



Silent Revolution

**The Role of Community Development
in Reducing the Demand for Small Arms**

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Siobhan O'Reilly-Calthrop

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Alan Whaites and Edna Valdez, series editors

The Working Papers provide comment and analysis on relief, development and advocacy issues affecting the people of the Two-Thirds World. The views expressed are entirely those of the authors alone and do not represent the policies or positions of the World Vision partnership of NGOs.

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Abbreviations

ADP	Area Development Programme
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
IANSA	International Action Network on Small Arms
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
<i>Kebele</i>	Ethiopian lowest level of government administration
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WV	World Vision
WVE	World Vision Ethiopia
<i>Woreda</i>	Ethiopian administrative district

Executive Summary

Background and rationale for research

The proliferation of small arms around the world and their accelerated use in contemporary conflict are attracting increasing attention throughout the international community. The statistics are alarming: 43 of the last 47 conflicts have been fought with light weapons and 80-90% of victims of modern violent conflict are civilians. An estimated 500 million small arms are said to be in circulation world-wide, although the real figure is reckoned to be closer to 1 billion. Of greatest concern is the impact this is having on ordinary civilians, particularly children, and the way in which ordinarily non-violent disputes are becoming violent.

Although it is acknowledged that these weapons are not responsible for violence, it is widely agreed that their availability exacerbates and prolongs conflict, feeds instability, fuels crime and banditry, and creates a culture of violence that maintains and deepens poverty. For this reason, concern is rising amongst all sectors of civil society throughout the world, and increasingly governments, about the impact of the availability of these weapons on society. In the last few years, this concern has led to a growing movement of civil society groups, including humanitarian agencies such as WorldVision, to campaign to reduce the supply and demand for small arms in all parts of the world.

Most of the energy so far has been focused on controlling

supply, largely because many NGOs (non-governmental organisations) lobbying on this issue do not have a presence amongst communities affected by the increased availability of small arms. Humanitarian NGOs do have this presence, yet remarkably few have examined how their poverty alleviation activities might help reduce demand for small arms. Recent research within World Vision suggested that integrated community development programmes can have a strong role in promoting cultures of solidarity and reversing cultures of violence. One particular example of this was found during a programme evaluation in a remote district in Amhara region, Ethiopia. In addition to considerable socio-economic and environmental improvements achieved within the community, it was observed that gun-related violence had dramatically declined, in particular between two rival tribes. This was not an area that could be identified as a “war zone,” but it suffered from an entrenched culture of revenge and violence, and small arms have been widely available for much of this century.

World Vision UK, together with World Vision Ethiopia (WVE), decided to investigate this further and commissioned a preliminary piece of field research to identify what causal factors lay behind this behavioural change and what role World Vision’s Area Development Programme (ADP; see footnote 18 for further definition) had in this. This report is the presentation of the findings.

Findings

The research clearly found that fundamental social and economic change had taken place in the district since WVE began working in the district in 1984. Not only had the

use of guns declined dramatically — to the extent of being no longer used — but violence and conflict were also greatly reduced. The culture of violence, revenge and retribution that was characteristic of the Amhara and Oromo peoples who live in Antsokia had been transformed into a culture of tolerance, respect for life and for one another and co-operation. Furthermore, living standards significantly improved for the majority of beneficiaries who now enjoy reliable and sustainable livelihoods as a result of improvements in agriculture, health, education and employment that the ADP has brought.

What has been witnessed is a profound, gradual shift in the lifestyles, behaviour and attitudes of the community. This relates to every aspect of Antsokia life — health, work, education, ones' neighbours, family, friends and enemies and, consequently, the gun. Guns, which used to be the pride and joy of every male, are no longer venerated. Instead, farming tools and schooling have become the objects of achievement and honour by the community. As the value of life has increased, so has the value of human beings; this in turn has had a direct impact on the use of guns.

What is most pertinent is that far-reaching behavioural changes (relating to use of guns, health and sanitation, work, traditional cultural practices) have been prompted by attitudinal change. What is evident is the interconnectedness of every aspect of life: improvements in one area (e.g., reliable agricultural production) can show a direct effect on another (e.g., levels of violence).

The research identified a broad range of factors which have been influential in bringing about this change, none

of which is attributable to one single actor. The main factors identified (in order of influence) were securer livelihoods and higher standards of living providing a future hope; spiritual re-awakening of the Christian church; inter-tribal co-operation and networking; lifestyles and example of ADP staff; stricter gun laws and improved law and order; increased access to education; education against harmful cultural practices; construction of roads, prompting increased interaction and trade; and the famine of 1985.

It is difficult to be conclusive about the degree to which these factors influenced change without further in-depth research. More rigorous study is needed to conclusively establish causal links between ADP development practices and the reduction of violence and demand for small arms. What is clear, though, is that these factors worked together to have a synergetic effect on the community. The existence of each one strengthened and consolidated the impact of the others. Together they altered behaviour and attitudes, and together they reduced the causes or triggers for conflict — alcohol abuse, socio-economic disparities, grinding poverty, lack of state controls, a culture of revenge, availability of guns and negative traditional cultural practices.

However, it is hard to deny the over-riding influence of the ADP and WVE's presence. Changes in attitudes, mobility and economic wealth appear to have been the greatest influence and WVE's ADP has been primarily responsible for this. Its programme acted as scaffolding on which other factors hung and took effect. Its presence unified and gave hope. Its vision gave direction. Most important, it was able to affect negative attitudes rather than behaviour alone, through the relationships that it built between staff

and beneficiaries, through the interdependency that it encouraged, and through the economic stakes it created.

The impact of the ADP is summed up neatly by the farmer Bekele Mengesha: *“I do not say that the change of heart came at once. It took time. Several factors can account to that but the single most important factor is World Vision’s presence and the new development spirit it has created and the jolt it has caused in the old value system. World Vision gave us more opportunities and reasons to celebrate life than just waste it. The more we value life the more we are engaged to enhance it and the lesser the instinct for violence.”*

Lessons and implications

This research was relatively simple, brief and biased toward qualitative data. Clearly, more in-depth research is required. However, we believe that the strength of the findings make it important to look at what lessons emerge, tentative though they might be, and the implications they hold. What is interesting about this research is that it has lessons not just for successful disarmament programmes but also for community development and its contribution to peace-building.

Lessons

1. Factors which cause people to use small arms are multiple and complex, and are directly related to issues of poverty, unequal distribution of wealth, culture and accepted norms, historical prejudice and rivalry, and ignorance.
2. Therefore, one cannot pursue disarmament in isolation from the factors that prompt people to use guns.

Response must be holistic and integrated, tackle the causes and triggers of conflict as well as gun use, and offer alternatives.

3. “Tackling” the causes of conflict and gun use need not be direct or explicit to be successful.
4. Integrated, participatory, holistic community development has a critically important role to play not only in reducing demand for guns at the grass-roots level, but also in building cultures of peace.
5. Programmes which attempt to alter *attitudes* toward guns, violence, conflict, death and life will be much more sustainable than those that just target behaviour.
6. Collaboration and co-operation among government, UN, NGOs and other civil society actors is essential for any disarmament or peace-building efforts to succeed.

Implications

1. *NGOs’ role in reducing demand* — Humanitarian NGOs have an important role to play in reducing demand, which must not be neglected whilst pursuing stricter controls on supply. Whilst working for stricter controls is essential and will have a wider geographical impact, altering attitudes of those at the receiving end is always more sustainable than altering the behaviour of arms producers.
2. *Disarmament programmes* — Agencies such as the United Nations which conduct civilian disarmament programmes should consider ways in which programmes might be more holistic in their approach,

changing attitudes, not just the behaviour of gun users. Greater collaboration with NGOs and religious institutions in the area would be advisable.

3. *Humanitarian NGOs and peace-building* — Humanitarian NGOs need to look closely at whether their programmes are or could influence cultures of violence and gun use and to consider refining or re-designing programme design.
4. *Advocacy and Programming* — Better co-ordination and information sharing between those working in programmes, in policy, and in advocacy is needed within NGOs in order to identify these linkages.

“The attack was executed with automatic guns and rocket propelled grenades and turned a traditional dispute over grazing and water rights into unprecedented slaughter.”

— IRIN special report (November 1998)

Section One

Background

1.1 The problem of small arms

Small arms¹ have recently become the buzz-word on the lips of NGOs and governments as the latest problem to be tackled in achieving global security. Why?

Since the end of the Cold War, the world has undergone fundamental changes in economic, political, social and technological spheres. Not least among these changes have been the shift in the type and nature of war, the global flow of armaments, and the associated change in type of weapons used in warfare.² As the super-powers no longer had reason to fight proxy wars in Africa, Latin America and Asia, insurgents and rebel movements have had to fund their own battles with greatly depleted resources and using different tactics.³ The simplicity, portability and low cost of small arms rendered them the ideal weapon for rebel groups who cannot afford to train soldiers, who

¹ The term 'small arms' is used here to include small arms, light weapons and ammunition, and explosives. However, it is important to note that the strict definitions of 'small arms' and 'light weapons' differ. The former refers to revolvers and light-weight guns, whilst light weapons refers to heavy guns and portable grenade launchers.

² Cairns (1998), Lederach (1997), Regehr (1993) and Duffield (1998) are just some of the authors who have discussed the shifting nature and type of war since 1989. Conflicts are typically "intra-state", increasingly target civilians, and are essentially about issues of governance, resources and territory, though fought along ethnic/religious lines.

³ ICRC 1999, 3-4.

use guerrilla tactics and recruit children as soldiers. At the same time, the decline in super-power military activity led to the selling or transfer of surplus weaponry to such groups, whilst the opening up of borders and introduction of free-trade in many parts of the developing world meant weapons could be sold more cheaply and recycled more easily.⁴

The tendency of modern warfare to draw civilians into the fighting as fighters and as victims — as has been seen in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia — has also increased the attractiveness of small arms. Indeed, close correlation between the two trends is widely cited.

As a result, small arms have become the most favoured weapon of contemporary conflict.⁵ Although it is difficult to obtain exact statistics, baseline figures are alarming: 43 of the last 47 conflicts have been fought with light weapons and 80-90% of victims of modern violent conflict are civilians.⁶ An estimated 500 million small arms are said to be in circulation world-wide.⁷ This estimate is, however, believed to be conservative — the US Department for Disarmament Affairs believes the real figure to be closer to 1 billion.⁸

Of great concern is the fact that children are now much more vulnerable to becoming perpetrators and victims

⁴ According to an OCHA report, an AK-47 can be sold for as little as \$6— the price of a chicken in Uganda or a couple of boxes of maize in Mozambique (OCHA 1998).

⁵ Wallenstein and Sollenberg 1997.

⁶ Clegg, Greene, O'Callaghan 1998; Cairns 1998; ICRC 1999.

⁷ Ibid., SIPRI Yearbook (1998); Janes Infantry Weapons, 1996-97.

⁸ Rowell 1999.

of atrocities as a result of a greater availability of small arms. An estimated 300,000 children were used as soldiers in wars in the 1990s — an issue that has attracted increasing concern, action and campaigning by NGOs and the UN.⁹

For humanitarian agencies such as WorldVision (WV) this trend is of grave concern. WV has experienced firsthand the effects of the proliferation and misuse of small arms in many countries, and seeks to provide relief and rehabilitation for thousands of communities destroyed by armed conflict, most of which have used small arms. Such countries include Bosnia, Kosovo, Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia and many others. Programmes to assist those directly scarred by small arms are on the increase; these include programmes for the care and rehabilitation of former child soldiers in Uganda, and programmes to deal with the psycho-social traumatic effects of war and violence in Bosnia and Rwanda. Indeed, many WV staff and their families have suffered firsthand the effects of such violence and use of guns.

Moreover, in many parts of the world where WV conducts community development programmes, staff are struggling to know how to respond to the increased violence that availability of small arms brings. North West Kenya, North East India and Cambodia are just a few places. The EAC General Secretary, Francis Muthaura, admitted at a conference on the issue last month that the flow of

⁹ The UN recently appointed a Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict to tackle the problem of child soldiers, amongst other issues. The International Coalition to Stop Child Soldiers is an NGO lobbying coalition.

illegal arms into the region has contributed to the rising rate of violent crimes and conflicts.¹⁰ Indeed, the extent to which traditional disputes between tribal groups are becoming violent has prompted research into the impact of gun availability amongst African pastoralists.¹¹

Small-arms proliferation and their abuse are also blamed for being instrumental in increasing violent crime and domestic violence in the North and in countries that are officially “at peace.”

WV is responding to the challenge that modern conflict is posing to its work in various ways. Indeed, this trend is one of the factors that have prompted a fundamental re-thinking of WV’s mandate, role and method of operation.

It is acknowledged that these weapons may not be responsible for the violence, but it is widely agreed that their availability exacerbates and prolongs conflict, feeds instability, fuels crime and banditry, and creates a culture of violence, all of which maintain and deepen poverty.

1.2 Rationale for research

Concern is rising amongst all sectors of civil society throughout the world, and increasingly governments, about the impact of the availability of these weapons on many aspects of society. Human rights organisations, gun control groups, victim support groups, local communities and public health groups as well as humanitarian NGOs and

¹⁰ Regional Conference on the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa region, Nairobi, 12-15 March 2000 (see IRIN Great Lakes report 2000).

¹¹ The impact of increased gun availability on pastoralist tribes in the Horn of Africa is the subject of two pieces of research, one by the UNDP and the other by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in the UK.

conflict consultancies all are affected by this rising phenomenon and see it as a critical problem.

In the last few years, this concern has led to a growing movement of such groups campaigning to reduce the supply and misuse of small arms in all parts of the world. Lobbying aimed at reform in arms-trade policy and controlling illicit arms trade has already begun to reap fruit in Europe, the US, and West and Southern Africa where regional controls on small arms have been agreed by governments.¹² The UN is demonstrating its awareness of the seriousness of the issue.¹³ Preparations are being made for a UN international conference on illicit small-arms trafficking next year, and the first conference on combating the proliferation of illicit arms in the Horn of Africa was held by 10 African nations in Nairobi just last month.¹⁴ Momentum has gathered to such an extent that a specialist global NGO network has been set up to facilitate NGO campaigning activities known as IANSA, the International Action Network on Small Arms.¹⁵

¹² EU Code of Conduct (1998), OAS Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (1997), ECOWAS 1998, and Action Programme for Southern Africa (1998).

¹³ A Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms was submitted to the General Assembly in the autumn of 1997, outlining the main areas of concern and action. It represents an important benchmark in the evolution of attention to the small-arms issue.

¹⁴ Regional Conference on the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa region, Nairobi, 12-15 March 2000 (see IRIN Great Lakes report 2000).

¹⁵ IANSA was launched in May 1999 with over 170 NGO members. Its principal aim is to facilitate international NGO and civil society action to curb the supply and demand for small arms through changes in government policy and social and economic reform.

Most of the activity by IANSA members to date has been focused on addressing the first aspect of IANSA's objectives: controlling the *supply* of small arms — issues relating to access and availability. Less activity has been focused on reducing the *demand* for small arms, the second of IANSA's objectives.¹⁶ Within this category are activities that aim to reverse cultures of violence, promote cultures of solidarity and co-operation, and tackle poverty and under-development.¹⁷

Few international NGOs have begun to examine how it might be possible for them to reduce demand aside from the more general activities of poverty alleviation. Yet, as a humanitarian organisation, WV believes it has an important contribution to make in reducing demand for small arms more directly. Promoting cultures of solidarity and co-operation and reversing cultures of violence are necessary elements of successful community development. Two pieces of recent research brought this to our attention by highlighting the role that WV community development work has played in building cultures of peace and solidarity. The first, which examined WV's ADPs,¹⁸ found

¹⁶ It is recognised that a fair amount of work is being done in the area of reducing demand, but this is small compared with that focused on supply, particularly amongst international NGOs.

¹⁷ See pages 6-7 of IANSA's Founding Document (May 1999) for a full list of the type of activities identified by IANSA's members as those which reduce demand.

¹⁸ ADPs are a specific type of integrated community development programme unique to WV that have become the principal channel through which WV seeks to assist the poor throughout the world. Currently, there are some 238 ADPs in 35 countries around the world, with more being added each year. More specifically, ADPs are child-focused, sustainable development programmes which usually cover an area the size of an administrative district, with about 10,000-50,000 people, and address all aspects of a community's basic needs. They operate for 10-15 years. For more details on the definition and origin of ADPs, see the Appendix in this volume.

that by using a certain type of process and approach, community development has the potential to nurture strong local networks of trust, co-operation and 'social capital' amongst diverse people groups.¹⁹ As a result, long-standing mistrust, enmity and divisions have been bridged in many communities, and cultures of peace established.

The second piece of work was an evaluation conducted in 1997 by WVE to document the impact of its work in Antsokia Woreda (district), Amhara region, since work began there in 1984. From questioning beneficiaries, it was found that amongst the general socio-economic and environmental improvements, gun-related violence had declined dramatically, in particular between the traditionally warring Oromo and Amhara tribes.²⁰ Furthermore, it appeared that the gun culture that had existed in Antsokia for several decades and exacerbated ethnic and domestic violence had been replaced by a spirit of tolerance, co-operation and respect for life amongst the population. A variety of causal factors was identified as attributing to this behavioural change by those beneficiaries who spoke about it, including new social institutions (schools and police force), but two factors in particular were pointed to as being most influential. The first was the development activities that had brought economic improvement and shown the value of education and employment. The other factor was the way in which the development programme had "created an atmosphere of understanding" between the two tribes through inter-ethnic community development groups and activities.

¹⁹ O'Reilly 1999.

²⁰ Eshete 1997.

Such an insight indicated that gun-related violence and conflicts in general had declined largely due to the influence of the community development programme on people's attitudes to each other and to life. Such a finding has tremendous implications for how humanitarian NGOs can contribute to the fight against small-arms misuse at the grass-roots and not just in advocacy efforts. It has implications for programme design, and for how we further our understanding of how to adapt to this ever-changing post-Cold War environment. It can also be argued that it offers a more sustainable and effective method of curbing the small-arms problem than reducing access and availability.

WV is not aware of any other similar research, although some research is being carried out on related issues.²¹ As a result, we felt there was a strong and urgent need to examine whether the findings of this case study were correct, and to find out what lay behind this change. We therefore commissioned the researcher of the Antsokia case study to return to Antsokia to conduct further research and to test his initial insights. This report is a presentation of the findings.

It must be pointed out that this research was preliminary in nature and scope. It is, therefore, recognised that a more rigorous study is needed in order to establish conclusively causal links between ADP development practices and the reduction of violence and demand for small arms.

The report is structured as follows. Section 2 provides the background and context of Antsokia district and envi-

²¹ The International Resource Group in Kenya, the BICC, and Owen Greene at Bradford University are working on different aspects of small-arms proliferation on the local communities in the South.

rons, as well as a profile of WV's work there. In section 3, the principal causes of conflict in Antsokia are briefly discussed, including the warrior culture and the role that small arms have played in the community. Section 4 briefly discusses the traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution that exist, and section 5 gives an overview of the history and impact of small arms in Antsokia. In section 6, the findings of the research are outlined and the influential factors are discussed, as identified by the informants.²² The final two sections analyse the findings and conclude with some lessons and implications for community development work, disarmament programmes and small-arms advocacy. Methodology and aims and objectives of the research are outlined in the Appendix.

²² The word 'informants' is used in this report to mean interviewees or those who took part in PRA exercises. For a full list of informants, see the methodology section in the Appendix.

Section Two

Profile of Antsokia: The People, the District and World Vision

2.1 General²³

Antsokia ADP, located 350 kilometres north of Addis Ababa, lies in Antsokia-Gemza Woreda (district), in the Central Highland region of the northern Shoa Zone. A rural agro-economy, the district is divided into two distinct geographic, agricultural and ethno-cultural areas. The highland area, characterised by steep slopes and upland, lying 1600-2600 meters above sea level, is predominantly pastoral land. Lying below the highlands is an extensive plain, rich in alluvial soil and typically used for arable farming.

Two distinct ethnic groups live in these areas: the Amhara, who form 75% of the population, and the Oromo, who comprise the remaining 25%. The distinction between the two groups lies in their economic activity, religion and cultural practices, shaped by the landscape in which they live. The Amhara, who live in the highlands, depend on mixed agricultural and livestock production for their livelihoods and are traditionally Christian. By contrast, the Oromo, who live in the lowlands and valleys, are traditionally Muslims and pastoralists, although in recent years, population growth has forced them to turn to crop cultivation.

²³ The majority of the information in this section is taken from World Vision Ethiopia 1999.

Some 45,000 people live and earn their livelihood in the 595 square kilometres of land delineated as Antsokia Woreda, which has 15 peasant associations and one urban dwellers association.²⁴

2.2 Local Economic and Demographic features²⁵

With the exception of a few artisan groups, the people of Antsokia community traditionally have been poor subsistence farmers. They used basic agricultural techniques, producing a narrow range of cereals — barley, sorghum, wheat, corn and teff²⁶ — with livestock production supplementing the economy. Off-farm activities are primarily limited to weaving, woodwork and petty trade. A deeply rural economy with two small towns, the area was severely isolated until WVE mobilised the building of roads and bridges. Transport was typically on foot, and trade was carried on pack animals. The limited agricultural production, the poor transport and the exploitative feudal system stifled any economic growth beyond a subsistence level for centuries. Even the few ‘land lords’ who could accumulate wealth in the form of surplus grains could not play that role because of the feudal stigma attached to trade and related activities.

²⁴ Peasant Associations were set up in rural areas of Ethiopia by the previous regime. The current government abolished most of them. The remaining associations are a form of civil institutions composed of farmers living and working in areas of 800 hectares.

²⁵ For more in-depth discussion of the history of land tenure and political systems in Amhara region, see the Appendix.

²⁶ Teff is a cereal crop unique to Ethiopia and is the staple diet of most Ethiopians.

2.3 Historical socio-political aspects

Antsokia is a land rich in history. Situated within what was the imperial Ethiopian State, it is believed to have been governed by a succession of historic kings who were part of the Solomonic dynasty. A feudal system prevailed during this time, under which a complex hierarchy of administrators governed the land and people. Typical of feudal systems, the people suffered exploitation and oppression by the landlords, and so organised their own institutions as a form of self-protection. These institutions, called *Aba Hagg*a and *Dengora Dagna*, acted as arbitrators between the people and the State, provided judicial services for conflicts within the community, and mobilised the community in times of war.

Most of these institutions continued to operate for hundreds of years, even during the period of Haile Selassie, despite the major administrative reforms introduced. It was not until the communist military regime of the Derg emerged in 1974 that they were forcibly replaced by supposed community-based political institutions, such as Kebele Gebere Mahiber. Intended to be 'revolutionary' committees, these were largely formed by the regime as a system to control and repress the population. However, new leaders have more recently used these groups as a constructive tool for local community organisation.

Patterns of land ownership also radically shifted in 1974 with the Land Proclamation Act. All land was nationalised and distributed to former tenants. The fall of the Derg regime in 1991 hasn't altered land ownership. Land remains in the hands of the government. Public agencies regulate and manage land leases, both in rural and urban environments.

2.4 Religion and ethnicity

In Antsokia, religion, ethnicity and livelihood are intimately connected and play a pivotal role in shaping and dividing society.

Antsokia is predominantly a Christian culture, with 70% of the people belonging to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Evangelical Christians, though fast growing, currently form a small minority, about 3%. The Islamic Oromo are significant in size (27%) and have also experienced growth in recent years. Known as the *Selemetes*, these Amhara Muslims have converted principally for security reasons — land pressure has forced them into Oromo areas where Islamisation is essential for acceptance.

Although intermarriage exists between the two tribes and connections are cordial on the surface, relations between them have traditionally been characterised by rivalry, prejudice and suspicion. This is for a variety of reasons. First, the Oromo, who arrived relatively late in the sixteenth century, were considered recent interlopers by the indigenous Amhara. Their presence was considered a threat to land, resources and survival. Being the minority group, the Oromo were marginalised by the Amhara²⁷ in local politics and resource allocation, causing bitterness on the part of the Oromo.

Second, the divide and rule tactics of the Italians during colonial rule exacerbated relations by favouring the Oromo and leaving “a legacy of inter-ethnic discord.”²⁸

²⁷ The exact date of the Oromo migration is slightly controversial. Hassen places it as sixteenth century (Hassen 1974, 10).

²⁸ Hassen 1974.

Undergirding this are the distinct and separate occupations, lifestyles, and cultural and religious practices of both tribes, which have been viewed suspiciously. The Oromo practice of male genital mutilation was particularly disdained and feared.²⁹ The spatial segregation and poor infrastructure has maintained this prejudice between the two communities.

Last, the warrior culture and culture of revenge shared by both tribes meant that violence and bloodshed were common.

Traditional and religious leaders have played an important role in settling accounts through elaborate rituals. Although they have prevented violence from becoming widespread, they were generally ineffective in resolving disputes or bringing reconciliation between the two tribes. This is discussed in more detail in section 5.

2.5 Famine

Despite the harsh existence and difficult circumstances, the people of Antsokia experienced relative stability and sufficient agricultural production for years. However, rapid population growth coupled with the economic and political upheaval of the past few decades seriously de-stabilised agricultural production. Population growth placed enormous pressure on the land, causing rapid de-forestation and consequent land erosion, which went unchecked by local authorities. Within three decades, serious damage had been inflicted on the eco-system causing agricultural production to fall well below consumption needs of the people.

²⁹ See section 3.5.

In 1984, the situation reached a crisis point. The civil war with Eritrean and Tigrayan 'liberation' fronts in then-Northern Ethiopia had inflated agricultural prices, caused massive displacement and worsened the effect of a serious drought which triggered a nation-wide famine causing starvation on an unprecedented scale. WVE responded with a major relief effort throughout the country, including Antsokia, which was particularly badly hit. Hunger and disease, exacerbated by a massive influx of people to the area, claimed an average of 15 to 20 people every day.

2.6 World Vision Ethiopia in Antsokia

WVE first began its work in Antsokia in 1984 in response to the severe famine that paralysed Ethiopia, launching a massive relief operation that assisted between 20,000 and 30,000 drought and famine victims a month. This progressed into rehabilitation activities in 1986, gradually developing into agricultural, health and educational initiatives and the introduction of the concept of participatory community development. After a number of years mobilising and educating the community, the Antsokia ADP was launched in 1991.

Thus, the programme adopted a development approach, moving away from service provision to mobilisation and training. It broadened its focus from food security to afforestation, agriculture, soil and water conservation, health and nutrition, infrastructure, saving and credit provision (revolving loan scheme), saving and credit associations, gender and development, and child sponsorship. Through these programmes, roads have been repaired, bridges built, schools built or upgraded, clinics set up, forests planted, small businesses started, improved agricultural techniques

disseminated, and women given the opportunity and training to earn their own income. All these initiatives were planned and implemented through locally elected committees, discussed in more detail in section 6.2.7.

The impact of the programme on the woreda has been immense and all encompassing. There was only one school in the area before WVE began its operation. Today, there are over 23 primary schools, one high school and one community training centre in the ADP target area. Primary school enrolment ratio is now 59% against 11% in 1983. The literacy rate has increased from 11% to 51%. Most of the schools were built with the support and cooperation of WVE, and these usually required contributions from the parents in labour and resources. More than 75% of households now have access to drinking water, 90% of these within one kilometre. Some 85% of the population have been immunised. There are now six health centres serving the population. About 30% of households use latrines. Environmental rehabilitation programmes such as afforestation and soil and water conservation have gradually restored the eco-system and increased agricultural production. Agricultural production and productivity have vastly improved, with cereal production increasing 218% and 35% of farmers now being surplus producers.³⁰ The social and cultural changes are discussed in section 6.

Antsokia ADP has been so successful that WVE started another ADP in the neighbouring district in 1997, called Antsokia II.

³⁰ See World Vision Ethiopia 1994, 95.

Section Three

Causes of Conflict in Antsokia and the Warrior Culture

According to oral anecdotal evidence, the area had a long-standing history of violence originating from conflicts rooted in land, economic disparities, poverty and socio-cultural factors.³¹ These are discussed below.

3.1 Land

In the years before the deposition of Emperor Haile Selassie I, disputes over land were a major source of conflict. A long history of settlement, a rapidly growing population, and the fragile nature of the eco-system made land a scarce and precious commodity. Disputes over inheritance issues, land annexation and border conflicts would often lead to violent clashes involving individuals, families and the larger communities. Breaches of crop-sharing agreements were also sources of major disputes.

3.2 Alcohol abuse

Many incidents involving murder took place as a result of alcohol abuse. Rows over trivial issues could easily excite emotions and trigger serious quarrels involving violent confrontations. Such incidents would take place in local liquor houses, on religious holidays and during traditional

³¹ According to various sources, including Girma Wondafrash, the former Governor of Antsokia.

wedding ceremonies. One informant recalled an incident in 1988 at his own home compound, where a festive wedding celebration came to a tragic halt as a result of an argument which broke out in gunfire and led to several deaths.

3.3 Domestic strife

Disputes related to female/male relationships or sexual matters frequently led to violence. To cite a few instances, disputes occurred amongst the Amhara tribes when a man was found or suspected of having an affair.³² Competition between young men over the same girl could also be the source of major conflict. Disputes could also arise over women who live alone either because of divorce or death of a husband. Two or more men might establish secret relations, locally known as wushima, with a single woman. This would often cause strife that would degenerate into violence. Informants also reported the occurrence of violent clashes revolving round the kidnapping of young girls, a practice that was rife in Antsokia. Parents whose daughters were kidnapped would have to settle the account either through violent methods or through agreements requiring tedious cultural deliberations.

Early marriage was pointed to as a factor contributing to the culture of violence. When young girls were married off at an age too early to play the role of wives (10-12 years), the lack of exposure in life usually led to strained relationships which often would end up in divorce. The divorced wife would go back to her parents with a trifling amount of money and without a due share of commonly

³² Polygamy is not culturally acceptable amongst the Amhara people.

owned property. The tug of war between the concerned families would sometimes result in tragic deaths.

3.4 Socio-economic disparities

The other category of conflict relates to socio-economic disparities between the two major tribes in Antsokia: the Amhara and Oromo. Historically, the Oromo have been marginalised by the Amhara kings and administrators who denied them land and political positions.³³ The Italians exacerbated tensions by favouring the Oromo. More recently, population pressure and resource scarcity have prompted looting and disputes over grazing grounds which generate tensions between the two communities. However, the backdrop of such deep-seated tension is a socio-cultural practice that has created antagonism for years between the two tribes. This is examined next.

3.5 Cultural differences: The practice of genital mutilation

According to informants, the practice of male genital mutilation within the Oromo culture was the major cause of inter-communal violence. Both parties admit the prevalence of such a culture in the past. Government archives of the 1950s also confirm the prevalence of such practices.³⁴

Every male Oromo ready for marriage was required to show a part of a genital organ of a male person from the neighbouring Amhara community. Killings to obtain the

³³ According to Hassen (1974) the Oromo had been subject to the rulers of the Bezoch aristocratic family of the highlanders. Disputes between the local Oromo chiefs and the Amhara ruler, Ras Wolde Ashager, in the 1860s led to the eviction of the Oromo from their lands and the settlement of soldiers in their stead.

³⁴ World Vision Ethiopia 1974, 136.

genitals of a man would usually occur during the wedding season. Wedding ceremonies and associated festivities extended up to 15 days. The younger people met at selected sites for dancing and social events. The Oromo girl would never allow herself to dance with a male without showing proof that he had de-masculated someone. Informants from the highland community recalled the danger of walking without company during the wedding season. The Amhara subject to such erratic raids were identified by language, their style of dress and the rope they wear around their neck as a mark of their Christian religion. Targeted raids and killing especially occurred during weekly market days. The highlander Amharic-speaking community had to cross the Oromo-inhabited plain in order to go to Kemissie town, the only market at that time serving the entire district in the past.

3.6 Warrior and vendetta culture

Although all these factors are identified as reasons for, or causes of, conflict, a crucial factor must be taken into account when analysing the prevalence of conflict amongst this community. This is the warrior culture and the culture of revenge or vendetta.

The warrior culture is common amongst many people groups in Ethiopia.³⁵ Informants commonly referred to existence of a warrior sub-culture that celebrates values such as heroism, machismo and strength, exalting those who win. The culture of revenge is also deeply rooted, honouring retribution above reconciliation. In the event of the murder of a family member, someone from the murderer's family or clan must be killed before the burial

³⁵ Lewis 1961 and Hassen 1974, 136.

ceremony. The killing is indiscriminate. Someone, young or old, preferably male, must die so that the victim's family as well as the perpetrator's family will "weep together." Thus the spiral of violent conflict continues and murder becomes a part of daily Antsokia life.

Both of these characteristics of Antsokia society played a crucial role in establishing and maintaining a culture of violence, not only between the Amhara and Oromo tribes, but also between clans and families. They also, of course, created fertile ground for the introduction of guns into the society.

3.7 Weak presence of the State

An important factor preventing the mitigation or control of this violence was the conspicuous weakness of local administration, including law and order. This was particularly acute in Antsokia, which is a very remote region. Although judicial and police institutions have been in place since 1941, lack of enforcement and respect for the rule of law rendered them ineffective. As a result, use of guns was not controlled and disputes were not settled by modern legal processes. Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms were similarly ineffective in preventing disputes from becoming violent, but they were effective to a certain degree in settling disputes after a period of violence. In this way, it could be said that the *Kalichas* (Muslim elders who performed traditional conflict resolution ceremonies) filled a crucial gap in the context of the weak presence of the State. This is discussed further in the next section.

Section Four

Traditional Conflict Resolution

In a community where conflict is common and violence is endemic, traditional conflict resolution has played a role in attempting to control or manage violence. Over the years, two kinds of conflict resolution have been used.

The first is *Guma*, which is used to settle intra-clan blood feuds. Elders and religious leaders play a prominent role in the negotiation process. According to the norms of this institution, members of the family responsible for the death of someone from another family agree to pay a prescribed amount of money as blood compensation for the deceased. Informants vary on the amount, but the range is anywhere between 1000-4000 Birr.³⁶ As part of the overall settlement package, the person who committed the killing has to face some kind of ex-communication involving physical banishment. If the banished person appeared in the village from which he was removed, it would be considered a breach of the agreements and hence the other party is absolved from any action taken against him. Though the *Guma* institution is well established and respected by the community, informants maintain that it has not been very effective in deterring violence.

When conflicts are inter-ethnic, between the Amhara and the Oromo, *Guma* tends not to be used. Instead, blood

³⁶ Based on the current exchange rate, this is equivalent to US\$130-500.

settlement would be dealt with using the mediation skills of elders and religious leaders from both the Christian and Muslim communities and only after a bloody spiral of violence. The Muslim sheik plays a pivotal part in the mediation process. All members of the negotiating team approach the sheiks (*Kalicha*) to conduct the arbitration. Elders and family members representing the feuding parties settle their disputes in a meeting directed by the sheik. Once settlement is reached, a binding ritual is performed. A goat, sheep or oxen is slaughtered and the disputing parties are asked to cross the slaughtered animal by pleading an oath. A stick called *kiti* is planted into the soil, and each side says, "Let my body be as stiff and lifeless as this stick if I break the oath." Then they eat and spend time together to cleanse themselves from the sense of bitterness and hostility that has surrounded their relationship.

It is interesting to note the special role Muslim converts play in this reconciliation ritual. The new converts, locally referred to as *Selemetes*, are former Christians from the highland communities who converted either for security reasons or in search of land. The *Selemetes* constitute the middle ground and function as brokers in the conflict-resolution process.

These traditional methods of conflict resolution are akin to conflict management or settlement of accounts in the aftermath of a cycle of violence. There is no tradition of elders mediating conflicts *before* they become violent, nor is there a concerted effort to bring an end to the cycle of violence directly. Thus the traditional methods tend to be largely ineffective in preventing violence, though helpful in halting the continuation of violence and disputes.

These methods are still used today, but their significance has considerably declined for a number of reasons. One reason is the decreased incidence of violence within Antsokia, but the two principal reasons relate to social and judicial changes. First, the police have been educating the community on the role of the police and judicial bodies in settling disputes and conducting campaigns against traditional practices that promote acts of violence. Second, the increased respect that the Christian church has gained over the years has prompted many to turn to pastors and church lay leaders instead of the *Kalichas* to settle conflicts. These changes are discussed further in section 6.

Section Five

Small Arms in Antsokia : History and Impact

5.1 A brief history of small arms in Antsokia

Guns were first introduced to the area in significant numbers at the end of the last century, when Emperor Menelik mobilised and armed the nation to resist the growing strength of the Italians. When the Italians were defeated at Adwa in 1896, the returning soldiers, most of whom were peasants, were allowed to use the weapons as a reward for their services.

It is believed that some firearms may have made their way into the area prior to 1896, given the proximity of Antsokia to the ports of Obock and Tadjoura, which were the main routes for illicit gun trafficking. Since the French controlled the ports, French merchants dominated the trade of firearms. Weapons continued to trickle on a relay system through Afar and Oromo territories through merchants who operated their business secretly.

Small-arms proliferated once again in the region in the 1930s for the same reason: to defend the nation against the Italians. The Italo-Ethiopian war, which broke out in 1936, led Emperor Haile Selassie I to mobilise the people to confront the Italians at Mychew. In the ensuing battle the Ethiopians lost the war and the soldiers retreated. After the Emperor left the country in 1936, some joined the patriotic forces, while others returned to their homes,

again with their guns. The patriotic forces operating in the area continued to receive arms smuggled and supplied, perhaps by the French, who were hostile to the Italians.

The divide and rule policy of the Italians was a critical factor in escalating the availability of arms in the area. The Italians, who occupied Ethiopia for five years (1936-41), deliberately fomented ethnic hostilities between the Amhara and Oromo to cause bitterness and discord.³⁷ They favoured the Oromo as agents whom they heavily armed to track down the patriotic forces resisting their rule.

In the years following the restoration of independence in 1941, the country enjoyed economic growth with land cultivation becoming a prominent feature of the life of the people.³⁸ However, this raised the disposable income of the people to purchase firearms that had by then become an integral part of the culture. In the 1950s and 1960s there were more guns in the area than at any time in the past.³⁹

In the last two decades, two seminal events drastically affected both the scale and type of small arms in the nation at large, including Antsokia. Both relate to changes in national government. In 1974, when Haile Selassie was deposed, the region became one of the centres of resistance for members of the old regime, and as a result a new influx of arms flooded into the area to help pros-

³⁷ Hassen (1974) comments on how the Italian period left behind a legacy of inter-ethnic discord.

³⁸ Interviews with farmers Hussein Endale, Datte Wolde, Mohamed Gabriel, Ismael Alieye, Adem Hawza and Nuriez Hassien (30 July 1999).

³⁹ Hassen 1974, 136.

ecute the war. In 1991, when the Derg regime collapsed, the disbanded army either kept all the modern guns or sold them at a cheap rate. Additionally, wars in neighbouring Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan in the early 1990s flooded the Horn region with arms. As a result, Kalashnikovs became a cheap, readily available weapon and a commonly owned item in Antsokia and throughout Ethiopia. According to police sources and informants, Antsokia society was 90% armed in the mid-1990s.⁴⁰

No check was placed on the use and ownership of guns in the area, partly because of the weak presence of the State to maintain law and order. However, the tide began to turn in the mid-1990s when the government introduced gun-licensing laws and strengthened the police and security force throughout the country. Today, arms in theory can be bought on the open market, but customers have to go through prohibitive formalities to obtain the permission. As a result, only local militia forces legally are allowed to carry firearms.

5.2 The gun culture and the impact of small arms in Antsokia

It is difficult to identify and assess the exact intensity of violence prior to the advent of small arms in Antsokia. Similarly, it is not possible to estimate and establish the societal damages of violence prior to the introduction of guns to the area. However, informants are unanimous on the extensive role guns played to destabilise and impoverish the community at large. Informants testified that

⁴⁰ This figure is an approximate percentage of households owning a gun. No statistics are available, but the estimate is based on local police knowledge and information from former gun owners.

every single family in the entire community has been affected by the death of someone resulting from a gun-related incident

It is also clear that guns have considerably intensified the level of violence and thereby escalated the scale of killings. People from both tribes admit that guns became the means of exacting revenge because they provide an easy tool to kill and retaliate promptly. Indeed, the spiral of violence prompted by the culture of revenge was more rampant in Antsokia after the introduction of guns. Guns had become such a vital feature of the community that every growing male person made it his foremost dream and achievement to have a gun and would frugally save any earnings to equip himself with one.

Though the essential motive of possessing a gun was for self-defence, its incorporation in a culture that celebrates heroism gave it another dimension. Carrying a gun became a symbol of masculinity and power. Guns became close to being sacred objects, revered by many as the essence of life. As one farmer admitted, *“Every one of us was armed. We thought life could not go on without them [guns].”* Unceasing societal friction and competition raised the importance and increasing presence of guns.

Those most severely affected by the culture of revenge were the vulnerable groups, particularly children. One informant whose children were sponsored by WVV intimated that he had to send away his two sons to distant locations to continue their high school education in order to protect them from potential reprisal killings.

Section Six

Findings

This section will present the findings of the field research, focusing on information gathered from the outcome of the interviews, PRA exercises and observation. It is divided into two parts. The first part summarises the changes found in levels of violence, use of guns and community dynamics/quality of relationships. The second outlines the factors identified as contributors or causes of this change. A case study representative of the experience of the majority of Antsokia community is inserted between the two parts.

6.1 Changes in levels of violence, use of guns and community relations

All available sources, oral, official and written, were unanimous in their assertion that violence, conflict and use of guns had declined dramatically amongst the people of Antsokia since WVE had begun working in the district in 1984. According to a police lieutenant, *“More than 80% of gun related incidents have been contained.”* The reason for this is multi-faceted and will be explored in the next section (6.2). Presented here are the main changes identified by the people relating to levels of violence and conflict and the use of guns since 1984.

Table I presents a list of the changes identified by the informants.⁴¹

⁴¹ Due to the sensitivity of the research topic, specific tallies of participants and replies were avoided.

Table I: Social and behavioural change as identified by informants⁴²

A. Highland Amhara community:

The Amhara community identified the following to have changed over the past 10-15 years:

- fewer shooting incidents, less bickering during social occasions such as wedding ceremonies
- tendency to be less bellicose
- fewer incidents in local liquor houses
- dramatic scaling down in crime and incidents related to guns (police report)
- decreased interest in retribution and vengeance
- more inclusive and enlarged perception of life
 - increased valuation of life and self worth
 - rise of a spirit of reconciliation
 - increase in the mediative role of Evangelical Christians
 - an increase in suing offenders, as opposed to acting impulsively,
 - decline of the *Guma* institution
- decline of the power and influence of the Muslim sheiks (*Kalichas*)

⁴² Due to the sensitivity of the research topic, specific tallies of participants in the PRA exercises and replies were avoided.

- decline in the prevalence of harmful traditional practices such as abduction of girls and early marriage
- relative freedom of women and increased male/female interactions
- significant decline in the habit of drinking alcohol
- growing understanding of the sanctity of marriage
- decline in the use of insulting words and acrimony
- total absence of the glorification of guns, culture of impunity
- rise of new peace-loving attitudes
- rise of new traits of life such as saving and planning
- growing recognition of others as different but equal
- gradual dying of biases and stigmas towards others
- growing emphasis towards industry, hard work and achievements

B. Within the Oromo:

- significant decline in the value attached to demasculation
- rise in the cultivation of crops
- gradual improvement in work habits
- increasing tendency toward sedentarization
- decline in the power and influence of the *Kalichas*
- increased mobility, sending children to schools located in the highland

- accepting the Amhara as good neighbours
- improved living conditions
- improved perception of life that gives more value to oneself and others

C. Amhara and Oromo:

- intermarriage
- free mobility
- free interaction
- free association
- significant decline (virtual absence) in looting
- tolerance of common grazing and pasture
- toleration of formation of farming niches of the Amhara in the Oromo plains
- formations of joint associations to tackle larger communal issues
- decline in mutually incriminating insults, erosion of biases and stigmas
- readiness to learn from one another
- spirit of competition for better life
- ADP-wide solidarity
- freedom of movement, especially significant given the fact that Harbu Wolde was a site formidable even for the government forces in the past

The findings indicate a marked change in behaviour and

attitudes towards work, education, marriage, health, each other and each other's property and outsiders. Even the value placed on life had altered significantly. Not only are guns now used rarely, but violence itself is a rarity, especially between the two tribes. No mention was made of domestic violence (although it is to be expected that this would not be mentioned), so it is difficult to ascertain changes in domestic violence, but references to an end of girl abductions and early marriages were significant. Guns are no longer venerated as previously, and the need to take revenge has been replaced with appreciation for the concept of reconciliation.

The increased value placed on life and work can be seen by the way the discipline of saving has emerged, an effort to improve living conditions and standards is being witnessed, and healthy competition exists. As one farmer confessed, "*We used to fight one another, now we have discovered our enemy: its name is poverty. We are fighting the real enemy together!*" The sense of community is evident in expressions of "a readiness to learn from one another," their desire to set up farmer or enterprise associations, an absence of looting and a tolerance for common grazing. The toleration of Amhara farming associations being formed on Oromo plains is a hugely significant factor, demonstrating an understanding of the need to share in order to survive and, most important, a fundamentally different attitude toward the other tribe.

It is important to note the use of the words 'less' and 'growing' by the informants, which recognises that these changes are not absolute: a certain amount of violence still exists, as do prejudices and old patterns, but these are slowly changing.

6.1.1 PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) exercises

Time lines, mobility maps, and particularly priority matrices confirmed such changes, especially in types of aspirations, interaction between tribes, levels of employment and lifestyle. Mobility had increased for all purposes, largely due to the improved roads and bridges built by WVE, but also due to the increased economic activity and community development meetings that arose from the ADP initiatives.

The priority matrices showed improved standards of living and aspirations: when people were asked to identify major problems 15 years ago, top of the list were problems relating to security and the absence of peace. Then followed health-related problems, schools and transport. When people were asked to identify major achievements in the last 10 years, top of the list was peace and security. It is important to note that this was not a reference just to national peace, but local peace experienced by the reduction in violence between and within tribes. When asked to identify and prioritise major problems currently faced, scarcity of land was top of the list, followed by transportation and electricity. This confirms the sense of security currently experienced, and indicates a desire for economic development and investment. As one informant said, "In the past, we walked under the shadow and constant threat of death. We now walk freely with a sense of security."

At the control group village, Majete, the findings were rather different. Violence is still a problem amongst the people here — inter-tribe and domestic — despite the reduced availability of guns. Indeed, relations between the

Amhara and Oromo in this town and the neighbouring district were reported as strained, and memories of wide-scale inter-communal violence that took place in the early 1990s have not faded. Mobility has increased somewhat for purposes of trade with the improved roads and bridges that connect Majete to the rest of Antsokia, but mobility to or through rival tribe areas is still dangerous. Indeed, it is considered risky to travel there alone. Inter-marriage between the two groups was not reported.

Although less time was spent in the control area, aspirations and attitudes toward work, women, outsiders and each other were observed to be markedly different from the ADP area. In Majete, the sight of vast numbers of farmers drinking the local beer at midday was common, their willingness to talk to outsiders (i.e., the research team) was minimal, and their aspirations for the future were lower than those of the ADP population. Women's mobility and freedom to trade and earn money have not improved as in the ADP.

6.2 Case study

Bekele Mengesha is a successful farmer from the village of Afso, is Amhara by tribe, and is an influential member of the community of Antsokia. His story is representative of the experience of the majority of members of Antsokia community, both Amhara and Oromo, and his view is believed to capture the essence of the change of attitude towards guns and violence. His story is presented below.

I loved guns to the point of reverence. I purchased all sorts of guns from Meniysher to M-One and Kalashnikov. They symbolised prowess and power. Carrying guns was not an option, rather it was an

obligation. The better the type of gun you had the more the symbolic significance. *Guns were our first priority.* We would sell whatever we have, grains, pepper, vegetables, to save money and buy guns. It brought a great honour to us when people talked about our guns.

The grim realities of the famine of 1984/5 tarnished our image and pride. All of a sudden, we were reduced to nothingness and insignificance as we all became dependent on handouts. We all became one family and friends without distinction to class or ethnicity. Hunger, the great leveler, made us one. Guns and the false security they provided lost their value when the belly was churning for the basic necessity of life, bread.

Then World Vision came to provide relief assistance. We ate and fed from the same table, so to speak. It is like finding a common father. Disaster brought us together and under the umbrella of World Vision, we became, as it were, families. That was the time when the collective experience of grief helped to break old walls and we saw each other as human beings for the first time.

However, the grim period lasted short, we recovered and moved back to our respective villages. Through the rehabilitation programme of World Vision, we started normal life. Life gradually revived, including the need to have guns, but guns would never have the same significance. We experienced near-death situation, and we also saw resurrection. We saw also relative abundance. The

source of our economy was diversified, thanks to World Vision. We have started to cultivate new crops including root crops unknown to Antsokia. We made money, we started to use it for productive purposes. There are so many life-enhancing services such as schools, clinics, potable water, roads that have been extended to us through World Vision's development programmes.

In the past, life was until you killed someone and die. Now, we have stakes, property savings, above all a better future and possibilities. Our simple farming tools have proved to be far better weapons for life than the guns. So we let the guns hang at home. They did not even have ornamental significance. I readily gave them when I was asked by the government. I no longer need the guns for my security. The Lord is my shepherd. What have we benefited from the guns? In looking back into our past, no doubt guns have caused untold destruction. As to now and the future, our position rests on a simple motto: Work and win life.

Today we do not gauge life in terms of the type and number of guns one possesses. Rather, the new yardstick asks how much has one invested? How furnished is his house? Are his children going to school? Are they well-fed and dressed? These are the new driving forces. *I do not say that the change of heart came at once. It took time. Several factors can account for that, but the single most important factor is World Vision's presence and the new development spirit it has created and the jolt it has caused in the old value system.*

WorldVision gave us more opportunities and reasons to celebrate life than just waste it. The more we value life the more we are engaged to enhance it and the lesser the instinct for violence.

Together, these findings indicate a dramatic change in social behaviour, attitudes, levels of employment, use of guns and cultural practices amongst both the Oromo and Amhara peoples.

6.3 Influential factors

This section will discuss the various factors that were attributed by the informants as causing these changes. They are many, varied and complex, and as such a significant amount of attention has been given to them in this section. Overall, they have had an influence by either removing the reasons for conflict (e.g., socio-economic disparity, extreme poverty, anti-social cultural practices), removing the means by which to inflict violence (disarmament), or actually altering the attitudes and behaviour of the community.

They will be discussed in the reverse order of importance given them by the interviewees accompanied by explanations for their influence.

6.3.1 Famine

The effects of the notorious famine of 1984/85 on the psyche of Antsokia society were profound and were the first factor to bring about a change in attitudes. First, the famine altered somewhat attitudes to life and death: those who survived emerged with a greater reverence for life than previously, as they had come so close to death. As a

result, the value of guns began to decline in importance. Second, the famine bound the community in collective grief and dependency serving as a uniting force. As Bekele Mengesha said, *“The collective experience of grief helped to break old walls and we saw each other as human beings for the first time.”* Another farmer testified, *“Thanks to the 1984 drought it exposed our real self and buried our empty and false pride.”* Thus, the famine acted as a catalyst for the beginning of the thawing of relations between the Amhara and Oromo, and challenged the value of the gun.

The famine also prompted the arrival of WVE. Its work with the whole community and mobilisation of each group to work together ensured these attitude changes were not lost but rather developed and matured.

6.3.2 Infrastructure and communications development

Prior to the arrival of WVE and the ADP, Antsokia was a highly isolated society. Therefore, the construction of a road connecting Antsokia with the neighbouring district and feeder roads into the interior villages was a significant landmark.⁴³ This encouraged mobility, heightened trade and interaction both within and outside the woreda, even as far as Addis Ababa. Such interaction broadened understanding and experience of other cultures and lifestyles, which in turn affected Oromo and Amhara practices.

The large growth of schools and the construction of a district medical centre created new communal places of

⁴³ Although the road construction was organised by WV, the local community contributed labour and material resources.

interaction which attracted both Oromo and Amhara tribes. This bred familiarity between previously segregated peoples and built friendships between children from both tribes, the children acting as a bridge between the adults. In this way, levels of interaction and sharing of experience between the groups was furthered.

6.3.3 Urbanisation

The only town in Antsokia Woreda, Mekoi, was just a small village in 1984. Now it is a thriving small town with a semblance of modern amenities. The town's growth is essentially attributed to the presence of WV and of the ADP, which has brought about significant economic growth, although the expansion of local government administration must also be recognised for its contribution to the growth of the town. The market attracts traders from as far as Kombolcha and Dessie. It is known for its fruit, vegetable and root crops, mostly introduced by WVE. Most of the hotels are owned by farmers who have benefited from WVE's interventions by working hard and investing. As a result, Mekoi has become a 'melting pot' where the people of Antsokia have become familiar with each other and with outsiders, and where the two ethnic groups meet together regularly for trading. It has also become the locus for ADP training and district level committee meetings, and as such is a place where deeper levels of interaction have taken place. Thus the growth of the town has helped to alter the attitudes of the community toward each other (Amhara and Oromo) and toward outsiders.

6.3.4 Education

There was only one school in the area before WVE began its operations. Today, there are over 23 primary schools, one high school and one community training centre.

The point to be stressed here is not so much the physical expansion of schools but the new ideas and values that were introduced as a result of the staff's initiative and close relationship with WVE. Children began to learn about health, nutrition, sanitation, the negative consequences of harmful cultural practices (including genital mutilation), family planning and innovative methods of cultivation. School education also taught against abusive elements in the existing culture such as early marriage, girl abduction, marriage by arrangement and fratricidal violence.⁴⁴

In the past parents held dismissive attitudes to children and did not listen to them. But education enhanced their value and children came to be seen as valuable assets for the future.⁴⁵ Children naturally conveyed what they had learnt to their parents, who consequently became exposed to new thinking and practices. They also communicated through special songs and stories designed to help the children learn and pass on the message.

In this respect the local education system and the children who attend have become important players in alter-

⁴⁴ Such education is in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 24 (3), of which Ethiopia is a signatory. Article 24 (3) stipulates that "State Parties shall take measures to abolish traditional harmful practices prejudicial to the health of children."

⁴⁵ For example, some children who have gone through secondary and higher education now have professional jobs in Addis Ababa and provide financial support for their parents. As such, they are seen as very valuable assets.

ing values, prompting the rejection of those traditional habits which are destructive and which often have been triggers for conflict and violence. One example of this is the dramatic decline in girl kidnapping; this decline has been attributed to education. As the head master testified, *“Pupils have become active agents in the transmission of new values that confront the old and harmful ones.”*

6.3.5 Law and order and the new arms laws

An undoubted factor in the declining levels of violence and use of guns is the imposition of state law and order which the present government introduced. Not only did this include the removal of illegal, unregistered weapons, but also new, stricter laws were passed on gun ownership. In addition, police forces were reinforced and militia security forces set up at the Peasant Administration and woreda level. Police actively educate the people on the causes and consequences of crime (i.e., penal law). Government cadres also conduct campaigns against harmful traditional practices.

It is clear that government policy has played a critical role in reducing the use of guns by withdrawing their availability and imposing a sense of law and order.

6.3.6 The growth of the church and the rise of a new Christian culture

The growth of the Christian church is also pointed to by many as having influenced behavioural and attitudinal change in the district.

Since the overthrow of the Communist Derg regime in 1991, both the Christian and Muslim churches have experienced significant growth in Ethiopia. In Antsokia, the

Christian church has grown most significantly, although Muslim growth has also taken place. As has been the case in other parts of Ethiopia, non-Orthodox Christian churches in Antsokia have grown quite rapidly, to about 3% of the population.⁴⁶

The impact of church growth has been noted in a few ways. The first is the emphasis placed on biblical lifestyle and attitudes, particularly in the area of forgiveness. Among the local Christians, who tend to be rural farmers, moral and ethical teachings of the Bible have found expression in more stable and love-centred marriages, more peaceful relations with neighbours, disciplined lives, hard work, abstinence from alcohol and restraints from immoral and anti-social pursuits. The Christians are respected amongst the community for their discipline, hard work and perseverance but mostly for their sense of hope, love for one another and forgiveness, traits that others seek to emulate because of their positive impact.

Second, practising Christians appear to have had a surprisingly influential impact on the demise of the gun culture. According to some informants, they were among the first to reject the use of guns before the new stricter gun laws were introduced. As a result, they were ridiculed and accused of cowardice by many. As one farmer testified, *“Someone killed my father. The Bible says, ‘Forgive’. The culture asserts, ‘Kill’. I obeyed the first. I was called a coward but it did not matter.”*

Last, the rising number of, and respect for, practising Christians has also affected a shift in reliance on the traditional conflict mediators. People are beginning to turn to Chris-

⁴⁶ Non-Orthodox refers to Evangelical, Pentecostal, Catholic, Anglican and Baptist churches.

tian pastors and elders as mediators in community or individual conflicts instead of the traditional *Kalichas* (see Table 2 in the Appendix). The explanation lies in the fact that their lifestyles command respect and they are trusted by the people. The impact this is having on the effectiveness of traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms was not clear.

It is also important to note that the lifestyle and value systems of the WVE staff who are from these new Christian cultures were closely observed and widely respected by the community (as discussed in section 6.3.7 below). They appeared to have had an indirect impact on the community members' attitude toward each other.

6.3.7 World Vision Ethiopia's Area Development Programme

6.3.7.1 Economic impact: Increasing the value of life

The successful fulfilment of one of the principal objectives of WVE's ADP in Antsokia — secure and sustainable livelihoods — is a major factor that has been pointed to in reducing the use of guns and building peace in the area.

The region in which Antsokia is located is notorious for irregular rainfall, land scarcity, land erosion and food insecurity. The initiatives that WVE introduced to address this (crop diversification, irrigation, the utilisation of the Belg [short] rains, vocational training, etc.) have resulted in significant improvements in standards of living brought about by surplus and regular agricultural production and a diversified income base.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Nearly 35% of farmers are surplus producers; at peak season a minimum of 200 metric tons of fruits and vegetables are brought to the weekly market in Mekoi for sale. Cereal production increased from 4,832 metric tons in 1990 to 15,352 metric tons in 1998.

This in turn has influenced people's diet and clothing habits, and prompted the recent emergence of a culture of saving and investment, something that was virtually non-existent in the past. Some enterprising farmers have dared to invest their income in hotels and shopping businesses. More important, this has created a work ethic which was previously non-existent.

The impact this new economic productivity has had in reducing violence and gun use is threefold. First, it has raised the value of life: life is less cheap and expendable when there is so much to live for. Second, it has given people hope for the future and a reason to live; these were previously lacking and this lack served as a prime motivating factor for self-destruction. And third, economic activity and the competitive work ethos have provided a distraction from violence — people have become busy and are focused on earning a living rather than on retribution.

In essence, the creation of reliable and sustainable livelihoods and the associated economic prosperity has removed one of the reasons for conflict — severe poverty — and has altered the community's attitude to life itself.

6.3.7.2 Structure and approach: Building relationships

The way in which the ADP was first introduced to the community and the way it was and continues to be implemented have been critical in influencing the behaviour and attitudes of community. We called this the structure and approach of the ADP.

The Approach. From the very beginning, strong emphasis was placed on conveying the importance of trust and

unity amongst the community, particularly amongst the Oromo and Amhara. The staff spent much time conveying this to the community and generating opportunities for interaction. Abdella Osman, who served as a Manager of Antsokia I ADP for 11 years, explains: *“We saw it as our paramount task to educate the beneficiaries of the significance of peaceful human relations for growth and development. We spent a considerable portion of our time in relationship building. Our animators went to every village to teach the community on the vicious consequences of violence and its negative impacts on development. The people listened to us. Indeed, we made a breakthrough in establishing rapport and a spirit of harmony amongst members of the community.”* This approach served as an excellent foundation not only for effective community development but also for beginning a process of relationship building amongst the community.

Second, WVE took the inclusive approach, which was of immense importance. The staff insisted that participation in the ADP be open to all members of the community in need, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, tribe, gender or age. The Oromo, who traditionally have been excluded from economic or social benefits (see section 3.4), were embraced along with the Amhara, as were women with men. Although this was not popular at first amongst the Amhara, it not only created opportunities for interaction (see “Structure” below) but also conveyed an important lesson about the equal value of each tribe and gender.

Third, a participatory approach to community development was used: beneficiaries were taught and mobilised to own their programmes, and to devise, plan and execute any development initiatives. By doing this, villages learnt to work together for a common purpose, often for

the first time. Thus they developed a common sense of purpose and a future as they enjoyed a degree of ownership and involvement in the programme.

Structure. The structure of the ADP has also been crucial to the changing of attitudes amongst the community. By 'structure', we refer to the way in which the ADP and the activities are organised and managed. Essentially, this is done through a system of locally elected committees. Each village elects its own development committee, and members are responsible for planning and implementing development activities. Specialist committees are formed to address agricultural, health, micro-enterprise, women's issues, and so on. Members of these committees also are elected to sit on zonal and district-level committees to oversee the whole process and provide co-ordination. All of these committees meet regularly to take part in seminars and workshops, and they also meet occasionally to share experience and network.

The immediate impact of this system was for interaction to take place at a meaningful level between previously "walled" groups: the Amhara and Oromo, men and women, Orthodox Christians and Muslims, and so on. This later led to greater understanding of one another, including a realisation that their needs were similar and their poverty was not caused by their ethnic or religious identity. Familiarity and an appreciation for one another developed, and most important, dependence on one another for survival was nurtured. This was particularly true for members of zonal and woreda committees which were tribally mixed.

The former and current managers of Antsokia ADP both stressed the fact that the various inter-ethnic and intra-

ethnic seminars and workshops the ADP has organised over the years made substantial contributions toward building inter-dependence and mutual understanding. People from all tribes, genders and social backgrounds attended seminars, ate and stayed together, and dialogued together on common issues. The seminars also brought to the fore women who in the past were not allowed to leave their houses by social sanction. As one woman said, *“We were given a chance to move out and speak on behalf of women.”*

Another contributing factor was the community programmes that were run during the early days of the ADP and which required joint community effort, such as rehabilitating the environment through Food for Work. Such community endeavours created a sense of common purpose and destiny and strengthened the spirit of solidarity.

Although it must be stressed that this approach used by WVE was a lengthy, slow process, it is clear that such an approach and structure has been critical to nurturing attitudinal change: breaking traditional social barriers, building trust and meaningful relationships within the community, and instilling a common sense of purpose. Most important, it has created a situation where communities are now reliant on each other for survival.

6.3.7.3 Presence of World Vision Ethiopia

One factor that was not initially obvious but was pointed out frequently by the informants is the presence of WVE and the role it provides as a unifying agent. As a non-local organisation (not from Antsokia) which is non-governmental and non-discriminatory in its provision of services,

it was respected by the community for being impartial and served as a common umbrella for all. This is a function that neither the government nor a local organisation that might be seen to favour one group or the other could provide.

Furthermore, mere presence spoke deeply to the community that it was valued and that life was worth living. On its own, this may not have been influential, but accompanied by the way the WVE staff related to the community, the message they brought, and the way the development activities were organised, it acted as a powerful example and catalyst for change. Most important, the respect that WVE gained from its life-saving mission during the relief years meant that the community was receptive to its message of putting an end to violence and guns.

6.3.7.4 Management and leadership Style

The behaviour and example of WVE staff was mentioned as a great influence in the lives of the people. In the early years, facilitators spent considerable time building relationships with the beneficiaries who observed their tolerance, fairness, commitment, self-sacrifice, and above all, love for the beneficiaries. Such behaviour has caused the community to ask itself, “If someone we don’t know has invested so much to love us, why do we hate and fight each other?” In other words, the example of the staff, particularly those working at the village level, has had a direct impact on the behaviour and attitude of the community itself.

The previous ADP manager, Abdella Osman, contributed in a unique manner to this aspect of the ADP by virtue of his commitment, his personality and his identity. He served

as manager for 11 years without a break. Osman is a Christian of Muslim background and is from the Oromo tribe from South East Ethiopia (Harar). His inter-personal skills and his knowledge of the language meant that he could interact easily with the people. As a result, he has served as a bridge between the Christians and Muslims, the Oromo and Amhara.

Section Seven

Analysis

At this point, it is appropriate to return to the questions that this research set out to answer/investigate:

- Has there been a significant decline in use of guns and violence, and is this something unique to Antsokia?
- What are the factors that caused the decline in the use of guns and/or of violence? Have the tools for violence simply been removed, or has the motivation for violence disappeared? If the latter, how was this achieved?
- To what degree has WVE or its ADP been influential in this change? What other factors or actors have been influential?
- How sustainable is the change; that is, is it a short-term trend?

7.1 Overall findings

First, it is clear from the findings that the observations of the initial research⁴⁸ were well-founded and representative of the district as a whole: use of guns has declined dramatically since WVE began operating in the woreda, to the extent that they are now hardly used. Moreover, levels of violence and conflict have also drastically reduced,

⁴⁸ The subject of the initial research was not the same as this one. Rather, it was a WVE research project looking at the overall impact of its work in the Antsokia.

particularly between the two traditionally warring tribes, the Oromo and Amhara. Conflict within these communities relating to non-tribal matters has also declined. In its place a spirit of tolerance, understanding, respect and cooperation has emerged at various levels of the community. The dynamic within the community has shifted from being fundamentally aggressive, defensive and violent to a much more peaceful, tolerant and rational environment. This is not to deny the existence of conflict or tension — they do exist. But when they occur, attempts are made to find a resolution without violence.

The changes noted within the community run much deeper and broader than relational ones, significant as they are. Indeed, fundamental social and economic changes have taken place within Antsokia that are expressed in behavioural and lifestyle change amongst individuals and groups. The introduction of reliable and sustainable livelihoods and its accompanying economic wealth, the improved road and communication systems and the increased number of schools and educational facilities have altered the living standards, outlook and aspirations of the majority of Antsokia residents. This is intimately connected with the improved relations and reduced level of conflict.

What is also clear, and of immense significance, is that change has not been limited to the behaviour and lifestyles of the communities. Attitudinal change has been equally notable and, crucially, appears to be the driving force behind the behavioural change. This relates to every aspect of Antsokia life — health, work, education, neighbour, family, friends and enemies, indeed, even guns. All these have been affected by a fundamental change in attitude toward life and its value. As the value of life has increased, so has

the value of human beings; this in turn has had a direct impact on the use of guns.

The question is, what has caused this behavioural and, more important, this attitudinal change toward violence, the use of guns and values in general?

7.2 Influential factors

It is clear from the previous section that a broad range of factors has been influential in prompting this paradigm shift within the community, and that the behavioural and attitudinal changes affecting gun use are closely related to those affecting other aspects of life.

Education has clearly been important in altering anti-social behaviour. The local education system and the children who attend have become important players in altering values, prompting the rejection of traditional, often destructive habits that frequently were triggers for conflict and violence. Increased access to formal education has also created a thirst for life that has contributed to a sense of hope. And the children also acted as bridges between the adults through the friendships they made with children from different tribes and clans. Government education also has affected positively the community's attitude toward violence through 'conscientisation' programmes, although it is difficult to assess the degree of influence that the police had.

The most important government contribution has been to withdraw the availability of guns through the informal process of disarmament in the mid-1990s and by imposing a sense of law and order. This was an important piece of information that the initial research did not uncover.

That said, this was clearly not the only factor in prompting such a dramatic decline in use of guns. As some of the informants mentioned, their 'appetite' for guns and their instinct for violence had been destroyed by the famine of 1995 and the changed community dynamics brought on by the ADP. Attitudes toward guns were already changing. Furthermore, the reduced levels of violence indicate that the waning need to use guns must be factored into the equation.

Famine and its impact were not given as much credit as expected for their influence. This has been explained by the short memory of the interviewees. Yet it is clear that the famine played a profound role in turning around attitudes to life, guns, and one another. However, it is also clear that the famine alone would not have brought about such deep changes. The staff acknowledged that relations between the two tribes were still highly strained for some time after the famine until WVE started to encourage them to work together. Thus, it appears that the famine acted as a catalyst for the beginning of the thawing of relations between the Amhara and Oromo and thus challenged the value of the gun. Possibly what was most critical about the famine was the respect and trust that WVE earned through its life-saving work, which meant that the people were receptive to its message of unity and ideas of co-operation.

Infrastructural and communications development also contributed to behavioural and attitudinal change by creating a vehicle and locus for regular interaction between people from both tribes. Increased trading opportunities and communication breed familiarity. However, they alone cannot explain the degree of change found.

The pervasive influence of the growing Christian church is clearly very important to some in the community, though not all, and so cannot be attributed as a single factor. The impact of Christians in pioneering the rejection of the gun would have been small if no other factors had come into play. But it appears its influence is compelling. In the words of a local government administrator, "*I cannot deny the influence of the new Christian cultures in changing the perception of life and human relations.*"

Last, but not least, is WVE — its community development programme, the social and economic changes it brought, and the way in which it related to the community. Each of these clearly had a profound impact on the lifestyles, aspirations, and attitudes of both tribes, with regard to each other, life, death, and, therefore, the gun. To quote the Chief Police Officer of Antsokia, "*The experience of Antsokia has clearly shown the vital connections between peace and development.*" This has primarily been brought about by two crucial aspects of WVE's programme.

The first aspect is the *improved standards of living and livelihood security* that arose as a result of the activities, which had a threefold impact: they gave the community a purpose for living and a stake in the future; they raised the value of life; and they provided a distraction from violence, all of which previously did not exist. The second was the *approach and design of the ADP*, in particular the inclusive approach that insisted on both tribes benefiting, the participatory committee system which promoted a sense of ownership and led to inter-tribal co-operation, the mixed training programmes, and the example and exhortation of staff, who demonstrated commitment and love for the people and encouraged reconciliation and

unity. All of this introduced a whole new dynamic within the community: a sense of common purpose, respect, value and a dependence on one another for survival.

To be conclusive about the degree to which these factors effected change is hard to tell without further in-depth research. It is clear, though, that these factors worked together to have a synergetic effect on the community. The existence of each one strengthened and consolidated the impact of the others. Together they altered behaviour *and* attitudes, and together they reduced the causes or triggers for conflict — alcohol abuse, socio-economic disparities, grinding poverty, lack of state controls, a culture of revenge, availability of guns and negative traditional cultural practices.

However, it is hard to deny the over-riding influence of the ADP and WVE's presence. Changes in attitudes, mobility and economic wealth appear to have been the greatest influence and WVE's ADP has been primarily responsible for this. Its programme acted as scaffolding on which other factors hung and took effect. Its presence unified and gave hope. Its vision gave direction. Most important, it was able to influence negative attitudes rather than behaviour alone through the relationships that it built, the interdependency that it encouraged and the economic stakes it created. Furthermore, the community clearly views WVE's community development programme as the primary factor.

The fact that the many of the changes were driven by attitude change helps answer the fourth question: How sustainable is the change in use of guns? This research has been conducted relatively soon after the community chose

to reject guns (five years). However, one can be fairly confident that this change is not a short-term one precisely because it has come about as a result of attitude change concerning not only guns but also conflict resolution, and life and death. The use of guns has stopped not just because the tools have been removed but primarily because the community no longer venerates the culture of the gun or of violence.

The degree to which these changes were unique to Antsokia is a remaining question. The research conducted in the control group was not as extensive as in the ADP, and so it is difficult to compare accurately the changes in the two districts. However, what was found is telling. Few of the behavioural shifts that accompanied the economic and social changes in Antsokia were found in the neighbouring town of Majete. Clearly, use of guns has declined there due to the stricter arms laws, and attitudes toward traditional practices have waned with the influence of the government's education and the attitudes of their neighbours. Yet conflict and violence is still prevalent, attitudes towards the other tribe remain suspicious and unco-operative, and the thirst for life found in the neighbouring district has not been awakened. One may conclude that the influence of the ADP in fleshing out and consolidating the other catalysts (government education, urbanisation, infrastructural change, growth of Christian church) and in orchestrating social interdependence and trust is critical for bringing about the kind of changes needed to make disarmament meaningful and sustainable.

Section Eight

Conclusion

This research set out to examine whether community development has a role to play in reducing the demand for small arms at the grass-roots level, focusing on a country which suffers from a history of a ready supply of arms. In doing so, it aimed to look more closely at the other approach to tackling the small-arms problem, reducing demand, a subject which has attracted much less attention from campaigners than its counterpart, supply.

Although the level of research was relatively simple, the findings were compelling. The research clearly found that fundamental social and economic change had taken place in the district since WVE began working in the district in 1984. Not only had the use of guns declined dramatically — to the extent of being no longer used — but also violence and conflict were also greatly reduced. The culture of violence, revenge and retribution that was characteristic of the Amhara and Oromo peoples who live in Antsokia had been transformed into a culture of tolerance, respect for life and for one another, and co-operation. Furthermore, living standards have significantly improved for the majority of beneficiaries who now enjoy reliable and sustainable livelihoods as a result of improvements in agriculture, health, education and employment that the ADP has brought.

What has been witnessed is a profound, gradual shift in the lifestyles, behaviour and attitudes of the community.

This relates to every aspect of Antsokia life — health, work, education, neighbour, family, friends and enemies, and, consequently, the gun. Guns, which used to be the pride and joy of every male, are no longer venerated. Instead, farming tools and schooling have become the objects of achievement and honour by the community. As the value of life has increased, so has the value of human beings. This in turn has had a direct impact on the use of guns.

Most pertinent is that the behavioural change (relating to use of guns, health and sanitation, work, traditional cultural practices) has been prompted by attitudinal change. As a result, improvements in one area (e.g., reliable agricultural production) encouraged a direct effect on another (e.g., levels of violence).

The research found that a broad range of factors has been influential in bringing about this change, none of which can be attributed to one single actor. These factors included improved access to education; construction of roads, prompting increased interaction and trade; health centres; education against harmful cultural practices; stricter gun laws and improved law and order; secure livelihoods brought about by better agricultural techniques and vocational training; inter-tribal social organisation and networking; the impact of new Christian cultures.

It is difficult to be conclusive about the degree to which these factors influenced change without further in-depth research. A more rigorous study is needed to establish conclusively causal links between ADP development practices and the reduction of violence and demand for small arms. It is clear, though, that these factors worked to-

gether to have a synergetic effect on the community. Together, they reduced causes or triggers for conflict — alcohol abuse, socio-economic disparities, grinding poverty, lack of state controls, a culture of revenge, availability of guns and negative traditional cultural practices.

Changes in attitudes, mobility and economic wealth appear to have had the greatest influence, and WVE's ADP has been primarily responsible for these. The community itself identified WVE's community development programme as the principal influential factor.

The impact of the ADP is summed up neatly by farmer Bekele Mengesha: *"I do not say that the change of heart came at once. It took time. Several factors can account for that, but the single most important factor is WorldVision's presence and the new development spirit it has created and the jolt it has caused in the old value system. WorldVision gave us more opportunities and reasons to celebrate life than just waste it. The more we value life the more we are engaged to enhance it and the lesser the instinct for violence."*

In the light of this, what lessons can be learnt from these findings, and what are the implications for community development, humanitarian NGOs, advocacy on small arms, and peace-building issues in general? The next two sections will attempt to draw out some of these.

8.1 Lessons

It is recognised that the level of this research was relatively simple, brief and biased toward qualitative data. Clearly, more in-depth research is required. However, we believe that the strength of the findings and their implications make it important to look at what lessons emerge,

tentative though they might be, and the implications they hold. What is interesting about this research is that it has lessons not just for successful disarmament programmes but also for community development and its contribution to peace-building.

- *It is clear that the factors which cause people to use small arms are multiple and complex* and are directly related to issues of poverty, unequal distribution of wealth, culture and accepted norms, historical prejudice and rivalry, and ignorance. It is also clear that these are fairly universal, with variations depending on the context.⁴⁹
- *Therefore, one cannot pursue disarmament in isolation from the factors that prompt people to use guns.* The response must be holistic and integrated, one that tackles the multiple causes and triggers of conflict as well as gun use and offers alternatives.
- *“Tackling” the causes of conflict and gun use need not be direct or explicit.* As this research shows, approaching it from a different angle can have equal, if not, better results. In the case of WVE, the goal of the ADP was not to end gun dependency and violence but to bring about social and economic transformation. It was recognised, of course, that the two were connected, but WVE focused on doing that which it knew it was skilled to do — mobilising the people to self-organisation and unity, and promoting socio-economic development, which in turn altered attitudes. With the help of the government education programme and

⁴⁹ For example, use of guns in North America is driven not just by poverty, tribal rivalry and prejudice, but also by the narcotics trade.

gun licensing laws, coupled with the influence of the spiritual awakening amongst the Christian churches, the gun and revenge culture was eroded.

- *Integrated, participatory, holistic community development has a critically important role to play not only in reducing demand for guns at the grass-roots level but also in building cultures of peace.* Transforming cultures of violence into cultures of tolerance, respect and co-operation takes time, requires an outside agent to act as a bridge between hostile communities, and needs to provide incentives for non-violence. This is something that humanitarian NGOs are well-placed to do and confirms the findings of earlier World Vision UK research into the contribution of ADPs to peace-building.⁵⁰ Yet this dynamic of holistic development has not yet been fully recognised or exploited.
- *Programmes which attempt to alter attitudes toward guns, violence, conflict, death and life will be much more sustainable than those that just target behaviour.*
- *A key lesson of this research is the need for collaboration and co-operation in any efforts aimed at development, disarmament or peace-building.* The causes of conflict and gun violence are multiple and interconnected and therefore require collaboration for success. A sense of dependency and a degree of humility amongst all actors is needed, something which NGOs are not historically best known for. This includes those engaged in development (humanitarian NGOs, local governments, UN, and others), in advocacy (policy and programmes staff within NGOs, between different

⁵⁰ O'Reilly 1999.

types of NGOs, and government actors) and conflict resolution. And it applies not just to grass-roots level work but to macro- and meso- programming and advocacy.

8.2 Implications

8.2.1 NGOs role in reducing demand

Humanitarian NGOs can tackle the problem of small arms at the grass-roots. In the battle to restrict the supply of arms to unstable areas, humanitarian NGOs must not ignore the contribution they can bring to reducing demand. We need to be turning greater attention to looking at how our work can decrease demand, even if the impact is more geographically confined. Working for stricter legal and administrative controls on small-arms flows is essential and will have an arguably bigger impact if successful. But loopholes will always be found, and altering attitudes of those at the receiving end is always more sustainable than altering the behaviour of arms producers. For humanitarian agencies that work closely with those who are users or victims of these weapons, there is a clear need to focus on how we can contribute to this other approach.

8.2.2 Disarmament programmes

Those agencies conducting civilian disarmament programmes such as the United Nations would do well to consider ways in which programmes might be more holistic in their approach, changing attitudes and not just the behaviour of gun users. Greater collaboration with NGOs and religious institutions in the area would be advisable.

8.2.3 Humanitarian NGOs and peace-building

Similarly, humanitarian NGOs need to look closely at whether their programmes are or could influence cultures of violence and gun use and to consider refining or re-designing programmes. We need to be identifying what others, and ourselves, are doing well so that we can increase the incidence of convergence of factors. This may be the principle factor that is needed to deal with local conflict rather than designing special, separate peace-building programmes.

8.2.4 Advocacy and programming

Advances have been made in recent years in improving understanding about the links between local and macro causes of conflict, largely thanks to improved communications technology. However, what is still lacking is greater co-ordination and information sharing between those working in programmes, those engaged in policy, and those conducting advocacy in order to act on this improved knowledge.

Appendix

A.1 Area Development Programme Concept and Description

ADPs are a specific type of integrated rural community development programme unique to WV that have become the principal channel through which the agency seeks to assist the poor throughout the world. Currently, there are some 238 ADPs in 35 countries around the world, with more being added each year.

A.1.1 Historical Development of ADPs

ADPs were developed by WV in the late 1980s out of the realisation by field offices throughout the world of the advantages of “scaling up” community development programmes funded through child sponsorship. By covering a larger geographical area and working in a wide number of communities whilst at the same time retaining a micro-level approach, it was seen that community development had the potential to become more integrated and sustainable. This involves addressing the health, socio-economic, training and educational needs of an administrative district. Macro issues as well as micro issues such as improvements to the physical infrastructure, local economy and provision of government services, could be addressed. Moreover, the basic principle and aim of WV’s work, transformational development, was seen to have a greater chance of success by encouraging the development of networks and coalitions of community groups so as to mobilise the community to tackle wider root causes to

problems. In this way, the work has a greater chance of sustainability, and communities are transformed into self-reliant, self-confident stakeholders in the process.

A.1.2 Description

Owing to the large number of countries in which WV operates and the cultural diversity that this entails, the exact approach of each ADP varies somewhat according to context. Specific design, goals and content of ADPs also vary according to the specifications of the stakeholders who participate in the design and implementation of the programme.¹

As a result it is difficult to describe absolutely the exact nature of each individual ADP. There is no single comprehensive ADP model or paradigm; rather, ADPs are a strategy for implementing a development paradigm. They are a framework, a means to an end rather than an end in themselves. Although this paradigm varies according to context, certain fundamental goals and approaches exist in all ADPs.

Table A-I lists the principal factors common to all ADPs and the main features that vary:

¹ Stakeholders include all or a mixture of the following: local community/beneficiaries, traditional leaders, local and regional government authority, line ministries (health, education, agriculture, development), local church leaders, and, of course, WV (ADP staff, national office and support office).

Table 1: Principal defining common and different features of ADPs

<i>Similar features</i>	<i>Variable features</i>
Integrated community development	Nature of bilateral relationship between support and field office
Large, contiguous geographical area	Geographic unit
Child Sponsorship is major funding source, but sources are multiple	Administrative functioning
Long-term commitment (10-15 years)	Legal status
Prioritises women and children	Degree of partnership with local government
Relies on empowerment, capacity building and participation of stakeholders (beneficiaries and/or local government)	Staffing (number of staff, type of roles and interaction with community)
Emphasises and builds strategic alliances and networks to impact macro causes of poverty	Structure (number, type and distribution of development committees)
Process with various stages of intervention, funding and programmes aimed at increasing the ownership of the stakeholders	Transition process (whether begins as new project or is consolidation of several existing projects)

Source: ADP Standards Document, outcome of 1996 ministry standards workshop on developing a common understanding of ADPs.

Taking this into account, one can describe ADPs as follows:

ADPs are child-focused, sustainable, transformational development programmes covering an area the size of an administrative district, with about 10,000-50,000 people. Activities are focused on improvements in health, education, agriculture, micro-enterprise and leadership skills addressed through training, credit provision, infrastructural improvement and capacity building. The operation and community ownership of the ADP largely depends upon a network of committees formed of elected, community members who oversee the running of the programme at various levels. As a result, the exact approach and nature of the programme varies. Facilitators, or village development workers, who are indigenous to the region, are trained and placed in the community to build relationships, mobilise the community, facilitate training, co-ordinate responsibilities of government extension workers, encourage networking and co-operation between community leaders and groups. Where Christian churches exist, the facilitator co-ordinates training and capacity building of church leaders. The time-scale is long-term, covering a period of 10-15 years.

A.2 Aims and objectives

The research addressed the following questions:

1. To what degree were the findings of the initial research well-founded; that is, has there been a significant decline in violence and use of guns and is this something unique to Antsokia?

2. What are the factors that caused the decline in use of guns and of violence? Have the tools for violence simply been removed or has the motivation for violence disappeared? If the latter, how was this achieved?
3. To what degree has WV or its ADP been influential in this change? What other factors (modernisation of Ethiopia) or actors (government) have been influential?
4. How sustainable is the change; that is, is it a short-term trend?

In order to answer the above questions, the following questions were identified as requiring investigation:

- What has been the traditional relationship between the two tribes in Antsokia, the Amhara and Oromo?
- When did the culture of violence arise? Why?
- When did the gun culture arise (if different from above)? Why?
- Has this changed? If so, how and why?
- Where were guns obtained? How much did they cost? Did this change (source and price)?
- What is the present relationship between the two tribes? If it is different from the past, why and for how long?
- Have the levels of violence decreased or has just the use of guns decreased?
- What types of conflict existed; that is, what were the issues and what caused the conflicts?

- What kinds of conflict exist now? Family? Tribal? Land or boundary? Other?
- What sectors of society have witnessed this change? Does the change include the youth and women? Is it a phenomena found in particular villages/zones or is it a general trend?
- What principal factors have been affecting the people of Antsokia in the past 10-20 years?
- What are the external factors that affect Antsokia; that is, could there be other influences on the people's attitude towards guns, have the price of guns increased, are they less accessible?
- What are the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and are they used still?

The actual questions asked the interviewees (informants) were based on the above questions but were phrased or approached less directly. The following are examples (different questions were asked of different types of informants):

- What has been the nature of the relationship between the Amhara and the Oromo in the past—as far back as you can remember? Focus 20-30 years back.
- Describe the reasons or sources of conflict within Antsokia community.
- What were causes of conflict in the past, as far as you are aware?
- What have been the trends in conflict over the past 20-30 years?

- How was/is conflict resolved?
- Could you tell me about how your travel patterns have changed over the past decade or so? Has it become easier? Do you go to different places? More or less frequently?
- What was the affect of the famine in 1984 on the community?
- What are the most significant changes that World Vision's programme has brought to the community? Have these changes been experienced by all members of the community or particular sectors of it? What about the staff? How do they relate to the community, to beneficiaries and teachers/government officials? How are they viewed by the community?
- In what ways have you personally been affected by the WVE programme?

A.3 Methodology

Tibebe Eshete, a former staff member of WVE who had conducted research on the history of WV's work in Antsokia, was asked to conduct the field research under the direction of World Vision UK. Eshete was the staff member who had originally passed on to World Vision UK his article "Jil Bahil", which described how the community in Antsokia had stopped fighting each other and laid down their arms since WV had begun its community development work there. Since he was familiar with the area and with WV staff but had not actually worked in the area or had personal ties with the community, he was deemed an appropriate researcher.

Research was conducted over a period of three weeks in August 1999, with part of that time given over to research in Addis Ababa University library.

The research was predominantly based on primary sources, in particular oral information. Semi-structured and structured interviews were the main form of investigation, with Participatory Rural Appraisal exercises used where appropriate.² Observation was also used and found to be an excellent alternative source of information.

The process of selecting which informants to interview and which villages and communities to visit was done in consultation with the ADP staff. They gave advice on where different groups of people could be found, on the socio-geographic layout of the district and which people groups had had a history of conflict. Of particular assistance was the former ADP manager who happened to be visiting the country and the ADP itself at the time the research was being conducted. He gave invaluable insight and advice as to which groups to visit and provided an outsider's impression of how relations and practices had changed since leaving the ADP in 1997.

Four sample villages were selected for visits. Affso, representing the Amharic-speaking groups; Harbu Wolde, representing the Oromo-speaking population of the lowland; Mekoi, the town where the WV office is located; and Majete, serving as a control group. Majete was selected as a control group because WV had only recently begun activities

2 Informally structured PRA exercises were used as a back-up tool: to confirm information gathered from interviews, to determine if there was a consensus of opinion on certain issues, and where the medium of interviews was less appropriate, e.g., with women's or youth groups. Due to the sensitivity of the topics, specific tallies of participants and replies were avoided.

there, thus providing contacts with whom to obtain consent to do the research but without any significant influence of the community development programme as yet.

A cross-section of people from the Antsokia community were selected for interview, including male and female farmers, elderly men and women, youth, government officials (administrators, judges, police officers, etc.), school administrators, teachers, church elders and pastors, sheiks, WV staff.³

The interviews were conducted in a spirit of dialogue and interaction. Questions were used as prompts, and interviewees left to talk about the subject as they wished. Samples of the actual questions asked can be found in section A.2 above.

PRA tools were also used. Those used were priority matrix, mobility maps and time lines. Time lines were used to discover changes in social relations over the past 10-15 years and changes in the use of guns. Priority matrices were used to discover whether conflict and the use of guns were still problems, or perceived problems, and how values had changed. Mobility maps were helpful in discovering changes in lifestyles, forms of employment and social interaction. However, the exercises did not yield any fundamentally new information, with the exception of the time line.

For the control group in Majete, it was much more difficult to conduct PRA exercises and so the researcher depended on interviews and observation techniques.

An attempt was made to consult some secondary data on the history and socio-economic aspects of Antsokia;

3 See the list of informants at the end of the Appendix.

however, there are virtually no written materials on the subject. A bachelor's thesis and a master's thesis of the department of history of Addis Ababa University were consulted for background materials. For basic information, manuals and reports relating to the ADP were consulted at the WV library in Addis Ababa.

The findings of the research were written up in report format by the researcher; the report was then edited and complemented with introductory sections by the co-author. An attempt has been made to retain as much of the original style and format as possible.

Due to the timing of the field research, the researcher had to face the obstacles placed by heavy rain and flooding. The effect this had on the roads meant that some places identified for research were unreachable by car. This was overcome by either walking (in deep mud!) or by carefully selecting a sample of sites for research which were as representative of the community as possible. The researcher found that they were highly representative of the overall picture.

A.4 Political administration and land tenure in Amhara region (pre-Menelik II-Haile Selassie)

A.4.1 Political administration

With regard to the political administration of the district, the highest political assignment was the *Gej* (governor). The *Gej* came from an aristocratic family, and he was appointed by the king or his viceroy. Next to him, stood the *Meslene*, literally, "one's representative." *Meslenes* acted and ruled on behalf of the *Gej*. The *Meslene* was assisted by the *Atbiya Dagna* (village judge). The *Atbiya Dagna* were

powerful figures at the parish level. In turn, the *Atbiya Dagna* were supported by *Yechika Shums*, who, in principle and theory, were supposed to stand on behalf of the people. In practice, however, they were gradually turned into political appendages in service of the State. Serving as local policemen were the *Nech Lebash*, whose main responsibilities were to maintain law and order. These offices and political institutions were part of the federal set-up and, by and large, served politico-administrative purposes. Although their exact evolution cannot be accurately traced, they definitely pre-date the region of Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia (1889-1913).

There were also independent civic institutions that the community set up to offset the weakness of these state directed institutions. *Aba Hagga*, *Dengora Dagna* and *Leba Shy* were examples of such institutions that have been identified. The role of the *Aba Hagga* was to organize and lead meetings and to mobilize campaigns when required. *Dengora Dagna* mainly dealt with justice issues. The *Dangora Dagna* served as go-between in normalizing relationship between the State and the local people in the event of a crisis. The *Dengora Dagnas* were particularly effective in mitigating corruption committed by the *Yechika Shum*. The *Leba Shy* was an institution established by the community to track down thieves and bring them to public shame and punishment. Most of these institutions survived the days of Emperor Haile Selassie I, 1931-1974, despite the major administrative reforms he introduced. By the time the military regime was set up, they were rendered unnecessary with the installation of new community-based political institutions such as *Gebre Mahiber* and *Kebele Mahiber*.

A.4.2 Land tenure

There are several strong indications that the area had a long-running settlement record. The people refer to the first occupants of land as *Aqni Abat* (the founding father). Descendants of the *Aqni Abat* held their own plot of land, commonly known as *Rist*. In principle, *Rist* land belonged to the whole community, with every member entitled to a share. In practice, it was of a private nature. With the expansion of the central government and the introduction of taxes, users of *Rist* land became tribute-paying farmers, locally known as *Gebars*. Hence, *Gebar* has been the predominant feature of the land-tenure system in Antsokia region. With the rise of population and the resultant fragmentation of land, those who could not be accommodated became tenants, locally known as *Chisegna*. The tenants would enter into a contractual agreement, *Agag*, as it was locally referred to, with a landed farmer, or landlord, under which they cultivated land and received a percentage of the produce. This arrangement was commonly known as *Erbo*. During the final years of Emperor Haile Selassie, the number of tenants was steadily rising.

Another form of land tenure observed was *Kelad*. This referred to the land distributed to soldiers in lieu of salary for military services rendered. The soldiers quartered on *Kelad* lands were obliged to serve in the local militia or police forces or as prison guards. The last category of land tenure was designated *Ye Galla Meret*. The term *Galla* has been employed by the highlanders to refer to the Oromo group occupying the lowland plains. So *Ye Galla Meret*, simply means the land of the Oromo. The designation is perhaps in recognition of the special nature of land use in the Oromo-inhabited land, which is predominately

used for grazing and pasture rather than cultivation. Informants recall that at one time some of the Oromo lands were taken away from the owners and distributed to the soldiers of Ras Wolde Ashager, who was the governor during the days of Emperor Menelik. Defiance of government order by the Oromo leader, Ali Sahfi, is attributed as the main reason for the confiscation of the land. Ras Wolde Ashager's family and descendants known as Bezoch, formed the ruling elite of Antsokia as most of the *Gej*, *Meslene* and *Atbiya Dagna* came from this group.

Turning to the subject of taxation, the State levied regular tributes, known as *Asrat*, introduced by Emperor Menelik. Apart from this, the people were subjected to numerous types of taxes, of which some were legally constituted while others were placed *de facto* by the local officials. Land tax, educational tax and income tax are examples of the first. Corvee labor and occasional grain contributions to local government representatives could be cited as examples of the second type.

A.5 Typology of guns used/found in Antsokia

1. The pre-Italian period:

Meniysher (local name)

Wujigna (local name)

Dimotfor (local name)

Mauzeer (local name)

2. Post-Italian period:

Belgig (local name)

Alben (local name)

Moscob (local name)

3. Modern:

M-One

Kalashnikov

Prices: The pre-Italian types range between 500 and 1000 Birr.⁴

The post-Italian type range between 1,000-2,000 Birr.

The modern types, especially the M-1, considered to be the precursor of the latest technology of arms, and Kalashnikov, cost approximately 2,000 Birr in 1991 however, this has declined to 700 Birr.

⁴ When this research was conducted, the value of the Birr was 11.93 to the £ and 7.51 to the US\$.

A.6 List of Informants

Yohanes Tesfaye, high school director

Abdella Usman, former ADP manager, currently a PhD student

Shiferaw Bekele, associate professor of Modern Ethiopian history Addis Ababa University

Girma Begashaw, former administrator of Antsokia Woreda

Girma Wondatrash, former woreda governor

Alenayehu Abayneh, police officer

Getu Sishaw, head of the district police

Girma Yeshitila, current district administrator

Amare Deribe, economic expert district office

Sisay Hailu, prosecutor, judge

Yohanes Gustavo, pastor of Mekoi Meserete Kirstos Church

Mezmur Dessalegne, church elder

Tsegaw Kasahun, church elder

Ahmed Teka, church elder

Worky Semegne, church elder

Taddesse Gebre, guard

Kebedachew Zegeye, youth member

Endale, youth

Adem Hawza, farmer

Alieye Mustetei, farmer

Datte Wolde, farmer

Mohamed Gibril, farmer

Ismael Alieyie, farmer

Nuriez Hussien, farmer

Hussien Endale, farmer

Nuru Yusuf, farmer

Seyum Kasahun, farmer

Zegeye Asfaw, farmer, trader

Gorfinesh Berhanu, woman farmer, trader

Aschalech Abebe, women farmer

Taitu Atlabachew, woman farmer

Tadelech Taddese, woman farmer

Zenebech Mohammed, woman farmer

Bekele Mengesha, farmer

Bogale Masresha, farmer, merchant

Aliyu Mohammed, merchant

Gizachew Wondemagegne, farmer, merchant

Teshome Begashaw, farmer

Assefa Andarge, farmer

Samuel, current WVE ADP manager

Tesfay Kibret, WVE staff

Ambaye, WVE staff

Kiffetew, WVE staff

Yeshitia, WVE staff

Zerihun Gulte, sociologist, WVE staff, Majete

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Useful Websites:

Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC):
www.bicc.de

British American Security Council, which gives regular reports on developments in small arms campaigning:
www.basicint.org. Email: basic-plw@igc.topica.com

International Action Network on Small Arms:
www.IANSA.org

Publications on small arms: www.oneworld.org (search under "small arms")

Saferworld information on conflict prevention and arms trade: www.saferworld.co.uk

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