, who provide basic physiotherapy exercises and massage services for bedridden patients to increase physical exercise and prevent secondary infections. There were also occasions when the volunteer HBC providers extended post-mortem care (death care) at the time of death. The focus group discussants agreed that these civic and social service functions would have been unthinkable before the TSDA intervention, when stigma and discrimination against HIV and AIDS patients was very high. Eliminating stigmatising practices and minimising social discrimination were very significant achievements in the Kolfe operational areas.

Another key function of the TSDA which was appreciated by the Focus Group A and C discussants was the vocational skills and employment creation initiatives for young people who had lost their parents. To this end, the TSDA has arranged vocational training for youth aged 15 and above to acquire technical skills, engage in income-generating schemes and become socially and economically self-sufficient. The TSDA also covers the cost of training fees, materials and graduation expenses. Upon completion of the training programmes, each trainee is given start-up capital of Birr 2500. Close follow-up and guidance services are also provided to needy members to improve their economic prospects. The TSDA also assists youth to find employment on the completion of their training. In this regard, the 2012 TSDA Annual Report indicates that a total of 21 young people (12 male and 9 female) were assisted in attending vocational training programmes and supported in securing employment in the fields of teaching, surveying, audio-visual production, hairdressing, catering, drafting and basic computer services. It was encouraging to learn that these employed young people have all started to support their

siblings and extended families financially. Three of the targeted youths have even registered at universities to upgrade their educational status.

The 2012 TSDA Annual Report further indicates that “the small-scale economic support programme for the guardians of orphan and vulnerable children has so far benefited 1,198 OVC living under the guardianship of 1,150 family heads” (TSDA 2012:9). It was disclosed that the beneficiaries were selected from among the needy by members of Iddirs in collaboration with the TSDA management. The guardians also received training in business development, the fostering of a savings culture, marketing skills, record keeping and loan management prior to providing any financial support in the form of soft loans. Various short-term training sessions lasting three to five days were conducted in collaboration with the Micro and Small Enterprise Promotion Office of the Addis Ababa City Administration.

In addition, in 2012 the TSDA had transferred a total of Birr 2,396,000 to 1,198 guardians, with an average working capital of Birr 2,000 per person, to help members start small businesses. Of this start-up capital, the guardians were expected to pay back 20 per cent (Birr 400) without interest after a four-month grace period. While it was recognised that the guardians had to run a financially sustainable business, the arrangement to pay back the money was believed by the TSDA leadership to reduce their sense of dependency on external resources, minimise their debt burden and encourage the operation of a revolving fund.

In recognition of the time required for a business to reach at the breakeven level and become fully operational, the TSDA has extended the direct support programme for the targeted orphans through the provision of supplementary financial and other types of material support. This normally happens during the first four months of the grace period allowed for loan takers. Accordingly, each OVC was entitled to receive a financial grant of Birr 60 per month through their caregivers/guardians to reduce pressure on the financial profitability of their family’s small business. Each guardian had to deposit between Birr 5 and Birr 15 in blocked bank accounts for the targeted child’s use in future. The blocked account system protected the interests of the child, as the guardian was not allowed to withdraw money from it unless the TSDA advised the bank to do so. It was hoped that the children could use the cash deposit to help them start a business in the future or to serve as a safety net when the direct support programme ceases to operate. Until the family

business becomes profitable, the orphan children are also entitled to receive clothes and shoes twice a year.

In summary, the focus group discussions and the review of secondary documents, as well as my own field observations, indicated that the TSDA has facilitated transformation in the targeted communities by mobilising Iddirs and the various cross sections of the Iddir members' families to combat the negative impact of HIV and AIDS in their sub-city. The community-led actions have provoked great interest among ordinary community members, strengthened communities' social capital during times of crisis and transformed individual Iddirs' functions from very limited assistance at the time of death to holistic social and economic support without losing sight of their 'traditional' civic responsibilities. This was formally demonstrated by the Iddirs' newly adopted bylaws, which stipulate the right of members to obtain support prior to their death. The revised bylaws have also incorporated the prevention of HIV and AIDS, and care and support services for people affected by and infected with the disease. Many of the Iddirs have also introduced a new rule whereby orphans have the right to fully-fledged membership without making additional payments. In some cases, the bylaw allows OVC who cannot afford to pay their regular membership fee to be exempted from the regular payments to Iddirs. Hence, the proactive participation of local community based Iddir members, the sense of belonging to the TSDA felt by the various cross sections of community members and the creation of an appropriate people-to-people self-support structure have meant that the TSDA has emerged as a CSO that can deal effectively with the negative effects of HIV and AIDS and, assist the target community members to live healthy lives.

This demonstrates that if 'traditional' civic associations such as Iddirs are given the required civic spaces, they can play a transformative role in strengthening citizen-led community development initiatives, promoting the participation of cross sections of ordinary citizens, connecting grassroots communities through both horizontal and vertical linkages with others and searching for lasting solutions to emerging community challenges.

6.4 Analysis of the TSDA's contribution to care and support services for the elderly

This section reviews the multiple functions of the TSDA in the care and support of the elderly. Deeply touched by the weakening of the informal social protection mechanisms, the fragility of extended family support and the growing isolation of older

people, the TSDA has since its establishment taken the initiative to extend care and support services for people aged 60 and above. The TSDA understands that the inability to continue to pay for Iddir membership and their gradual dismissal from Iddirs has been a great concern for the elderly, as their isolation from such Iddir institutions erodes their social capital and can mean that they do not have access to decent burial services. The TSDA also learnt that local government spending on the care and support of the elderly has been non-existent. In the absence of community-based social protection schemes, the elderly in poor urban communities like Kolfe have been hard hit, consequently battling to live with dignity. It is against this background that the TSDA took the initiative to start multiple programmes that are intended to improve and transform the lives of destitute older people in targeted communities. This is discussed below.

Discussions with the focus groups of Iddirs leaders indicated that about 60 percent of Iddir members comprised people above the age of 60 years. Of this proportion, about ten per cent of these people have no permanent income either from their extended families or other social security mechanisms. They often live by begging from their fellow villagers. As a result, they cannot afford to meet the Iddir contributions, even though they are often as low as 0.10 American cents per month. This has forced them to withdraw from Iddirs and they are consequently left without social support even at the time of death.

In a culture situation that values decent burial services at the time of death, losing such support means giving up one's dignity and pride. In order to change this situation, the TSDA has mobilised all Iddir members to amend their bylaws to exempt the destitute from paying membership fees and ensure that they continue to obtain service from Iddirs until they pass away.

Mr B, one of the founders of the TSDA, stated that this positive step was one of his life time achievements and makes him very happy. His association has now become pioneers in extending support to destitute older people, providing them with continued social support and decent burial services at the time of their death (Mr B, Personal Communication Sept 2012).

In addition to this, the TSDA has mobilised active older people to provide free services to the bedridden elderly through homecare services, which include cleaning the homes of destitute older people, washing their clothes and utensils, assisting them with bathing and walking, as well as spending time with them to share their psycho-social problems. Accordingly, the TSDA (2012) reports that over 460 active older people were

mobilised to provide free home care services to 920 bedridden older people across ten communities in 2012.

Another important function of the TSDA is the inclusion of active older people in economic support services. It became clear from the focus group discussions with the TSDA leadership that older people in Kolfe are often excluded from using formal lending institutions because of the high interest rates, strict and inflexible repayment conditions, monthly service charges and the higher ceiling on loan amounts compared to the value of loans the older people need to meet their basic needs and their repayment capacity.

This was reiterated in the discussion with Focus Group D participants; who pointed out that active older people in the Kolfe area find it difficult to access loans from banks and microfinance institutions. Although a considerable number of older people who were interviewed showed interest in receiving financial loans, they were not confident enough to borrow due to their limited investment, savings and financial capacities. Mr K, a senior citizen and member of the Focus Group D, pointed out that: “the conventional financial institutions always focus on saving and paying capacity, which is difficult for older people to prove” (Mr K, Personal Communication 2012).

This was echoed by another older person, Mr B a, who said “we have had anxiety about repayment capacity and we were concerned about the violent reprisal effects and repossession of assets of clients in case we failed to pay back the loans. We were sceptical about taking loans of such type as it may threaten our reputations”. (Mr B a, Personal Communication, 2012).

It was against this background that the TSDA decided to strengthen the capacity of older people through the creation of an institution that provides financial facilities for older people. According to the By-law of the Cooperative(TSDA 2012), the credit facility that was formed by the TSDA has unique features, including access to credit primarily aimed at persons aged 50 years and older, use of Iddir entitlements of individual members as loan collateral, and the right of a family member to succeed to the scheme in case the original member dies or becomes inactive.

In line with these features, the TSDA has facilitated and supported the formation of an independent microfinance wing named *Tesfa Bekolfe* Credit and Saving Cooperative that has served as a financial facility primarily for older people. According to the TSDA (2012) report, the cooperative has provided loans of up to Birr 2500 (US\$179) to 214 older people from 58 Iddirs.

The participants in the Focus Group C and E discussions who had taken loans thought highly of the business training they had received, especially the training sessions on budgeting, business planning, business diversification and marketing, as these are crucial in building their business confidence and ensuring that loans are used for their intended purpose.

Ms Z, one of the loan recipients, pointed out that she did not know much about business management, except for her deep interest in helping herself economically by engaging in traditional food processing. She was encouraged by the newly set up loan facility and took the loan to start a small food processing enterprise. She fortunately became profitable and managed to become self-reliant and to support her four family members with their basic food, health and housing needs.

Ms Al, a 60-year-old woman, was making a living from begging. She was advised by the Iddirs to start an innovative business, which was to rent a donkey to transport small freight. So she took a loan from the Kolfe branch office. Although she was very anxious about her business, she was successful and stopped having to beg.

Older persons interviewed stated that the Tesfa's revolving fund programme had allowed them to accumulate and diversify their assets. For example, Ms Di, a 63-year-old loan recipient from Kolfe, noted that before obtaining a loan she did not have household utensils or furniture. However, after she took out the loan and expanded her business she was able to earn more revenue, which was enough to satisfy her basic food needs, send her grandson to school and buy a chair to furnish her home.

Another loan recipient, Ms ET, used her loan of Birr 2000 to bake and sell *Injera* at the local market. She was able to pay her debts regularly and feed the four members of her family with basic food items throughout the year.

The loan recipients (mostly women respondents) would not have been able to reach this level without the financial facility and the psycho-social support they received from their families to take out loans and start a business.

Accordingly, Focus Group D discussants believed that these small soft loans had helped the elderly persons who had received them immensely in terms of improving their livelihood and security. Had it not been for this type of loan arrangements, even the most physically active would have been forced to live from begging or would have been dependent on social assistance provided by others.

When Focus Group B (leaders of the TSDA) was asked about their biggest challenge, they pointed out that the TSDA has limited financial and loan facilities and would be unable to facilitate more lending on a larger scale than the current number of beneficiaries. It is also limited geographically. They also admitted that the potential for their cooperative to evolve into a self-sufficient credit institution is questionable owing to their low interest rate and the high transactions costs for managing small loans for a small number of beneficiaries.

Overall, the majority of participants in the focus group discussions were of the opinion that the loan facility for older people was very useful in meeting the economic needs of older persons, who otherwise were neglected by conventional banks and other financial institutions. The creation of such a financial facility has reached the unreached people and their participation has restored not only their economic independence but also their personal dignity and pride. Overall, in the absence of any formal banking services, the financial facility for older people and its embedded link with the ‘traditional’ Iddir associations has been an innovative and unique initiative that has demonstrated the transformative role played by ‘traditional’ CSOs.

6.5 Analysis of Tesfa Social Development Association’s relationships with government and other non-governmental/private organisations

It is evident that in order for ‘traditional’ CSOs to discharge their civic responsibilities, they need ‘independent’ civic space. When the TSDA leadership was asked about its relationships with the local Kebele and Sub-city administrations during the preceding five years, they disclosed that they had positive working relationships with the local authorities. They reported that they had established a partnership committee (*Tamira* committee), composed of Sub-city and *Kebele* representatives and heads of local health, HIV and AIDS, and educational affairs offices to jointly review the TSDA’s work plan and implementation capacities and overcome challenges to project implementation.

On the other hand, when the government representatives that took part in Focus Group G were asked about their relationships with the TSDA, they pointed out that they themselves had been members of the Iddirs that constitute the TSDA and they were familiar with its work. They believe that the TSDA has implemented praise worthy development programmes which are consistent with the development priorities of the local

government. However, they also pointed out that the TSDA should be more transparent in its resource mobilisation efforts and inform the government about its revenue sources.

The Focus Group D discussants, on their part, pointed out that there was tension between the TSDA leadership and the local government authorities because of local government's refusal to accede to the TSDA's request to acquire plots of urban land for free or at subsidised prices to expand its social and economic services. The local government representatives argued that they could not provide land free of charges for CSOs like TSDA outside the urban land policy, which directs that the acquisition of urban land should be conducted through a competitive bid and lease arrangement.

Another source of tension that affects the relationship between the TSDA and local government is related to the limited capacity of the TSDA to respond on a broad scale to the social problems in the operational areas. Mr B argued that:

... due to the scarcity and small size of financial resources, Iddirs – even if they went beyond their original functions – could not use the capital they mobilise to engage in social service delivery functions by investing on infrastructural activities that require high level of financial investment. They have also limited access to external financial facilities to proactively support their members in business and development undertakings. This must have been well recognised by the local government bodies and they instead should have thought to support us by leveraging community's resources.

In the Focus Group D discussion, the most sensitive source of tension related to the pressure exerted by local government bodies on the leadership of the TSDA to use their strong social network for election rallies and the mobilisation of the public for the purpose of national elections. The TSDA leadership has always been sensitive to these matters and they have used different tactics to avoid the use of Iddir platforms for political agitation and campaign work.

6.6 Summary

The analysis of the TSDA in this chapter has partly provided the answers to my research concern of how Ethiopian communities organically organise their 'traditional' associations and collectively engage in social action to transform their communities. As discussed in the preceding sections, the case of the TSDA and its ground-breaking work in the prevention of HIV and AIDS, care and support for orphan children, and assistance to the elderly has demonstrated how 'traditional' individual Iddirs have maintained their

‘core’ functions. Simultaneously, they have united their forces horizontally and vertically to form a union of Iddirs to proactively engage in and respond to the ever-changing socioeconomic realities. The various Iddirs have remained ordinary people-owned organisations and have united their voices to defend the rights and interests of their members. The union of Iddirs, the TSDA, has been seen to have constituted a vibrant and value-adding CSO that can partner with international organisations in their pursuit to mitigate social problems in Ethiopia, such as the negative effects of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. In doing so, the TSDA has brought about societal transformation, as evidenced by the transformation of its functions from being merely focused on burial and post-death services to being a provider of multipurpose socioeconomic support services prior to death; from being an isolated Iddir setup with limited membership to being a union of multiple Iddirs with thousands of members; and from being reactive in providing micro-level action to being proactive in providing macro-level action that requires strategic partnerships with both the government and donor agencies.

I, therefore, underscore the importance of Iddirs and Iddir associations such as the TSDA in poor urban communities to facilitate positive societal transformation at grassroots level. Keeping local government at arm’s length and having a strong constituency base in the poor of the community have helped the TSDA to remain defiant to administrative and legal pressure. The unity among the individual Iddirs and their organically formed networks has given them the public legitimacy, the organisational strength and the resilience to cope with difficult situations and maximise the impact of their programmes on communities.

In sum, the case-based analysis of the TSDA has demonstrated that ‘traditional’ CSOs can mobilise tens of thousands of ordinary citizens for civic humanitarian causes without losing their civic culture or virtues across various locations to facilitate societal transformation in a widely sustainable manner in Ethiopia.

Chapter 7

The Community-Based Integrated and Sustainable Development Organisation(CBISDO) and an Analysis of Societal Transformation

7.1 Introduction

The previous two empirical chapters dealt with the experiences of community initiated ‘traditional’ CSOs and their contributions to societal transformation. The cases of the Gurage People Self-Help Development Organisation (GPSDO) in the rural Imdiber area (Southern Nations Nationalities People Regional State) and the Tesfa Social Development Association(TSDA) in the poor urban communities of Kolfe (Addis Ababa) were examined. The main functions of these ‘traditional’ CSOs, their organisational development paths and their partnership experiences with ‘modern’ NGOs were reviewed. I also explored how these ‘traditional’ CSOs mobilised their internal assets, took charge of local development practices, and facilitated societal transformation for their communities with minimum assistance from external sources.

This chapter focuses on an examination of the functions of the Community Based Integrated and Sustainable Development Organisation (CBISDO), which was identified as a ‘modern’ CBO and created through the initiative of a local NGO called the Integrated Holistic Approach Urban Development Project (IHA-UDP).

The chapter specifically analyses the way in which poor urban communities in the Tekle Haimanot slum communities, Lideta Sub-City, Addis Ababa, have mobilised through this ‘community-Based’ organisation and whether such initiatives have made a lasting difference in the lives of community members, as well as contributed to societal transformation.

A total of 66 people participated in the primary data collection, analysis and reflection sessions. They were drawn from six cross sections of the CBISDO constituencies, including ordinary general assembly members (20), but ordinary community non-association members who live in the operational areas of the organisation (20), current and past executive board members (6), local level government representatives(6), older people/‘traditional’ leaders (6), and local businesspeople (8), as indicated in figure 7.1.



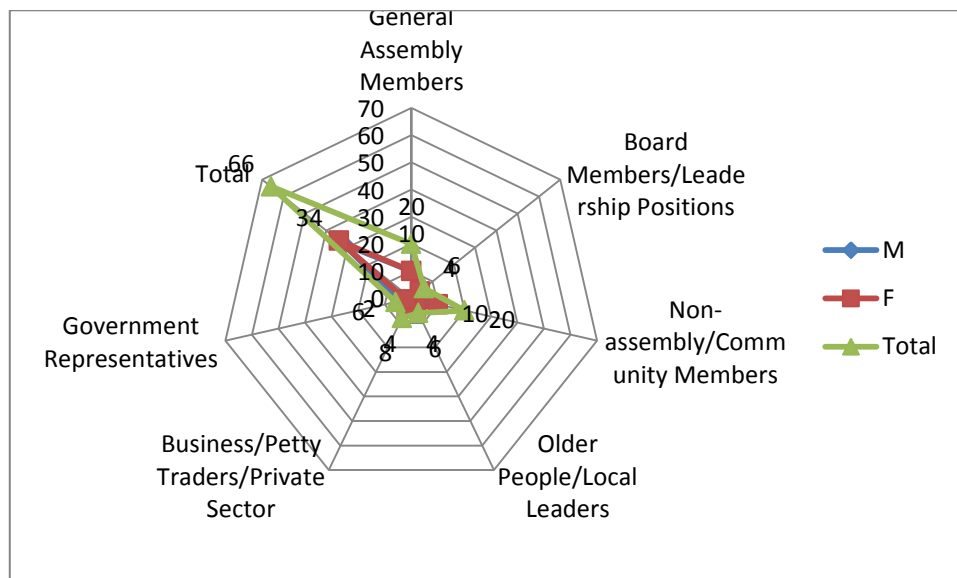


Figure 7.1: Distribution of CBISDO study participants by constituency and gender

Source: Own based on the primary sources of data and study participants, 2012

Figure 7.1 shows that the gender composition for the study participants was fairly evenly distributed. Out of a total of 66 participants, females made up 34. Equal numbers of male and female participants were drawn from each of the general assembly, ordinary community members, business people and government representatives groups. However, males outnumbered females in the focus groups of older people/‘traditional’ leaders, government representatives and board members.

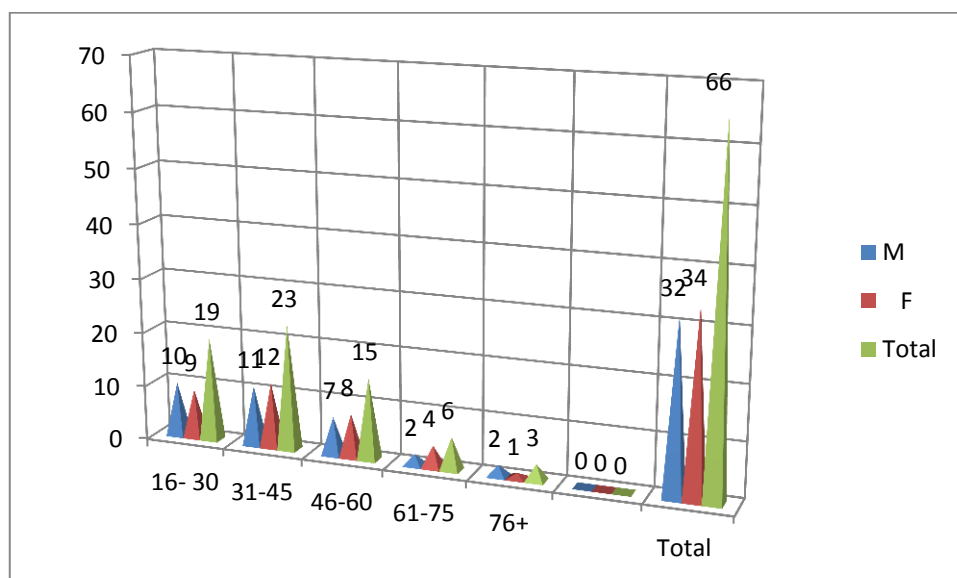


Figure 7.2: Distribution of CBISDO study participants by age and gender

(Source: Own based on the primary sources of data and study participants, 2012)

As indicated in figure 7.2, the majority of study participants (23) fell into the category 31 to 45 years, followed by 19 in the 16 to 30 year age group and 15 in the 46 to 60 age. Nine participants only were above the age of 60. Overall, the case-based analysis benefited from the inclusion of the various cross sections of CBISDO stakeholders.

I made field visits to, held discussions with and observed all the community development schemes. I also worked on a voluntary basis for the IHA-UDP for ten years and I have been in frequent contact with the target communities of Tekle Haimanot. In addition to my extensive knowledge of the area, I spent about three months living with the local people to understand in depth how the various community-based schemes and CBISDO organisational functions were running. These multiple sources of information provided rich data that informed the analysis and helped to construct the findings of the study as follows.

7.2 The Tekle Haimanot Slum Urban Community: the CBISDO operational area

According to a IHA-UDP report (2011:5), the urban slum area where CBISDO has been operating used to be known as *Tekele Haimanot Woreda, Negus Woldegiorgis and Tureta Sefers*. This area began to be inhabited in the early part of the 20th century. At the time the urban plots were owned by an influential feudal lord who was reportedly close to the political circle of Emperor Menelik II. This, coupled with the relative remoteness of this part of the city reportedly contributed to its slow level of urbanisation compared to the other parts of the capital until the Italian occupation (1936–1941) (IHA-UDP 2011:7).

The early settlement of the area was partly shaped by the Italian occupation of Ethiopia, which brought its own racial urban policy and relocated the very poor inhabitants, including beggars, from other parts of Addis Ababa to this part of the city. For this reason, the area was dubbed *Tureta Sefer*, which literally means the neighbourhood of pensioners or dependents (IHA-UDP 2011:8).

One of the key informants – Mr T, reported that since *Tureta Sefer* is very close to the big open marketplace, adjacent to both the grand Annuar mosque and the Tekle Haimanot Orthodox Church in Merkato, it has continued to be an attractive site for new migrants to settle illegally, notably people living from begging. The lives and work of the majority of other urban inhabitants are also directly linked to and dependent on the large open market – Merkato. These people are mostly petty traders, second-hand clothe sellers,

food or local drinks peddlers, and day labourers (Mr T, Personal Communication May 2012).

According to the IHA-UDP (2011:15):

..the illegal settlements and the inhabitation of the area by very poor people have complicated the implementation of proper city planning and the undertaking of community development initiatives. Particularly, the deep rooted culture of dependency and the prevailing intergenerational poverty in the area has created a sense of fatalism, apathy, lack of dignity and self-esteem among the communities living within the CBISDO's operational area.

It was against this background that the Integrated Holistic Approach –Urban Development Project (IHA-UDP) was founded by Dr Jember Tefera, once the first lady of the capital (Addis Ababa) and wife of the late mayor Dr Engineer Haile Giorgis Workneh. She recalls that she was deeply touched by the devastating socioeconomic and health problems experienced by the urban poor communities as well as their powerlessness to change their lives and their limited capacity to influence urban policies and practices. The main objective of the IHA-UDP was, therefore, to “improve the quality of life of the people of the area, in particular of the most needy members, by addressing the root causes of the multiple inter-woven problems of the target groups through a community based integrated holistic approach project” (IHA-UDP 1996:3).

The baseline survey which was conducted by the IHA-UDP in early 1989 revealed that the priority needs of the local people (in order of importance) were improved housing, better environmental health, paved roads and alleys, preventive health services, job creation and skills training, access to educational/recreational facilities, improvement of basic social services and social protection services for older people, people with disabilities and orphan children (Feleke 1989:10).

The IHA-UDP phased out its project intervention after nine years of operation (1989–1998) and handed over its responsibilities to the CBISDO. Since its formal establishment in 1997, the CBISDO has taken over and engaged in the management of the community schemes and has continued to serve the interests of the urban poor communities as part of the IHA-UDP sustainability strategy.

The following section examines CBISDO's multiple civic functions and its contribution to societal transformation.

7.3 Analysis of the organisational setup of CBISDO and its contributions to societal transformation

As stated in the previous section, the formation of CBISDO was brokered by the IHA-UDP after it had implemented an integrated urban community-based programme in four poor urban Kebeles of Addis Ababa. Since 1989, for nine years it had covered a total population of 42,000 residents. The founder of the IHA-UDP stated that “CBISDO was created in the image of the IHA-UDP to follow its footsteps, pursue its development goals and sustain the project initiatives that had taken place prior to its formal phasing out in the Tekle Haimanot areas” (Mr Am, Personal Communication August 2012).

According to LA,

The IHA-UDP was instrumental for the formation of CBISDO and the former has considered it as its successor and grassroots partner to sustain the cooperation of handed over project activities. IHA-UDP has also used CBISDO as a conduit for channelling various financial and technical supports entirely generated from external international donors.

For this reason, the IHA-UDP coordinator was extensively involved in overseeing the overall operation of CBISDO and extending management support to it, especially in its early stages.

As stated in the bylaws of the organisation, CBISDO envisions:

... sustainable and improved community life through integrated community development endeavours. It is committed to the implementation of sustainable community-based development programmes. It is governed by a general assembly of members drawn from the target community members, youth, local IHA-UDP staff and government representatives including the representatives of the Addis Ababa City Administration, the Woreda Administration and the administration of the four targeted Kebeles(CBISDO 2010:3).

When asked about the composition and leadership capacity of CBISDO, the Focus Group E discussants reported that “the composition of the leadership includes elected representatives from the neighbourhood group, education extension workers and local staff members of IHA-UDP as well as members of the local government bodies”.

The structure of the neighbourhoods groups(NHGs) is as follows: Each Kebele was subdivided into a household cluster (5–10 households) and sub-zone (30 households) to form the NHG. Subsequently, the four Kebeles, in a pyramid structure, elected a representative for each of the three programme components (health, socioeconomic

development and physical upgrading) so that a total of three representatives from each of the Kebeles make up the *Tamra* (joint) executive body. In line with this, each sub-unit of community members elects a person to represent them as a focal person when implementing the programmes (CBISDO 2010:5)

In addition to these governing bodies, composed of cross sections of community representatives, the day-to-day operational functions of CBISDO have been headed by a secretariat staffed with a full-time programme manager, assisted by six programme and programme support team members (see the organisational chart below).

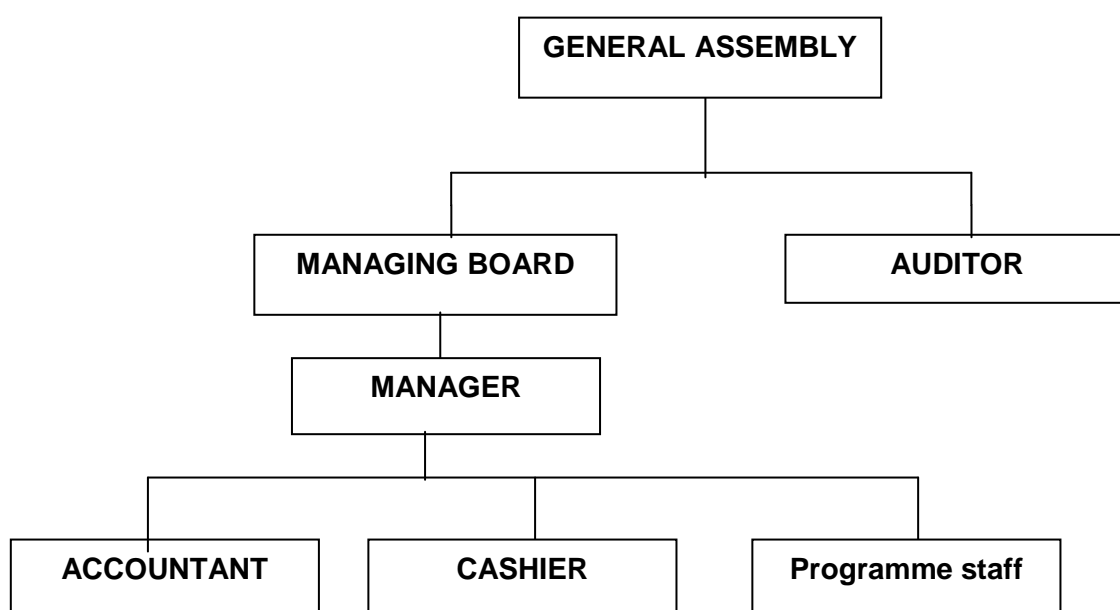


Figure 7.3: Organisational structure of CBISDO

(Source: CBISDO 2010)

CBISDO was created to serve as a grassroots structure with a unique combination of not only various cross sections of the targeted communities but also representatives of various government bodies. The IHA-UDP founder argued that the inclusion of government representatives in the leadership of the CBISDO was done intentionally in anticipation of fostering positive relations and a smooth collaboration with local government bodies (J, Personal Communication September 2012).

Despite the good intentions and the inclusion of the various community representatives in the CBISDO organisational setup, the discussions with Focus Group A participants revealed that:

CBISDO's management has never been in a good position to review, update or utilise the structures available to it. It has maintained inconsistent organisational policies and guidelines. It was unable to systematically guide and manage hundreds of unskilled staff inherited from the previous programme and programme support services. Training and staff capacity building programmes were not organised according to expressed training needs. Those who had participated in certain training programmes could not practice what they had learned because they were wrongly placed. There was a lot of dissatisfaction among community-level staff because of the extremely low pay and weak grievance-handling procedures.

Focus Group B also felt that:

the senior management team of CBISDO could not be effective as initially anticipated since there was no good team spirit among its members. They were self-divided to the extent of not talking to each other and they could not carry out the mission of CBISDO as it was envisioned in the organisation's bylaws and strategy papers.

Focus Group C further pointed out that:

... the manager of CBISDO was inactive and lacked respect; he had even been physically attacked twice by staff members who had gone through series of labour allegations and court cases. The absence of a charismatic leader with the necessary professional skills, experience and commitment to the cause of disadvantaged urban dwellers has been the main challenges in the management of the organisation.

Focus Group A participants, on their part, reported that

... the situation was further complicated by the fact that the senior management team and the board of CBISDO could not guide the organisation strategically to advance its mission as most of the board members lacked the appropriate leadership skills and experience. For this reason, board meetings were not held and elections were not conducted on regular basis to replace inactive or absent board members.

A review of the financial documents of CBISDO indicated that the organisation was completely dependent on external grants channelled to it through the IHA-UDP as a backup inter-locator. It did not try to explore the potential of domestic resource mobilisation to support and run community development initiatives. Surprisingly, the CBISDO management was not even able to do a timely follow-up in order to collect the external financial grants pledged to it. It would seem that CBISDO has found itself in difficult financial circumstances and has consequently found it difficult to sustain its operation (CBISDO 2011:5).

Overall, the findings of the focus groups and the document reviews, as well as the physical observation of the state of completed community schemes, indicate that the

CBISDO senior leadership and management body has never been in good shape nor has it had capacity to effectively manage and transform the organisation into a vibrant and a more credible entity, let alone to facilitate societal transformation in Tekle Haimanot.

7.4 CBISDO's social service functions and their sustainability in Tekle Haimanot

In the previous section, I examined the institutional setup and community-level structure of CBISDO, as well as the challenges it faces in facilitating societal transformation. In this section, I focus on CBISDO's social service functions at grassroots level.

As discussed in the previous section, CBISDO inherited programmes with a strong infrastructural base that included low-cost housing, income-generation units, a health post, a community library, elementary and junior high schools, youth recreation centres and a drop-in centre for the elderly.

According to the annual planning document of CBISDO (2011), the organisation was able to support a total of 211 (66 male and 145 female) poor older people by providing access to a monthly cash transfer of Birr 150 (about US\$12) per month. The organisation has continued to facilitate the delivery of home care services to 97 (24 male and 73 female) elderly people who were bedridden and had mobility problems; and 113 elderly people were supported through the Multi-Purpose Older People Drop-in Centre, which was constructed by the IHA-UDP.

The same report indicated that CBISDO facilitated the sponsorship of 897 orphan and vulnerable children to have continued access to formal education by paying school fees and providing school uniforms. They were also offered tutorial services to help the children improve their academic performance. Special attention was given to the girl children who usually are overburdened with domestic chores, which negatively impact on their academic performance. Each day, about 60 children and youth use the services of the two libraries constructed by the IHA-UDP. The children found these places better for doing their homework since they do not have electricity or enough space at home. In addition, 150 children were served lunch during the school day to ensure their regular school attendance (CBISDO 2010:4–5).

Similarly, the youth employment creation programme was able to extend support to 60 (38 male and 22 female) youngsters who were enrolled in marketable skills training

programmes such as carpeting, wood and metal artwork, electrical repair, auto-mechanics, hairdressing, car washing and cleaning facilities. However, many of the interviewed youths reported that they could not get employment using the skill training that they had acquired. They think that the linkages that have been created to provide employment opportunities are minimal.

It was disclosed during the focused group discussion with the CBISDO management that the health care support services for community members were running smoothly. According to the 2012 CBISDO annual report:

... clinic-based services were provided to a total number of 8,753 patients. Over 608 mothers received antenatal and postnatal services, while the family planning services reached 4,768 people and the vaccination coverage increased to 1,636 children. Health education was targeted at Iddirs association members and a total of 9,323 people received this service. Similarly, the HIV and AIDS prevention work included home visits (230 households), counselling service (149 people), condom distribution (1,622 people), psycho-social support (1,266 people), home care (96 people), referred patients (20 people), and HIV and AIDS prevention education attendants (2794 people). The nutrition unit provided dry rations monthly to 5,700 poor people, supplementary feeding to 360 pregnant and lactating mothers, and nutrition rehabilitation to 240 people (CBISDO 2012:15).

The same report disclosed that another social service function of CBISDO was income generation for the economically poor. The organisation has involved unemployed community members in food processing, public shower services, grain mills, baby food, water points, spinning, weaving, sewing, basketry, and savings and credit activities.

During the field study, all 66 study participants were asked about the most significant social service functions and the changes that they have observed. Accordingly, they rated the services as indicated in figure 7.4:

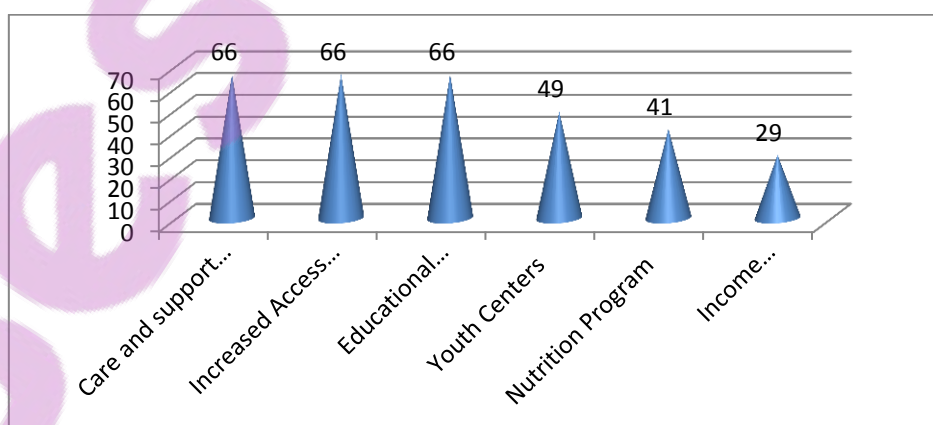


Figure 7.4: Rating of CBISDO's most significant social service functions

As indicated by figure 7.4, the support programme for the elderly, health services, educational sponsorship for children of poor urban families, the youth centre and the nutrition programme for undernourished children and lactating mothers were rated as having the highest level of value because of the positive impact they have had on improving the lives of the poorest segments of the targeted communities. The study participants identified OVC, single mothers, street children, people with disabilities and the elderly as the primary beneficiaries of these social service functions.

Comparatively, the income generation schemes were found by the respondents to have less impact due to the low level of profitability and lack of financial sustainability. They do not have sufficient capacity to generate income and transform the lives of their beneficiaries.

When Focus Group A discussants were asked about how they measure the institutional sustainability of CBISDO, they stated that they measure the sustainability of their organisation on “its ability to address emerging community needs; its capacity to take participatory decision-making process involving the cross sections of community members; and the availability and continuity of financial resources to keep up the social service schemes that are freely delivered to the poorest section of the targeted communities”.

All 66 study participants were asked to identify the risks which they consider to be a challenge to the sustainability of the social service functions and CBISDO’s capacity to facilitate societal transformation.

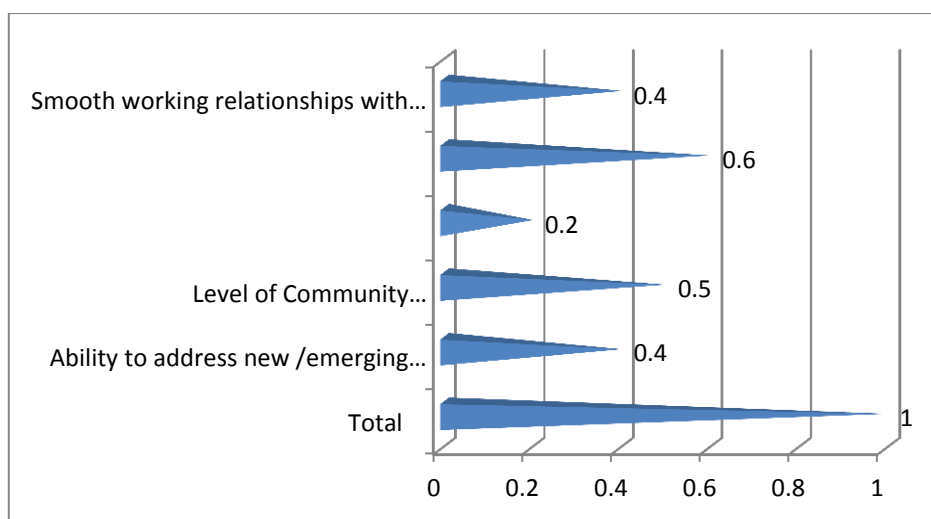


Figure 7.5: CBISDO community's analysis of risk factors

(Source: Own based on the interview findings, 2012)

Accordingly, the respondents identified the following risk factors posing challenges that could affect the sustainability of CBISDO and the ability to facilitate societal transformation.

Limited capacity to address new/ emerging community needs: As indicated on figure 7.5, the CBISDO leadership had never taken on new initiatives in response to emerging needs or promoted continued collective action. Instead, the participants argued that because CBISDO took over as many as 52 programmes from the IHA-UDP (see annex10), it had become very cumbersome and has exceeded its financial and institutional capacity to operate and maintain such multiple community development schemes. Therefore, CBISDO has so far concentrated on responding to and filling in the gaps in the day-to-day operations of the various programmes that have been taken over from the IHA-UDP.

Dependency on external financial resources: The study participants further pointed out that no financial contributions from community members have been received or profit obtained from the existing income generation scheme to sustain the rendering of social services. Thus CBISDO was able to survive only at the expense of the external grants it had secured from international donors through the back up of the IHA-UDP. This had made CBISDO entirely dependent on external donors and consequently it faces a high risk in terms of a lack of financial sustainability.

In this regard, when asked about the financial sustainability of the various programmes being run by CBISDO, Focus Group A discussants pointed out the following:

There have never been any regular financial contributions from community members that could be used towards meeting the costs of the smooth operation of the various programmes, except paying for subsidised health care and small house rents. There has also never been an endeavour to mobilise financial resources from other sources to partially cover or complement the grants generated from external donors. The hopeful income generating schemes including the youth recreation centre and the public shower schemes have become less competitive to compete with other schemes or remain relevant in the local market. As a result, the existing income generation units cannot generate enough revenues to cover the costs of the operation of social services such as care and support for older people and the orphan and vulnerable children programme. This financial situation has made the operation of the various programmes of CBISDO highly dependent on foreign sources and highly susceptible to external financial shocks.

Limited community participation and sense of ownership: It was believed that the efficiency of the CBISDO leadership in facilitating coordinated action and promoting

genuine community participation was limited. During the focus group discussions, group A participants stated that there were no regular meetings between the leadership of CBISDO and fellow community members. Even the NHGs had become inactive and had lost their original momentum. There had been infrequent meetings over the past year and it was virtually impossible to have open community dialogue to maintain the dynamism of proactive community development activities. For this reason, there were interruptions in genuine information flow and the participatory decision-making process among the various structures of the CBISDO.

Limited collaboration with and support from local government: During the discussions, Focus Group A participants indicated that:

... the sustainability of CBISDO's initiatives partially depend on the existence of an enabling institutional environment and legal cooperation with government. Although the linkages of the health care post and primary/secondary schools a requisite smooth with the relevant government and NGOs, the absence of such collaboration for the smooth operation of the other social service rendering schemes (such as care for the older people and support centres) has gradually put the operation of these schemes at risk.

All the focus group discussants unanimously agreed that, under the current circumstances, it was highly likely that the social service schemes of CBISDO would gradually lose their momentum and their potential to reach larger numbers of the population would diminish. Therefore, CBISDO is not in a position to replicate the various community-based schemes elsewhere and its capacity to facilitate societal transformation is very limited.

7.5 Analysis of CBISDO's communicative and representational functions with government

From the outset, CBISDO statute stated the importance of its relationships with the local administration, sub-city administration and main Addis Ababa City administration for its operation. It has thus created a structure for the inclusion of local government representatives in its governing body and has created a space for them to work with community leaders who are devoted to changing the quality of life of the poorest in the community (CBISDO 2009:2).

Efforts have been made to create awareness among government officials, from the lowest unit of the government local authority to the highest regional or federal officials.

Specifically, CBISDO has formalised the scope of its partnership with functional government departments; particularly, the Addis Ababa Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs and the Bureaus of Urban Development, Education and Health.

A positive aspect that was observed during the field observation was the linkage created between the Kebele 41 Health Post and the government-run Tekle Haimanot Clinic. This partnership is running smoothly, enabling the regular provision of free vaccination services without incurring additional financial costs on the side of the CBISDO. Similarly, a successful working arrangement with the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE) has enabled the organization to use the Kebele 41 Health Post as a permanent outreach centre for the provision of free family planning and reproductive health services.

However, according to the focus group discussion with the CBISDO leadership, the CBISDO’s relationships with the various local, zonal and regional city government bodies have seriously been hampered by various policy and institutional factors. The study participants identified the following risk factors (fig. 7.6) as having a negative impact on sustainable societal transformation in the area.

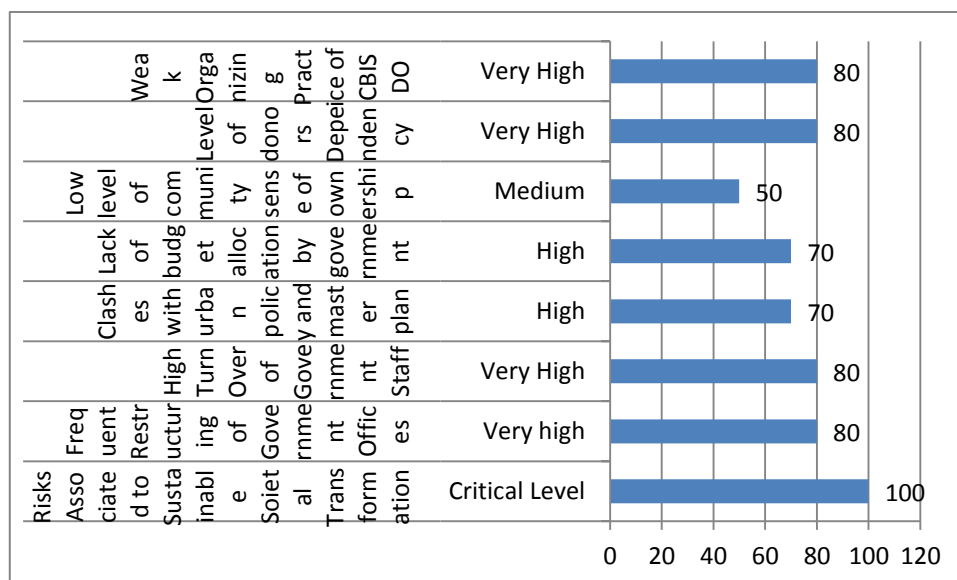


Figure 7.6: Types and levels of risk associated with communicative and representational functions identified by study participants

Frequent restructuring of government offices: The study participants indicated that the city administration has undergone a major restructuring process. Since the formation of CBISDO nine years ago, the City administration has undergone four restructuring

processes. This restructuring was so extensive that it ended up with the merger of two separate urban Kebeles and Kebele Administration offices and the amendment of their responsibilities. This has hampered the smooth implementation, handing over and management of community development services.

High turnover of government staff: There has been high turn-over in government office bearers due to successive restructuring processes. For example, while the chairperson of the CBISDO board happened to be a local government representative and other local government officials were included on the board, the members have changed constantly and could not discharge their responsibilities as anticipated. Even those who stayed in their position for a reasonable period did not take their responsibilities seriously as their prime occupation was with other political and administrative matters of the government. This has contributed to also down in the implementation of CBISDO programmes and this has crippled the day-to-day leadership functions of the management office. In addition, it has been difficult to maintain CBISDO's 'independence' from government control and promote its civic responsibilities functions free of political influence.

Incompatibility of urban development policies and practices: The study participants pointed out that the physical upgrading work of CBISDO has become incompatible with the relatively new government urban renewal policy. Since the Addis Ababa City Administration adopted an urban renewal policy which aimed at demolishing urban slums, construction of high-rising condominiums and the promotion of private investment in the urban housing sector, the very poor community members in CBISDO operational areas face eviction. The urban renewal policy has also resulted in the demolishing of houses and some social services buildings being run under the ownership of CBISDO. The study participants reported that they are disheartened by the demolishing of the community service infrastructure which was used by the urban poor and the targeted poorest segments of the Tekele Haimanot area. They also felt highly insecure since some of the poorest household members were dispossessed of their houses without compensation or replacement. Under such difficult circumstances, the CBISDO could not demonstrate itself to be the voice of the urban poor. It could not mobilise local people to stand up and fight against the dispossession of poor urban dwellers due to the government urban policy and urban slums renewal programme.

Lack of government budget and failure by government departments to comply with operational agreements: The study participants disclosed that although CBISDO has signed an agreement with the relevant government departments to handover its completed community-based schemes, the various departments have not lived up to their commitment to allocate the necessary budget, take over the completed schemes and maintain the operation and sustain the services. CBISDO also is also unable to access alternative domestic resources to ensure the continuity of such social services. If less financial resources are available to such services it will mean that there will be a greater risk to their sustainability.

Lack of strong community organising practices and limited sense of community ownership: Based on the above challenges and the shortfalls in the community organising practices, I am of the opinion that although CBISDO claims to have adopted Paulo Frère's 'conscientisation' approach and his consideration of the political nature of education to investigate thinking and to change the structure of oppression (Frère, 1972), CBISDO has ended up by creating more of awareness raising platforms than developing a grassroots movement that demands a reform in the political status quo and the structure that partly contributes to their urban underdevelopment.

CBISDO has also acted as an 'interventionist' and 'solution maker' to the problem of urban communities instead of helping communities to solve their own problems by using their own resources and galvanising their own initiatives from the inside out. I argue that unlike the rights-based approach, its community mobilisation evolved from the delivery of social and material resources in accordance with the needs of communities without institutional reforms and fundamental community initiatives on the part of the targeted communities. Therefore, the CBISDO management and staff have continued to drive the change process and play an 'interventionist' role, concentrating on the provision of infrastructural services at community level at the speed and pace of their external donors instead of community members making the major decisions, articulating their rights and holding government accountable. Thus, the various community mobilisation efforts have only been demonstrated in the form of prioritising community needs, selecting sites and mobilising labour resources during the construction phases. There has been limited grassroots capacity among community members to mobilise local material/financial resources and influence future urban development practices.

Dependence on external agencies for financial and technical support: As stated previously, it was learnt that CBISDO depends heavily on the generous support and grants it has received from dedicated philanthropists and charity organisations outside the country. Many of the social service initiatives such as the programmes for the elderly and the OVC became operational because of these donors in Europe. Accordingly, a number of international donors, including international NGOs such as Dorcas (Dutch) and Help Age International, various churches in the United Kingdom (Life Church, Community Church, St Peter's Church and the Gel fall Fellowship), the CRED Foundation (UK), COOPI (Italy), Ethio-Berhan (Dutch), the Professional Association (Ethiopian health professionals in Sweden), and individual donors from the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Sweden and the Netherlands, have reportedly been funding the CBISDO programmes.

CBISDO management argued that these external donors are considered to be solidarity groups that help the organisation to overcome urban poverty. They are considered to be genuine partners rather than actors that dominate the course of urban development actions. However, the management admitted that there is no guarantee that these external donors will maintain the momentum of their funding as the current financial crisis in Europe has become critical. This has been complicated by the fact that CBISDO has no alternative domestic resource mobilisation strategy in place to sustain their social service activities financially. This remains a barrier to the future financial sustainability of the existing social services and for CBISDO to emerge as the collective voice of the poor and other local people in its communicative and representational functions.

7.6 Summary

The case-based analysis of CBISDO indicates that despite the rhetoric of a participatory development approach, the organisation has made efforts to institute project-bound community participation, which has been instrumental in helping it to accomplish the project cycle management in accordance with the expectations of external donors. The participation process is also client-oriented and expert driven, having CBISDO at the helm of 'interventions'.

Therefore, local people generally perceive CBISDO as the second generation of the IHA-UDP, viewing it as created in its image to serve the same purpose by 'remote control' from the project office and playing a 'watch-dog' role in sustaining the operation and

maintenance of the project interventions that were completed and handed over during the first project period.

The absence of continued charismatic leadership in CBISDO and the gradual diminishing of the use of community mobilisation mechanisms in key decisions have exacerbated CBISDO's weak institutional base. The various cross sections of the urban communities feel that they have no more control over and or influence on CBISDO's institutional growth. It is important to note that most of the study participants do not consider CBISDO to be a locally grown and groomed 'traditional' civic society organisation such as Iddirs or Iqubs, which have the power to voluntarily mobilize local people and promote citizen led civic society functions. Instead they regard CBISDO as predominantly a client-oriented, project-bound and task-oriented external grant funded organisation.

The breach of contractual obligations by local city administration in the administration and operation of completed community schemes, except for the education and health sectors, has challenged the institutional and financial sustainability of the schemes that have already been handed over to communities and local government. The urban housing rehabilitation schemes and the income generation units, as well as the care and support services for the elderly have in particular faced the highest risks of sustainability since these interventions have been incompatible with the slum upgrading and urban renewal policies and strategies of the Addis Ababa City Administration.

In conclusion, unlike the two first two case study organisations (GPSDO and TSDA), which demonstrated citizen-led grassroots development initiatives, I argue that the IHA-UDP-driven initiatives and CBISDO's interventions tend to be more client oriented, project bound, external grant funded and contractually tied to government relations. From the group discussions with the local leaders, local staff and community members, it became evident that responsibility for the various projects' planning and implementation remained with CBISDO itself. More attention was being paid to achieving the project results proposed by external donors than to creating a proactive community facilitation process that would ensure the inclusion of all stakeholders in key decisions, the mobilisation of local resources and the fostering of an empowering partnership with government stakeholders.

It was noted from the empirical findings that CBISDO has failed to act as a facilitator of continuous community actions. It has gradually lost its vibrancy and charismatic

leadership, resulting in an inability to win the trust and confidence needed to mobilise the various cross sections of urban communities. Its relationship with local government has been problematic and has tended to be confrontational when it comes to the management and sustainment of the improved housing units and completed social service schemes. It is depressing that after almost three decades of urban community development endeavours in Tekle Haimanot, the poorest members of the targeted urban communities are still living in a state of hopelessness and despair, having failed to transform their lives and attain positive societal transformation at community level.

PART THREE

Chapter 8

Summary, Conclusion and Pathways to the Future

8.1 Summary

This study was motivated by the conviction that the theoretical misconceptions, marginalisation and lack of support for ‘traditional’ civil society organisations (CSOs) have challenged their contribution to societal transformation in Africa. With the aim of making a contribution to the expanding frontiers of knowledge on CSOs and their role in societal transformation in Africa, this study presented and analysed the role of three CSOs in Ethiopia. Based on case-based analysis methods, the study examined how community members have organically organised their ‘traditional’ associations and collectively engaged in social action to transform their communities. The case analysis reviewed the experiences of both ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ CSOs that have been active in social action in Ethiopia. It has also used the case studies to analyse how the main theoretical discourses on CSOs are relevant to explain the history, functions and dynamics of CSOs and their transformative role.

In this chapter, the main pillars of the analysis and the findings of the discussion are presented on the basis of the analysis of the dominant theoretical civil society discourses (chapter 2) and the political historical context (chapter 4) that surround and shape the conceptualisation, thoughts, policies and practices of CSOs. Using qualitative research and case-based analysis methods (chapter 3), the main synthesis for this chapter is informed by the examination of the histories, organisational paths and current development practices of the three CSOs under scrutiny (chapters 5–7).

Many conclusions can be drawn from this study depending on one’s advantage point but, in line with its overall objectives, the study revealed the importance of bridging the theoretical divide between the ‘modernist’ and the ‘traditionalist’ perspectives on civil society discourses. By way of indicating the intellectual pathways to the future, the study recommended the harnessing of the roles of ‘traditional’ CSOs and changing the international funding criteria that used to be applied in favour of the ‘interventionist’ role of ‘modern’ CSOs. Consistent with the specific objectives for this study, the main

conclusions and pathways to enhancing the roles of CSOs and societal transformation are, therefore, indicated in the following sections.

8.2 Conclusion and pathways to the future

8.2.1 Towards bridging the 'modernist' and the 'traditionalist' theoretical divide on civil society discourses

One of the objectives of this study was to examine the dominant civil society theoretical discourses and draw up intellectual schemes regarding the conceptual understanding, meanings and practices of CSOs.

Accordingly, the thesis, in its literature review and theoretical framework analysis, identified that current theoretical discourses can be traced back to one source as the origin of the concept of civil society, that is, one of the classical period Ancient Greek political philosophers, Aristotle. Indeed, the concept of civil society at that time was simply used to refer to a society governed by rules and orderly mechanisms; this subsequently contributed to the rise of a dominant conceptual perspective on CSOs. The works of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke during the renaissance and enlightenment periods of the western world were also cited as exemplary works in the analysis of the thesis, since they geared the conceptual thinking to the social contract paradigm and focused on the delineation of duties and responsibilities between the state and society.

The analysis in chapter 2 of this thesis further pointed out that the perspective on civil society entered a new trajectory later in the 19th and 20th centuries when European scholars, notably, Alex de Tocqueville, Antonio Gramsci, Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx, studied societies in terms of the nature and power relations that inherently exist among the three interdependent core players in society, namely, political, economic and civic. We have learnt from the analysis that since the 'modernist' perspectives on civil society were grounded on the social, economic and political realities of the 'civilised' West (Western Europe and North America), their proponents perceived the development of civil societies as a manifestation of modernisation and a reflection of the state of becoming 'civilised'. In other words, these western discourses and the 'modernists' who got their inspiration from various Eurocentric realities and theories of social evolution simply viewed CSOs as embryonic and 'exotic' in Africa. They underlined the necessity of Africa passing through social evolutionary paths if Africans were to climb the ladder of 'modern' civil societies

like their counterparts in the western world. The analysis in this thesis indicates that such a 'modernist' orientation biased the study of CSOs until recent times, echoing the position that 'modern' CSOs are incompatible with the life patterns of Africans and other 'tribal' societies of the world. Such an orientation labelled Africans as 'traditional', less civic and having difficulties associating with other people for good causes beyond the interests of their clans or ethnic boundaries. It barely acknowledged the contribution of 'traditional' institutions and practices in societal transformation. For this reason, the 'modernists' concluded that the domestication of the concepts and the promotion of the practice of 'modern' CSOs are a necessary pathway for 'traditional' Africa to lead its societies towards what they call a 'matured' level of nation states.

Unlike these theoretical premises, this thesis argued in its analysis that such a 'modernist' discourse on civil society has denied Africa the intellectual space to present the way in which African civic cultures foster character and intellect with home-grown civic institutions and civic spaces. These 'modern' political regimes and ideological instruments have underestimated and failed to appreciate the power stored in the 'traditional' structures to bring about new or alternative forms of governance. They overlook the impact these 'traditional' CSOs have on keeping African communities and social groups intact and transformative. In the past such misconceptions marked the western perspective and misrepresented the state of 'traditional' CSOs and their contribution to societal transformation in Africa and the rest of the 'developing' world. Therefore, a blinkered assertion of the 'modernist' position means a denial of the rich and diverse cultural resources of African communities (as empirically evidenced in chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis) which have developed in their own way to promote volunteerism, self-help, peace and social transformation parallel to their counterparts in the west.

In light of this, this thesis strongly argues that one should not take these 'modern' and 'evolutionary' conceptual perspectives of CSOs for granted or as the universal benchmark for understanding and explaining the inherent nature and dynamics of 'traditional' CSOs in Africa. It also emphasises that the existing 'modernist' approaches, including the western-based concepts, meanings and practices of CSOs should be re-examined. For this, the thesis suggests that scholars should move beyond the deconstruction of the western perspectives to nurture the already growing body of literature (notably by African scholars) to fill the knowledge vacuum and counter-balance the dominance of a 'modernist' approach to civil societies.

In moving forward and reconstructing the intellectual divide, this thesis suggests that the ‘modernist’ civil society discourses should be acknowledged as just one form or school of thought representing the western, and not the universal, world. At the same time, it is fundamental to reject the social evolutionary perspective and accept the power of ‘traditional’ knowledge and the inherent strength of Africans and other ‘traditional’ societies in being capable of generating and planting their home grown CSOs, as evidenced in the empirical chapters of this thesis.

In this regard, the thesis proposes the need to rethink the thinking on CSOs. A possible pathway is suggested by capitalising on the work of Odora Hoppers and Richards (2011:35, 36) who reorganised the roles of ‘modern’ institutions in the light of cultural resources provided by modernity’s other *second-level indigenisation*, in which their analytical principles serve the same purpose and support the need for providing an alternative theoretical perspective and development practice route for the coexistence of ‘traditional’ CSOs and their genuine partnership with ‘modern’ CSOs in pursuit of societal transformation in Africa.

To take this a step further, the study recommends the introduction of a universal civil society approach, which can bridge the divide between the ‘traditionalist’ and the ‘modernist’ perspectives. It is proposed that this be called a One-Humanism approach to the study and analysis of CSOs. This newly proposed approach basically rejects the evolutionary approaches that have dominated the thinking and the actions to justify the ‘modernity’ and the maturity levels of ‘traditional’ CSOs. The One-Humanism approach instead looks for multiple pathways in recognition of the existence of CSOs in any human society and believes that all are equally important in keeping their respective societies functional and transformational. It emphasises that civil societies can evolve everywhere in specific historical, social, economic and political settings to serve the interests of their members, but that these should not be ranked in terms of a social evolutionary approach to justify their ‘civility’. As evidenced in the historical analysis (chapter 4) and the case-based analysis of the GRCO and TSDA (chapters 5 and 6 respectively), while identifying the analytical distinctions and the dichotomy among the political, economic and civic societies is necessary to study the dynamics of a well-functioning society, it is equally important to understand the inherent linkages and interdependence of the political, economic and civic society sectors in any given society.

8.2.2 Towards harnessing the roles of 'traditional' CSOs for societal transformation

The objective of this study was to identify and critically examine cases of Ethiopian communities, and analyse how they organically organise their 'traditional' associations and collectively engage in social action that transforms their communities.

As discussed in the previous chapters of this thesis, it was learnt that the various social groups in Ethiopia have maintained their 'traditional' civil associations to serve the socioeconomic and political interests of their members despite the lack of legitimacy they have been accorded by successive political regimes in Ethiopia.

The historical analysis in chapter 4 of this thesis provided various accounts of 'traditional' CSOs that have existed for ages across diverse communities in Ethiopia. The *Sera* of the Sidama people in the southern part of Ethiopia was shown to have served community members as a web of social relations and interrelations, regulating the communal social structure and governance system among the Sidama. This 'traditional' institution is known to have constituted the morality of the individual and the community by providing social security and facilitating social action through consensus building. It was indicated that such 'traditional' institutions have been instrumental in obligating individuals to accommodate the majority view and force them to live in harmony with each other. The case of the *Gada* of the Oromo people was also cited as offering an organised socio-political institution based on age-aligned democratic leadership among the Oromo pastoral communities to help members to manage community resources equitably, mitigate and reconcile conflicts, and restore peace and stability.

An equally important 'traditional' CSO is identified in the case of *Seera* among the Kambata people, which is based on the principle of commitment to truth, serving as one of the most important 'traditional' institutions to guide conduct and promote several sets of norms practised and internalised by the Kambata people in the southern central part of Ethiopia. It was shown that the *Seera* live in a normative realm in terms of which individuals and groups are expected to behave in relation to marriage, family relations, peer group associations, work cooperation, socialisation, child and older people care and natural resources management. This institution has survived and serves as a moral authoritative agency to ensure the well-being of the Kambata communities and to protect them from uncertainty and shame in difficult times.

As extensively examined in chapters 5 and 6 of the thesis, the *Ya joka* and *Gordanna* ‘traditional’ institutions among the *Sebat Bet* and the *Kistane* Gurage communities respectively have played a significant role in the cultural, legislative and judiciary functions of these local communities. It was disclosed that despite the social stratification and urbanisation process that changed their occupations, educational levels, migration patterns and way of life, most Gurage people still appreciate and are governed by these ‘traditional’ institutions in maintaining peace and order, governing social behaviour, guiding marriage and family arrangements, socialising children, promoting care for the elderly and enhancing collective social action.

In line with the analysis in chapters 5 and 6 it is evident that ‘traditional’ CSOs are an important aspect of the day-to-day lives of the Gurage communities. It is inspiring that these ‘traditional’ institutions were responsive to external changes without losing their ‘traditional’ identities. The study (chapter 5) demonstrates that the *Ye joka* ‘traditional’ institution of the Gurage was used for the institutional growth of the Gurage Road Construction Organisation. The transformation of Iddirs and their concerted community actions through the Tesfa Social Development Association (TSDA) was also presented (chapter 6) as empirical evidence of the existence and contribution of ‘traditional’ CSOs in Ethiopia. It was found out that these types of ‘traditional’ CSO, have served as the social fabric and conduit for societal transformation in urban poor communities in Ethiopia by promoting solidarity, self-help and local participation among their communities under ever-changing socioeconomic and political conditions.

As discussed at great length in chapter 6, Iddir has become the most respected multi-ethnic CSO among people of all walks of life in both the urban and rural communities of Ethiopia. The empirical evidence shows that Iddirs are now among the most popular national institutions and they serve millions of people from both urban and rural settings regardless of kinship, ethnic, religion, and political background.

Furthermore, the empirical evidence in chapter 6 indicates that Iddirs did not remain static as one may commonly expect of ‘traditional’ CSOs. As depicted in the case-based analysis of the TSDA, these ‘traditional’ CSOs have transformed themselves from time to time through both a vertical and horizontal organisational development process. They have demonstrated wider levels and a broader scope of collaboration with other ‘modern’ institutions to serve wide-ranging needs and respond to emerging social realities. The formation of a vertical institutional structure that brought the various entities together

through a union-like organisational setup has resulted in the up-scaling of their operation and the expanding of their collective action, which can serve as an alternative way of creating a higher form of civil society in Ethiopia.

In this regard, the empirical evidence from the case-based analysis of the TSDA (as shown on chapter 6) is highly relevant; the TSDA has played a significant role in uniting and creating linkages among the various cross sections of urban communities to promote civic causes and implement citizen-led development practices. The TSDA has demonstrated that Iddirs can transcend ethnic and kinship boundaries and serve as a catalyst for positive and transformative social change. As explained by the case analysis of the TSDA, individual Iddirs have united their efforts and resources to provide social care and economic support to poor and isolated older people who were expelled from their Iddirs due to their inability to pay membership fees, particularly as they became older. It has also become an alternative institution for providing social support to grandparents who have lost their children to HIV and AIDS and who live with their grandchildren under extremely difficult circumstances. The organisation has mobilised members to deal with the negative impact of the HIV and AIDS pandemic and to overcome the social exclusion and discrimination of community members infected and affected by the pandemic.

Overall, in its case-based analysis of the TSDA in chapter 6, the thesis indicates that the emergence of networks of Iddirs has played a social integration function not only in integrating urban community members horizontally but also in linking Iddir members vertically to the formal administrative and political structures. The case of the TSDA illustrated a positive community practice, where by the networks of Iddirs represent communities' interests, promote public social welfare and extend social security assistance across different parts of Ethiopia through principled collaboration with government and other external agencies.

In light of the 'transformative' change process that has been witnessed by the Iddirs and their networks in Kolfe, an important conclusion that can be drawn is the fact that the main principle of the Iddirs organisation which keeps the members united and active is *Sebawinet* (humanity). The Iddirs originated from and are governed by the core value of mutual help at time of death, a tragedy common to all human beings. It is this tragic life cycle that often brings individual members together, regardless of who they are, to show their humanity, solidarity and support. The Iddir organising practices are, therefore, based

on 'civic' principles and serve as a springboard for undertaking subsequent social actions that have impact on societal transformation.

As discussed on chapter 6, an important social dynamic that has contributed to the transformation of the 'traditional' roles of Iddirs is the challenges and negative impacts presented by the HIV and AIDS pandemic in local communities in the early 1990s. The immediate threat to the institutional survival of Iddirs was noticed when they were saddled with huge arrear payments which were supposed to be paid to families that had lost their members as a result of the pandemic, as these were fast exceeding Iddirs' savings and regular financial contributions. Many of the Iddirs were on the verge of collapse, unable to pay their debts to deceased families. On a related front, the negative consequences of the HIV and AIDS pandemic were later witnessed with the passing away of the middle generation, which left surviving children and older parents behind without support. Another issue and even more dangerous for the survival of these families was the discrimination and stigma directed at families affected and infected by HIV and AIDS. This deeply touched the heart and minds of Iddir members, triggering support for orphan and vulnerable children and the elderly by transforming the 'traditional' functions of Iddirs. Thus, the empirical evidence in chapter 6 revealed that individual Iddirs responded to the situation and even became proactive in dealing with this challenge through the formation of Iddir unions and the inclusion of multiple functions made available to Iddir members before their death. The formation of an Iddir network, on the one hand, did not contradict or undermine the initial objectives of the establishment of Iddirs. On the other hand, the creation of a vertical structure helped individual Iddirs to undertake multiple civic functions and have the power to enter partnerships with 'modern' CSOs and collaborate with international donors from the West.

Hence, the empirical findings in chapter 6 of this thesis challenge the relevance of the neoliberal or modernist theoretical perspective and identify the negative implications of the wrong labelling of 'traditional' associations as archaic and never changing, or the preposition that if they do change it is at the risk of losing their original identity and infusing potential conflict among their original founders. The TSDA case analysis disproves this. Instead, it demonstrates that the TSDA has served as a neutral multimodal institution by hosting several Iddirs, mobilising their own resources, and leveraging additional support from external agencies for larger-scale community initiatives that could not easily be made available by individual Iddirs or agency-initiated 'modern' CSOs. The

formation of the union and its additional structure has, therefore, been instrumental in broadening the scope of Iddir functions and maximising their reach to a larger number of communities in various locations. These communities had supported each other in areas of social concern long before they were recognised and partnered with ‘modern’ CSOs or international donors. The Iddirs organically transformed themselves to respond to emerging social realities and forged partnerships with multiple institutions.

Therefore, it can be concluded that given the necessary civic space, the ‘traditional’ CSOs like the TSDA can naturally transform their functions and governance structures to promote self-help and facilitate positive social changes in their own cultural, social, economic and political settings. The harnessing of the roles of ‘traditional’ CSOs through knowledge generation, policy measures and practical support can help local communities to enhance their inherent power, mobilise their resources and collectively engage in social actions that transform their respective communities.

8.2.3 Towards moving beyond the ‘interventionist’ roles of ‘modern’ civil society organisations

Another important departure point within the objectives of this thesis was the critical review and analysis of the partnership between ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ CSOs and an examination of their instrumental role in enhancing social transformation. In line with this, the case of the agency initiated ‘modern’ CSO, the Community Based Integrated Sustainable Development Organization (CBISDO), which originated from the Integrated Holistic Approach-Urban Development Project (IHA-UDP) in the Tekele Haimanot area of Addis Ababa was examined (chapter 7).

The analysis of the CBISDO case indicates that its founder, who was inspired by the ‘conscientisation’ approach of Paulo Freire and his consideration of the political nature of education to investigate thinking and the structure of oppression, organised and mobilised the poor urban community members in Tekele Haimanot in an integrated community development initiative. The organisation was legally structured as a replica of ‘modern’ CSOs, with its own general assembly, board and secretariat. Nonetheless, it was found that the composition of CBISDO management is unique. It is neither a ‘traditional’ institution (like the Iddirs) with strong grassroots ownership nor it is a replica of ‘modern’ mass organisations (like the Kebele Urban Dwellers Association managed by local government).

Nor does it fulfil the organisational setup of independent NGOs, as local government representatives hold leadership positions as the chair or co-chair of the CBISDO board.

The case analysis in chapter 7 also examined the community education and dialogue approach which was adopted by CBISDO and which was believed to have created opportunities for the poor to become aware of their attitudes and organise themselves to fight against poverty and social injustice. However, the empirical evidence shows that, unlike Paulo Freire's conscientisation approach and the investigative power of education to challenge the structure of oppression; CBISDO's participatory 'brainstorming' education sessions have ended up as 'consciousness-raising' platforms and they only serve to diagnose social ills, identify priority needs and design projects that are meant to address community needs. Such limited and fragmented community awareness sessions have led to action that was directed by the CBISDO and its 'mother' institution, the IHA-UDP, amplifying their 'interventionist' role in addressing the expressed needs of the 'targeted' community members. Instead of the community members becoming the source of critical human agency, capable of driving social transformation, they were conditioned to be 'clients' of the project interventions funded by external financial donors. Therefore, such diagnostic and 'interventionist' approach by CBISDO could not help poor urban communities to move beyond developing reactive approaches and implementing responsive community action to existing problems.

It was further disclosed in chapter 7 that the presence of such confusing organisational identities in CBISDO and inefficient management structures coupled with a weak secretariat setup and poor collaboration with government departments working on the various community-based development schemes gradually weakened the role of CBISDO in societal transformation. It was evident from the case analysis that CBISDO has become a local development contractor and intermediary agency rather a grassroots-based and citizen-led CSO. Moreover, its community 'interventionist' approaches have become conduits for transferring grant from international donors. As the empirical evidence indicates, without the continuity of some funding from international donors that have had historical and personal connections to the founder of IHA-UDP; CBISDO could even face a serious risk in terms of sustaining itself financially and institutionally. Under such circumstances, CBISDO can only play a limited role in brokering long-lasting community initiatives, generating self-initiated collective action and challenging the structural causes of oppression, which hinder positive societal transformation.

Based on the empirical evidence in chapter 7, therefore, this thesis concludes that the ‘interventionist’ approach of ‘modern’ CSOs like CBISDO does not create or utilise critical human agency, which is capable of planning and driving citizen-led community action that can lead to societal transformation. For this reason, the study underlines the importance of moving away from client-oriented project interventionist roles to the facilitation of a critical human agency focused and citizen-led asset development process that allows citizens to become critically aware of their situation and proactively engage in actions that facilitate societal transformation.

8.2.4 Pathways for enhancing effective civil society–government partnerships for societal transformation

This study highlighted the fact that the theoretical prepositions and the intellectual aspirations for the creation of vibrant CSOs that work for societal transformation in Africa cannot be envisaged in isolation from the prevailing dominant political structures and without ensuring “freedom of thought and associations” (Sen 1999:272). In this regard, the empirical findings for this study emphasise that the creation of an enabling political climate is necessary to the growth and expansion of CSOs and their ultimate contribution to the ushering in of mutual trust, formation of free associations and facilitation of societal transformation in Ethiopia.

As discussed on chapter 4, the relationships between the successive political regimes and CSOs in Ethiopia have never been smooth. This was partly due to the fact that Ethiopia, although a nation with an ancient history and a non-colonisation experience in Africa, has had authoritarian political regimes that provided their citizens with little opportunity to exercise their rights. It was found that the formal political governance systems have forced ordinary citizens to conform to the absolute power of the government. This had been reinforced by strong religious practices, notably the Ethiopian Orthodox Church which has been dominant in the country from the 4th century up to the end of the Emperor Haile Selassie I period.

The historical accounts also revealed that the dynamics of the CSO–government relationship took on different shapes after the socialist-military government came to power (1974–1991). The relationship between the government and local citizens during the socialist-military period was characterised by the stripping of citizens’ rights to form associations of their choice. No independent, strong ‘modern’ local CSOs were active

during the 17 years of the regime, except for a handful of national associations and welfare-oriented organisations such as the Ethiopian Red Cross Society and the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia, which has been formed long before the socialist government came to power.

As explored on chapter 4, the socialist government rather propagated the formation of ‘mass organisations’ according to the pattern of the Chinese and the soviet communist models. The socialist government also denounced the values of ‘traditional’ CSOs, dubbing them the ruminants of the feudal system. It also continued to systematically exclude and marginalise ‘traditional’ CSOs from the mainstream public domain and attempted to replace their functions with the formation and institutional support of the ‘communist’ oriented mass organisations such as the All-Ethiopians Farmers’ Association, the CETU, the Ethiopian Revolutionary Youth League and the Ethiopian Women’s Association.

The discussion in thesis further disclosed that the influx of hundreds of western-based international NGOs into the country was pronounced during the 1974/1984 famine and conflict. Their major interventions have focused on humanitarian responses and disaster reduction so that the incumbent government of Mengistu Haile Mariam at the time allowed them to operate as part of the mission to rescue the lives of millions of compatriots who were seriously affected by the famine. This position meant that NGO intervention focused more on a life-saving mission than facilitating societal transformation

The study showed that the downfall of the socialist-military government of Ethiopia and the ascendance of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to power in 1991 promised the opening up of more civic space and a democratisation process. This was witnessed in the first ten years of the government through the mushrooming of hundreds of ‘modern’ CSOs. A notable improvement in the civil society landscape was witnessed through the establishment of civic rights-focused organisations such as the Ethiopian Human Rights Council, Action Professionals Alliance for People, the Organisation of Social Justice and Ethiopian Women Lawyers Associations. These organisations were active enough to mobilise communities and create awareness on civil rights issues. However, as per the analysis in chapter 4, the incumbent government gradually became less tolerant of these rights-based CSOs after the controversial 2005 national elections, suspecting them of solidarity with opposition groups. The government subsequently promulgated a new civil societies and charities law in 2009, which restricted

a considerable number of CSOs from conducting public advocacy, legal awareness and legal aid programmes.

Overall, the thesis in its historical analysis (chapter 4) and empirical findings (chapters 5, 6 and 7) indicates that the political and legal frameworks of the successive political regimes in Ethiopia have created pressure on the growth and development of various types of 'traditional' CSOs. 'Traditional' CSOs were also side-lined and marginalised from mainstream national development endeavours. However, it is disclosed that such organisations did not disappear and, instead, they have coexisted side by side with the dominant political and religious systems serving the ordinary citizens in difficult times. These 'traditional' CSOs often took marginal positions in discharging their civic functions mainly at grassroots level, delivering social welfare activities to the most destitute social groups, which were considered to be no threat to the political status quo.

In order to enhance effective partnerships between CSOs and government, both parties should develop mutual trust, recognise the complementary nature of each party's role in societal transformation, identify common approaches and shared community action plans, design mutually agreed implementation arrangements and develop social accountability mechanisms for both the political and civic societies. This would mean having constructive policy dialogues on an enabling environment for civil society operations and making the civic space a better field for discussions. This could be complemented by organising a series of CSO-GO forums to showcase positive collaboration and partnership experiences and explore mechanisms for replication. The increased involvement of local citizens through social accountability mechanisms and developing the culture of listening to community feedback on the delivery of public services by government would be an important step towards fostering effective partnerships for societal transformation.

8.2.5 Immediate steps towards enhancing the role of civil society organisations in societal transformation in Ethiopia

The empirical evidence from chapters 5,6 and 7 indicates that there have been few strategic differences in the political chemistry of the successive political regimes in Ethiopia as regards their official position and attitude to recognising and working with 'traditional' CSOs that are autonomous of government influence. The successive governments wanted to remain authoritarian and to control institutions outside government circles. They enforced laws and strategies that serve as sticks to punish, and control the

role of independent civic associations and limit their catalytic roles in societal transformation. Restrictive government regulations have limited the space and the role of 'traditional' CSOs. As a result, 'traditional' CSOs were side-lined in the provision of social welfare services, merely allowing them to perform gap-filling functions in politically less sensitive areas.

The path to constructing an effective partnership and attaining positive societal transformation is still difficult, but possible. It requires the full recognition and facilitation of a positive enabling environment for CSOs to enable them to regain their historical place in grassroots development.

One of the pathways for the future is to reform the political system so it becomes one that fully recognises and practically respects the rights of citizens to freely form and act through their associations independent of government interference and pressure. The incumbent political regime in Ethiopia should revisit its revolutionary and developmental state agendas concerning the participation of citizens in the key decision-making processes, both at policy and development practice level. It needs to bear in mind that development is not just about attaining fast national economic growth but is fundamentally about economic development, increasing liberty, respecting the rights of citizens to development and ensuring the associational freedom of citizens to have a say in their own future.

In this regard, both the CSOs and the government in power should take practical measures to foster mutual trust, build confidence and ascertain equal partnership in development. Without such political measures, it is less likely that citizens and communities will develop confidence, regain freedom, harness innovation and enhance collective action that can be long-lasting and bring about societal transformation. Given the historical conditions in Ethiopia, the first ball for positive legal and practical actions still seems to be sitting in the court of the government. The government needs to take timely action to avoid unnecessary confrontation and pave the way for a better negotiated civic space that facilitates public dialogue and societal transformation.

The second pathway for a better and sustainable societal transformation in Ethiopia is the call for local and international 'modern' CSOs to revisit their 'interventionist' project approach in humanitarian and development practices and open up their doors for citizen-led development practices by fostering partnerships with 'traditional' or grassroots-based and people-owned organisations in Ethiopia. They should revise the rules of the game and the 'aid architecture' for a true partnership with citizen-led 'traditional' CSOs. They need

to drop the masks and language of ‘project speak’ so that instead of requiring communities mostly to participate in their preconceived and financially backed projects, they should move to a more open partnership model that includes open community dialogue, a community resources-building approach and the facilitation of a societal transformation process.

The third pathway is related to the change required in the mind-sets and aid architecture of international donors and western governments. There is a need to revamp the rules of partnership and funding criteria set by international donors, governments and private sector to enhance the partnership between ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ CSOs and facilitate societal transformation. At the very least, global programme partnership frameworks, aid architecture and funding criteria that side-line ‘traditional’ CSOs should change and a new global system and partnership modality that fully recognise the independent and distinct roles of all types of CSO should be put in place.

The fourth pathway is about ‘traditional’ CSOs themselves. They need to be more flexible and open enough to negotiate and expand the scope of their networks and linkages – horizontally among like-minded civic associations and vertically with national and international organisations.

In sum, bridging the ‘modernist’ and the ‘traditionalist’ theoretical divide on civil society discourses; harnessing the role of ‘traditional’ civil societies in citizen-led development initiatives; moving beyond ‘modern’ CSOs’ client-oriented and project-bound ‘interventionist’ approach; fostering principled partnerships between government and CSOs; as well as revamping the international aid architecture are important driving forces to strengthen the role of CSOs and enhance the societal transformation process notably in Ethiopia, Africa.

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Annexes

Annex -1-

Consent form

Date _____

Name _____

Location _____

1. I give permission for Mr. Feleke Tadele Kelkil, to use my interviews, photos and related documents of myself and my family in his research work and publications, both in Ethiopia and abroad, and on the worldwide web.
2. I confirm that I am over 18 years old and I agree with the above conditions.

Signature _____

Date _____

Researcher _____

Date _____

የፈቃደኝነት መግለጫ ቅፅ

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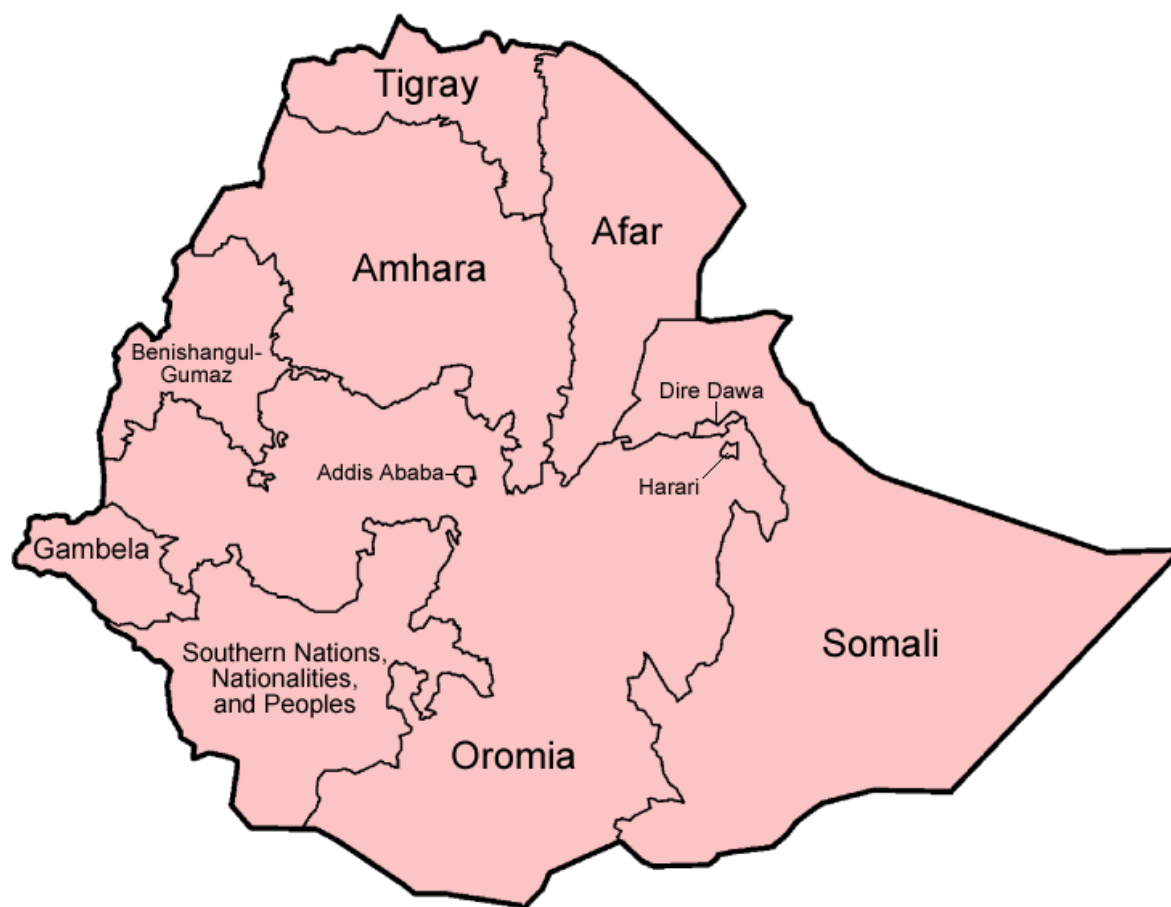
1. እኔ ስሜና አድራሻዬ ከዚህ በላይ የተገለፀው ለአቶ ፈለቀ ታደሰ ከልክል የእኔን እና የቤተሰቦቼን ቃለመጠይቆች፣ ፎቶ ግራፎች እና ሌሎች መረጃዎችን ለምርምር ስራዎችና ለህትመት በአገር ውስጥም ሆነ በውጭ አገር እንዲሁም በአለም አቀፍ ትህረቱን እንዲጠቀሙባቸው ፈቅጂላቸዋለሁ።
2. ዕድሜዬ ከ18 ዓመት በላይ መሆኑን እያረጋገጥኩ ከላይ በተገለፀው መሠረት ለጥናቱ አቃ ኛነቴን አቆልክለሁ።

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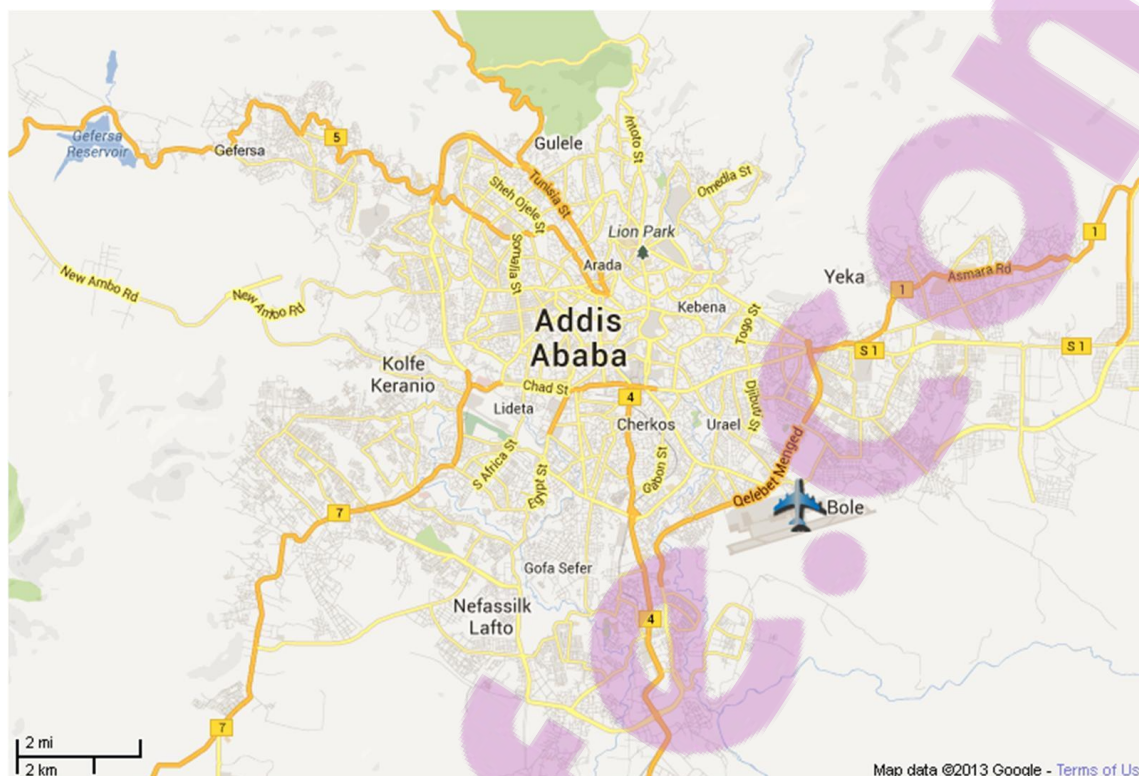
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Annex 2: Political map of Ethiopia

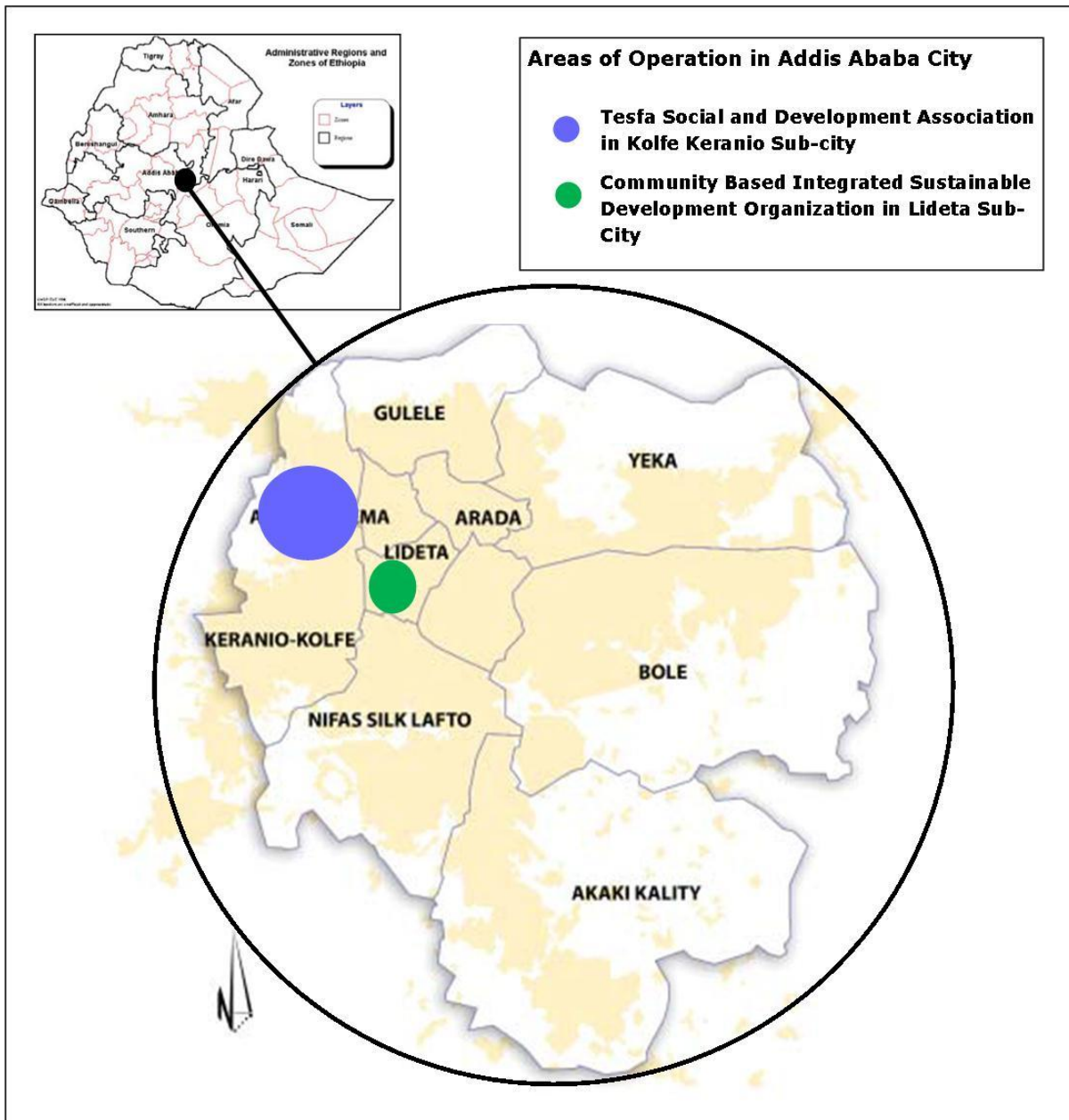
(Source: UNOCHA, April 2013)

Annex 3: Administrative Map of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



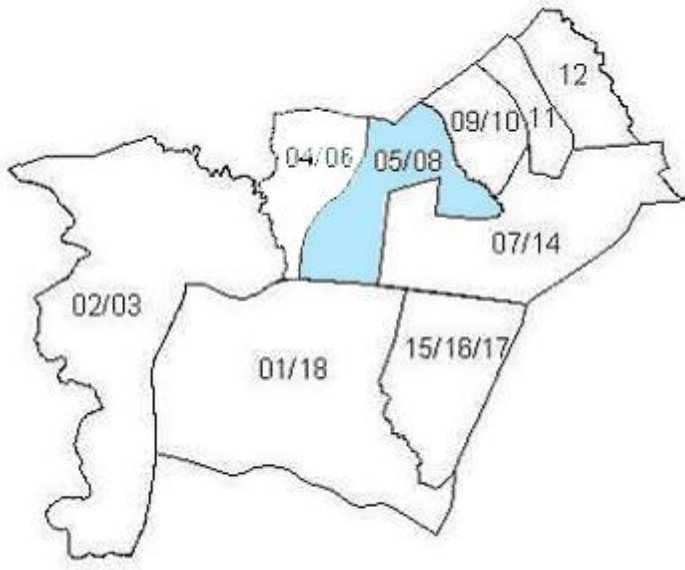
Source: Google Map, 2013

Annex 4: Administrative Map of Kolfe-Kernaio and Lideta Sub Cities, Ethiopia

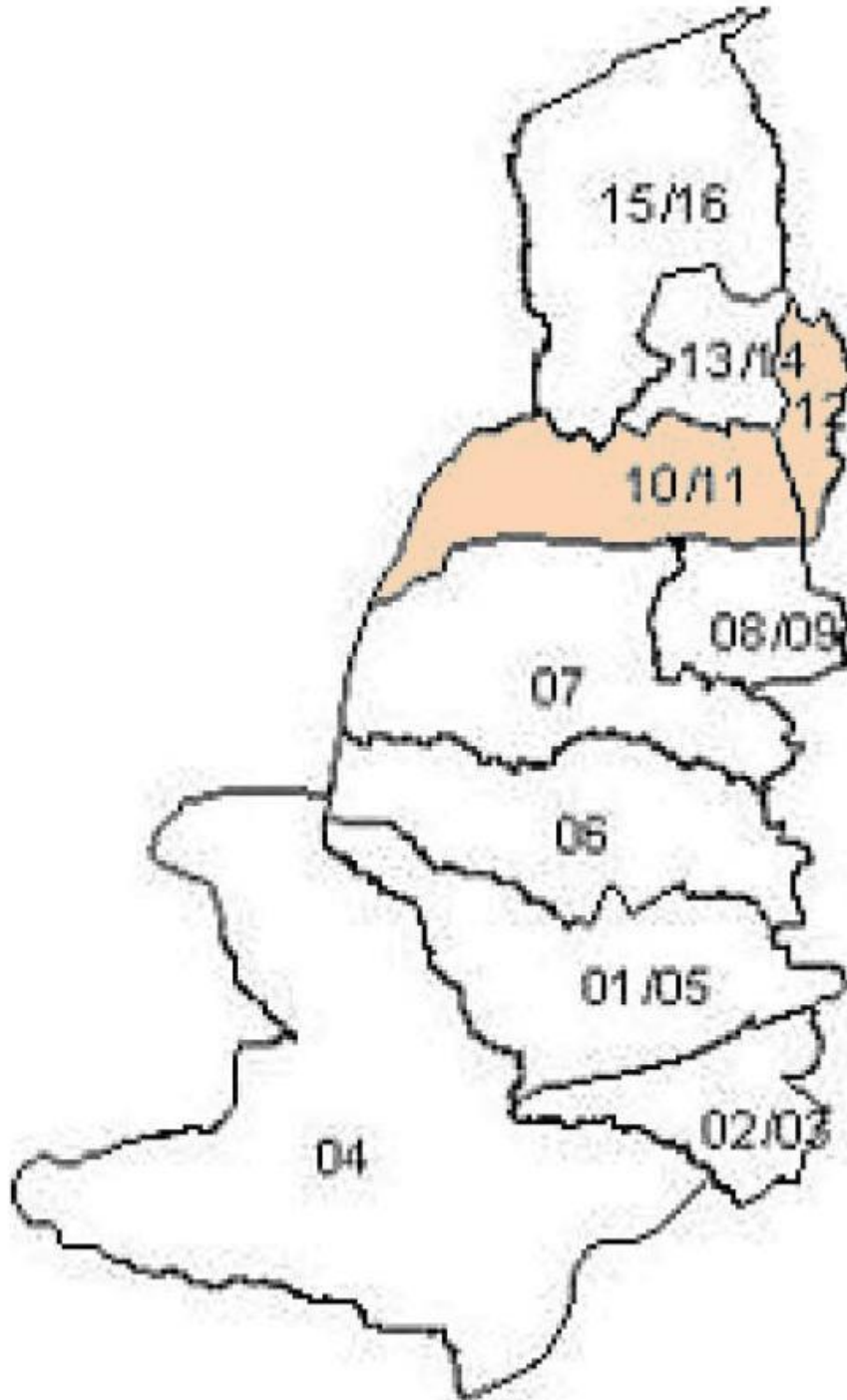


Source: Adopted from Addis Ababa City Government (AACPPPO - Addis Ababa City Planning Project Office) and Lyon Town Planning Agency, (2012)

Annex 5: Map of Lideta Sub-City –Operational Areas of CBISDO



Annex 6: Map of Kolfe Keranio Sub-City – Operational Areas of TSDA



Annex 7: Ethiopia - Key Population Indicators and ‘International’ ‘Development’ Ranking

Population	88,013,491 (July 2010 est.)
Capital	Addis Ababa
Type of Government	Federal Republic
Life Expectancy at Birth	55.8 years
Literacy Rate	42.7%
Religious Groups	Ethiopian Orthodox Christian 40%, Sunni Muslim 45-50%, Protestant 5%, remainder indigenous beliefs. Orthodox 43.5%, Muslim 33.9%, Protestant 18.6%, traditional 2.6%, Catholic 0.7%, other 0.7%
Ethnic Groups	Oromo 34.5%, Amara 26.9%, Somalie 6.2%, Tigraway 6.1%, Sidama 4%, Guragie 2.5%, Welaita 2.3%, Hadiya 1.7%, Affar 1.7%, Gamo 1.5%, Gedeo 1.3%, other 11.3%
GDP per capita	\$1,000 (2010 est.)

Ranking Body	Rank	Ranking Scale (best – worst possible)
UN Human Development Index	174 (2011)	1 – 179
World Bank Rule of Law Index	27.5 (2010)	100 – 0
World Bank Voice & Accountability Index	11.4 (2010)	100 – 0
Transparency International	120 (2011)	1 – 178
Freedom House: Freedom in the World	Status: Not Free Political Rights: 6 Civil Liberties: 6	Free/Partly Free/Not Free 1 – 7 1 – 7
Foreign Policy: Failed States Index	17 (2012)	177 – 1

Source: Adopted from ICNPL, The World Factbook 2010. Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2010.

Annex 8: Main International and Regional Human Rights Laws and Instruments Signed/Rectified by Ethiopia

Key International Agreements	Ratification*	Year
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	Yes	1993
Optional Protocol to ICCPR (ICCPR-OP1)	No	--
International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	Yes	1993
Optional Protocol to ICESCR (OP ICESCR)	No	--
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)	Yes	1976
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	Yes	1981
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (OP-CEDAW)	No	--
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	Yes	1991
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW)	No	--
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	Yes	2010
Regional Treaties		
African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR)	Yes	1998
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	Yes	2002

* Category includes ratification, accession, or succession to the treaty
 (Source: ICNL. Ethiopia- NGO Law Monitor –Research Center, 2013)

Annex 9: List of Member Iddirs of TSDA

ተ/ቁ	አካተት ስም	ጀምሮ የሰራበት ዓመት	የአባላት ብዛት	ጾታ		የትምህርት ደረጃ	እትሜ	አድራሻ
				ፀ	ሴ			
1	መትጋኔ ለም	1984	332	172	160	ከመ/ት-1ኛት	ከ20-85	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 12
2	□□ቅ ለስራ	1930	292	150	142	ከመ/ት-1ኛት	ከ35-90	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 12
3	ቅ/ስ ሚካኤል	1987	293	172	121	ከመ/ት-2ኛት	ከ28-89	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 12
4	ሠፈረ ገነት	1964	171	111	60	ከመ/ት-ማስ	ከ30-90	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 13
5	እድገት	1969	80	36	44	ከመ/ት- □/ር	ከ30-82	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 12
6	ቁጠባና አካባቢ	1961	137	26	111	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ40-80	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 12
7	አቅረ ሠላም	1985	150	80	70	ከመ/ት- 1ኛት	ከ30-90	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 13
8	ፈጣን ጎረቤት	1990	81	30	51	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ35-85	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 13
9	ቀይ ከክብ	1967	215	140	75	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ30-90	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 13
10	ቅትማለሙ/ሥሴ	1968	40	1	39	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ40-80	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 12
11	ኪዳነ ምህረት	1978	35		35	ከመ/ት-12	ከ35-55	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 12
12	አብርሃሙ ሥላሴ	1978	15	3	12	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ45-76	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 12
13	ፋና ወጊ ሠ/ሠ	1931	225	125	100	ከመ/ት- 1ኛቴ	ከ35-90	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 12
14	□□□ርና ስቤል	1931	209	139	70	ከመ/ት- 1ኛቴ	ከ30-90	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 13
15	በሕይወት ሳለን	1989	65	45	20	ከመ/ት- ማስ	ከ30-58	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 13
16	ዊንጌትና አካባቢ	1996	70	56	14	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ28-75	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 13
17	ጠቀሰ ሥላሴ	1984	35	1	34	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ30-55	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 12
18	ተስፋ በሕይወት	1999	97	15	82	ከመ/ት- 1ኛቴ	ከ35-65	አዲስ ከ/ክ10
19	ግንቦት 5	1970	34	2	32	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ35-63	አዲስ ከ/ወ10
20	ቅድስት ሥላሴ	1985	30		30	ከመ/ት- 10ኛ	ከ40-75	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 12
21	ሁለ ቱ ሰላም/ሰ	1980	71	11	60	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ40-90	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 13
22	መተባበሪ	1988	181	140	41	ከመ/ት- 1ኛቴ	ከ40-88	ቱርካ ቡራ-□
23	ቅደስ ቱርካ	1992	205	155	50	ከመ/ት- □/ር	ከ30-90	ቱርካ ቡራ-□
24	ቱርካ	1995	244	150	94	ከመ/ት- ማስ	ከ25-80	ቱርካ ቡራ-□
25	ቅዱስ አማኑኤል	1985	60	59	1	ከመ/ት- ማስ	ከ25-60	ቱርካ ቡራ-□
26	ሌሊሳ	1980	80	60	20	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ230-90	ቱርካ ቡራ-□
27	የአረጋውያን አጋር	2000	50	10	40	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ38-70	ቱርካ ቡራ-□
28	አዲምሳ ጉዲና	2001	60	45	15	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ25-75	ቱርካ ቡራ-□
29	አባሎ	2001	26	22	4	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ35-60	ቱርካ ቡራ-□
30	በአለ ወልድ	1957	274	120	154	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ35-85	ቱርካ ቡራ-□
31	ቢቱልቱ ቢራ	2001	55	30	25	ከመ/ት- 10ኛ	ከ25-55	ቱርካ ቡራ-□
32	ቱርካ አረጋውያን	2001	60	30	30	ከመ/ት- 10ኛ	ከ50-90	ቱርካ ቡራ-□
33	ሴት ለአንድነት	2003	26		26	ከመ/ት- 12ኛ	ከ25-55	አዲስ ከ/ወ10
34	ሚሊኒየም	1976	50	25	25	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ30-79	አዲስ ከ/ወ10
35	ኮልሬ ፏፏቴ	1985	20	16	4	ከ8-1ኛቴፅ	ከ35-66	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 10
36	ኮልሬ ከልጅነት	1979	14	12	2	ከ12-1ኛቴፅ	ከ30-45	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 12
37	ኑወሊን	1900	70	45	25	ከመ/ት-12	ከ25-70	ቱርካ ቡራ-□
38	ፈጣን ሴቶች	2001	15		15	ከ8-12	ከ30-55	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 12

39	የአረጋውያን አጋር	2000	50	11	40	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ38-70	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 12
40	አቡዬ ሴቶች	1966	40	2	38	ከመ/ት- ቴፕ	ከ37-80	ከ/ቀ/□ረቱ 12
41	□ለሙ ሥላሴ	1965	25		25	ከመ/ት-12	ከ38-82	አ/ከ/ወ/10
42	መትጎኔ □/ሴቶች	1962	46	2	44	ከመ/ት-12	ከ30-75	ዳኖወረዳ
43	ኮልኛ ቅ/ቋርቋስ	1996	30	16	14	ከ8-1ኛቴፅ	ከ30-75	ዳኖወረዳ
44	በአለወልድ በኬ ሲ	1955	48	40	8	ከመ/ት-10	ከ38-80	ዳኖወረዳ
45	ሰዮ ከተማ □ትር	1960	250	200	50	ከመ/ት-12	ከ35-85	ዳኖወረዳ
46	ኬላ ማርያም	1965	31	20	11	ከመ/ት-10	ከ35-78	ዳኖወረዳ
47	ሰዮአባ ማርያም	1960	61	40	21	ከመ/ት-12	ከ30-75	ዳኖወረዳ
48	ቀላ□, መ/□ትር	1970	37	30	7	ከመ/ት-8	ከ32-70	ዳኖወረዳ
49	□ራርቱ መ/□ትር	1980	61	41	20	ከመ/ት-9	ከ36-80	ዳኖወረዳ
50	ሰዮ አንድነት ክትር	1975	274	200	74	ከመ/ት-1ኛት	ከ38-85	ዳኖወረዳ
51	ቢቂልቱ ቢራ	1976	50	40	10	ከመ/ት-12ኛ	ከ38-86	ዳኖወረዳ
52	አጂላ ቀበሌ	1985	65	50	15	ከመ/ት-10	ከ35-88	ዳኖወረዳ
53	በሾ አካባቢ	1986	83	70	13	ከመ/ት-10	ከ35-87	□ል0
54	ጎጃ አብዲ ቦሩ	1985	55	40	15	ከመ/ት-8	ከ40-90	□ል0
55	ሺኩቴ አብዲ ቦሩ	1990	65	45	20	ከመ/ት-10	ከ37-80	□ል0
56	አሶሌአብዲ ጉዲና	1987	35	30	5	ከመ/ት-9	ከ34-77	□ል0
57	ሸዋ በር አዲስ	1970	60	45	10	ከመ/ት-7	ከ39-89	□ል0
58	ጣጤሳ አካባቢ	1969	25	25		ከመ/ት-6	ከ40-92	□ል0
59	አሶሌ አፋኒ በሪ	1966	25	25		ከመ/ት-6	ከ38-90	□ል0
60	ዊርቱ □ሬኛ	1959	25	25		ከመ/ት-7	ከ39-85	□ል0
61	አሶሌ ሁንዶ ጉዲና	1986	30	30	25	ከመ/ት-8	ከ28-82	□ል0
62	አዲሳ ገላን	1970	50	50	10	ከመ/ት-6	ከ30-84	□ል0
63	አሳሶ □□ሳ	1986	25	25		ከመ/ት-7	ከ33-88	□ል0
64	ቡርቃ ነጋአ □□ሳ	1955	25	20	5	ከመ/ት-6	ከ35-90	□ል0
65	ቅ/ገብርኤል	1958	35	35	20	ከመ/ት-8	ከ34-89	□ል0
66	ሽኩቴ ባለወልድ	1975	50	50	5	ከመ/ት-9	ከ36-92	□ል0
67	ቅ/ቋርቋስ	1966	28	28	2	ከመ/ት-12	ከ37-70	□ል0
68	ጫንጮ አብዲጉ	1970	55	55	7	ከመ/ት-10	ከ32-70	□ል0
69	ፋሌ አብዲ ቦሩ	1977	50	50	10	ከመ/ት-12	ከ30-65	□ል0
70	አርጋ አሊን ጂራ	1979	40	40	10	ከመ/ት-10	ከ25-60	□ል0
71	ኮላ ገላን ጎልማሶ	1980	75	20	55	ከመ/ት-7	ከ30-88	□ል0
72	ጎጃ አረጋውያን	1985	108	57	51	ከመ/ት-1	ከ36-91	□ል0
73	አሶሌ □□ሳ	1979	63	30	33	ከመ/ት-7	ከ40-85	□ል0
74	□□ ቀበሌ ሰራተኛ	1984	55	35	20	ከመ/ት-1	ከ25-58	□ል0
75	አቤቤ ኮሎ	1970	65	35	30	ከመ/ት-12	ከ30-83	□ል0
76	አዲላ ደራርቱ	1969	60	20	40	ከመ/ት-6	ከ39-88	□ል0
77	ጎጆ 01 ኮከት	1981	70	25	45	ከመ/ት-6	ከ40-89	□ል0
78	ወሊን ጂረና □ል0	1969	65	35	30	ከመ/ት-7	ከ40-84	□ል0
79	ወልደአ አብዲ ጉዲና	1955	50	25	25	ከመ/ት-6	ከ41-89	□ል0

80	አንተባበር ቅ/ብርህል	1969	105	40	65	ከመ/ት-7	ከ35-90	□ል0	
81	□ሙራ መድሀኒያለም	1972	110	60	50	ከመ/ት-9	ከ38-79	□ል0	
82	ጊንጨ ለንድነት	1974	120	70	50	ከመ/ት-10	ከ37-78	ጊንጨ	
83	ተክለ ሃይማኖት	1969	90	65	25	ከመ/ት-9	ከ33-70	ጊንጨ	
84	ሚካኤል አካባቢ	1980	67	42	25	ከመ/ት-7	ከ28-60	ጊንጨ	
85	ል□□ ሴቶች	1980	60	10	50	ከመ/ት-5	ከ25-58	ጊንጨ	
86	ቅ/ብርህል ሴቶች	1977	77	10	67	ከመ/ት-10	ከ25-70	ጊንጨ	
87	ቅድስት ሥላሴ	1980	80	10	70	ከመ/ት-8	ከ26-60	ጊንጨ	
88	ጊንጨ ወንድማማቾች	1976	100	40	60	ከመ/ት-12	ከ23-55	ጊንጨ	
89	ኪዳነ ምህረት ሴቶች	1972	100	10	90	ከመ/ት-12	ከ24-56	ጊንጨ	
90	ቡል□ □□ቱ	1960	65	28	37	ከመ/ት-10	ከ28-70	ጊንጨ	
91	ኦል□□ ማህበር	1973	135	90	45	ከ8ኛ-ቴፕ	ከ25-60	ጊንጨ	
92	መደረጎኔ ዓለም	1980	95	90	55	ከ5ኛ-12	ከ28-74	ጊንጨ	
93	ኪዳነ ምህረት	1979	155	95	60	ከ5ኛ-12	ከ27-59	ቶንጨ	
94	መትጎኔ ሴቶች	1980	70		33	ከመ/ት-10	ከ28-62	ጊንጨ	
95	መስጊድ ሥላሴ ሴቶች	1978	50	70	30	ከመ/ት-12	ከ28-74	ጊንጨ	
96	ጊንጨ ወንድማማቾች	1992	30	50	42	ከመ/ት-8	ከ24-58	ጊንጨ	
97	ኩሉ ገለን	1978	35	30	30	ከመ/ት-7	ከ36-70	ጊንጨ	
98	ቆላ ሥቁሴ	1976	65	35	35	ከመ/ት-12	ከ25-60	ጊንጨ	
99	አስጎሪ ሥላሴ	1974	25	65	40	ከመ/ት-8	ከ28-70	ጊንጨ	
100	ደንዲ ሰ/ሰራተኞች	1978	25	25	25	ከ6ኛ-ቴፕ	ከ28-54	ጊንጨ	
101	ዋሙራ ኪዳነ ምህረት	1960	10	25	30	ከመ/ት-8	ከ30-69	ጊንጨ	
102	ፋጂ ቅ/ብርህል	1958	25	10	15	ከመ/ት-9	ከ30-80	ጊንጨ	
103	ደንዲ ዳለቻ ሴቶች	1968	100		100	ከ6ኛ-12	ከ28-65	ጊንጨ	
104	ተ/ሃይማኖት ሴቶች	1974	70		70	ከ6ኛ-11	ከ24-60	ጊንጨ	
105	ጊንጨ ገለላ ገብርኤ	1997	55	40	15	ከመ/ት-12	ከ28-70	ጊንጨ	
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Annex 10: IHA-UDP/CBISDO – List of programme components and sub-components

Community Development (CD)	Physical Upgrading (PUG)	Primary Health Care (PHC)
1-Community organisation and awareness creation 2.Child and youth programmes 2.1 Formal Education 2.2 Youth Rehabilitation 2.3 Non-formal education and recreations 3. Older people care and support 4. Rehabilitation of persons with disabilities 5. Income generation and job creation 6. Coordination of urban extension workers (EEWs)	1-Housing and communal services 2. Construction of programme buildings and public utilities	1-Safe and clean water 2. Environmental health 3. Vaccination – Children younger than five years and pregnant mothers 4. Nutrition and day care for children younger than five years 5. Mother and child health (MCH) 6. First aid 7. Health education 8. Communicable disease control

(Source: IHA-UDP, Annual Report, 2010)