

BETTER ASSISTANCE IN CRISES RESEARCH

Conflict, Displacement, and Social Assistance in Three Districts of Ethiopia

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Summary

In the context of recurrent drought shocks and other climate stresses, and in the aftermath of conflict that has affected different parts of Ethiopia, the country is struggling to address a sizeable humanitarian challenge alongside the need to sustain support to those living in chronic and severe poverty. This study draws on a review of policy documentation, interviews with a range of government and donor officials working in and on Ethiopia, and primary qualitative fieldwork in conflict-affected districts to assess the responsiveness of social protection and humanitarian systems to conflict shocks in Ethiopia. This research was carried out in three *woredas* (districts) of Amhara, Oromiya, and Somali regions in 2022.

Conflict-affected people in the study areas can be designated as internally displaced people (IDPs), returnees, or non-displaced conflict-affected people, depending on their condition during and after conflicts. These populations receive support through a variety of channels, including the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), humanitarian aid, and through community relations and networks. PSNP support is provided to targeted clients, including conflict-affected people. Humanitarian aid is delivered to conflict-affected people who are not covered by the PSNP. Assistance from community members is often the first line of support until PSNP and humanitarian transfers are provided.

Households eligible for PSNP transfers are those that are chronically poor and food insecure. PSNP targeting was carried out before the conflict unfolded in northern Ethiopia, whereas targeting in the border areas of Oromiya and Somali covered by this paper occurred in a post-conflict period when many displaced populations had returned. Due to budget limitations and specific mandates, the PSNP is not able to scale up provision to cover newly poor households or to increase support to existing clients should they require additional resources due to conflict shocks. Long and delayed bureaucratic procedures are among the reasons for delays to PSNP payments.

Humanitarian food assistance (HFA) is the main humanitarian mechanism to support conflict-affected people who are not PSNP clients. Nevertheless, it is unpredictable and inadequate to meet the significant scale of need. Insufficient support from humanitarian and community channels means that many IDPs seek paid work and resort to firewood collection and charcoal making. These coping activities in some places have generated tensions with host communities.

Commitments at all political-administrative levels are needed to address the legacies of recent conflicts, enabling an environment of safety and security for people to resume their livelihoods and to support the resumption of full PSNP operations. Experience from our survey sites – Babile Somali and Babile Oromiya – where regional, *woreda*, and community leaders supported peace-building in the aftermath of conflict in 2018 (allowing for the return of displaced people and provision of PSNP support nine months following the start of tensions), shows that wider political dialogue and conflict management processes are indispensable to the resilience of social protection systems. The Federal Government of Ethiopia has established the Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF) to guide medium-term responses in conflict-affected areas. This encompasses the social protection sector and investments required to address the impacts of conflict on PSNP delivery structures and recipients, alike.

As per the findings of this study, the Ethiopian government and humanitarian stakeholders could consider the following to enhance access to social protection and humanitarian support for conflict-affected people:

- **Coordinate PSNP and HFA responses to conflict shocks:** A single delivery system could be decentralised to regions, *woredas*, and communities by developing strategies to enhance financing, assessing conflict impacts, incorporating psychosocial support into conflict shock responses, and capacity-building efforts. To contribute to the efforts of addressing the immediate needs of conflict-affected people, conflict-affected *woredas* should be prioritised for support through PSNP shock response budgets. Moreover, establishing and working through command posts¹ for conflict shock response at different levels by involving community leaders and the relevant sector heads is needed.
- **Improve the effectiveness of PSNP and HFA transfers:** Bureaucratic errors have delayed PSNP payments in conflict-affected areas. To address this issue, regions and *woredas* could consider enhancing their programme monitoring system, to make actors at *woreda* and *kebele* (sub-district) levels accountable. It is important to consider the use of agent-based mobile money transfer to make PSNP cash payments and reduce the burden on, and risks for, programme clients and implementers.
- **Address financial limitations of HFA and the PSNP:** An expansion of financing for the PSNP and humanitarian channels is urgently needed to adequately cover the social protection and humanitarian needs of conflict-affected people. Additional financing can be used to deepen and widen delivery in conflict-affected *woredas*, thereby addressing the impacts estimated in the 3RF assessment.
- **Promote recovery and rehabilitation actions in conflict-affected areas:** People require relief, livelihood, and psychosocial support to rehabilitate and recover from the aftermath of the conflicts. This requires well-coordinated fundraising and programme actions. The 3RF could include provision of livelihood support to conflict-affected people (PSNP and non-PSNP) by piggybacking on the PSNP's livelihood support structures and mechanisms. The use of cash plus approaches could be considered to address the needs for livelihood rehabilitation beyond meeting food security needs.

¹ Command posts are coordination centres for humanitarian, recovery, and reconstruction to mobilise and deliver assistance to conflict-affected people.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

3R	Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction
3RF	Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework
BASIC	Better Assistance in Crises
CBS	community-based support
CLA	Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DaNA	Damage and Needs Assessment
DEC	Development Expertise Center
DRM	disaster risk management
EDRMC	Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	focus group discussion
FHE	Food for the Hungry Ethiopia
FSCD	Food Security Coordination Directorate
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
HFA	humanitarian food assistance
iDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDPs	internally displaced people
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
KFSTF	<i>kebele</i> food security taskforce
KII	key informant interview
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoP	Ministry of Peace
NGO	non-governmental organisation
ORDA	Organization for Relief and Development in Amhara
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
RBoA	Regional Bureaus of Agriculture
REFSA	Resilience Food Security Activity
RFSDRMC	Regional Food Security and Disaster Risk Management Commission
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region
TDF	Tigray Defence Forces

TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	water, sanitation, and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WDRMO	Woreda Disaster Risk Management Office
WFSTF	<i>woreda</i> food security taskforce

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1. Introduction

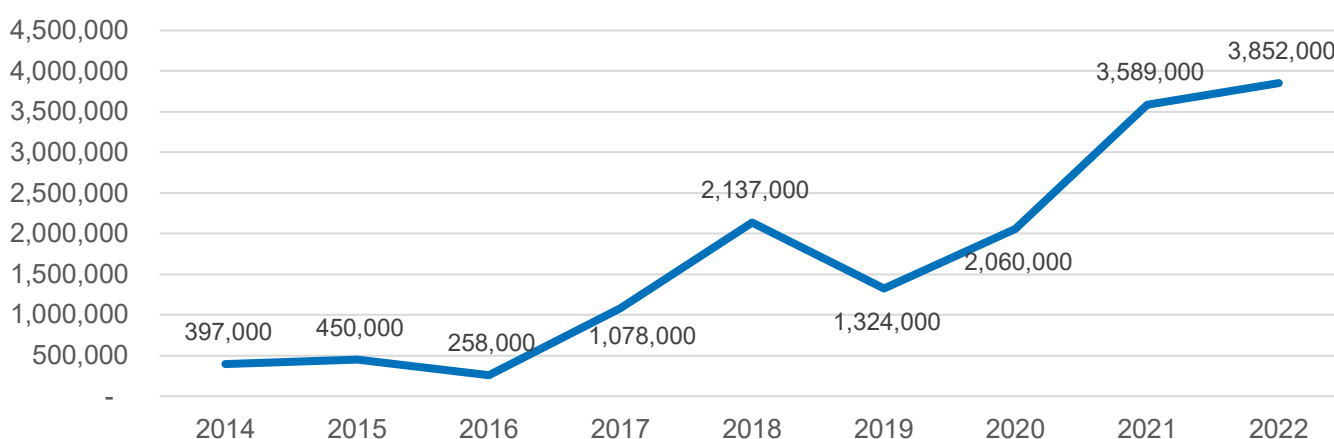
1.1 Background

In Ethiopia, a combination of climate- and conflict-related shocks have contributed significantly to a rising humanitarian caseload in recent years. These shocks have resulted in significant additional pressure on already chronically food-insecure populations, as well as resulted in acute food security for others. In response to the challenge of responding to the needs of a chronically food-insecure population, in 2005 the Government of Ethiopia was supported by development partners to initiate the country's first large rural safety net intervention, the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). The PSNP has become the key instrument to address chronic food insecurity, delivering food and cash support to about 7.9 million people, alongside natural resource development and household asset-building activities. About 80 per cent of programme clients receive support from the PSNP for six months of the year in exchange for their participation in community public works; the remaining 20 per cent of the PSNP caseload are 'direct support' beneficiaries, receiving unconditional transfers for 12 months a year (MoA 2023).

The PSNP has, however, struggled to provide a timely response to shocks that generate acute needs. In recognition of this, the current phase of the PSNP (hereafter, PSNP 5) has incorporated new features to strengthen the programme's shock responsiveness. Specifically, the design of PSNP 5 envisions scaling up coverage to 3.8 million people to meet transitory needs during crises on the basis of data generated from the national early warning system (MoA 2020).

Still, the PSNP is not designed to respond to the impacts of conflict shocks on poor and vulnerable people. In recent years, conflicts ignited in many parts of Ethiopia have caused huge hardship, resulting in greater levels of food insecurity, the destruction of livelihoods, and displacement. The lack of attention to conflict in the PSNP design became very apparent during the 2020–22 war in northern Ethiopia, which killed thousands of people and exacerbated humanitarian conditions in Tigray and in neighbouring areas of Amhara and Afar regions. The conflict also resulted in a large movement of people trying to escape the violence. In the last decade, the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Ethiopia increased tenfold, from 397,000 in 2014 to 3.85 million in 2022 (Figure 1.1). *Kebele* (sub-district), *woreda* (district), and regional officials have struggled to respond to the swelling number of IDPs, due to a lack of planning and insufficient resources. IDPs and host communities have struggled to cope, while returnees and those who were not displaced but still affected by the conflict also required assistance to meet basic needs.

Figure 1.1: Trends in IDPs in Ethiopia due to conflict



Source: Authors' own, based on data from iDMC (2023).

Support to people affected by conflict and displacement is provided through two official channels, in addition to assistance through community relations and networks:

1. **Humanitarian food assistance (HFA):** Provided as either food or cash, HFA is managed by the Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC), with multiple international organisations involved in implementation, and with a heavy reliance on funding from international donors.²
2. **Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP):** Food, cash, or a combination of these is provided to PSNP clients. The PSNP is managed by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), with some involvement of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in its implementation, and is largely funded (65 per cent) by international donors.³
3. **Community-based support (CBS):** Communities themselves mobilise to provide life-saving basic goods and psychosocial support, in particular to IDPs.

1.2 Research objective and questions

This study assesses the responsiveness of social assistance to conflict shocks in three *woredas* of Ethiopia. There is limited empirical evidence on how a combination of PSNP and humanitarian assistance can respond better to the needs of those affected by conflict and displacement. This is a critical gap, given the fragility of Ethiopia's political and social contract and the conflict dynamics at play in many areas of the country. This study aims to help fill this gap by providing contextual learning to inform policy and programming designs to improve the use of social assistance in wider responses to conflict and displacement settings.

The research addresses three related questions. First, how have the PSNP and HFA responded to situations of conflict, displacement, and return? Second, how have programme structures for delivery and implementation accommodated the needs of displaced and returnee populations? And, finally, which features enable effective delivery of combined PSNP and HFA support during conflict and in response to displacement, and what features mitigate against this?

This paper is structured as follows: the study *woredas* are profiled in section 2; the key emerging issues for social assistance response to conflict shocks in Ethiopia are set out in section 3; and conclusions and recommendations for national and international stakeholders are presented in section 4.

1.3 Methodology

This paper is based on qualitative assessments carried out at federal, regional, *woreda* (district), *kebele* (sub-district), and community levels (see Table 1.1). At the federal level, key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with key personnel working in the MoA, Ministry of Finance (MoF), EDRMC, and Ministry of Peace (MoP), donors (United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank), and NGOs.

Three *woredas* were purposively identified (one each in Amhara, Oromiya, and Somali) to learn from different conflict episodes, and different experiences of social assistance provision. Correspondingly, one sample *kebele* was drawn from each *woreda* with the same objective, in consultation with *woreda* offices in charge of coordinating the PSNP and humanitarian responses. Based on this, KIIs were conducted with *kebele* leaders and *woreda* disaster risk management (DRM) and food security desks. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were carried out with conflict shock-affected community members, segmented by gender, with one group in each *kebele*. FGD members included IDPs, returnees, and non-displaced conflict-affected people.

² As per the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) Financial Tracking Service, Ethiopia requested about US\$3.3m for its Humanitarian Response Plan 2022 and was able to secure about 50.3 per cent of this (UNOCHA 2023).

³ According to the PSNP design document, by 2021 the programme had secured 65 per cent and 25 per cent of its funding requirement from international donors and the Government of Ethiopia, respectively, with a 10 per cent funding gap by that time (MoA 2020).

Table 1.1: Federal and regional government, donor, and NGO key informant interviews

Organisations	Sectoral focus	Operational level or region
Food Security Coordination Directorate (FSCD), MoA	PSNP and HFA	Federal MoA
World Bank, Donor Coordination Team for PSNP	PSNP	Federal level
Irish Aid	PSNP	Federal level
Building Resilience in Ethiopia	PSNP and HFA	Federal level
USAID	PSNP and HFA	Federal level
EDRMC	HFA	Federal level
Department of Public–Private Partnership, MoF	Recovery and Reconstruction	Federal level
MoP	HFA, and Recovery and Rehabilitation	Federal level
Regional Bureaus of Agriculture (RBoA) and regional DRM structures	PSNP and HFA	Amhara, Oromiya, and Somali regions
Regional State Pastoral Development Bureau	PSNP and HFA	Somali region
Regional office of Organization for Relief and Development in Amhara (ORDA), NGO	PSNP and HFA	Amhara region
Food for the Hungry Ethiopia (FHE) Ethiopia Resilience Food Security Activity (REFSA)	PSNP and HFA	Amhara region
Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) lead for PReSERVE project	PSNP	Amhara region
Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Ethiopia, REFSA project	PSNP and HFA	Oromiya region

Source: Authors' own.

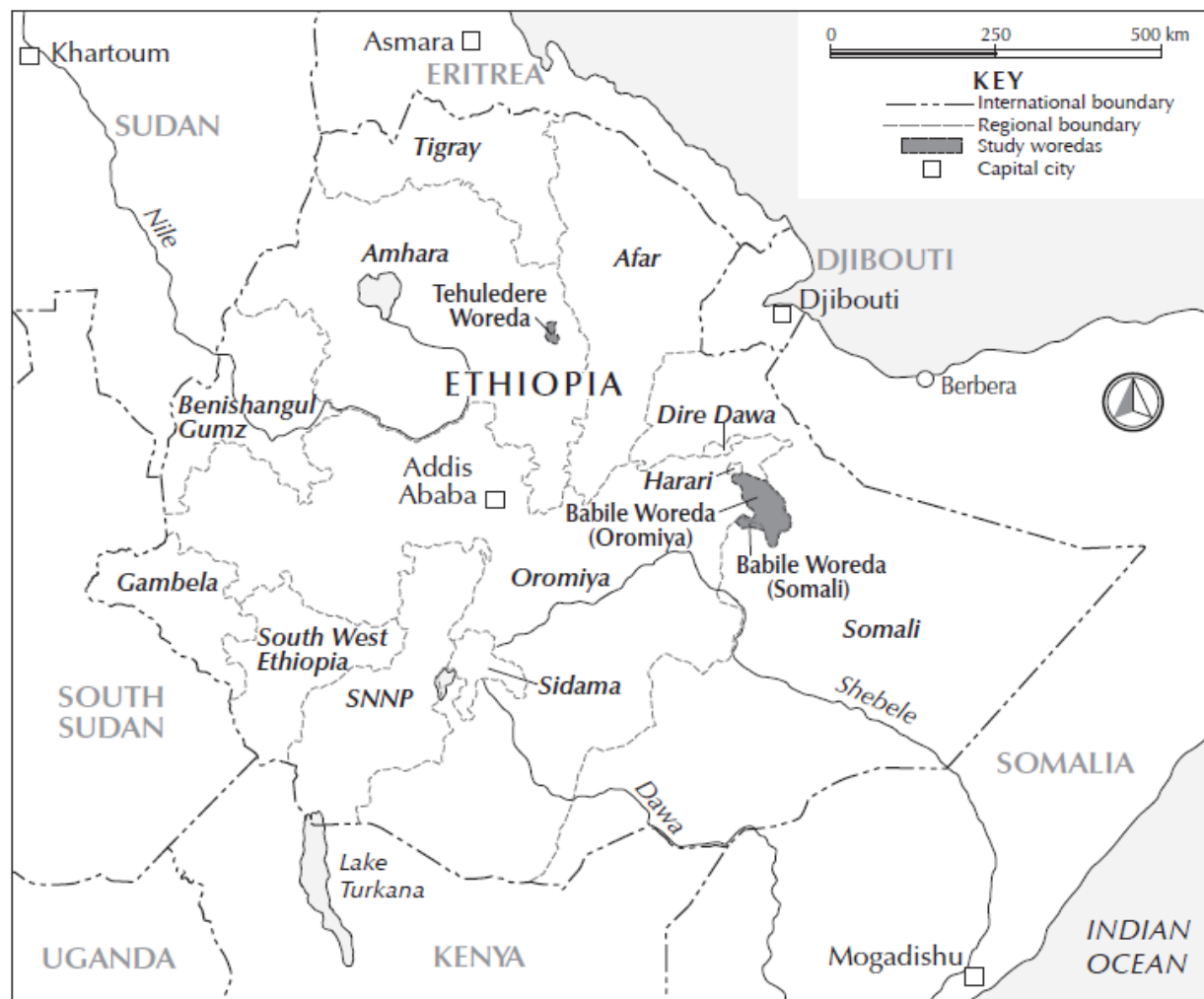
1.4 Definition of key terms

This study focuses on social assistance, which is one type of social protection. **Social protection** is widely understood as the public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised; with the overall objective of reducing the economic and social vulnerability of poor, vulnerable, and marginalised groups (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2004). One type of social protection is **social assistance**, which includes transfers (of cash, food, or vouchers) to individuals or households, fee waivers, and subsidies for poor and vulnerable people. The transfers can be either conditional (for example, the recipient must take part in community public works, or attend a health clinic, etc.) or unconditional (the recipient receives the support without any conditions attached). Social assistance is provided by both development and humanitarian actors. Sometimes the labels and terms used are different and development and humanitarian actors may emphasise differing objectives, but there is also an increasing amount of overlap across the humanitarian–development nexus – in particular, in the provision of social assistance in protracted crises.

2. Woreda profiles

This study has focused on three locales: Babile Oromiya *woreda* in Oromiya region, Babile Somali *woreda* in Somali region, and Tehuledere *woreda* in Amhara region (Figure 2.1 and Table 2.1). This section describes these *woredas* and their conflict dynamics, and responsiveness of PSNP and HFA to the conflict shocks.

Figure 2.1: Administrative map of Ethiopia and locations of study *woredas*



Source: Authors' own.

Table 2.1: Study *woredas* in Oromiya, Somali, and Amhara regions

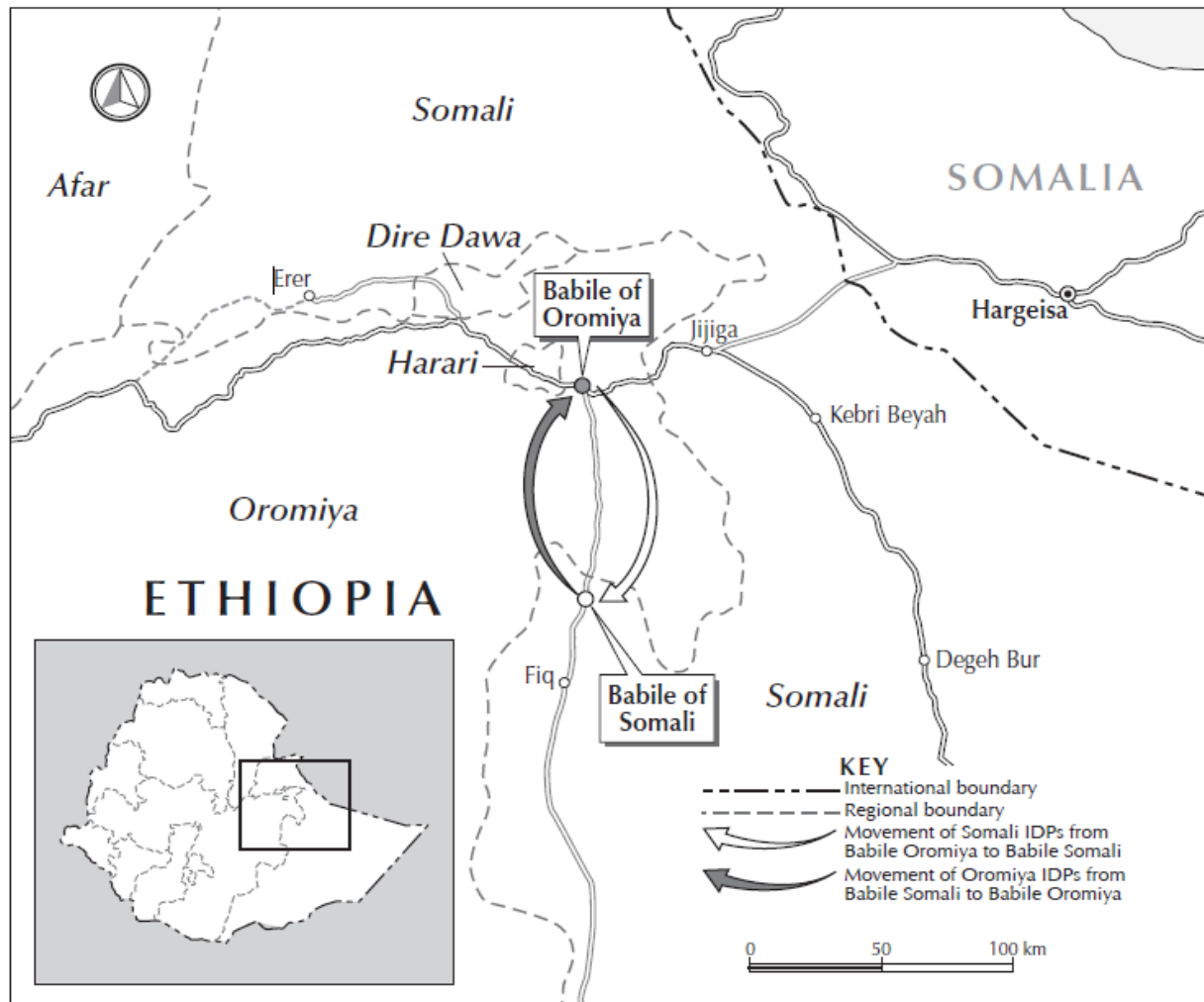
<i>Woreda</i>	Babile Oromiya	Babile Somali	Tehuledere
Region	Oromiya	Somali	Amhara
Zone	East Hararghe	Fafan	South Wollo
Population	143,625	153,000	138,493
IDPs (during conflict)	83,692 during 2018/19; now returned	55,000 in 2018; 600 in 2022	8,019 (current)
HFA (current)	5,580	27,800	62,111
PSNP started	2005	2005	2005
PSNP 4 clients	27,813 (18 <i>kebeles</i>)	53,130	17,016
PSNP 5 clients	20,929 (21 <i>kebeles</i>)	27,637	15,476
Reduction of PSNP clients (%)	25	48	9

Source: *Woreda Office of Agriculture (Amhara and Oromiya) and Pastoral Development Office (Somali).*

2.1 Babile Oromiya and Babile Somali

Babile is an area crossed by the border dividing the regions of Oromiya and Somali (see Figure 2.2). The *woreda* populations are estimated at 143,625 people in Babile Oromiya and 153,000 people in Babile Somali. There is cross-border conflict between the two Babile populations over land use. Some argue that the 1991 regime change and introduction of the ethnic federal governance system which included nine regional states aggravated the pre-existing conflicts over resources between pastoral and agropastoral Somali and Oromo communities (Liban 2008; Mohamed 2018). These latent intercommunal conflict dynamics were exacerbated by the involvement of paramilitary regional government forces, with violent outbreaks in August 2018 and continuing insecurity and intermittent fighting up to September 2021.

Figure 2.2: Cross-border conflict dynamics, Babile Oromiya and Babile Somali



Source: Authors' own.

People lost their lives, and livelihoods, household assets, and public infrastructure were destroyed. Many people were displaced. The violence spread across several rural *kebeles* of the *woreda*s, forcing 133,962 people to flee from their homes, with many going to the two *woreda* capital towns (Table 2.1 and Figure 2.2). During 2018–19 about 55,000 IDPs moved to Babile Somali and 83,692 IDPs arrived in Babile Oromiya. By 2022, the majority had returned to their original places of residence.

These displaced people included about 5,000 people of Somali ethnicity who were attacked and forced during the conflict to move away from their homes in Babile Oromiya, to go to Babile Somali. After nine months, most of these IDPs voluntarily returned to their original *kebeles* in Babile Oromiya following conflict resolution efforts between the two regions. At the time of data collection in October 2022, about 600 of the displaced group remained in a camp in Babile Somali town, most of whom were very poor, with no assets or farmland in Oromiya to go back to. They survived by collecting and selling firewood which they carry to market on their backs and using donkeys; they received minimal and unpredictable humanitarian assistance.

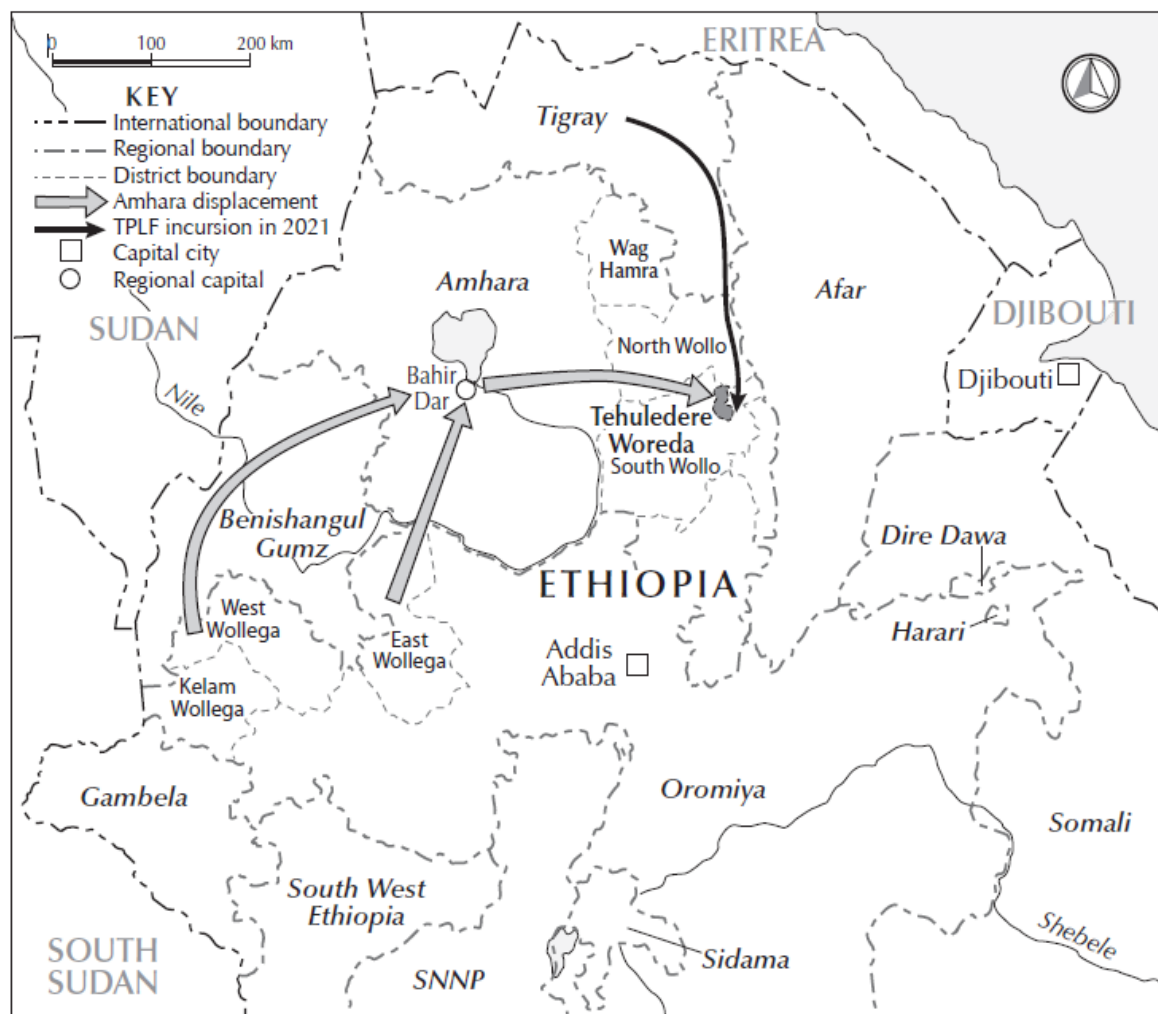
According to administrative officials and residents interviewed in Babile Oromiya, a grazing land in Goda village, Rir Arba *kebele*, is still under the control of Babile Somali. The situation requires further peace negotiation and reconciliation efforts to resolve the root causes of the conflict, with the leadership of the MoP, and the participation of regional and *woreda* administrations, as well as community and religious leaders.

PSNP support started in these *woredas* in 2005. Currently, PSNP 5 is supporting 20,929 clients in Babile Oromiya and 27,637 clients in Babile Somali. In both *woredas* the geographic coverage of support has increased under PSNP 5 but, without an increase in *woreda* budget allocations, both *woredas* have also seen a reduction in the number of beneficiaries (Table 2.1). In Babile Oromiya, PSNP support was extended to three additional *kebeles* while the number of beneficiaries has decreased by 25 per cent (6,884 people). In Babile Somali, the number of beneficiaries has decreased by 48 per cent (from 53,130 clients under PSNP 4 to 27,637 under PSNP 5). Historically, both Babile populations have received humanitarian assistance to help people cope with recurring climate- and conflict-induced shocks and scarce resources. According to the Woreda Pastoral Development Office in Babile Somali and the Woreda Office of Agriculture in Babile Oromiya, about 27,800 and 5,580 people, respectively, received HFA at the time of this assessment.

2.2 Tehuledere

The third *woreda* in this study is Tehuledere in the South Wollo zone of Amhara region, with an estimated population of 138,493. Tehuledere has experienced two conflict-related events in recent years. First, from 2018 it became a destination for IDPs affected by political-ethnic conflict in western Oromiya (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: IDP flows from Wollega zones to Tehuledere



Source: Authors' own.

People from Amhara who had settled in Wollega in western Oromiya region some 45 years previously under a 1984 resettlement programme by the Derg regime, have been forcibly displaced by suspected members of the Oromo Liberation Front, locally known as *Shene*. This conflict in the Wollega zones expanded into a large outbreak of violence, causing deaths and injuries, the destruction of household assets and livelihoods, and the displacement of tens of thousands of people. Tehuledere has provided shelter to about 8,019 IDPs fleeing this ongoing conflict, setting up two camps. At the time of the research (October 2022), more IDPs had arrived from western Oromiya in the preceding two weeks, whereas others had been there for a few years.

The second event occurred in 2021 when the Tigray Defence Forces (TDF) entered and occupied the *woreda*. The ensuing violence by the armed group caused people to flee, with the first wave of displacement beginning in November 2021. The TDF incursion displaced people from Tehuledere to Kombolcha town and Addis Ababa, respectively about 55km and 280km away. Families moved on foot, carrying infants and young children. Most began returning to their homes after two weeks, having exhausted their food supplies, while others were displaced for six weeks. By October 2022, all these IDPs had returned home.

The PSNP started operations in the *woreda* in 2005, delivering cash and food transfer payments to 17,016 public works and direct support clients during PSNP 4. The number of clients supported by PSNP 5 has reduced by nearly 9 per cent to 15,476. In 2022, HFA was a critical source of aid for 62,111 people affected by conflict shocks related to the incursion of Tigray forces and IDPs fleeing from western Oromiya.

3. Thematic issues

This study investigates how conflict-affected people in the three study *woredas* were supported by social assistance during and after conflict events. People affected by conflict in these locales included those who stayed in their communities during the conflict outbreaks, those who were displaced, and those who returned. Social assistance was provided to conflict-affected people through the PSNP and humanitarian channels; in addition, community-based support (CBS) was an important source of assistance for many. This section details findings in five areas: (1) adequacy of support, (2) targeting, (3) modality, (4) transfer delivery, and (5) reconstruction and recovery.

3.1 Adequacy of support

PSNP support is not designed to meet new and exacerbated needs during a conflict

People affected by conflict and displacement suffer losses to their livelihoods and assets with negative impacts on their food security and wellbeing. They need immediate help during the conflict as well as support after to rebuild their lives. Alongside being food insecure, these households lacked income to cover non-food expenses, including supporting their children's schooling. PSNP support is not designed to adapt and respond to these new and exacerbated vulnerabilities.

People who are displaced from their homes are not eligible to receive PSNP support if they move out of their *woreda*; existing programme guidance before the onset of the 2020–22 conflict in northern Ethiopia was that 'migrants' had to be resident for two years in their new place of residence before they could be eligible for selection. In Amhara region, reports were made of the possibility of collecting PSNP transfers by client IDPs outside of their residential *woredas*.⁴

Sekota and Zarina woredas have IDPs from TPLF [Tigray People's Liberation Front] occupied woredas. These people are getting their regular transfers from neighbouring woredas as their names are registered in the PSNP's payroll system, R-PASS.
(KII with Amhara RFSDRMC)

PSNP households that were not displaced and were registered for public works received their full transfers, even though they were not required to contribute labour to public works projects during the conflict period. Yet, according to focus group respondents, this was not sufficient to enable them to meet their consumption needs and recover their livelihoods following conflict shocks. This 'gap' in need would ideally be covered by an increase in transfers through the PSNP contingency funds as the key mechanism for the programme to scale. But while this design feature exists on paper, the issue was one of financing: the programme is under-resourced and therefore design features like contingency budget (currently shifted to the shock-responsive safety net scheme)⁵ that might otherwise help the PSNP to respond to shocks were not functioning as they should. Furthermore, the PSNP is limited to how it can expand in response to conflict (as opposed to climate) shocks – either through increasing the level of support given to existing clients or by increasing the number of beneficiaries to protect consumption and assets.

PSNP 5 focuses on climate shocks mainly related to drought. PSNP is not addressing multi-hazard shocks. It works on shock-responsive scale-up within PSNP woredas. It reaches both PSNP and non-PSNP clients within woreda boundaries.
(KIIs with FSCD of MoA)

⁴ Amhara Regional Food Security and Disaster Risk Management Commission (RFSDRMC), Bahir Dar, 1 June 2022; and FHE, Addis Ababa, 30 May 2022.

⁵ Contingency budget was practised during PSNP 4 by allocating 5 per cent and 10 per cent of the PSNP budget to *woredas* and regions, respectively, to respond to unforeseen shocks. This has been changed and is now, under PSNP 5, shock-responsive budget of which 5 per cent goes to *woredas* while 10 per cent of the PSNP budget is retained at federal level to respond to acute shocks. The federal level shock-responsive budget is released to *woredas* on the basis of reliable, quantitative, and auditable time series data generated by the EDRMC national early warning system. During 2022, the shock-responsive safety net scheme was practised in some parts of Somali and Oromiya regions due to budgetary shortages.

The pre-conflict inadequacy of PSNP transfers has limited the ability of PSNP support to provide an effective safety net for conflict-affected households facing heightened needs and new vulnerabilities

The regular PSNP transfers have not been able to adequately meet the needs of households affected by recent conflicts. This is due to insufficient *woreda* budgets leading to partial targeting of large households, and the recent very high inflation and the rising cost of living which means the value of cash transfers in real terms has declined.

Yes, the cash transfer payment given to PSNP clients was increased from 230 birr/person/month to 340 birr/person/month... The PSNP transfer increase is not sufficient considering the rising market price for cereals.

(KII with Woreda Food Security Desk under the Woreda Office of Agriculture, Babile Oromiya)

As a result of the inflation, the money is losing its value. The money we receive [from the PSNP] is very small and the price of the food is very high. So, we are unable to buy the necessary items with the money we get. Therefore, we want the transfers to be given in food instead of cash.

(FGD with non-displaced conflict-affected women, Babile Somali)

PSNP 5 operates under the principle of full family targeting⁶ at the region's discretion (MoA 2020). However, in Babile Somali a household cap rule that limits targeting to three persons per household is widely applied due to regional-level resource limitation resulting from the increase in the number of targeted *woredas*, *kebeles*, and households. Likewise, in Babile Oromiya and Tehuledere there are still households – especially those with large families – where not all family members are targeted by the programme, leading households under partial family targeting to complain. This might be largely explained by the fact that the caseload figures for PSNP 5 have sharply reduced; alongside that, humanitarian assistance has not expanded to pick up the extra caseload that might need support. These targeting realities mean the PSNP transfers are inadequate for large families, limiting how much the PSNP support can enable these households to cope with conflict-related shocks.

On average for each family, maximum of three members, and minimum of two are targeted.

(Community FGD, Babile Somali)

We know that full family targeting is supposed to be practised by the current PSNP. But a few able-bodied family members were excluded during targeting. We are still applying [to the woreda] to accommodate the family members excluded from PSNP targeting.

(Mixed group FGD, Babile Oromiya)

Currently, full family targeting cannot be implemented in an effort to reach more families with the available resources.

(KII with *kebele* food security taskforce (KFSTF), Tehuledere)

PSNP support is delivered to clients as cash, food, or a combination of the two. In Babile Somali and Tehuledere, PSNP transfers are in cash, and in Babile Oromiya, a combination of cash and food. PSNP cash payments range from 320 to 340 birr per person per month, depending on the region. In all areas, FGD participants and KIIs undertaken by this study reported that the existing PSNP cash transfer amount was inadequate in view of the current high rate of inflation in the economy, despite payment increases across all PSNP *woredas* in 2022. For example, Babile Oromiya increased the payment rate from 230 to 340 birr per person per month, about a 39 per cent increase from 2021, but the national food inflation rate was 42.4 per cent during the first five months of the year (when PSNP's public works and associated support are implemented) (WFP 2022).

⁶ Full family targeting considers all members of targeted households for PSNP transfer. However, the core caseload number and associated budget of the programme are not adequate to secure full family targeting.

Box 3.1: Analysis of the purchasing power of PSNP cash support

We considered the PSNP payment rates and the average retail price of wheat in Harar (Oromiya) and Weldia (Amhara), the nearest markets to Babile Oromiya and Tehuledere, respectively, for the period January–June 2022.

Parameter	Babile Oromiya	Tehuledere	Average	
Wheat price, birr/quintal	4,967.0	4,734.0	4,850.5	
Payment rate, birr per person	340.0	320.0	330.0	
Purchasing power, birr/kg	9.1	10.2	9.7	
Payment gap, monthly,	kg	5.9	4.8	5.3
	%	39.1	31.8	35.5

Source: Calculated from the January–June 2022 wheat price obtained from [National Market Information System \(NMIS\)](#) and payment rate of 15kg per person per month from PSNP 4 Programme Implementation Manual (MoA 2014).

As indicated in the table, during this period the retail price of wheat was estimated at 4,967 birr per quintal for Babile Oromiya and 4,734 for Tehuledere. Accordingly, the 2022 PSNP payments could purchase about 9.1kg and 10.2kg of wheat per person per month for Babile Oromiya and Tehuledere, respectively. These rates are 5.9kg (39.1 per cent) and 4.8kg (31.8 per cent) for Babile Oromiya and Tehuledere, respectively, below the standard PSNP payment rate, which is 15kg of wheat without considering vegetable oil and pulses. Therefore, in 2022 the average PSNP cash payment in the two *woredas* was one third (35.5 per cent) below its value to purchase 15kg wheat from the nearby markets. This indicates that the PSNP payment in cash for conflict-affected people was lower at least by one third of what it should have been as per the food market conditions in 2022.

HFA similarly has not provided adequate support to people affected by conflict

According to KIIs with *kebele* administrators in the three study *woredas*, assistance delivered through humanitarian channels was also inadequate compared to the level of need experienced by conflict-affected people. Moreover, due to resource limitations, often *kebeles* are obliged to reduce the individual quota from 15kg per person per month to 10kg per person per month to cover more people with HFA support.

The emergency support is given in the form of grain, pulse, and edible oil. Usually, the transfer is not adequate to meet the needs of the people. It targets the entire household members. However, the resource limitation obliges the distribution centre to reduce the ration from 15 to 10kg/person/month.
(KIIs with *kebele* administration, Babile Oromiya)

In Babile Somali, for example, IDPs received minimal support to cover their basic needs and support their livelihoods.⁷ Humanitarian support reaches them about once every six months, prioritising the elderly, people with disabilities, and those who are ill (and unable to collect and sell firewood). One bag (50kg) of wheat is divided between two to three households. Generally, in Babile Somali, both IDPs and host communities complain that the humanitarian aid they receive is insufficient to meet their needs.

Though the [humanitarian] support is inadequate, priority is always given to the IDPs. The hosting community members agree on this as IDPs are needier than them... Usually 50kg of wheat is divided among three households.
(*Kebele* KIIs, Babile Somali)

Many people [IDPs] are not getting this [HFA] support. Very poor people who have no labour to collect and sell firewood, elders and handicapped get one bag of wheat for two households twice a year.
(FGD with women IDPs, Babile Somali)

⁷ KIIs with *woreda* food security taskforce (WFSTF) and KFSTF, Babile Somali, 2–3 October 2022.

HFA has not provided the necessary resources to meet the needs in all study *woredas* and cope with the rapid rise of IDPs in Tehuledere, alongside the competing needs of host communities for humanitarian support and social services. Across the study locales, the *woreda* and *kebele* leaders stressed the need to increase HFA resources to meet humanitarian demands of conflict-affected people and address community disagreements.

We believe that the emergency and HFA support is not adequate to meet family needs.
(Kebele KIIs, Babile Oromiya)

The emergency support in the woreda is inadequate to cover the needy people. Currently, in Babile town there are several women carrying and selling firewood. This shows the severity [of the] drought [including after conflict returnees] and the inadequacy of emergency support given to the target population.
(Woreda KII, Babile Oromiya)

The number of HFA target households should be increased so that the support can reach all the eligible community members. The amount of food given to families is not sufficient and it should be improved.
(Woreda KII, Babile Somali)

People impacted by conflict have specific nutritional, health, gendered, and psychosocial needs but the current social assistance mechanisms do not provide support for these in the three study woredas

The PSNP is not designed to meet all kinds of needs. Findings from the three sample *woredas* indicate that there had been no special humanitarian nutrition and health-related support for women, children, or elderly people with special needs and affected by conflict shocks. Alternatively, IDPs seek support from residents in nearby villages, as part of the community-based support extended to IDPs.

Conflict-affected people in Babile Somali and Tehuledere *woredas* experienced significant negative impacts on their livelihoods that are not addressed in current humanitarian or development programmes; for instance, houses were damaged or burnt down; livestock were looted and slaughtered; and household properties were sometimes confiscated. In Tehuledere, some family members were killed and others were traumatised by gender-based violence (some women were raped). Since the conflict, there were two rounds of HFA for affected people in Tehuledere. As indicated by the Woreda Disaster Risk Management Office (WDRMO), about 173 returnee households (those who had been displaced for the two worst weeks of the conflict) sustained complete or partial damage to their homes. Of these households, about half received construction materials and cash support from the Ethiopian NGO, Development Expertise Center (DEC). According to the *woreda* administration, many are still in need of similar support to rehabilitate damaged homes. In Tehuledere, the emergency support should be organised and coordinated in the form of food, shelter, livestock, and psychosocial support. However, several factors have put coordination of the emergency support in jeopardy, including limited resources, poor assessment of the level of damage sustained by the community, and failure to prioritise the type of support given to the target community.⁸ For instance, coordination of psychosocial support to victims of gender-based violence was not adequately provided due to lack of skills and trained personnel in the area at *woreda* level.

The community started fleeing from this woreda to different places of Amhara region including Kombolcha, Dessie, and as far as to the North Shewa as of 20 October 2021 when conflict occurred. The community members were attacked by the invading force that confiscated household properties, demolished and/or burnt down their homes, and slaughter[ed] their livestock. Especially, women suffered much as they were raped by the armed force members... The invading force stayed in the woreda for 45 days. The community members couldn't get any of their properties when they returned to their places.
(Kebele KII, Tehuledere)

⁸ National level conflict Damage and Needs Assessment (DaNA) was carried out and reported in December 2022 (see section 3.5). However, *woredas* and *kebeles* have not conducted their local level DaNA and have no plan for recovery and reconstruction.

About 79 households in rural areas and 39 households in the woreda town had completely lost their homes. They received cash and construction materials from an NGO called DEC for reconstruction and maintenance of damaged homes... Also 65 households sustained 40–50 per cent damage of homes that require major maintenance. But, they haven't yet received any support to do so. (Woreda KII, Tehuledere)

With these gaps in PSNP and HFA support, community-based support has been vital for conflict-affected people; but it is limited by climatic and conflict shocks, and social tensions

In the study *woredas*, community members have a tradition of helping, sharing, and caring for each other at critical times. The communities have organised themselves to provide support to conflict-affected people, especially to IDPs, until humanitarian aid is made available, and as additional support to compensate for minimal HFA transfers. While support received from other community members can likewise be unpredictable and inadequate, it is often the only type of support available at the onset of conflict before humanitarian aid or increased PSNP transfers are available. It has an outsize significance for displaced households, whose needs are often the greatest but who can be the most difficult to reach through the PSNP and, sometimes, through humanitarian channels.

However, CBS is prone to being withdrawn or reduced if the communities themselves are affected by climatic and conflict shocks, or when tensions develop between IDPs and host communities around the use of local resources. For instance, in Tehuledere, when host communities were attacked and displaced during the 2021 conflict, they were unable to continue supporting IDPs who had sheltered in the *woreda* to escape the expulsion in western Oromiya region.

We got support from the woreda administration and people, not only shelter; they gave us also love and comfort. It was the community who gave us food, clothing, cooking materials, etc., especially at the time we reached this site for the first time...

(FGD with IDP men from Wollega, Tehuledere)

3.2 Targeting

Targeting refers to the identification of who should receive aid. Community-based targeting methods are used by both the PSNP and HFA to identify target beneficiaries. There is an overlap in membership of the targeting committee for the PSNP and HFA. Both channels apply wealth ranking to identify their clients. A key difference is that HFA targeting is practised at the *kebele* level while PSNP targeting is at the village level.

This section summarises key issues found in the study *woredas* related to the targeting eligibility criteria, assessments, and processes for PSNP, HFA, and CBS, and community members' and beneficiaries' perceptions of these, during and after conflict.

The PSNP targets permanent residents of woredas while HFA provides support to IDPs

The PSNP targets permanent residents of *woredas* and regions. However, the PSNP is not designed to provide support for people who move to a new *woreda* or region. People in Tehuledere *woreda* in Amhara who were displaced from Oromiya region and people displaced between the two Babiles, moving from Oromiya to Somali regions or vice versa, did not fit the eligibility criteria for the 2021 PSNP targeting as they were not permanent residents of these *woredas* and regions. Instead, they had to rely on HFA, which was prioritised for IDPs.

We tried to accommodate conflict-affected families, such as female-headed households, during the PSNP targeting. However, the resource limitation was quite a challenge and the quota allocated to the kebele needs to be improved.

(Kebele KII, Babile Oromiya)

The IDPs in this kebele do not receive the PSNP transfers. Some of them have told us that they used to receive the transfers in their original areas [Babile Oromiya] before they came here. They were not even considered for the PSNP support during the recent [2021] targeting in our kebele... No one tells us the reason why they are not included. Sometimes when the IDPs ask why they are not considered for the PSNP, the woreda PSNP workers tell them that it's because of inadequate money [budget].

(FGD with IDP host communities, Babile Somali)

Conflict has affected PSNP targeting processes and accountability mechanisms, impeding transparency and community participation, and leading to perceptions of unfairness and complaints, with risks for increased social tensions

All three *woredas* undertook targeting exercises in 2021 as part of the PSNP 5 shift to identify people living in severe poverty (previously the programme targeted households that were chronically food insecure). In Tehuledere, during the conflict in 2021, the *woreda* food security desk lost the targeting assessment data and thus had to undertake a second round of collecting data from *kebeles*.⁹ This had to be done in haste and community members did not participate. As a result, community members from the sample *kebeles* harboured reservations about the fairness and transparency of the targeting.

Previously, they did the [PSNP] targeting and let the people comment on that. But in the recent targeting the public didn't get a chance to comment. So, there is disappointment [among the] public.
(FGD with non-displaced men, Tehuledere)

In contrast, in Babile Oromiya and Babile Somali targeting for PSNP 5 took place during a relatively peaceful time, nearly two years since the height of the conflict. *Kebele* officials and area residents alike reported that targeting was undertaken with the usual participatory methods.¹⁰ In both Babiles, people reported that they perceived PSNP 5 targeting to be fair and transparent.

We believe that the [2021 PSNP] targeting process was fair and transparent. We discussed the selection criteria with and actively participated the community in the selection process. We finally posted the list of targeted households at the kebele office for endorsement or submission of complaints, if any. The complaints were entertained by the appeal committee established at kebele level.

(KII with KFSTF, Babile Oromiya)

We believe that the [PSNP] targeting process was fair and transparent. The appeal committee was involved in solving targeting complaints. The real problem is the inadequacy of cash transfer per person.

(FGD with women, Babile Somali)

According to FGD participants in all three sample *kebeles*, it was possible to submit complaints about the PSNP targeting process and outcomes to *kebele* appeal committees. The committees were reported in the main to respond to appeals in a timely manner. However, conflict and displacement disrupted the functionality of PSNP's appeal handling in Tehuledere.¹¹

HFA targeting prioritises IDPs in the absence of other support. Nevertheless, in the context of broad-based need, the process of categorisation and excluding those in need due to resource shortages can incite social tensions

HFA has prioritised supporting IDPs in the study *woredas*. FGDs with host community members in the study *woredas* revealed that this prioritisation is perceived as fair by the host communities. As some local people predictably get PSNP support, which is not provided to IDPs, distributing HFA to the IDPs is considered a way of ensuring wider coverage of social assistance to populations in need. As indicated by host community members, humanitarian assistance plays a major role in the social stability and peaceful coexistence of the host community and the IDPs.

*Now, the [humanitarian] food assistance is largely given to IDPs. We [the host community] asked the *woreda* and kebele administrations to prioritise the IDPs because they are more in need than us and they don't receive the PSNP transfers.*

(FGD with men, Babile Somali)

The conflict-affected people – especially the IDPs – are the primary target of the HFA transfers.

(KII with *woreda* DRM, Babile Somali)

⁹ KII with WFSTF, Tehuledere, 21 October 2022.

¹⁰ KFSTF KII, Babile Oromiya, 30 September 2022; and FGD with women, 2 October 2022.

¹¹ FGD with men and women, Tehuledere, 19 October 2022.

In Tehuledere, IDPs from western Oromiya all received HFA when they first arrived as these people had no other way to meet their basic needs. Later, in Tehuledere and in Babile Somali, community-based targeting categorised people who needed HFA into three groups based on the damage they had sustained to their livelihoods during the conflict, with community members taking part in the assessment through targeting committees. Only the first (worst-affected) group, identified as having no alternative source of income (except for selling their own labour and collecting and selling firewood and charcoal), received HFA.

[In the case of the host community], the community participates in categorising the community into three groups. Otherwise, [in the case of IDPs from western Oromiya], HFA is distributed to all households by the woreda DRM in collaboration with the kebele administration.

(KII with kebele administration, Tehuledere, 21 October 2022)

Further, the categorisation of the community into three groups generated tensions.¹² IDP camps in Babile Somali have HFA targeting committees formed of elderly people, women, and leaders from within the community. The committees conducted targeting with support from the *kebele* administrations and guidance from the WDRMO. During this process, very poor and elderly people were prioritised. This community-based HFA targeting has strengthened acceptance of targeting decisions among the IDPs.¹³

Community-based support, based on cultural norms of helping others and sharing resources, is critical for conflict-affected people, in particular IDPs. CBS often involves state, civil society, and community participation to identify beneficiaries and guide the conflict response

The three study *woredas* all reported on how important CBS is for people affected by conflict. This CBS is given to IDPs in the form of food, clothing, cooking materials, and other support as they reach the camps. In addition, local people in Babile Somali share small plots of land with their relatives among the IDPs to plant food crops.¹⁴ Community leaders, community members, and local government authorities are all involved in directing support from community networks.

CBS is one of the five strategies of the country's National Policy and Strategy on Disaster Risk Management, which envisages 'a community centered and organized mass mobilization-based disaster risk management system' (FDRE 2013: 11). *Woreda*, town, and *kebele* administrations help coordinate the distribution of CBS to IDPs; likewise, religious leaders and members of local committees from women's associations, business associations, and Edirs¹⁵ have major roles in mobilising and delivering community support to IDPs.

In Tehuledere, the *woreda* and *kebele* administrations established and continued to work with a peace and security committee comprising IDPs living inside camps to mobilise and distribute CBS resources from the local community. In Babile Somali, Muslim religious leaders have led the mobilisation and distribution of resources from the local community to IDPs as they arrive at the camps.

The woreda and kebele administrations, and host community representatives take part in collecting locally available support for the IDPs. The peace and security committee of the IDPs, in collaboration with the woreda and kebele administrations, coordinates the distribution of the resources available from the local community. The available resources from the community [are] distributed to the IDP community based on family size, gender, and need.

(FGD with IDP men, Tehuledere, 19 October 2022)

Religious leaders are leading the support [mobilisation] for the IDPs from the local community. Men, women, and youth are participating in this process [by bringing resources].

(FGD with women, Babile Somali, 2 October 2022)

¹² KII with *kebele* administration, Tehuledere, 21 October 2022.

¹³ KII with WFSTF, Babile Somali, 3 October 2022.

¹⁴ FGD with IDP women, Babile Somali, 2 October 2022.

¹⁵ An Edir is a traditional community organisation whose members assist each other during the mourning process.

3.3 Modality

With prices rising due to conflict and other factors, people preferred to be given food over cash (despite food basket shortages), but the PSNP and HFA are not designed to adapt in real time to such shifts

In FGDs conducted in October 2022, PSNP and HFA beneficiaries reported that they preferred to receive food over cash transfers. This contrasts with previous experiences in Babile Somali (under PSNP 4), when people received all PSNP payments in food and then they sold part of the food to meet non-food demands. Later, it was changed to cash payments.

The PSNP food entitlement is 15kg of grain, 1.5kg of pulses, and 0.45kg of oil per person per month. However, pulses and oil are not always available. As a result, beneficiaries that receive PSNP support as food transfers also reported to this study that the PSNP transfers were inadequate to meet the needs of their households.

Humanitarian relief passing through the DRM system is usually given in the form of cash, food, or a combination of both. However, people usually prefer such assistance to be in the form of food as it has greater value than cash. The food assistance is usually in the form of cereals. The full basket of food including cereals, oil, and pulses is mostly not available due to resource shortages.

3.4 Transfer delivery

The conflict and post-conflict impacts on food transportation, region-to-woreda cash transfers and other administrative processes caused delays in PSNP transfers and unpredictability for both recipients and local authorities alike

There were some interruptions to PSNP support during conflict outbreaks and, commonly, delays to PSNP support during and after conflict in the three study *woredas*. Interrupted and delayed PSNP transfers heightened families' food insecurity, leading them to resort to borrowing money or food from better-off families and selling their assets such as livestock. The impacts were more severe for people who have been affected by conflict and lost their regular livelihoods.

The timeliness and frequency of PSNP payments varied from *woreda* to *woreda* depending on local contexts such as prevalence of conflicts, conveyance of cash or food transfer to the *woreda*, type of transfer, and timely delivery of public works attendance reports. In the sample *woredas*, beneficiaries received cash transfers through banks, while food is provided at distribution sites. Often PSNP clients have to travel a long way to collect cash and/or food payments.

The PSNP transfer is delivered both in food and cash. The food transfer is given from the store [located in woreda town] at about 11km away from our kebele. We collect our cash transfer from banks located in Babile town.

(FGD with women, Babile Oromiya)

Regarding interruptions in payments, there were reports that the PSNP transfers were paused during local conflicts in Babile Somali and Babile Oromiya. Payments were resumed with some delays following resolution of the conflicts. In Babile Oromiya, the PSNP was able to adapt and help people who missed transfers due to conflict by making back payments. Similarly, in Tehuledere conflict-displaced PSNP clients were able to collect their payments at the *woreda* centre.

From the beneficiary perspective, as described in the previous section, there were also interruptions in support for IDPs who moved into a new region (for example, the IDPs from Babile Oromiya who settled in Babile Somali). These IDPs were not able to receive their PSNP payments, as inter-regional PSNP resource transfer is not possible.

In all three *woredas*, there were delays in making payments ranging from a few weeks (Babile Oromiya and Babile Somali) to two months (Tehuledere). According to the *woreda* food security desks, delays often related to the impacts of conflict, such as the late arrival of public works attendance sheets or food transportation problems, and sometimes the transfer of money from region to *woreda* took longer.

Cash transfers experienced fewer delays than food transfers, but not in all cases. This made the PSNP transfer unpredictable for both recipients and implementers.

The *kebele* administration interviewed in Tehuledere¹⁶ acknowledged the delays and the unpredictability of PSNP payments. However, it was not aware of the reasons given by the *woreda* administration, indicating the lack of a common effort by the *woreda* and *kebele* to resolve the problems within their scope and reduce the delays in PSNP transfer payments.

HFA support proved to be even less predictable for conflict-affected people

Generally, in the three *woredas* humanitarian assistance is neither timely nor predictable for conflict-affected people. Community members reported that they are not informed when humanitarian assistance would arrive. In all cases, the delivery schedule of emergency support is not as predictable as the PSNP transfers.

We received emergency humanitarian support twice a year, but it is not predictable.
(FGD with returnee women, Babile Somali)

We did not have sufficient information on humanitarian assistance. In the first round of support, they [kebele officials] called and told us there would be assistance. Then based on our family size, they gave us what we got.
(FGD with returnee men, Tehuledere)

In the Babile Somali FGDs, participants talked about how, when IDPs do not know when the HFA will arrive, they resort to selling firewood and charcoal, and that the *woreda* administration had announced restrictions on the collection of firewood and burning charcoal. As a result, some people have started to go to Babile town to look for work or beg for *sedeqah* (gifts) on prayer days. Others receive in-kind support from different sources – such as cooking utensils and used clothes – and take these items to sell at the market so they can meet their daily needs.¹⁷

Moreover, the HFA support – when it does arrive – can be under quota or of poor quality. For example, Tehuledere IDPs (who received only two rounds of emergency support in a year) reported being given 31 per cent less cereals than the EDRMC standard and no pulses or oil at all.¹⁸ Moreover, IDPs in the sample *kebele* of Tehuledere reported that one of the rounds of support was weevilled wheat.¹⁹

The Tehuledere *woreda* administration reported working with government departments, NGOs, and private businesses to provide timely support to conflict-affected households. Mostly, the support provided was one-off and for a limited number of people. However, although they provided important support to the IDPs at a critical time of need, such support is irregular and unpredictable, with problems in identifying and matching conflict shock problems with appropriate support type. For instance, delivering carpets as support for IDP households who have lost their homes shows the mismatch in needs-based delivery.

3.5 Reconstruction and recovery

The Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF) has been formulated to comprehensively provide life-saving recovery and rehabilitation assistances to conflict-affected populations

In June 2023, the Government of Ethiopia set out its 3RF, which details the implementation arrangements and institutional framework, a resource mobilisation strategy, and financial mechanisms to manage and fund the country's recovery from 2023 to 2028. It was based on the National Policy and Strategy on Disaster Risk Management (FDRE 2013), which has three overarching objectives: to save lives, protect livelihoods, and ensure the provision of recovery and rehabilitation assistances to all disaster-affected populations.

¹⁶ KII, 21 October 2022.

¹⁷ FGD with IDP women, Babile Somali, 10 October 2022.

¹⁸ The EDRMC standard for HFA support is to deliver 2,100 kilocalories or a basket of 15kg of cereals, 1.5kg of pulses, and 0.45kg of vegetable oil per person per month (EDRMC 2024).

¹⁹ FGD with women, Tehuledere, 19 October 2022.

The 3RF is based on the December 2022 Damage and Needs Assessment (DaNA), prepared with technical assistance from the World Bank and development partners (GoE 2022). The DaNA provides a comprehensive inventory of damages, losses, and needs resulting from the conflict affecting northern Ethiopia between November 2020 and December 2021. The damage across sectors and the regions covered in the DaNA²⁰ is estimated at US\$22.69bn, while total reconstruction and recovery needs are put at US\$19.73bn (*ibid.*).

A Resilience, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (3R) unit, reporting to the President's Office,²¹ was established at the federal level to lead the 3RF, with the expectation that 3R units will be established at the regional level. Government and community-based institutions alike are expected to be involved in the implementation of 3R plans. Most of these institutions are new to such a comprehensive programme supporting conflict-affected people. Based on this, there is a need for capacity-building efforts in human resources, office facilities, etc., to bring the 3R plan to the ground.

²⁰ The DaNA gave a comprehensive geospatial coverage to the northern conflicts (Tigray, Afar, and Amhara) and the spillover pockets of conflicts in parts of Benishangul-Gumuz, Oromiya, and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) (Konso).

²¹ KII with MoF, 14 June 2023.

4. Conclusion

Ethiopia is undergoing a fragile political and socioeconomic period, one that is exacerbated by conflict dynamics that have undermined the food security, nutrition, and livelihoods of many. While those already targeted for PSNP support were provided for to an extent during recent conflicts, they did not receive additional food or cash assistance from the programme despite having additional needs relating to the impacts of the conflict. Indeed, the PSNP itself has faced a financing crunch in recent years, which has strained routine programme functions and limited transfer values; the application of ‘partial family targeting’ is but one reflection of the resource shortage and attempts by programme implementers to extend coverage. Thus, the ambitions of PSNP 5 to respond to (climate) shocks have been dented by a funding shortfall. Humanitarian providers have stepped up to support conflict-affected populations in many areas. Since the PSNP 5 design was not explicit about how the programme should function in situations of conflict, humanitarian aid is used to support conflict-affected populations (including PSNP recipients) through the EDRMC system.

Yet, the patchiness of humanitarian assistance and gaps in provision for particular conflict-affected populations – notably IDPs – underscores the need to rethink the nexus of PSNP and humanitarian assistance in conflict-affected areas. PSNP systems have been unable to accommodate the needs of programme beneficiaries who are displaced outside of their home region. PSNP systems even struggled to provide transfers to beneficiaries who move to neighbouring *woredas*, let alone to other regions. Still, this study has uncovered examples of regional and *woreda* authorities acting flexibly to provide transfers to displaced households, and to fulfil payments that were missed when displaced people return.

Efforts by regional and *woreda* officials to adapt the programme’s implementation and delivery indicate the willingness and need for the PSNP to function differently and more flexibly in response to conflict-related shocks. Other reforms could strengthen the effectiveness of PSNP provision for programme beneficiaries who are affected by conflict. For example, while not a panacea, the greater use of digital payments, possibly facilitated through a network of community-based agents, could promote the continuity of payments in areas where conflict makes it difficult to operate or to access populations requiring assistance. Further, programme officials should continue to explore ways of supporting the portability of payments for PSNP beneficiaries who are displaced. The difficulties of doing so within the programme’s current administrative and operational set-up could encourage the consideration of other approaches, such as establishing a federal-level contingency fund specifically to cover the needs of PSNP beneficiaries who are displaced.

The recent government commitment to recovery and reconstruction interventions through the 3RF require appropriate planning, resource mobilisation, and actions to support the stabilisation and reconstruction of lives and livelihoods post conflict. Planning interventions must carefully consider the views of conflict-affected communities to cautiously design and implement a recovery and reconstruction plan that brings about long-lasting solutions that address the root causes of conflicts and displacement, and their impacts. Lessons from cash plus programmes could be instructive here, where the plus components might be innovations to facilitate social cohesion and peace-building at the community level.

Finally, affirmative policies are necessary to address the food security and livelihood needs of IDPs and returnee households. Such affirmative interventions should focus on restoring government institutions and community services (water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); health; education; and roads) damaged during the conflicts. In line with this, interventions that create access to medical and psychosocial support can be provided and expanded for individuals, and communities affected by conflict.

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