



Development Aid to Ethiopia

OVERLOOKING VIOLENCE, MARGINALIZATION, AND
POLITICAL REPRESSION

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POLITICAL REPRESSION

A Publication of the Oakland Institute

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was written by Luis Flores, a fellow with the Oakland Institute, in collaboration with the Oakland Institute's research team headed by Frederic Mousseau. We are grateful to Lori Pottinger of International Rivers and Felix Horne of Human Rights Watch for their thoughtful feedback on the report.

The views and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the Oakland Institute alone and do not reflect opinions of the individuals and organizations that have sponsored and supported the work.

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Cover photos: (top) Ethiopian army soldiers monitoring Suri people during a festival in Kibish (bottom) Typical highland scene in Amhara (back) the Omo River in Korcho.

Publisher: The Oakland Institute is a policy think tank dedicated to advancing public participation and fair debate on critical social, economic, and environmental issues.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
DAG	Development Assistance Group Ethiopia
DfID	British Department for International Development
EDF	Ethiopian Defense Force
ELAP	Ethiopia Strengthening Land Administration Program
ELTAP	Ethiopian Land Tenure Policy and Administration Program
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FTF	Feed the Future
GEQIP	General Education Quality Improvement Package
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
HABP	Household Asset Building Program
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDA	World Bank's International Development Association
NFSP	National Food Security Program
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
PBS	Ethiopian Protection of Basic Services Program (Phases I, II, III)
PSCBP	Public Sector Capacity Building Program
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Program
REILA	Responsible and Innovative Land Administration in Ethiopia
CSL	Civil Society Law
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WBG	World Bank Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ethiopia is a locus of international attention in the Horn of Africa due to both its consistently high rates of economic growth and for its continued problems with widespread hunger and poverty. The nation is also significant for being among the most dependent on foreign aid. Topping the worldwide list of countries receiving aid from the US, UK, and the World Bank, the nation has been receiving \$3.5 billion on average from international donors in recent years, which represents 50 to 60 percent of its national budget.¹

Development aid has become essential in funding the Ethiopian government's so-called development strategy, outlined in the 2010 Growth and Transformation Plan. Through extensive infrastructure construction and large-scale agricultural production, the government of Ethiopia seeks to reach middle-income status by 2015. A key element of the development strategy is the relocation of 1.5 million people from areas targeted for industrial plantations under the government's "villagization" program. With more than 80 percent of the Ethiopian population² dependent on agriculture and pastoralism for subsistence, the disruptions caused by the villagization program are resulting in increased food insecurity, destruction of livelihoods, and the loss of cultural heritage.

Over the past three years, Ethiopia's donors have conducted assessments that confirmed the accounts of the use of violence, intimidation, political

coercion, and the denial of government assistance as tools in forced resettlement of ethnic and pastoral communities. However, they have failed to take decisive action to prevent policies that deny the basic human rights of some of the poorest and most marginalized people of Ethiopia.

This report presents evidence revealing how international development aid to Ethiopia is actually implicated in the problematic villagization program. Through the funding of agricultural investment initiatives like the Land Tenure and Administration Program, Feed the Future, the Pastoral Livelihoods Initiative, and the National Food Security Program, donors indirectly and directly provide assistance to the Ethiopian government's villagization scheme. Donors are also involved in the implementation of forced resettlement through social service programs like the multi-billion dollar Protecting Basic Services.

Donor organizations have failed to hold the Ethiopian government to standards of human and political rights, a neglect principally illustrated by the accounts of the forced relocations of entire communities in the name of development. The main donors also approve of and support—at least tacitly—the government's policy of agricultural "modernization," which in the absence of land tenure for local people is resulting in local land being given away to establish large-scale agricultural plantations run by foreign companies or with foreign funding.

International donors, seemingly concerned with not being formally associated with the government of Ethiopia's Resettlement Program, claim that no direct funding goes to the program, but these same donors provide substantial resources to the other pillars of the National Food Security Program. This approach allows them to claim they are not supporting or participating in any wrongdoing, however their overall funding for this sector along with the Ethiopian government's own resources, allows the resettlement program to take place.

Furthermore, the World Bank is providing indirect funding (through the support of a transmission line) to the controversial Gibe III Dam, which, once complete, will provide not just electricity but also water for the irrigation of large plantations on land that is being usurped from the ethnic communities of South Omo.

The US State Department³ and independent entities that have conducted investigations have acknowledged the increasingly repressive policies of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, the nation's ruling party. Proclamations restricting the operating of civil society organizations and the exercise of free press are legitimized under the banner of fighting terrorism. Accounts of unjustly incarcerated journalists are reflective of what has been called the state's "architecture of repression."

The US has suggested that it has decided to turn a blind eye to the "democracy deficit" of the regime because the "positive role played by Ethiopia within the Horn of Africa region is a strong basis for USG constructive engagement with Ethiopia."⁴

While it is critical to provide assistance to agricultural investment and the improvement of livelihoods and food security in Ethiopia, the current approach of international donors is resulting in the opposite effect. The Oakland Institute calls for truly independent investigations, conducted by international experts, into the impact of "development" programs currently being implemented in Ethiopia and into the role of donor funds in the villagization program and other allegations of violence stemming from development initiatives. Ethiopia's key donors should support this demand in order to allow accurate and objective information to surface and to ensure that their aid is not being used to restrict freedoms, violate human rights, or stifle democracy.



Excavator at work, Mago.

INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia, once described by former President Bill Clinton as a nation in “renaissance,” remains a land of contradictions.⁵ The second most populous nation in the African continent, Ethiopia remains among the poorest, with a per capita average annual income of \$170.⁶ Although it is considered one of two major “water towers” in Africa, chronic droughts have become part of Ethiopia’s reality, contributing to severe food insecurity and widespread hunger. Among nations categorized as “developing,” Ethiopia maintains a relatively low urban population at 17 percent; most Ethiopians continue to reside in rural areas and 82 percent of the country’s population depends on subsistence agriculture.⁷ These figures are often presented in juxtaposition to Ethiopia’s highly praised statistics on economic growth. In the last decade, the Ethiopian economy has grown between 4 and 7 percent every year.⁸ Ethiopia is a key US strategic ally in the unstable Horn of Africa and the war against Islamist militants in Somalia. It hosts the Headquarters of the African Union,

and the Ethiopian Prime Minister chairs the Union in 2013. Industrial interests have converged on Ethiopia as well, given its position on the “fast track to progress.”⁹ This combination of humanitarian need and the Ethiopian government’s receptiveness to foreign investment and Western strategic interests has made Ethiopia a “magnet for donors.”¹⁰

In recent years, Ethiopia has been receiving \$3.5 billion on average from international donors, which represents between 50 to 60 percent of its national budget.¹¹ The entities that have provided the most substantial development aid for the last decade are the US (through USAID and the State Department), the World Bank Group, and the UK.¹² The government controlled by the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) has developed strong development rhetoric in recent years—going as far as describing Ethiopia as a “development state.”¹³ In 2006, it enacted the Accelerated and Sustained Development to

End Poverty (PASDEP) program, which began a restructuring of agricultural arrangements to increase exports with the stated purpose of improving food security.¹⁴ Proving effective at attracting large sums of foreign assistance, the Ethiopian government recently built on past efforts with the 2010-2015 Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP). Through this plan for economic development, the government aims to reach middle-income nation status. But with \$3.5 billion in donor money on the books, the “development state” is highly dependent on the flow of foreign aid.

Beneath promises of equitable and democratic development, Ethiopia’s drive to development has depended on state force and the denial of human and civil rights. One of the most controversial elements of the government’s development policy involves the relocation of 1.5 million people between 2010-2013¹⁵ under the “villagization” program. On-the-ground research by the Oakland Institute, Human Rights Watch, and other organizations has revealed accounts of human rights violations ranging from beatings, unlawful arrests, and rape at the hands of the Ethiopian Defense Force, all used to enforce the government’s “villagization” program. “Voluntary” resettlements, particularly in Gambella and Omo, have targeted the agro-pastoral and ethnic communities living on land that was simultaneously advertised to foreign investors.¹⁶ The resettlements under the villagization program have enabled the implementation of some of the GTP’s goals, including large-scale plantations and irrigation infrastructure.¹⁷ The coerced resettlements under the villagization program--done in the name of development--rely on the government’s promises of social services and improved access to health and education facilities, which are used to legitimize

resettlement of people in new villages.¹⁸ Independent evaluations have found that the government’s promises of social services and fertile land often lack follow through.¹⁹ However, international donors that provide such large amounts of resources to the country have remained widely silent on the increasingly troubling development programs being pursued by the government.

In recent years, Ethiopia has been the second largest recipient of British aid, receiving \$261.8 million in 2011.²⁰ Recently, the UK’s Department for International Development (DfID) has come under scrutiny for failing to address reports of human rights abuses underwritten by DfID aid in Ethiopia.²¹ A lawsuit filed against DfID by the London-based firm Leigh Day & Co. publically alleges the complicity of Western donors in the forced resettlement of ethnic people in the Gambella region. Ethiopia has received about \$1 billion annually from the US between 2008 and 2010. The amount of US aid was \$608.3 million in 2011, nearly three times the amount allocated by UK aid.²² In the United States, the connection between the sums distributed to the Ethiopian government in development assistance and its continued failure to secure basic human rights remains largely ignored.

This report will point to the unquestioned and underanalyzed connections between Western development assistance as it functions to prop up the repressive political structure in Ethiopia. By widening an analysis of the use of development aid, the Oakland Institute also hopes to provide policy makers with a framework of political, historical, and human rights considerations that should inform future development assistance policies for the country.



“From aid to trade,”Gavin Houtheusen/DFID.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AID TO ETHIOPIA

“Regardless of the real motive for the resettlement policy, its net effect was to increase government control over large segments of society... The main value of this policy for the regime seems to have been the political control it promised.”

--Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1991²³

Historical Context of Foreign Aid

Ethiopia's path to development has been different from that taken by many African nations. Having avoided colonial rule, the establishment of Ethiopia as a “development state” was not a result of a colonist nation's attempt to retain influence in a time of decolonization, but rather grew out of emperor's Haile Selassie's attempt to expand power with foreign assistance.²⁴ As historian Amanda Kay McVety reflects in her 2012 study of aid to Ethiopia, development initiatives in Ethiopia have historically enabled “the state to control the people in a more dangerous way.”²⁵ To a significant degree, this dependence of state power on foreign assistance continues today.

As a 1991 study by the Library of Congress' Federal

Research Division concluded, this codependence was strong enough to withstand communist rule. “Although the Derg [regime] depended on the Soviet Union and its allies for military aid,” explains the Library of Congress report, “it was just as reliant on the West for economic development and relief aid.”²⁶ Particularly in the early 1980s, when the relationship between the Derg regime (the military junta that ruled the country from 1974 until 1987) and the Soviet Union was severed, the European community, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank Group offered millions in economic aid. Under the Derg, aid was used to consolidate control, not unlike under Selassie. A principal mechanism of state control was the mammoth forced resettlement of 13 million people by 1989.²⁷ The history of foreign development assistance to

Ethiopia suggests that the muddled, political, and often-coercive practices through which aid is actually implemented are nothing new. The relevance of this history is stressed by an informant to the Oakland Institute, who lamented in 2011, “Now the people [south Ethiopian pastoralists] are agreeing to everything the government is saying. They have no choice. The people live in fear... The government is acting like the previous Derg government.”²⁸

The increase in development aid to Ethiopia in the 1990s following the rise of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi corresponded with an expanding vision of Ethiopia as the leader of an “African Renaissance” and Ethiopia’s capital of Addis Ababa as both the continent’s diplomatic capital and “epicenter of [Africa’s] transformation.”²⁹ Ethiopia has been receiving \$3.5 billion on average in Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) from international donors in recent years, consistently ranking among the top five ODA recipients globally in the past decade.³⁰ The United States, the World Bank, and the United Kingdom make up the top three individual donors respectively. Ethiopia is currently the largest recipient of British aid and is among the largest non-war state recipient of US aid. Ethiopia has adopted a development model characterized by large-scale infrastructure development and the promotion of large-scale agricultural projects. Enabled by land resettlements, mammoth irrigation infrastructure, and unmatched concessions to foreign investors, Ethiopia’s development model is centered on expanding the national “export basket,” through a transition from agrarian to agro-industrial production.³¹ While Ethiopia’s number-one export has long been coffee beans, the government is promoting an expansion in the production of high-

value crops like cotton, rubber, sugar, palm oil, and cut flowers.

In 2005, Norwegian chemical producer Yara International granted the inaugural African Green Revolution Prize to Meles Zenawi, Ethiopia’s late Prime Minister, citing his role in “providing an enabling policy environment, securing ownership rights, improving child nutrition, making markets for the poor and doing all this in a way that protects and enhances the rural environment.”³² Yet, the path chosen by Ethiopia for agricultural development undermines the food security of millions of Ethiopians and increases the dependency of the country on global markets—in terms of monetary fluctuations, foreign currency reserves, access to chemical inputs, and land appropriations to sustain large-scale monoculture and foreign investment.³³

Famine and the Politics of Hunger

Hunger has never left Ethiopia following the devastating 1984-85 famine, which was responsible for the death of an estimated 400,000 Ethiopians.³⁴ Nowadays, 34 million Ethiopians--40 percent of the population--are considered chronically hungry.³⁵ Every single year, an estimated 10 to 15 million depend on food aid for their survival.³⁶ In 2010, Ethiopia was the world’s largest recipient of food aid, with nearly \$1.2 billion in aid allocated.³⁷

Seasonal drought is often cited as the cause of Ethiopia’s food insecurity, but the country is faced with chronic levels of undernutrition and food insecurity, which have little to do with climate. What made the 1984 Ethiopian famine particularly deadly was a hasty and violent forced resettlement scheme, a decade-long “economic war” on the rural



Maize harvest in Gambella.

population, and the use of humanitarian aid as a political weapon against Eritrea and Tigray.³⁸

Similarly, modern policies continue to exacerbate food insecurity, particularly for communities opposed to the Ethiopian government. The October 2010 report by Human Rights Watch, *Development Without Freedom: How Aid Underwrites Repression in Ethiopia*, reported the widespread “politicization” of food aid, agricultural inputs, and safety net protection.³⁹

The high volatility of food commodities prices has been a major threat to food security in recent years.⁴⁰

Moreover, the Oakland Institute has found increased food insecurity resulting from the government’s villagization program and inadequate employment resulting from large-scale foreign investment in the Lower Omo Valley and Gambella regions.⁴¹

Human Rights Violations

Widely reported allegations of civil and human rights abuses complicate Ethiopia’s “renaissance” narrative.⁴² The 2012 human rights assessment by the US State Department reported a long list of human rights violations, including, “arbitrary killings; allegations of torture, beating, abuse, and mistreatment of detainees by security forces;

reports of harsh and at times life-threatening prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention... infringement on citizens' privacy rights, including illegal searches; allegations of abuses in the implementation of the government's 'villagization' program; restrictions on academic freedom; restrictions on freedom of assembly, association and movement," among other violations.⁴³

In addition to political repression and violence, the government of Ethiopia has implemented its development initiatives with force and repression. According to allegations by citizens on the ground, Ethiopia's National Defense Force, under the direction of the government, has been the principal perpetrator of violence against local communities. The Oakland Institute and Human Rights Watch collected reports of beatings, intimidation, and unlawful arrests in regions in the Lower Omo Valley that have been targeted for resettlement.⁴⁴ Similar accounts of human rights violations have been uncovered in the Gambella region, also a site of large-scale resettlement for agricultural development. "The overwhelming majority of these beatings happened when people expressed concern about villagization," found a Human Rights Watch report. "Many beatings also took place during construction of tukulas in the new villages, where displaced people were forced to build their own homes."⁴⁵

The villagization program also involves sexual violence against the local population. Resettlement increases vulnerability to sexual abuse, as women must often travel longer distances for water and men will often leave their families for extended periods to return to their original lands to farm.⁴⁶

Human rights violations have also been extensively documented in the Lower Omo Valley, where local opposition to large-scale sugar plantations is resulting in arbitrary arrests and physical violence against the Mursi and Bodi communities. Patterns of abuse and intimidation stemming from opposition to resettlement and forced evictions have been reported as well.⁴⁷

A 2012 report by a committee within the United Nation's Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern that the so-called Voluntary Resettlement Program (villagization program) "entails forced evictions of thousands of people in various regions . . . who are relocated to villages that lack basic infrastructure, such as health clinics, clean water supplies and schools, as well as agricultural assistance or food assistance."⁴⁸ A common theme connecting allegations of abuse throughout Ethiopia is the role of violence as a means of stifling opposition to state policy.

Crackdown on Dissent

"Next time I travel to Ethiopia, I may be arrested as a terrorist. Why? Because I have published articles about Ethiopian politics."

--Tobias Hagmann, scholar of Ethiopia and Somalia⁴⁹

The government of Ethiopia's attempts to silence opposition to its economic development policies do not only target the affected local communities; the government has also been implementing what some have called an "architecture of repression" that is reinforced by national law.⁵⁰

A number of independent journalists, Muslim civil society organizations, ethnic populations and other

critics of government policies have been labeled by the government as terrorists, making them susceptible to the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation.⁵¹ A Human Rights Watch report has found that the “terrorist” label is often deployed by the Ethiopian government to justify cracking down on civil rights and to explain anti-government stance.⁵²

On January 6, 2009, the government passed the Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009 of Ethiopia. Known as the Civil Society Law (CSL), the proclamation makes it illegal for any civil society organization deriving more than 10 percent of its funding from foreign sources to operate within Ethiopia. As Northwestern University’s Law Center put it, “the CSL contains restrictive provisions that will effectively silence Ethiopia’s human rights advocates.”⁵³ The proclamation came four years after a proclamation barring civil society organizations from observing national elections—a directive issued six weeks prior to the 2005 elections.⁵⁴ The 2009 proclamation has since been used as the basis for silencing organizations critical of the government. In early 2013, the proclamation was used to justify the ban on three civil society organizations, One Euro, the Islamic Cultural and Research Center, and Gohe Child and Youth and Women Development, which were deemed to be engaged in “illegal religious activities.”⁵⁵ The proclamation directly undermines the aims of the 1999 UN General Assembly’s “Declaration of Human Rights Protectors,” an amendment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁵⁶

Just a few months after the adoption of the 2009 SCL, the Ethiopian government passed a similarly repressive Anti-Terrorism Proclamation. In 2009,

Amnesty International expressed concern that “the law could restrict freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and the right to fair trial.”⁵⁷ These concerns have materialized. In 2012, the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation was used by the government to justify the arrest and imprisonment of Ethiopian journalist Eskinder Nega, who was arrested days after he publicly criticized the use of anti-terror laws to stifle dissent. Following a trial denounced by the PEN American Center, Nega was sentenced to 12 years over allegations of terrorism.⁵⁸ *The New York Times* counts Nega among 11 journalists who have been arrested under the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation.⁵⁹

Reports gathered by the Oakland Institute suggest that these repressive government policies and practices work in conjunction with, often enabling, government-led economic development initiatives. One informant explained that after the government could not convince Bodi and Chirim locals to relocate, “the government called the security forces... caught four young men and put them in prison.”⁶⁰



Road roller at work, Mago.

DEVELOPMENT AID, VILLAGIZATION, AND “POLITICAL CAPTURE”: HIDING BEHIND DEVELOPMENT

Historically, government resettlements in Ethiopia have operated in tandem with larger development and political schemes. Forced relocations under the Derg regime, which were marked by violent military intervention and a repression of dissent and civil expression,⁶¹ impacted a staggering 13 million people. The Derg regime legitimized the forced movement of millions as an attempt to “promote rational land use; conserve resources; strengthen security; and provide access to clean water, health and education infrastructure.”⁶² Although the current Ethiopian government formed as part of the social upheavals reacting to Derg policies, the EPRDF promotes its villagization program on a platform for development and the provision of social services that is comparable to the Derg regime’s stance.

The government of Ethiopia’s policy regarding agro-pastoralist and pastoralist areas is discussed

in the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP). Approved in 2010, the GTP states, “the Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization Strategy emphasizes that small holder farmers and pastoralists need to use efficiently available modern agricultural technologies that increase productivity and production. In addition, the private sector will be encouraged to increase its share of investment in agriculture.”⁶³ The policy goes on to address the potential need for voluntary resettlement in an effort to increase agricultural production and to enable the construction of irrigation infrastructure. As of 2012, the villagization program involving the resettlement of nearly 1.5 million people was being implemented in the regions of Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz, Somali, South Omo, and Afar.⁶⁴

Pastoralists in Ethiopia face a number of challenges that threaten the sustainability of their traditional

practices. As the country has sought to develop and diversify its economy, land has been allocated by the state for other uses, reducing the availability of grazing areas and water.⁶⁵ A USAID report on challenges facing pastoral communities in Ethiopia adds, “Trends indicative of climate change, such as increasingly recurrent drought, floods, erratic rainfall patterns, and high temperatures are adding significantly to these stresses.”⁶⁶ According to pastoralist leaders cited in the USAID report, the loss of traditional land and restrictions on mobility can exacerbate inter- and intra-ethnic conflict.⁶⁷

The government of Ethiopia sees the clearing of pastoral lands as imperative to its agricultural modernization.⁶⁸ However, independent investigations have found that, rather than freeing pastoralists from “precarious” conditions, villagization moved “large numbers of people into concentrated areas [resulting] in various adverse environmental impacts including deforestation, overgrazing, decrease in level of groundwater, disappearance of bamboo, and pollution of water sources.”⁶⁹

Reports of coerced resettlement to make way for industrial plantations, particularly in the Lower Omo Valley and Gambella, call into question the government’s assertion that the resettlement is voluntary.⁷⁰ In particular, the Oakland Institute’s investigations have found a contradiction between reported efforts by the government of Ethiopia to change the pastoral agricultural models and the visible and extensive efforts to allocate prime Ethiopian land for large-scale monoculture development.

The following sections suggest that the policies and initiatives funded by major donors directly, indirectly, and through the promotion of a particular model of development provide financial support for and legitimize the government’s most recent villagization program. As recent investigations of the program have revealed, direct flows linking Western aid and particular instances of forced resettlement are difficult to establish—a result of state decentralization and reliance on woredas (local administrative districts) and increasing government restrictions on free press, popular internet access, and political expression.⁷¹ However, dozens of on-the-ground interviews conducted by the Oakland Institute, Human Rights Watch, and other organizations suggest the muddled paper trail between foreign assistance and villagization is itself symptomatic of the repressive environment that discourages public dissent.⁷²

BACKGROUND ON MAJOR DONORS

Of the \$2.8 billion in total foreign aid committed to Ethiopia in 2011, commitments by the US, the World Bank Group, and the UK comprised \$1.5 billion (see figure 1 below). The combined aid from these three donors consistently provides close to half of total international assistance to Ethiopia. On average, Ethiopia has received \$3.5 billion from international donors in recent years, which represents between 50 to 60 percent of its national budget.⁷³

Indispensability of US Aid

Of the approximately \$1.5 billion in aid mentioned above, US aid accounted for \$813.8 million, of which more than half is focused on HIV/AIDS initiatives. Although reports of the politically motivated

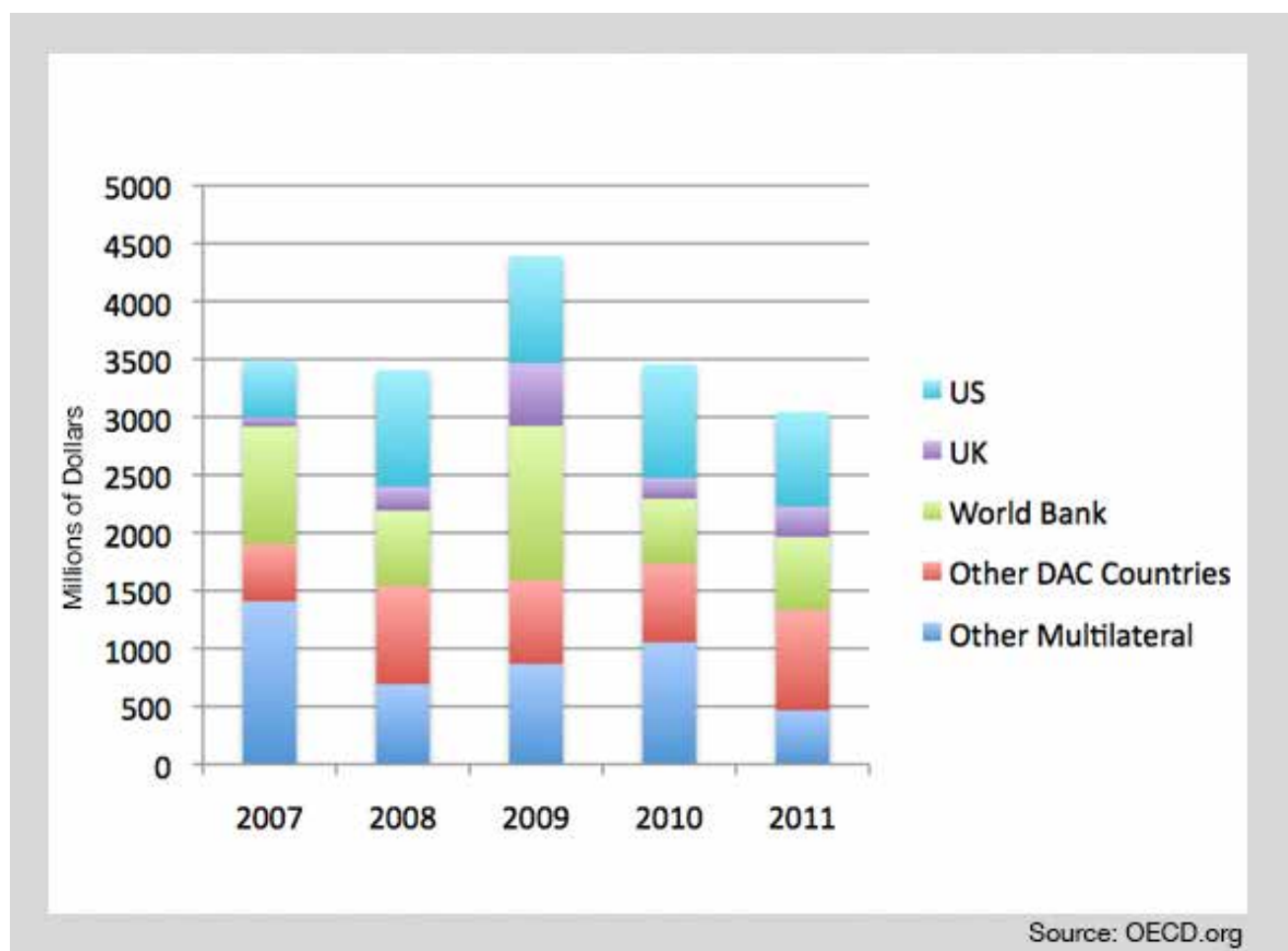
distribution of humanitarian aid have surfaced, this section will focus on development assistance, which comprises a lesser but still sizable portion of total aid.⁷⁴ US non-health aid appropriations to Ethiopia in fiscal year 2012 amounted to an estimated \$204.7 million.⁷⁵

In the past four years, according to OECD records, aid appropriations in the “Economic Development” sector have grown significantly, increasing from a low of \$32.8 million in 2008 to \$106.0 million in 2012.⁷⁶ The increase in aid for economic development to Ethiopia has occurred alongside decreasing

allocations of aid to the “Humanitarian Assistance” sector, which has seen a drop in appropriations from \$309.5 million in 2010 to \$35 million in 2012, and the “Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance” sector, which has fallen from \$6 million in 2009 to \$0.9 million in 2011.

The increasing concentration of US development assistance on economic development makes US aid indispensable to the government of Ethiopia’s development plans. Likewise, the recent decline in aid to the sectors meant to improve governance and ensure the protection of human rights is significant

Figure 1: Total Multilateral and Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Development Aid to Ethiopia, 2007-2011





“Golden opportunities in Ethiopia,” Simon Davis/DFID.

in the context of growing concerns of human rights abuses in the country.⁷⁷

The World Bank Group

The World Bank Group, through the International Development Association, is the largest multilateral donor to the Ethiopian government. In 2011, the WBG provided a total of \$630 million in assistance to Ethiopia, with over half of the annual assistance allocated as part of the Promoting Basic Services (PBS) initiative’s Phase II implementation.⁷⁸ PBS, which is administered and implemented by Ethiopia’s Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, receives additional funds from the government of Ethiopia, the African Development Bank, UK’s Department for International Development (DfID), the European Union (EU), Austria, Italy, Germany, and Irish Aid.⁷⁹ The remaining WBG assistance to Ethiopia was allocated to urban development and

irrigation and drainage infrastructure projects.

UK Department for International Development

For three years now, Ethiopia has been the largest recipient of UK non-humanitarian aid, with growing allocations.⁸⁰ In 2011, DfID contributed \$97.5 million to the PBS program and made significant allocations to the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP). DfID has come under increasing scrutiny following allegations of development assistance being used to fund Ethiopia’s villagization program through its support of the PBS and PSNP.

USAID's AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

USAID's economic development assistance aims to support agricultural modernization.⁸¹ Both USAID and the government of Ethiopia stress the necessity to shift Ethiopian land from pastoral subsistence production to enable export commodities. A 2010 USAID report on challenges facing pastoral communities in Ethiopia concluded, "all of these efforts are essential and require equitable and conflict-sensitive implementation (especially the resettlement scheme), as the majority of pastoralist groups in Ethiopia are under a variety of pressures that are making their livelihoods increasingly precarious."⁸²

USAID agriculture initiatives like the "Ethiopia: Land Tenure and Administration Program" (ELAP) support and enable the Ethiopian government's model of land reform that favors "agricultural modernization." This USAID program, which implements "pastoral interventions," has worked with the Pasadena-based consulting and engineering firm Tetra Tech on five key activities. In addition to legal consultations and trainings on property management for sedentary and pastoral communities, Tetra Tech uses mapping, land registrations to promote investment and provide "support for regional land agencies."⁸³ This partnership between USAID and Tetra Tech boasts among its objectives "targeting high-potential investment area[s] for expansion of work on land certification and facilitating land transactions."⁸⁴ Component two of the \$5 million USAID-funded but MoARD-operated ELAP project is to refine methodologies registration and

certification with the stated purpose of facilitating investment, land rental markets, and intensive crop production.⁸⁵ Through ELAP, USAID is supporting the government's land strategy in regional states targeted by villagization, particularly in the regions of Afar, SNNP, and Somali.⁸⁶

US development assistance is operating through President Obama's Feed the Future (FTF) initiative as well, which also takes up Ethiopia's pastoral question. The initiative divides Ethiopia by development conditions ("Hungry Ethiopia," "Productive Ethiopia," and "Pastoral Ethiopia") and provides recommendations to make "Pastoral Ethiopia" more productive. FTF uses a model for pastoral development that contradicts USAID's stated goals to preserve pastoral practices. The FTF's "Linking to Vulnerable Markets" component seeks to push pastoral communities into development by connecting them to agricultural value chains. Notably, FTF's multi-year strategy document specifically mentions concerns about Ethiopia's "policy of settlement regarding pastoral peoples"⁸⁷ and the potential for commercial farming and irrigation infrastructure to disrupt traditional migration patterns and access to resources. In 2011, the FTF initiative allocated over \$40 million in nutrition and agricultural development aid to Ethiopia.⁸⁸ However, while FTF expresses concern over the potential impact to pastoral communities, it places primary importance on increasing private-sector capacity in pastoral areas as a means to development.⁸⁹



Ruchi Soya soybeans plantation in Gambella.

There seems an inherent tension between the stated purpose of empowering pastoral and agro-pastoral communities and initiatives that seek to fundamentally transform practices of pastoral production. The Pastoral Livelihoods Initiative (PLI II), now in its second phase, is a USAID initiative devoted almost wholly to the pastoral question—perceived to be an economic question rather than a political one. Through PLI II, USAID pledged \$15.9 million starting in 2009 to strengthen the livelihoods of 205,000 pastoralists in the Oromia, Somali, and Afar regions of Ethiopia. Working in conjunction with dozens of woredas, PLI II focuses on resource management, “crisis modifiers” to preserve livestock, and the “implementation of income generating activities.”⁹⁰ A mid-term evaluation released in January 2012 explains how the program engaged in limited practices of pastoral resettlement: “PLI

II also facilitated the relocation of the households from their inappropriately sited locales to their new villages,” as a resource management strategy.⁹¹ The evaluation explained, under its “lessons learned” section, that, “the resettlement of inappropriately established villages did not happen without a certain amount of resentment on the part of the people required to move,” and recommended more significant “buy-ins” to decrease resistance to resettlement.⁹² The resettlements under PLI II seemed unconnected to the Ethiopian government’s official resettlement program—there is also no evidence to suggest that vacated land was later leased. Yet what the midterm evaluation does suggest is that relocations are not voluntary. As detailed below, no matter how well-meaning they are, development initiatives that turn a blind eye to the political and civil repression exercised by the

Ethiopian government contradict their stated goals of strengthening pastoral livelihoods, and make donors complicit, partly through negligence, in the human rights abuses related to the resettlement program, and other government approaches to “economic development.”

It must be acknowledged that, while these USAID programs operate within and strongly reinforce the narrative of export-oriented agricultural development through which the government of Ethiopia’s GTP and its villagization program is legitimized, the harmful effects of the government’s pastoral policies are often acknowledged by USAID initiatives. At a 2009 Ethiopian Land Tenure Policy and Administration Program (ELTAP) conference, one presenter expressed concern: “A major problem is that Afar pastoralists, for example, are seen to be settling on prime agricultural land. If the situation here is left to market forces the land would go to the highest bidder.”⁹³ ELTAP, a forerunner to ELAP, was implemented between 2005 and 2008. Unfortunately, numerous investigations now suggest that the 2009 concerns expressed in the ELTAP

conference materialized with violent consequences, including in the ELTAP project regions of Afar and Somali.⁹⁴

USAID reports on agricultural development initiatives show that official missions are not oblivious to the marginalization caused by a particular form of agricultural development. ELTAP documents have suggested the importance of considering alternative forms of land tenure for pastoralists with different land use patterns. However, unconditional USAID support for the GTP fails to ensure that such considerations take place and thus enable, through negligence, the Ethiopian government’s violent policies toward pastoralist populations. As the State Minister of Natural Resources, Ato Sileshi Getahun, explained in an Ethiopian Land Administration Project (ELAP) workshop in Addis Ababa, “Land administration will definitely continue to be a focus area of development in the five year Growth and Transformation Plan for the Government . . . the support of the USAID-backed land administration and certification projects as well as those of other development partners . . . are paramount.”⁹⁵

PROMOTING BASIC SERVICES (PBS)

“I like to compare the current donors to Italians who built roads for Haile Selassie. Without the Italian roads, the Emperor could not have controlled the state. Without the donor’s money, Zenawi could not hold it together—the PSCAP and PBS are the donor-funded bureaucracy. The donors should be more careful.”

--World Bank official, 2009⁹⁶

In 2011, the World Bank Group allocated \$420 million to the Protection of Basic Services Program (PBS), which has now been approved for a third phase with a promise of \$600 million in assistance.⁹⁷ PBS focuses on the education, water, agricultural extension, health, and road construction sectors, with the program’s funds distributed among local level governments and civil servants. The PBS is

significant among development initiatives because it functions as budget support for existing federal and local government expenditures. The PBS does not provide budget support to the central government, but rather more directly to woreda level governments. While a main reason for directing budget supports to district level government was to encourage transparency, the decentralized distribution of

PBS funds has remained relatively murky and research suggests that national politics do affect local government policy.⁹⁸ For this reason, donors like USAID do not participate in PBS, expressing concerns over the “unconditional budget support as well as concerns about inadequate monitoring of expenditure impact.”⁹⁹

In September 2012, two representatives of the Anuak people filed a request for an inspection of the PBS program by the WBG’s Inspection Panel,¹⁰⁰ claiming that PBS “[contributes] directly to the Ethiopian Government’s Villagization Program in the Gambella Region.”¹⁰¹ The letter, directed to WBG president Dr. Jim Yong Kim, recounts the daily displacement of families to Kenyan refugee camps. The reports of current coerced displacement of Anuak people are the latest in a long history of EDF and government violence against the Anuak. As a 2006 report by UNICEF found, the Anuak people are among a large population living in a “culture of fear.” Moreover, the report calls into question the claims of famine as the reason for pastoral hunger: “The Anuak population reported

that when the military [EDF] presence in Abobo is heavy they do not have access to the flour-grinding mill due to insecurity along the road. They also reported that . . . they are required to bring a letter from the authorities for permission to access the mill.”¹⁰² Similar instances of EDF-induced resource shortages around water and land were observed in the region.

The recent plea by the Anuak highlights PBS’s vulnerability to “political capture.” This term, introduced by the World Bank itself, refers to the danger that a “government could use its donor-funded structures and services to control and oppress the population; severely impinge upon their rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly; and discriminate against its citizens based on political affiliation.”¹⁰³ The WBG’s Inspection Panel, which has since agreed to conduct an investigation into a potential breach of a WBG safeguard against supporting resettlement, explained, “from a development perspective, the two programs [PBS and the resettlement program] depend on each other, and may mutually influence



Nuer village in Karuturi lease area.

the results of the other.”¹⁰⁴ In what has been called an “unprecedented” decision, the government of Ethiopia has expressed its refusal to cooperate with the Inspection Panel’s ongoing investigation.¹⁰⁵

It should be noted that the UNICEF report was released at the time the US military assistance to the EDF was growing in anticipation of hostilities with Somalia, seemingly enabling both the EDF’s mission in Somalia and indirectly condoning the violence against the Anuak community then being reported.¹⁰⁶

More recent research supports the Anuak’s claim that PBS funds have fallen into political capture by the Ethiopian government. A 2009 investigation by Human Rights Watch found that “donor-funded services, resources, and training opportunities were being used as treats or rewards for citizens to join the ruling party and cease supporting the opposition.”¹⁰⁷

PBS funds from the WBG have come under scrutiny over their potential use in funding the

villagization policies. The WBG has conceded that “in some instances households had been encouraged to voluntarily cluster in communities where World Bank and other donor-financed infrastructure already exists or is planned to be provided in order to have easier access to water points, schools, health centers, and other services.”¹⁰⁸

PBS and the significantly smaller Public Sector Capacity Building Programme (PSCAP) address important social needs in Ethiopia. The PSCAP aims to strengthen state capacity and decentralization. However, the “predominance of the EPRDF party” in the public sector results in a form of decentralization that marginalizes political dissent at the local level.¹⁰⁹ Development assistance can lead to local empowerment, but in Ethiopia, where aid increases the capacity for a government engaged in large-scale resettlements, it has led to a concentration of political power in the hands of those who administer the assistance.

ETHIOPIA’S NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM (NFSP)

In 2005, Ethiopia, with assistance from the World Bank, launched the National Food Security Programme (NFSP), a series of programs aimed at addressing food insecurity primarily through food and cash transfers. The inaugural NFSP (2005-2009) included three major components: the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), Other Food Security Program (OFSP), and the Voluntary Resettlement Program (VRP).¹¹⁰ In 2010, the second phase of FSP began a four-year implementation, with four main programs, PSNP, the Household Asset Building Program (HABP), the Complementary

Community Investment Program (CCI) and the Resettlement Program. Both the government of Ethiopia and international donors are clear in pointing out that foreign funds contribute only to the PSNP and HABP components; the government funds the NFSP’s “other elements.”¹¹¹

Of the principal programs of the FSP, the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) is the largest—in fact it is among the largest social protection programs in sub-Saharan Africa. Since its inception in 2005, the PSNP has managed an aggregate budget of

\$2.3 billion—a budget composed of aid from 10 development partners including DfID, USAID, WBG, Irish Aid, Canadian International Development Agency, World Food Program, Swedish International Development Agency, and the Netherlands.¹¹² Commitments for the 2012 implementation of the third phase of PSNP stood at \$700 million for the year.¹¹³

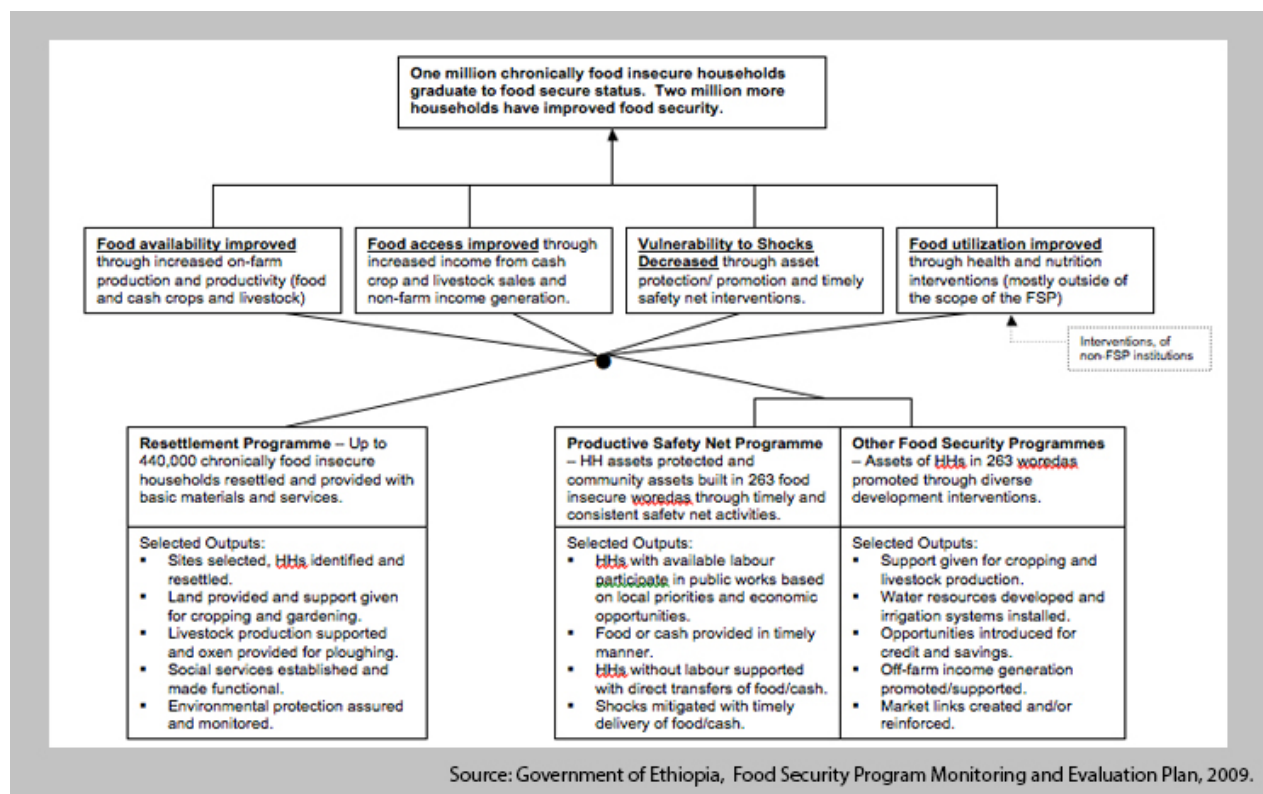
While the popular and well funded PSNP operates under the same umbrella program as the Resettlement Program, the concrete, on-the-ground, relationship between the two programs remains under-researched. By distributing PSNP aid to local governments via NGOs rather than the government, donors hope to remain separate from the Resettlement Program. The table below illustrates the structure of FSP that ensures that the foreign assistance does not contribute to the

resettlement, while still uniting all efforts on a unique path to food security.

This structural separation appeases donors who are reluctant to be associated with resettlement efforts over concerns “regarding the social and environmental impacts of large-scale resettlement programs in Ethiopia.”¹¹⁴ Yet by funding the billion-dollar PSNP program, foreign donors ensure the sustainability (and popularity) of the whole FSP program, indirectly legitimizing and supporting the resettlement program.

As an unnamed senior official foreign involved in PSNP lamented, “There is a big moral dilemma about the PSNP. Yes, we are feeding people, but we are also supporting the government that is repressing its people, that is using it as an instrument of control.”¹¹⁵

Figure 2: Food Security Program Hierarchy of Objectives





New electric lines, Addis Ababa.

GIBE III DAM

Ethiopia has been described as a “major ‘water tower’ in Africa.”¹¹⁶ The location of headwaters to many rivers within Ethiopia has made it a prime interest for large hydropower dams as well as water-intensive agricultural development. Research by Bread for the World shows that the emphasis on large dam construction is unfit for local, small-scale production and overwhelmingly benefits large-scale monoculture export producers.¹¹⁷ The construction of large dams results in the dispossession of land, water, and of culture in Ethiopia, and impacts people and ecosystems in neighboring countries downstream as well.

The Gibe III Dam is currently the largest dam in the country and the tallest in Africa. The dam is under construction in the Lower Omo region of southern Ethiopia, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and will have major, lasting impacts on Lake Turkana in Kenya, another World Heritage Site.

The Lower Omo region is also home to approximately 200,000 agro-pastoralists made up of some of Africa’s most unique and traditional ethnic groups, including the Kwegu, Bodi, Suri, Mursi, Nyangatom, Hamar, Karo, and Dassenach, among others. In the words of late-prime minister Zenawi, the dam will allow for an area “known as backward in terms of civilization . . . [to] become an example of rapid development.”¹¹⁸ Plans call for water from the Gibe III Dam to be used to irrigate 245,000 hectares of government-run sugar plantations.¹¹⁹ However, as International Rivers reports, the dam poses serious threats for the Omo River, “a lifeline for hundreds of thousands of local farmers, herders and fishermen, who depend on its nourishing floods

to sustain their most reliable sources of food.”¹²⁰ The dam will likely have devastating impacts on the fragile ecosystems of the Lower Omo Valley and affect the livelihoods of the 500,000 local people who depend on them in Ethiopia and also in Kenya, as a result of downstream effects on Lake Turkana.¹²¹

International Rivers categorizes the Gibe III Dam among projects that are so blatantly destructive that few international organizations can publically support them--such as the oil wells in Sudan’s conflict zones and China’s Three Gorges Dam.¹²² This must not have been lost on the Ethiopian government, since in 2012 it withdrew requests for assistance for the dam from several donors. Limited assistance has instead come from the Indian EXIM Bank and Chinese investors.¹²³ In August 2011, the Kenyan parliament passed a resolution requiring suspension of dam construction pending further studies. This makes the recent approval of \$684 million in funding from the World Bank for a power transmission line connecting the Gibe III Dam and Kenya particularly surprising.¹²⁴ WBG officials circumvented its social and environmental standards by saying the transmission line is not associated with just this one dam, and that other projects will feed into this grid. Strong evidence links this transmission line to the Gibe III Dam. The Resettlement Action Plan, an official project document, states that the line “is planned to provide reliable power supply to Kenya by taking it from Ethiopia’s Gilgel Gibe hydropower scheme.”¹²⁵ The Bank confirmed in a March 2010 letter that the Ethiopian government had “asked the World Bank to consider providing funding support to the Gibe III hydropower project and the associated

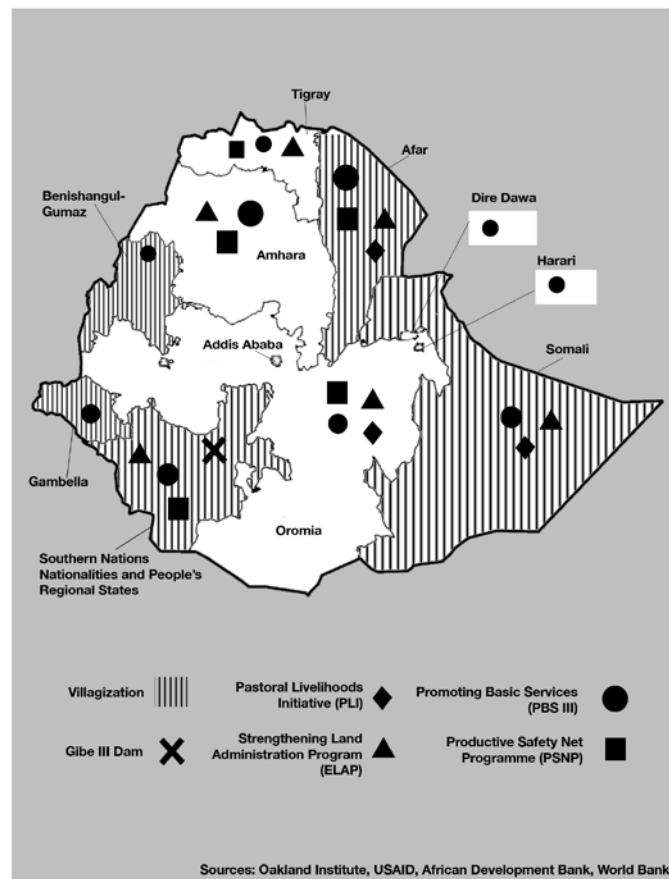
transmission lines.” But as controversy over the dam grew, the Bank edited its Resettlement Action Plan to replace the reference to Gibe by “from Ethiopia’s power grid” in its version of the document.¹²⁶ When the Bank approved the loan in 2012, it convinced its Board that the dam and transmission line were not “associated facilities” and therefore the safeguard policies that the dam project would have triggered did not apply.

Donors that are supportive of the project contribute to the human and ecological destruction that the dam will cause in a few particular ways. By supporting the government’s capabilities with the programs mentioned in this report, Western aid supports

forced resettlement in the areas affected by the dam and related large-scale irrigation infrastructure. Moreover, through backdoor support of the dam, the WBG is complicit in its human and ecological effects.

Since construction started in 2011, the Oakland Institute has received consistent and credible reports of human rights violations by the EDF, particularly against the ethnic groups in the Lower Omo Valley. These reports call into question the government’s insistence that all resettlements are voluntary. “We have no choice,” one resettled Omo native explained to the Oakland Institute. “The government forces us to stay and work for plantations or be exiled.”¹²⁷

Figure 3: Overlap Between the Villagization Program and Donor-Funded Development Programs



THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF COMPLICITY

Donor Investigations Overlooking Evidence

Although DfID is Ethiopia's third biggest donor (coming behind the US and WBG in annual allocations of development aid to Ethiopia), it currently remains among the most scrutinized due to allegations of the political capture of DfID funds for use in villagization. Specifically, a lawsuit filed by the London-based Leigh Day & Co. representing a man identified as Mr. O alleges that "[On] November 2011, soldiers from the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) arrived at his village. They told the inhabitants to leave and move to a different location. The resettlement was forced. The harvest was ripe but the villagers were not given any time to bring it in."¹²⁸ Leigh Day claims that through its support for PBS, which funds the health, agricultural support, roads, water, and education sectors, DfID finances the infrastructure and salaries required under the villagization program.

After a first donor mission in February 2011, DfID, USAID, Irish Aid, and the United Nations conducted a follow-up assessment in June 2012 looking at the villagization program in the Gambella region. The report from this five-day field mission cites increased access to services and infrastructures for resettled people, including better access to water, education and transportation.¹²⁹ Though the mission found no evidence of forced relocation, it observed

that "the pressure on government officials to reach their allocated target of relocations of people seemed high, with one village stating that they had been asked to move within the next week or lose out on food aid distributions."¹³⁰ The mission also warned that "the scale and speed of relocation is causing major disruptions to livelihoods. Land is the major source of tension. Whilst the majority of villagers had been allocated some land, this was usually less than the agreed 4 hectares. In addition, most of the new land had not been cleared, and remained under forest. Therefore people had very limited livelihood options and some felt that these had reduced due to the lack of access to fishing and riverside mango trees."¹³¹

A USAID-DfID assessment team traveled to South Omo in January 2012 and heard direct testimonies from local communities confirming the extent of human right violations. These included arrests of people, destruction of grain stores for land clearance, government threats including "sell your cattle or we will inject and kill them," confiscation of cattle medicine, limitation of access to agricultural lands, siphoning off of food aid, use of force and intimidation with presence of 'military' [likely federal police], rape of women and in one case a young boy.¹³² The team found that "the Mursi and Bodi in particular stated that they were living in fear, resorting to other food sources or going hungry."

The assessment report concludes that “although these allegations are extremely serious, they could not be substantiated by the visit.”¹³³

In 2012, the Finnish Foreign Ministry began questioning assistance funding to Ethiopia when a Finnish diplomat uncovered the potential use of their proposed Responsible and Innovative Land Administration initiative to bolster villagization in Ethiopia. An investigation by the consultant firm Finnmap found that “most groups [said] they moved out of obligation to avoid trouble.”¹³⁴ After conducting research and interviews in the Benishangul-Gumuz region, Finnmap suggested

the different assessments. There seems to be no commitment and no sense of urgency to take a firm public position or review the terms of international assistance as regards the current situation in Ethiopia. Britain’s Minister for Overseas Development said in response to a parliamentary question on November 5, 2012 that “the Department for International Development was not able to substantiate the allegations of human rights violation it received during its visit to South Omo in January 2012, and will be returning to the area to examine these further.” Yet to our knowledge, no such second visit has taken place.¹³⁷

“The positive role played by Ethiopia within the Horn of Africa region is a strong basis for USG constructive engagement with Ethiopia, despite problems such as the democracy deficit.”

--USAID¹⁴⁸

that the government’s resettlement policies, in addition to being coerced, triggered “considerable social and ecological disruption.”¹³⁵ Moreover, Finnmap’s investigation concluded that “the authorities have been more focused on moving people than providing for them new villages.”¹³⁶ This official report contradicts the government’s narrative of voluntary resettlement.

These different reports confirm that the donor community is well aware of the human right violations as well as the massive human and environmental impacts of the current development policy.

Yet, there is no indication that any meaningful measures have been taken by donors as a result of

Contradictions Between Development Aid Policy and Practice

All the large donors mentioned in this report have explicit policies meant to prevent the diversion of aid to enact violence and human rights violations. The World Bank Group, for example, is bound to hold all aid allocations to an “Involuntary Resettlement Policy,” which, in addition to prohibiting the use of World Bank Funds for forced resettlement, stipulates that all communities peacefully resettled must be guaranteed social and physical infrastructure. It should be noted that the provision was added to WBG aid allocations after a 1994 internal evaluation found that an estimated \$3.2 million people worldwide had been displaced annually under infrastructure partially funded by the WBG.¹³⁸

When members of the Anuak community from a South Sudan refugee camp filed a request for an investigation in 2012, reports surfaced that WBG management placed pressure on the Inspection Panel over the potential investigation, denying any grounds for an investigation.¹³⁹ Moreover, one day after the Anuak's request of the WBG's PBS program was filed, the bank approved the Phase III allocation of \$600 million to PBS.¹⁴⁰ Even with the ongoing investigation by the World Bank's Inspection Panel, the Ethiopian government's unprecedented refusal to contribute to the investigation illustrates the lack of transparency and accountability in aid disbursement to the Ethiopian government that puts vulnerable communities in danger.

USAID recognizes the necessity for resettlement of poorly settled communities, in line with the Growth and Transformation Plan,¹⁴¹ but stipulates that the resettlement be implemented on a voluntary basis and in an "equitable and conflict-sensitive" manner.¹⁴² Concluding USAID-DfID's June 2012 joint report on the villagization program¹⁴³ is the following list of parameters for villagization: voluntary resettlement, advanced preparedness of services, adequate water, land, and inputs. The Oakland Institute's findings suggest that all these parameters have been violated.

Donors also reveal contradictions in their engagement with pastoralist communities. While donors claim a desire to support pastoralist communities to achieve sustainable development, support for the government of Ethiopia's pastoralist policies work against this goal. A USAID discussion paper illustrates this contradiction: "The GTP's plan for pastoral development gives priority to water

development and sets ambitious targets increasing export earnings from live animals and meat exports combined. . . . The GTP projects resettlement of pastoralists on a voluntary basis . . . in areas convenient to irrigation development."¹⁴⁴

There is certainly a contradiction, if not hypocrisy, in Western donors' denial of the legitimacy of reported forced resettlement on the one hand, and the necessity to clarify that absolutely no development assistance directly funds the government's Resettlement Program under the FSP. It seems that if international donors were secure over the integrity of the government of Ethiopia's voluntary resettlement program, the reluctance to be associated with it would not be there. Rather than addressing the issue of forced resettlement under the FSP, foreign donors have chosen to support the resettlement program's integral sister programs.

Discrepancies between policy and practice can be more clearly deceiving. The World Bank's "backdoor" funding of the transmission line connecting the Gibe III Dam to Kenya was approved after credible reports of detrimental human and environmental impacts were released, and widespread condemnation of the project's environmental and social assessments made it clear that the project is a threat to regional stability and security. This decision shows clear weaknesses in the World Bank's own policies (especially its definition of what an "associated facility" is), and an official disregard of its own stated intent to which avoid funding of involuntary displacement.

Ethiopian human rights abuses have been reported in the halls of US Congress as well. In 2006, the Center for Public Integrity highlighted the Ethiopia Freedom, Democracy and Human Rights

Advancement Act, which proposed capping military aid to Ethiopia until political prisoners were provided fair trials.¹⁴⁵ The bill was ultimately defeated following objections from the State Department and pressure by the lobbying firm DLA Piper on behalf of their client, the government of Ethiopia.¹⁴⁶

Negligence occurs not only in relation to widespread allegations of human rights violations, but the stated policy of individual donors is also ignored. It is perhaps a result of these glaring contradictions that the WBG's Inspection Panel recently called on the Bank's management to initiate an investigation of its PBS initiative.¹⁴⁷

form of annual funds transfers. Development assistance has been a key political tool in Ethiopia, a power broker enabling some interests while marginalizing others.

Ethiopia is ruled by a hardline dictatorship, so it should be no surprise that unchecked assistance to a hegemonic political party gets diverted to efforts to maintain political control. What is difficult to understand is the West's continued reverence for the Ethiopian government in the face of blatant repression and abuses of power. Former Prime Minister Zenawi is hailed as the brilliant "son of Ethiopia and a father of its rebirth," but, as the *Guardian* notes, this renaissance was "tainted

"Perhaps USAID/Ethiopia's greatest dilemma with directly funding the Government of Ethiopia is the EPRDF's total dominance over the entire political and economic arena, making it virtually indistinguishable from the government. So, if USAID was to provide direct funding to Government of Ethiopia institutions the United States could be accused of funding the ruling party."

--USAID¹⁵⁰

Funding the Development State

It is worth noting again the staggering fact that foreign development assistance represents between 50 to 60 percent of Ethiopia's national budget.¹⁴⁹ While this report has suggested strong links between Western aid and specific instances of state repression and programs that are greatly detrimental to the livelihoods of local communities, the indispensability of foreign assistance to the functioning of the EPRDF-led government is enough to establish donor complicity in the state's human rights violations.

This report has showed that Western development assistance to Ethiopia has not assumed the passive

by authoritarianism."¹⁵¹ Recent popular unrest suggests that the government's authoritarianism has not changed significantly under the leadership of Hailemariam Desalegn.¹⁵² It is this unchecked political support of an undemocratic and repressive party coupled with more direct backdoor support of destructive development initiatives that make development assistance complicit in the human and civil rights violations against some of Ethiopia's most marginalized peoples.



Malaysian plantation in Koka near Kibish.

CONCLUSION

While the Oakland Institute recognizes the need for international solidarity and support to agricultural investment to improve livelihoods and food security in Ethiopia, the current approach is yielding the opposite effect. The potential for equitable economic security and wellbeing in many of the international development programs highlighted in this report is undermined by the undemocratic and increasingly repressive form of governance these programs fail to address. There exists sufficient and reliable evidence to warrant a comprehensive reconsideration of development assistance to Ethiopia.

This evidence suggests donor involvement in the Ethiopian government's repressive policies in three primary ways.

First, the Ethiopian government's legitimacy and capacity, enabled by over \$2 billion in annual development aid, is granted with the knowledge that competing political opinions are increasingly susceptible to unlawful arrest and physical violence, that those resisting development policies are subject to intimidation and abuse in the hands of the ENDF, and that dissenting opinions are frequently stifled under the banner of anti-terrorism.

Second, this report suggests that the particular programs funded by foreign assistance (like PBS and PSNP) serve as political tools used to fund the government's villagization program.

Third, development aid is enabling the Ethiopian Growth and Transformation Plan, which promotes a model of agricultural development that increases the food insecurity of rural communities and makes them susceptible to resettlement to make way for the irrigation infrastructure necessitated by large-scale plantations run or financed by foreign investors.

The allegations of violence in Ethiopian development policies warrant serious attention, not least because of the role of donor aid in enabling and strengthening undemocratic practices. This problem is not simply one of the Ethiopian people or of the heads of development aid organizations. As USAID and DfID underscore in widely distributed slogans, development aid comes "from the people." Accountability for the disbursement of aid is due to the Ethiopian people as well as to the people of donor nations.

The Oakland Institute has been calling for a truly independent investigation that should be undertaken by independent international experts in Ethiopia as well as in refugee settlements in neighboring countries such as Kenya. The key donors to Ethiopia should back this demand in order to allow accurate and objective information to surface and to ensure that their aid is not being used to restrict freedoms, violate human rights, or stifle democracy.

ENDNOTES

1. \$3.5 billion is the average amount of Overseas Development Assistance from 2007 to 2011 according to the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development website, <http://stats.oecd.org>, accessed March 28, 2013; the budget of Ethiopia was estimated at \$5.6 billion in 2011 and \$7 billion in 2012, see *CIA World Factbook*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/et.html>, and the *Africa Report*, <http://www.theafricareport.com/East-Horn-Africa/ethiopia-proposes-7-billion-budget.html>, both accessed March 28, 2013.
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