

DAG Informal field visit report

South Omo Zone, Ethiopia



Final Report

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██████████ (Finnish Embassy), ██████████ (Swedish Embassy),
██████████ (German Embassy), ██████████ (DFID), ██████████
(The Netherlands Embassy), ██████████ (USAID), ██████████ (EU)

This informal report does not constitute in-depth social science research or a full-blown evaluation of Government of Ethiopia resettlement programmes. We believe, however, that it provides a broadly representative snapshot of programme implementation and outcomes. While it is based on notes gathered by all participants, this informal report does not necessarily reflect the position of participating institutions, nor of the DAG as a whole'

Introduction

To assess implementation and outcomes of state-directed resettlement in south Omo, a team of seven Addis Ababa-based staff from Embassies and bilateral donors visited Selamago Woreda on the eastern bank of the Omo in late August 2014. In this area, responsibility for resettlement is assigned to a state-owned corporation that is developing a 175,000 ha. sugar plantation along both banks of the river. This land is occupied by distinct, relatively small ethnic groups (on the east bank, Bodi and Mursi) who live in small, scattered and frequently-moving communities and pursue largely traditional agro-pastoralist livelihoods (men grazing their cattle over a large area and women cultivating rainfed or flood recession crops); and who appear to feel little connection with or affection for mainstream Ethiopian society or the Ethiopian state.

The team met the [REDACTED], [REDACTED], at the start and end of the visit. Four days were spent conducting a total of 19 focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews in eight sites (four Bodi, four Mursi). The team also met the management of the plantation.

Summary of the mission findings and recommendations

The Government's motivations for pursuing resettlement would seem to include (i) obtaining land for the plantation and the economic development that it is believed this will bring to the valley; (ii) to make it easier to provide basic services (schools, health posts, clean water); and (iii) to 'modernize' these tribes and ensure their integration with the Ethiopian state and society.

The team found no evidence of forced migration. However, it seems clear that local government and the plantation management have decided that resettlement is necessary. Based on our discussions with both the Government and communities, we understand that the Government is not offering communities any alternative but to settle permanently. As such, the focus of consultation appears to be an effort to persuade the communities to go along with this process, rather than debating options.

The Government seems however to realize that communities must see the potential benefits of resettlement if they are to be persuaded to settle. The Government has started to invite people to observe irrigated agriculture as practiced in other localities which have already been resettled. While the Bodi and Mursi have expressed their keenness to maintain their agro-pastoralist way of life, they seem to be interested in at least some of the basic services on offer. However, Government efforts at persuasion take place against a background of deep mistrust towards the Government, as confirmed by our interviews.

According to what we were told, only a limited sub-set of local planning decisions are discussed with communities: this would seem to effectively preclude informed consent (as required in international and Ethiopian policies regarding resettlement). Despite numerous meetings, communities seem to remain largely unaware of the full extent of plans for the transformation of the valley. In our view, once completed, the sugar plantation and the 500,000+ workforce will have a significant impact on the livelihoods and way of life of the Bodi and Mursi, which seems likely to significantly increase the risk of conflict.

Central to Bodi and Mursi concerns is their ability to maintain cattle herds. In this context, the Government has indicated that "grazing land will not be touched". At the same time, however, the Government has indicated that it will not allocate certificates for communal ownership of land.

The rapid pace with which it is proposed to implement planned development (villagisation and the sugar cane plantation) will significantly accelerate what seems to be an inevitable process of underlying social and cultural change, as the Bodi and Mursi are increasingly exposed to external influences. We believe that this combination will very likely destabilize communities who have preserved their agro-pastoralist and semi-nomadic traditional practices largely unchanged. In our view, the culture and way of life of Mursi and Bodi as they exist today are likely to be fundamentally and irreversibly transformed in the near future.

Efforts appear to have been made to improve the standard of living in resettlement villages. In two of the three resettlement villages there was a broad consensus that living standards were similar to, and perhaps moderately better than, life before moving, despite complaints about water pumps, health clinics, and sanitation. [REDACTED], however, was in marked contrast a clear failure. We were informed that consultation had not occurred, the site was completely unsuitable, no services had been provided, and people were suffering from numerous health problems.

Our interviews revealed that access to water, health and veterinary services was generally welcomed, though not at any price, by the local communities. The prospect of access to schooling generated mixed reactions: communities without schools were quite negative about education, while those which now have a school were positive. In our view, there are potential (although only partially-articulated) positive gender aspects to the cost-benefit calculations of resettlement policy: women may benefit more directly than men from healthcare, water and irrigated agriculture.

Some of the recommendations proposed by the mission members are the following (see page 12 for the whole list):

- The authorities should consider the capacity of largely traditional communities to adapt to rapid change; and consider whether a slower pace may generate better, more sustainable results with less risk of conflict. The Government should explore middle ways and adapted proposals that would allow a soft transition, avoiding conflict.
- Re-settlement should be voluntary, based on informed consent, and seek to respect cultural preferences. Greater transparency and more meaningful consultations are needed. Local government and the plantation management should provide communities with a fuller picture of plans for the development of the valley (informed by publication of the environmental impact assessment for the sugar plantation, as required by Ethiopian law), so that they may make informed choices on issues such as resettlement.
- The Government should be able to offer the population meaningful alternatives to moving without denying them access to health, education and other services.
- In planning infrastructure and implementing services, community preferences and priorities should be elicited through participatory consultations and, where possible, taken into account (for example, in adapting the school curriculum or adjusting holidays to harvest cycles). More efforts should be made to involve women in these discussions. Promised services should be in place before people are moved, with arrangements (handover to local government or functioning community management structures) to ensure that these services are maintained to an acceptable standard.
- Government should consider engaging third parties (e.g. NGOs) in this process, in line with the social accountability mechanism of the PBS. There are lessons to be drawn from Maki-Orachaga, where a mission has provided long-term support (over many decades) and development and integration – that is, voluntary villagisation - is occurring, and accepted.
- The Government should provide a formal guarantee on the protection of communal grazing land in order to respond to the concerns of Mursi and Bodi.
- An independent complaints mechanism should be established.
- The authorities should anticipate and seek to mitigate the risk of social problems (alcohol, prostitution, HIV/AIDS) likely to come with a large-scale influx of plantation workers. Drawing on international best practice, the Government should use participatory tools to engage communities for awareness and prevention; and establish sound conflict management mechanisms. The Government should identify ways to ensure ongoing benefit-sharing arrangements so that Bodi and Mursi communities gain from the sugar plantation.

Latest information on the movement of people, provision of services, etc.

The villagisation project and the problems perceived by its participants

The Government's (re)settlement strategy through villagisation is influenced by three major elements:

- Development of the area, most notably the installation of the sugarcane plantation: the Government strives to mitigate the impact of these developments on the area and its population.
- Access to social services: the Government wants to ensure the indigenous population's access to basic needs like land, water, education and healthcare services. According to [REDACTED], [REDACTED], these services can only be provided if the pastoralists are prepared to settle in permanent villages.
- Modernization of the communities: [REDACTED] expressed the need to "*modernize*" the traditions and way of life of these tribes. The Government intends to "*free them from backwardness*", and integrate them with Ethiopian state and society.

The Bodi and Mursi interviewees indicated that they are keen on maintaining their traditional agro-pastoralist way of life. They are not generally opposed to having basic healthcare, veterinary and water services, but are not prepared to gain access to it at all costs.

Furthermore, the interviewees expressed the feeling that the Government is not offering them any alternative but to move, or settle down permanently. [REDACTED] confirmed that the Government had already tried all other solutions and that villagisation now remains "*the only good option*", but said they will not force the tribes. While the team found no evidence of forced movements, from both our conversation with [REDACTED] and the interviews with the population it seems clear that the Government will keep on insisting until it has convinced the communities to comply.

Moreover, the Mursi and Bodi with whom we spoke feel that the Government's approach to villagisation does not take into account the needs and realities of their communities. In this context, two major issues were raised.

Firstly, interviewees stressed the importance of cattle and the availability of grazing land for their pastoralist lifestyle. Access to grazing land is of the utmost importance for these communities, and as such treatment of this issue would seem crucial to the success of any resettlement strategy. In this context, the Government indicated that "grazing land will not be touched". However, [REDACTED] indicated that they cannot comply with requests to dispatch certificates for communal land, as there is no legal basis in Ethiopian law. Our interviews suggest that the Mursi and Bodi are not convinced by the Government's verbal assurances that grazing land will remain untouched.

Secondly, those interviewed expressed their concern about the speed of change. Mursi and Bodi communities have preserved their agro-pastoralist and semi-nomadic traditional practices largely unchanged, but according to our analysis it is to be expected that – regardless of the arrival of the plantation – recent exposure to the external world (access through new roads, tourism, etc.) will significantly change this way of life. The resettlement programme will in our view accelerate this process significantly. Apart from the question whether these changes are welcome or not, interviewees indicated that the sheer pace of change destabilizes the communities. Representative of this expressed view, [REDACTED] in one of the villages complained that "*they should not make the change at our level*"; "*our children should be the ones benefiting from that change*"; "*we're too old to change. It's not possible to change in our generation*". Clearly, this issue adds to the grievances felt by the tribes, and to their willingness to resist the villagisation programme. While the overall feeling of insecurity and mistrust was shared, women expressed more interest than the men in the services that the Government of Ethiopia was offering, especially health-care and grinding mills, but also for some, education.

Views expressed during discussions with the Bodi and Mursi communities who have been or are likely to be affected by current or future (re)settlement activities suggest deep mistrust towards the Government. . Government and sugar corporation proposals are met with profound suspicion. (see also: social cohesion and conflict)

That does not mean that the tribes are unequivocally refusing all of the proposed changes.

The zonal administration mentioned that they have the desire and obligation to extend development to all Ethiopians equally: and ask rhetorically whether commitments to universal education and the MDGs should be compromised by resistance from traditional 'backward' values.

An example of a good practice that seems to yield voluntary villagisation can be found in the village [REDACTED]. Here, a [REDACTED] is running a school, a clinic and agricultural projects. As a result of these services a number of Mursi have settled down in the village, attracted by the services and the pragmatic and adaptive way in which they are provided (e.g. school schedule adapted to agricultural seasons, teachers from the same ethnic group and teaching in Mursi, etc.). This suggests that if the process is demand-driven and carefully implemented, it might yield desirable results for all the parties involved.

With the current developments accelerating underlying processes, it seems to us inevitable that the culture and way of life of Mursi and Bodi tribes as it exists today will be changed beyond recognition within a relatively short time. The Government claims it is committed to preserving the cultural heritage of these groups by the creation of a museum of Omo cultures in [REDACTED] and 'cultural villages' in several woredas. This approach seems to indicate that this cultural heritage will be confined to a number of selected villages oriented to the tourists.

Developments in the South Omo Valley

When approaching the South Omo Valley from [REDACTED], it becomes clear that a massive reshaping of the valley is under way. Production units are being set up, irrigation canals and new roads are constructed, vast tracts of land have already been cleared for sugarcane plantation or irrigated maize cultivation, and villages and towns for the plantation workers laid out. This amounts to an enormous undertaking by the Government of Ethiopia and the Ethiopian Sugar Corporation. It is estimated that 50,000 hectares of land will be used for the plantation on the eastern side of the river where two factories are under construction. A town for at least 5,000 workers and service personnel will be built adjacent to each factory; in addition, a number of villages shall be constructed for around 2,000 workers per village.

In total, the **Ethiopian Sugar Cooperation** is planning to cultivate 175,000 hectares of land, build five factories with a town to serve each of them as well as ten additional smaller towns and around 50 villages, while up to 500,000 permanent and seasonal jobs might be created. The installations on the western side of the river, primarily in the [REDACTED], will thus be far larger than what is being constructed today on the eastern side. The workforce will be recruited mainly amongst people from the highlands.

In our opinion, the influx of such large numbers of "highlanders" will drastically affect the stability and the ethnic balance in the area. On the east side of the Omo River the indigenous inhabitants of the region are estimated at a maximum of 20,000 people. The Mursi tribe estimates their numbers to be around 9,000 and the Bodi around 7,000, but sometimes lower figures are given in the literature. Other small groups intermingle with the Bodi and the Mursi, such as the Kwegu and some Suri (who are IDPs).

The on-going developments in the valley have and will have in our view a considerable influence on the livelihoods of these agro-pastoralist communities:

- As the land is cleared of trees and bushes the local population already complains about not being able to have access to the beans and leaves and the honey coming from the bee hives

in the trees. Moreover, they have reported that wild animals are coming to the villages and are attacking their cattle since the bushes in which they used to hide have been removed.

- According to the government, a fully developed plantation is expected to use up to 20% of the Omo water when fully functioning. Scientific studies¹ calculate a use of up to 44% of the river water with the current irrigation system. The traditional flood retreat agriculture practiced by these communities might be seriously affected. Although the sugar plantation representatives claim that an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment has been carried out, this document has not been made public as is required by Part Five, Nr. 15 1 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Proclamation (No. 299/2002).
- Access to the banks of the Omo River in order to practice flood retreat agriculture will be made more difficult by the presence of the sugar cane plantation.

Our interviews suggest that the Bodi and Mursi communities have a limited picture of the Omo Kuraz master plan and consequently of the impact that these developments will have on their lives.

From what we have heard, no clear benefit sharing mechanisms have been put in place and it is hard to see that the local population will benefit significantly from the project. Only a few people from Bodi and Mursi tribes will be able to benefit from the job opportunities generated by the sugar plantation due to lack of proper qualifications and lack of adaptation to their current way of life. The only members of these communities that are currently employed by the corporation are working as guards. However, the Government seems to be promoting vocational training targeted to Bodi and Mursi communities in order to improve their employability.

The consultation process

██████████, ██████████, expressed the Government's willingness to continue discussions with those affected – or to be affected – by the (re)settlement and villagisation programme. There is now acceptance that communities must see the potential benefits of resettlement before they can be persuaded to settle permanently. In communities that the plantation proposes should move, the corporation now invites people to observe irrigated agriculture as practiced in other localities which have already been resettled. When the residents of one Bodi village expelled construction workers, the authorities did not force the issue: they continue to try and persuade the community to engage with resettlement, but two years on, the community has not been persuaded and nothing has yet happened.

Moreover, ██████████ indicated that some of the 'negotiations' have been halted for the time being, in order to set up some of the social services and show the benefits it can bring to the communities. To underline this, ██████████ mentioned an agreement with the community ██████████. The Government initially proposed to move the population ██████████ to ██████████, but after consultation promised now not to move them to another place but instead turn ██████████ into a resettlement village, receiving other Mursi population. On the other hand, according to ██████████, some of the Mursi are actually requesting the Government to continue arranging their process of villagisation - though we were not able to confirm this statement following our interviews. He explained that as a result of this change in attitude, the tribes should not feel forced to (re)settle.

Interviews with the Bodi and Mursi population confirm that the Government has made efforts to foster discussion, and arranged visits by the future participants to (re)settled communities. However, there are also indications that in the consultations the tribes do not receive sufficient information about impact, options and formal rights, and are not given the possibility of making an actual choice on the basis of informed consent. In one of the villages it was reported that the construction work by the Sugar Corporation commenced without the community being informed. The community said that they had subsequently "chased out" the construction workers.

¹ Sean Avery 2014: What Future for Lake Turkana? The Impact of Hydropower and Irrigation Development on the World's Largest Desert Lake. University of Oxford; African Studies Center; Oxford.

In a couple of resettlement villages the population explained that they had first rejected the Government plans but later decided to comply, with some indication that they complied because of Government insistence.

As mentioned above, in several interviews there seemed to be uncertainty about the Omo Kuraz master plan and their impact on people's lives more in detail, for example concerning the (re)settling of outsiders and on land matters.

Some receiving community members felt that services could be desirable, *if* that does not imply other tribes or too many people (re)settling in that area, or other Government interventions that could have a negative impact on the lives of the interviewees.

The participation of the women in the consultations about villagisation seems to have varied. Women stated that they were not involved in any decision-making as it is "the affair of men" and they were not used to meetings and discussions ("this is the first meeting I am attending"). Women expressed more interest in services than men (health-care, grinding-mills, clean water and in some cases, education). In some interviews, they were particularly concerned about maternal health.

An adaptation by the government is that the planned area of the plantation has been revised to avoid national park land.

In conclusion, and on the basis of the interviews and when seen against the good practices guidelines and principles, there seemed to be challenges in ensuring meaningful consultations with the communities, with sufficient participation opportunities. With [REDACTED] as a partial exception, there also seemed to be a lack of enough information on options and rights, as well as resettlement and livelihood alternatives.

From what we heard and saw, the recommendations of the 2013 mission regarding the consultation process do not appear to have been implemented.

Villagisation / re-settlement implementation

There is a clear sense of commitment and action by the Sugar Corporation / Government to provide services to the villages we visited. Water points have been constructed. A couple of the villages have been promised, or are in the process of receiving, additional water points. Two of the visited villages now have a functioning primary school, and in one of them a secondary school is being built. A couple of new health posts have been erected, and one is under construction. Many interviewees expressed a desire for veterinary services, which are not yet provided adequately.

While the sugar corporation has been (generally) good at construction of social infrastructure - which relates to the core competencies of project planning and engineering that they use in developing the plantation – it would seem to us that their mandate and expertise does not readily encompass the soft skills of community consultations and engineering social change.

New resettlement villages (Bodi)

In one of the two new resettlement villages that had been visited by DAG mission teams in 2012 and 2013, those interviewed indicated that life in their new village is equal to or slightly better than it was in the sending village. However, considerable challenges remain for the implementation of the villagisation programme.

Education

The resettled Bodi show a keen interest in education. They recognize that learning how to write, count and process information could yield better jobs and might improve their children's chances of having a better life. A functioning primary school serves the three villages, though some complain about the distance (a one hour walk) and the lack of food at the schools.

Healthcare

The Bodi in these communities expressed their need for basic healthcare in order to cope with malaria, diarrhea, measles etc. They noted many problems with the existing services: the absence of qualified personnel and proper medication, the limited opening hours and their distance to the village (though in some cases, interviewees were not aware of a nearby health post). In response, [REDACTED] indicated that health posts have been built for new villages, exceeding the standard national ratio of one health post for every 5,000 people. He noted that these posts are meant for preventive care and not the curative care that residents should seek at a hospital. He said the government aims to train Mursi and Bodi individuals as health workers.

Drinking water

We heard that access to safe drinking water is still a major issue, three years after the villages have been established. Villagers reported that they were taking their water from the canal and that this is unsuitable for consumption (a view echoed by the Sugar Corporation). The Sugar Corporation has provided water pumps near the new resettlement villages. In many of these, including the (re)settlements visited last year, people complained about limited access to this service (1 or 2 hours of water every 2 or 3 days) because of broken or locked water pumps, controlled by the Sugar Corporation. It was reported that the response of the Sugar Corporation to notifications of these problems has become significantly slower. Other complaints about the pumps included the limited availability of the water during the dry season, the quality of the water (both taste and salinity were reported as worse than in the sending village) and the distance of the pumps from the village. [REDACTED] and the corporation acknowledged these problems and committed to fixing them. More water points are apparently currently being constructed.

Irrigation and grazing land

The resettlement villages seem to profit from the irrigated land they were provided with. Women we spoke to saw irrigated agriculture as less risky, guaranteeing a harvest in a year of poor rains, even if not matching the potential yield that they could obtain in a good year from the (larger) rainfed or flood recession fields they had cultivated before. The Bodi seem able to produce sufficient maize and sorghum. A bottleneck for food production lies in the availability of grinding mills, which we were told do not have enough capacity to meet the demand. The interviewees indicate that they are less reliant on food-aid now than they were before. Because of the scarcity of grazing land, some of the Bodi still keep their cattle at their old village.

Those people who accepted to settle permanently report that they receive food aid from the Government until the moment they gather the first harvest from the irrigated land allocated. Some interviewees claimed that has been reduced by the Government.

[REDACTED] Village

A small group of Bodi was asked to move from their village [REDACTED] two years ago; they were placed at a muddy and isolated site, in inferior [REDACTED] huts. Their situation during our visit was deplorable; the absence of sanitation means the villagers are suffering from diseases such as bloody diarrhea, malaria and unspecified headaches. Services are unavailable: the group indicated that it takes a two-hour walk to the nearest canal for bad quality drinking water, while the nearest health post is reported to be eight hours on foot. The group seems unaware that both services are available in surrounding villages. From what we were told in interviews, it seems that consultation by the Government was limited or absent. Despite the dire circumstances in [REDACTED], residents say the Government does not allow this impoverished and vulnerable group to move out. It is not clear why planning and implementation here was so much worse than in the other sites; or why the authorities would not allow (and help) people to leave for one of the other, better sites.

Receiving villages (Bodi and Mursi)

Education

The receiving Bodi villagers seem profoundly disinterested in education: they appear to see it as at best useless and potentially corruptive of their children's traditional lifestyle. Interviewees see a need for children to work on the field, and girls especially are not supposed to attend school, as an educated girl might choose her own husband, outside their community, with the result that parents would lose the established brideprice. Similar tendencies can be found amongst the Mursi, though some of them indicated a certain interest in education, as long as the children stay available for work. A long-established missionary-supported school in [REDACTED] was schooling large numbers of children to an apparently high standard, and appeared well accepted.

Healthcare

Some of the receiving Bodi villagers indicate that they are interested in having a health clinic to cope with the many diseases, as well as frequently reported child-birth related problems – though others seem to prefer not having any help, as 'only few die with childbirth'. Some complain about the limited access to medication and the distance of the available services. The Mursi express interest in a health post as well, and also complain about the inadequacy and distance of this service, as well as the price (though it is similarly priced to the health clinic in [REDACTED]). For both tribes, the absence of latrines while the bushes are being cut down seems to be worrisome.

Drinking water

The Bodi we spoke to indicated they are still happy to drink water from the river; the Mursi do so as well, but complained about the distance they have to cover to get it (a job done by the women) and the quality of the water. The government is reported to have promised a well, which is not yet constructed.

Irrigation and grazing land

The Bodi did not display a profound interest in having irrigated land. One interviewee expressed the view (which in our view may have some justification) that managing the allocation of irrigation waters may cause intra-communal conflict, especially for people not familiar with settled agriculture. They seem more concerned with the negative consequences of road construction and the limited availability of Omo water for their livelihoods. The Mursi on the other hand are interested in having wells or other forms of irrigation, since rain-fed crops do not yield sufficient amounts of food; however, they indicate they are not prepared to make any concessions regarding their independence. The government already offered some irrigated land, but the Mursi feel they have not been given a good enough look to accept it. Some interviewees mentioned their concern that if more villagers arrive there might be a scarcity of grazing land.

Potential Sending village

In a visited Mursi settlement, any help from the government is lacking. The group has been asked by the government to move, but refuse to leave their ancestral land. The interviewees indicated that they are interested in having health or water services, but will not accept any Government interference in exchange. At present, drinking water is collected from the [REDACTED] river at a forty minutes' walk, while healthcare can be had from a small mobile clinic at two walking hours. There is no school or food-aid available for this community.

Gender aspects

In our opinion there are potential although only partially-articulated gender aspects to the cost-benefit calculations of resettlement policy. In that they imply changes to traditional practices of following grazing cattle over an extensive area, resettlement and the broader set of changes associated with it may be particularly troubling for men, who are responsible for herding. Women however should in principle stand to gain from contact with ante-natal care and (maybe) access to closer and cleaner sources of water. As they have primary responsibility for agriculture, they may

also experience more direct gains from irrigated agriculture. However, female interviewees mentioned that they are only occasionally involved in consultations between the community and authorities, and their understanding of resettlement in particular and the plans for the valley more broadly appears more limited than that of men in the same communities.

The consequences: social cohesion and potential conflict

Interviews with the Bodi and Mursi indicated that amongst the receiving villagers there is a deep mistrust of the government's intentions across all of the topics investigated. Generally, these tribal communities do not seem to feel a part of the country, but consider themselves sovereign and independent peoples. Generally, the Ethiopian government appears to be regarded as an enemy, along with the police, the Sugar Corporation and its highlander workforce and the construction workers.

In the receiving Bodi villages, the arrival of the sugar plantation and government-assisted construction projects appeared to be regarded with great hostility. Respondents were generally suspicious, associating resettlement with a broader set of problems including traffic accidents on the new road; police confiscation of unlicensed AK47s; and hyenas and lions driven into their villages as forest is cleared for the plantation. In this context, it seems that small events and poor communications can easily trigger conflict. In one settlement chosen to receive additional, resettled households, workers constructing buildings were chased out when the community believed [REDACTED]. This was at a time of sporadic violent confrontations with the police resulting in imprisonment and reported beatings of individual villagers. Nevertheless, it seems that these incidents were not directly related to the villagisation / resettlement activities. All this has resulted in a great sense of hostility towards the government and construction/plantation workers. Participants in more than one focus group discussion appeared to feel really threatened by Government intentions. One group stated that *"before you come back next year, the government will come to kill and finish us"*.

Government-built schools are occasionally perceived as instruments of the authorities to *'make children mad'*, weakening their tribal identity and ensuring that they take the Government's side. This tendency is less apparent amongst already resettled Bodi; though government pressure for their resettlement is reported, they do not seem to have deep feelings of enmity.

The Bodi and the Mursi display a great sense of tribal independence vis-à-vis the government, highlanders, the Chinese, and others perceived to be interfering with their way of life. The government is seen as an outside force, threatening their independence and the availability of grazing land. On the other hand, the Bodi and Mursi communities say they have little or no choice in the resettlement effort associated with this development, and meaningful dialogue has stalled. In the communities we visited which are yet to be resettled (or receive settlers), stances appear to have hardened amid suspicions about government intentions for grazing lands. It is our analysis that this climate of fear and mistrust, deepened by a lack of information, poses a risk of conflict.

Besides the government, the Bodi and Mursi seem to regard other tribes (especially 'highlanders'), with suspicion and enmity: their arrival is seen as a source of potential conflict. Though the interviewed Mursi and Bodi tribes do seem to get along fairly well nowadays, concerns to maintain their independence and the perceived scarcity of grazing land and the fear of losing it seems to provide potential incentive for (armed) conflict with the government and highlanders.

However, the Bodi do not seem to have a huge problem with the Suri, who fled to the area from the other side of the Omo due to conflict with other tribes and with the government. The Suri expressed their willingness to comply with their Bodi hosts: the government appears to be regarded as a shared threat. However, the Bodi indicated that they would be unhappy to host any additional guests.

Poorly planned resettlement of large number of Konso into the area, and resulting tensions and fatal clashes between [REDACTED] farmers and Bodi herdsmen, about 10 years ago, seems to be resolved as

there is no current contact between the tribes. However, the Bodi are afraid that the government will again resettle the █████ – a tribe that they considered very aggressive – in the same area, because the █████s land is “not good”. Though some scrimmages with the Mursi are reported, the situation seems manageable because “*with the Mursi, you can make agreement*”.

The conflict between the █████ and the Bodi is often mentioned by local communities as a reference of the consequences of bringing “*highlanders*” to South Omo.

The authorities appear to have absorbed the clear message that resettlement will only succeed if sending and receiving communities belong to the same ethnic group. It now appears accepted that only Mursi will be moved to Mursi sites, and Bodi to Bodi sites.

The potential conflict issues raised above are mentioned by the interviewees themselves. In addition, the team noted that the scale of the Omo Kurza sugar project, the number of external workers needed (up to 500.000 people mainly coming from the High Lands), and the development of new villages and towns to harbor all these people is perceived by the local population as a threat and will bring fundamental changes to life in the lower Omo Valley. Moreover, in our view, it is expected that the arrival of large numbers of workers will also bring in new habits, like the enjoyment of strong alcohol and prostitution, and the risk of HIV. We consider that the creation of large settlements of plantation workers originating from outside the valley will have a significant impact on pastoralist culture and their sense of freedom. Some of the local communities mentioned that if “highlanders” come in large numbers to occupy their land “*there will be a lot of shooting*”.

Communities appear to have very limited knowledge of the broader plans for transformation of the valley. The authorities and the corporation believe that these communities will not be able to understand these plans. Our concern is that communities are being given information, and asked for their opinion, on only a narrow sub-set of local planning decisions (relocation and sedentarisation), and are being asked to make decisions without a good understanding of the wider context and the future impact of these processes in their lives. When the impact does become clear, we believe that there is a high potential risk of conflict. It is also not clear that the authorities have succeeded (or tried) to explain to communities their formal rights. As such, it is our analysis that improvements in consultation, while positive, would seem to fall considerably short of the benchmark of ‘informed consent’ established in international and Ethiopian policies regarding resettlement practice.

Methodology and limitations

In collecting and interpreting data, the team followed the approach outlined in Annex 2 (‘methodology note’) to the August 2013 DAG Terms of Reference (ToR) for CDP / relocation monitoring visits. The methodology note acknowledges the limitations of such short visits as a means of monitoring the full range of practice and outcomes; but attempts to maximise the quantity and quality of information that is collected so that it is possible to draw some working conclusions regarding patterns and trends in the implementation of relocation policy.

The note outlines some basic principles (an inductive approach; triangulation and rapid iteration; conducting discussions without local authorities present) and some principles of sampling (the number and mix of sites to be visited, and respondents within each site to be interviewed). It also discusses the practicality of managing an interview or focus group discussion, from preparation in advance (allocation of team roles), through the conduct of the exercise itself (building rapport, managing expectations, following leads while trying to cover all topics, recording full and accurate notes) to a team review of the interview (clarifying any ambiguities, tidying up notes) as soon as possible after the exercise. Annex 2 provides a condensed summary of the ToR methodology note.

In practice, the team needed to adapt the details of the DAG ToR methodology guidance somewhat. Firstly, a number of the sites visited – including the first one – were neither sending nor receiving settlements, but settlements that local authorities *proposed* to receive relocated populations in the future. This required some adaptation of the semi-structured interview / FGD checklist of questions in the DAG ToR. Some questions were dropped, some re-worded and some added. Information that

it was felt would be useful to collect from these communities would address (i) the nature of the relocation plans as understood by the community and (ii) the degree of consultation involved (as covered in the DAG ToR guidelines); but also (iii) community *perceptions* of future changes (livelihood opportunities and challenges, levels of service provision, etc.) that might result from receiving new households. This involves asking respondents about their feelings regarding a hypothetical situation, which requires some adaptation of the questions. The checklist adapted for these sites is included as Annex 3.

Secondly, it became clear that focussing only on the changes in welfare due to physical relocation (for both those who moved, and those who lived in settlements receiving relocated people) would provide an incomplete picture of the broader context of economic and social change faced by communities affected by relocation. In this visit to the South Omo, the development project that necessitated relocation (the sugar plantation) was also affecting local Bodi and Mursi communities in other ways (e.g. through the clearance of forest which was restricting their access to forest products such as wild honey, and which was also driving predators such as hyenas into their fields and threatening their cattle). These affected many in the areas. Including those who to date had neither moved nor received people moving from another area. In addressing these issues, there is a risk that the visit expands to cover an unmanageable range of issues relating to the tensions between small, traditionally-oriented agro-pastoralists on the one hand and processes of modernisation and state formation on the other. However, to collect and report information only on the specific topic of relocation risks a decontextualized account which fails to capture how relocation is only one aspect of a broader process involving the same sets of actors. For both the sugar corporation and the Bodi and Mursi communities, views on and engagement with the relocation process are shaped by understanding and opinion regarding broader objectives and relationships.

The visit lasted from the 22nd to 29th of August 2014, with the community data collection between the 24th and 27th. The team conducted 19 community discussions (FGDs or individual interviews) in eight sites, four of which were Bodi, four Mursi. These interviews covered approximately 220 people. In most places the team interviewed women and men separately. Three - [REDACTED] - were resettlement sites (although sometimes there had been a smaller settlement in that location previously); four - [REDACTED] and another village in the [REDACTED] area - were slated to receive resettled families, but had not yet done so; and one ([REDACTED]) was a sending village. To the best of the team's knowledge, government staff were not present in any of the meetings. Notes from each meeting were reviewed the same day, and then summary points pulled out for inclusion in a pro-forma (see Annex 4).

The team also conducted lengthy and productive discussions with [REDACTED], the [REDACTED], on arrival in [REDACTED], and again before leaving the zone. Finally, the group spent one night at the headquarters of the sugar plantation, and discussed the plans for the plantation with [REDACTED] and other staff. Discussions were conducted through a translator or, in some cases, two translators (one for Bodi to Amharic, the second for Amharic to English).

Comparison of findings with previous missions

Only 2 of the visited villages had been visited in previous DAG missions, [REDACTED]. The evolution of the situation can be found in the tables in annex

Recommendations

The mission members have proposed the following recommendations:

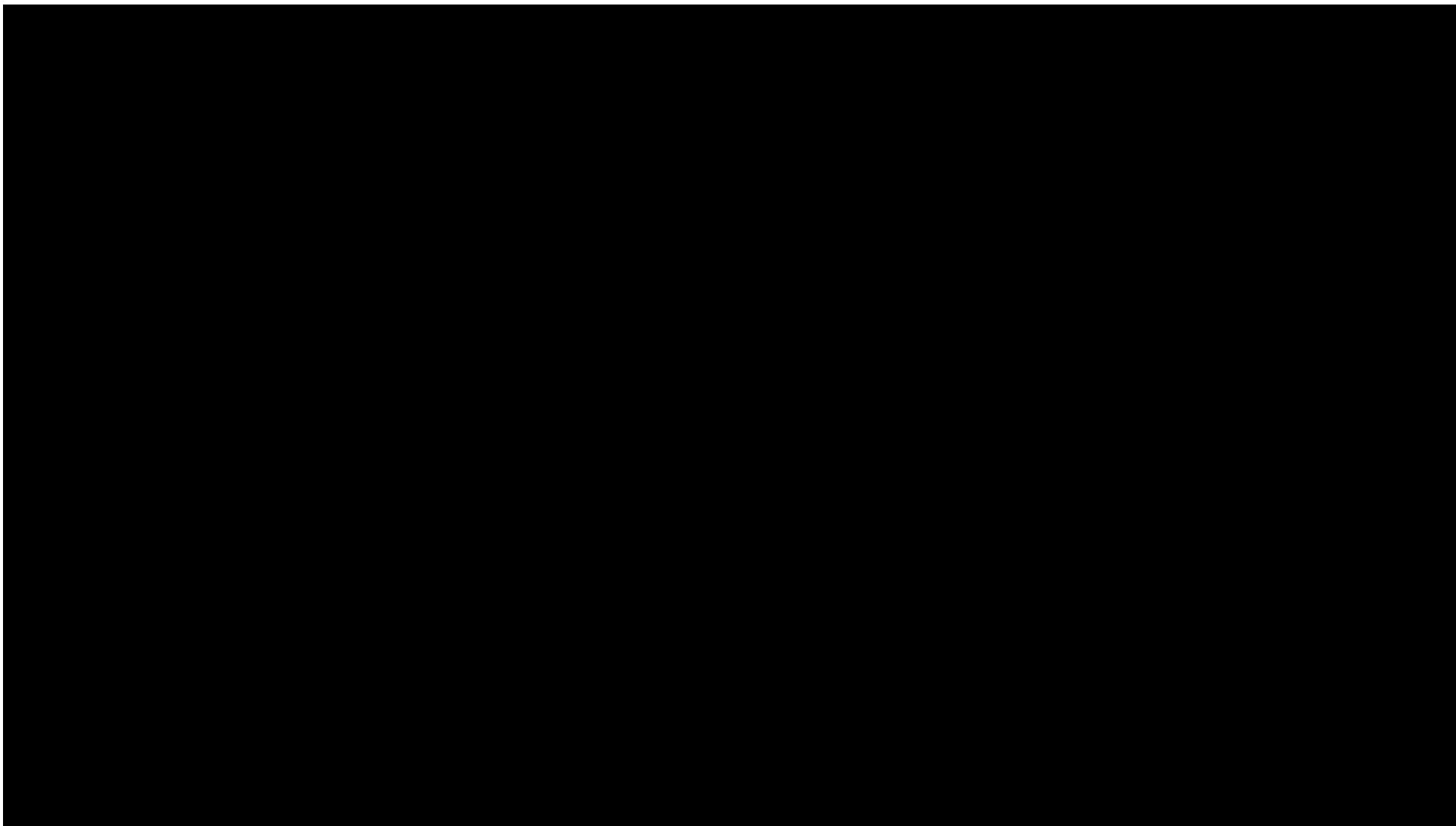
- While the Government of Ethiopia has pledged to extend consultations with the Bodi and Mursi in South Omo Zone, a more robust, **participatory approach, including women as well**, is required to help these populations cope with the implications of the developments in the area. This recommendation was already given in 2013 but, in our view, has so far not been taken up by the local government.

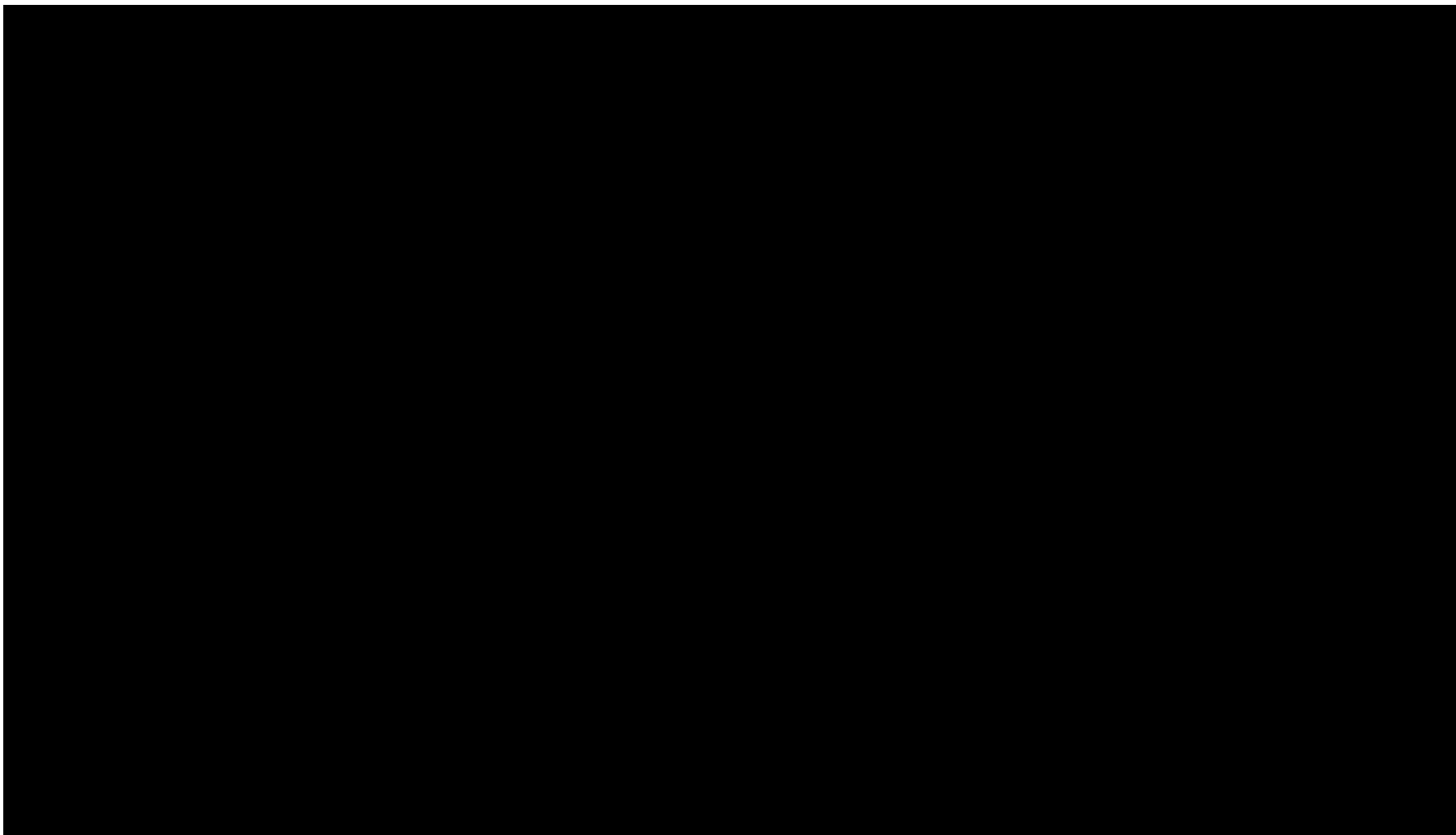
- There is a clear need of **building trust** between the Government of Ethiopia and the local communities. **Transparency** should become a priority in order to mitigate the existing mistrust towards the Government and to make the population fully aware of the developments to come. Communities need a broader understanding of these plans so they can make essential choices about their future. Moreover, they will need help to adapt and thrive.
- Based on our analysis the pace of sugarcane development and the villagisation process in the Omo River is far faster than the speed at which pastoralists can alter their livelihoods – and worldview. We would recommend that **change should be more gradual**, respecting traditional ways centered on cattle, while introducing irrigated agriculture, community-led tourism and other livelihood alternatives. We recommend that the Government should search for middle ways and **adapted proposals** that would allow a soft transition avoiding conflict.
- There should be an effort to develop cattle-rearing and make it more profitable, while using the knowledge and experience by the Bodi and the Mursi. As for the cultivation, mainly done by women, the development of their skills in that regard and supportive infrastructure could improve livelihoods.
- The Bodi and Mursi communities would benefit from expert assistance to help them through this pivotal transition. The value of this “change management” is suggested by development gains in [REDACTED], where a [REDACTED] school and health clinic have given young Mursi new tools to live in the modern world, while retaining a connection to Mursi identity and traditions. Coupled with the valuable services (secondary school, health post, veterinary clinic) now being built in the adjacent new settlement area, the development approach in [REDACTED] **appears to offer a model** for leading other communities in the valley toward a more sustainable future. The Government attention to the community-integrated progress in [REDACTED] could go a long way towards resolving tensions and building confidence with other Mursi – and Bodi – communities.
- When undertaken, **resettlement should be voluntary**, based on informed consent, and seek to work with preferences in both the resettled and hosting populations. The Government should be able to offer the populations **meaningful alternatives** to those of moving, without denying them access to health, education and other services.
- While the DAG mission heard that the GoE does not support communal land use certification for cattle grazing lands, there should be **communal involvement in land use planning** that affects these areas. Verbal promises from government officials about the preservation of grazing lands have failed to allay community worries. A formal agreement / contract or a written guarantee signed by the Government might help to respond to the wide concern of Mursi and Bodi over the future of grazing lands.
- In line with the federal Environmental Impact Assessment Proclamation (No. 299/2002), the required **environmental impact assessment** report on the **Omo Kuraz** master plan **should be made public**. Comments from affected communities such as the Bodi and Mursi should be incorporated into the report.
- The Government should identify ways to ensure ongoing **benefit-sharing** arrangements so that Bodi and Mursi communities gain from the sugar plantation. Assigning the corporation responsibility for building resettlement-related infrastructure and providing irrigated land has been a start: creating plantation-related jobs, training or demands for community goods and services (contracts to supply food for the company towns?) would help to facilitate acceptance. Government plans to train Mursi and Bodi health workers to provide services in their communities are sensible and helpful.

- **An independent complaints system should be established** to give both residents and government officials a fair and reliable way to engage over differences. As part of this mechanism, legal aid should be available to assist these populations in bringing complaints and seeking dispute resolution.
- Moreover, these **communities should be involved in the identification of the services to be provided, and on the delivery and monitoring** of new **services** such as health care and education. In this regard, government plans to train Bodi and Mursi residents as health workers mark a promising step.
- The Government should support the communities to develop their livelihoods based on their knowledge and experience.
- Government should overcome their reluctance and consider **engaging third parties** in this process. **NGOs** have of necessity developed approaches and techniques for participatory community-led development which local authorities cannot reasonably be expected to have. Clearly-defined contracts with NGOs to facilitate dialogue would help the authorities to deliver on the requirement of informed consent; and help the Bodi and Mursi to develop the new skills they need (e.g. for community-managed irrigation).
- The Government should **consider the specific needs and interests of women** in this process. Special attention should be given to aspects like maternal health, grinding mills and sanitation. As for the cultivation, mainly done by women, the development of their skills in that regard and supportive infrastructure could improve livelihoods.
- Women should also participate in the consultations and discussions between the Government and the affected communities.
- Promised **services should be in place before people are moved, and** these services should be **maintained to an accepted standard**. This requires that (i) facilities need to be completed to a good standard and (ii) there needs to be a well-managed handover of responsibility from the corporation (which builds the facilities) to normal Government line structures (which then provide the staff, medical supplies, and operation and maintenance budgets). Where it is suitable to engage communities in facility management (e.g. of water points), this needs consultation and close attention.
- The Government should **find sustainable solutions** for the provision of **drinking water** in the Bodi resettlement villages, as the current service provided by the Sugar Corporation is unsatisfactory. As in other parts of Ethiopia, the beneficiary communities in South Omo **should participate in managing water points** and ensuring their proper functioning in collaboration with government offices.
- The Government should ensure **coordination with the Sugar Corporation** so that social services facilities have sufficient staff and supplies once handed over for operation by the government.
- Another aspect of water warrants careful **attention**. **Irrigated land**, while significant for food-insecure populations, **may spark conflict if allocation of water resources isn't effective**. Because irrigable land is an important part of the package of benefits that the government is offering to the Bodi and Mursi pastoralists, water access for these farm plots needs to be reliable and equitable – and supported by suitable agricultural training.
- The high risk of conflict related to the arrival of thousands of highlanders to Mursi and Bodi areas calls for the creation of a solid **conflict management mechanism**.
- As areas on and around the Omo Kuraz plantation add resident workers, social problems such as crime, **HIV and alcoholism** may escalate. The Government should **seek international best practices in mitigating** these challenges and use participatory tools to engage communities for awareness and prevention.

- Transparency, participation and managed change are essential concepts that the DAG mission recommends to help answer the challenges in the lower Omo Valley. Putting these concepts into action will increase the chances for a peaceful transition with improved human development outcomes.

Annex 1: Tabular comparison of repeatedly visited villages





Annex 2: A summary of the August 2013 DAG methodology note

The visit cannot hope to be (and should not pretend to be) fully fledged socioeconomic research. These visits are constrained by lack of local language skills and need to work through translators; short time in the area and, as a result, a small number of sites and respondents; uncertainties about the number of affected sites and therefore difficulties in defining the sampling frame and what might constitute a 'representative sample'; visits spaced perhaps a year apart, and dependent on respondent recall for what happened between visits. In light of these constraints, the visits constitute structured and rigorous spot checks and (in the absence of long-term residential research) the best source of independent information available to the donors; but they do not constitute in-depth social science research or a full-blown programme evaluation.

However: a pragmatic approach to defining and following good methodological principles can help to ensure that (i) the time in the study area during the visit yields the maximum possible quantity and quality of data; and (ii) there is a degree of standardisation between sites and consistency between successive visits, which allows for meaningful comparisons between sites at the same time, and the same site over time. This would be harder if methodology varied between visits. Rigour and consistency in methodology should help ensure that visits provide both a broad sense of what constitutes normal practice and variation around this norm, and some understanding of trend.

General approach and principles

The approach should be inductive, moving from specific observations to (tentative) general conclusions about broader patterns. The team should start on the visit assuming that resettlement may and probably does have mixed effects (some good, some bad); and that the specifics of these effects and the balance between gain and loss will vary between sites, for different groups within the communities, and for any given site may (probably will) change over time. The team should aim to use triangulation between different sources (respondents and types of information) and rapid iteration (flexibility to follow up on interesting and relevant items arising in interviews, going back to check conclusions before moving on). Research should be conducted without the involvement or presence of local officials if at all possible.

Sampling

Each visit should aim to cover some five to six sites. Where there are enough relocation-affected sites that it is necessary to make a choice, if possible two to three should be revisits to sites previously studied (giving insight into trends over time and more depth of insight, building on prior knowledge of the community); and three to four should be to new sites (expanding and refreshing the geographical breadth of coverage and the ability to generalise from observations in the study sites to draw conclusions about the programme as a whole). For a revisit, team to review notes from previous visit, familiarise themselves with context and what had happened up until the last visit (and what had been planned to happen since then). In each site, the team should aim to complete at least two focus group discussions (FGDs); and at least three individual semi-structured interviews (SSI).

FGDs should be conducted at a minimum separately with men and women. In sites where there was an original settlement, the team should try to conduct FGDs separately with original residents and the newly-arrived; in sending sites, the team should talk with those planning to move, those who have declined to move, and those who moved but have since returned.

Teamwork and pre-planning

It is much easier to maintain a guided conversation and record the answers accurately and fully when working as a team. Ideally, this would involve assigning separate roles of interviewer; one or more note-takers; and a monitor, who keeps an eye on time and which questions have and haven't been asked or answered. The interviewer should talk through with the translator in advance to make sure that he or she is clear on the overall purpose of the visit and the checklist of questions. When translating what respondents say into the interviewer's language (e.g. English), the translator should aim to provide an account that is as close as possible to verbatim. Where /she is unclear what the respondent means, or when s/he feels the need to clarify (for example, explain a metaphor), the translator should first provide the verbatim translation, then add their own supplementary explanation or interpretation – and be clear about the difference between the two parts. Note-takers should choose (and then use consistently) a simple shorthand, which will also help to distinguish the respondent's own words (in translation) from contextual detail or the note-taker's own interpretations or questions.

Guidelines on conducting focus group discussions and interviews

Each FGD or interview should start with an introductory statement by the interviewer covering who the team are, why they are here, and how long the exercise might last. The interviewer should manage expectations; note that anyone can leave at any time; provide a realistic promise of confidentiality (individual names will not be used, but the identity of the site may be obvious; what is said in an FGD should not be repeated later; a respondent can ask for notes relating to what they said to be destroyed); and ask if there is anything the respondent(s) want to ask. Note takers should record contextual details: how many are present, the mix of sexes and ages, and the environment in which the discussion took place

The interviewer and translator need to practice good facilitation. Tone, eye contact, body language and neutral verbal fillers help to build and sustain rapport. The conversation should be allowed to flow and the interviewer should follow interesting leads and probe when necessary, but keep an eye on time and topics remaining to keep the exercise on track. Questions should be kept simple as much as possible (multi-part or hypothetical questions problematic) and avoid leading (which can be hard, especially, when you are seeking confirmation).

Good note taking records answers as close to verbatim as possible. Note-takers can use their own textual conventions (square brackets?) to note observations (nervousness, anger, amusement, confusion) or points of ambiguity to clarify later. They should note any diversity or disagreement between different FGD respondents. All of those involved (but particularly the monitor, if one is designated) should keep track of time and topics

remaining; note when some respondents say nothing or register disagreement, and try to bring them in; and suggest wrapping up if boredom or frustration seems to be setting in.

After the interview, the team should make the time to sit together and review the exercise as soon as possible. Note-takers go through their records, flagging any points where things were not clear to them and check to see whether the translator or other members of the team; can clarify.

Annex 3: Checklist of FGD / SSI questions for sites proposed for, but not yet, receiving relocated populations

Demographics

How many people are living / sleeping here in this village at the moment?

Same number of men and women?

Is everyone who belongs to this village here now? Or are some sleeping away at another place? (men / women; boys / girls)

Livelihoods

What do you and your families do to make a living?

Does everyone do the same things? Or do different people do different things to make a living?

Farming

- What crops
- When planted, when harvested
- Rainfed? Flood recession? Irrigated?
- How much land per family? Where is this land?
- Who farms: men or women? Or both?
- Do you grow crops to eat, or to sell?

Livestock

- On average, how many cattle per household? What would be a big household herd? What would be a small one?
- Do you keep any other livestock?

Is there anything else you / your family do to make a living or earn money?

- Hunting, fishing, collecting from the forest, work for other people, work for the plantation, household business, tourism

Has the way you make a living changed at all in the last three years? / are the things you do not to make a living any different from three years ago?

If yes, what's changed?

- Irrigation; access to land or water; rainfall; road access; use of fertiliser or other inputs; animal health; access to and quality of pasture; jobs; prices

Do you receive any food aid? / does anyone provide you with any food?

- If yes, how much / for how many months?
- Who provides this?

Overall, is it getting easier or harder to make a living / feed yourselves, compared to three years ago?

Health

Is there a health post here or near here? A health centre?

How long has this been here?

Overall, how is your families' health here?

- Main health problems
- Has it been getting better or worse over the last three years?

Education

Do children from this village go to primary school?

- How far away?
- When did it start?
- How many boys / girls attend?
- How many children *don't* go? Why?

Do any village children go to a secondary school? (male / female)

Are any going to university? (male / female)

Water and sanitation

Where do you get your drinking water?

How far away is this?

What about in the dry season?

Has the source of drinking water changed over the last three years?

- Better / worse / the same as now

Are there any latrines in the village?

- How many? How long have you had these?

Resettlement

We understand that the authorities will ask more people to come and live here.. Is that correct?

Do you know how many people may come here?

Would they be the same community / speak the same language as you? Or different?

Where would they come from?

Do you know when they might come here?

How do you feel about the possibility that more people might come here?

Did the authorities talk to you about the plans to settle people here?

- When did they first tell you about these plans?
- Who came to talk with you?
- Were you given a choice to say yes or no to the resettlement?

What land will be given to the people who come here

- How much, where

Have the authorities promised anything to your village if people move here?

- If yes, what have they promised
- Has any of this been provided yet? If yes, what?

If you are unhappy with people settling here, or what the authorities provide, can you complain?

- If yes, to whom?
- If no, why not?

Annex 4: Summary of data collection

N.	Place	Type of village	Tribe	Who	When	Type of interview	Number of people	GPS coordinates
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