



Gorgora Renaissance & Development Association

GRDA

Baseline Socio-Economic Report

For

Gorgora Integrated Community Development Project



June, 2014
Gorgora
Amhara National Region, Ethiopia

Acknowledgement

GRDA is extremely indebted to Mr. Berhanu Berhe, who took the leading role in taking the responsibility of conducting the study in coordination with the youth in Gorgora and the town's administration. Mr. Berhanu's years of professional experience in community development and social services have become a treasure trove for our infant organization.

His unconditional support and tireless work towards the success of our organization is sincerely appreciated. The active participation and feedback obtained from the residents was also paramount important for the study.

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Executive Summary

The baseline study was started in January and completed in June 2014. The study was managed by Mr. Berhanu Berhe, a respected individual with many years of experience in community development and social services. It was done in coordination with the youth and the town's administration that provided valuable inputs into the study. This was done by conducting meetings with focus groups, representatives of the community, and through questionnaires

The objective of the baseline study was to better understand demography of the population in the town. This demography included, but not limited to the number of households, income, age group, education level, access to healthcare, and job opportunities. Furthermore, the baseline study was used to identify the urgent and critical needs of the population which require immediate attention and also be utilized as a benchmark, the basis for assessment or change over time throughout the community development and revitalization efforts.

Gorgora has a population of about 2,045 of which 1,124 are male (55%) and 921 are female (45%). One third of the population is under the age of 20.

Ninety percent of the working age group is unemployed. Most households' income is derived from pensions from the now-deceased head of the households who served their country in one form or another. The average monthly pension is no more than \$7.50.

All respondents of the study identified lack of adequate transportation as a critical problem. A transportation network that functions properly is vital for social and economic connection. Since the town is located at the north-end of Lake Tana, lack transportation has become one of the major obstacles to growth and development.

Access to healthcare is relatively limited to one clinic in the town. The sick are examined and less complicated cases are treated with scarcely available medicine. Severe cases are referred to a higher health institute which is 41 miles north of the town. As mentioned above, due to lack of adequate transportation, urgent medical help is also inaccessible for many residents who are weak to walk.

Access to primary and secondary education is available for those whose parents can afford to provide at least one meal a day. A significant number of school-aged children cannot afford to attend school due to chronic poverty. The community does not have access to clean water, and sanitation facilities are non-existent.

As part of the baseline study, the study team also focused on the potential opportunities such as farm lands, water, fishery, and other natural resource that can be utilized in the long-term sustainable development projects. The availability of abundant potential work force within the community was another opportunity to be utilized in future development and revitalization activities.

Based on the baseline survey, it is recommended to conduct skills training for the unemployed, provide microfinance to initiate business venture at a house hold level, and assist students whose families can't afford to send them to school.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Gorgora is a little hamlet, a road side town, rich in history dating back to 1625. It is located on the shore of Lake Tana with elevation (altitude) 5,905 feet, 41 miles south of Gondar. The total area of the town is 1.1158 square miles with an annual rain fall of 40.866 inches¹. The economy primarily depends on subsistence farming, fishing, Lake Tana transportation, and retiree’s pension.

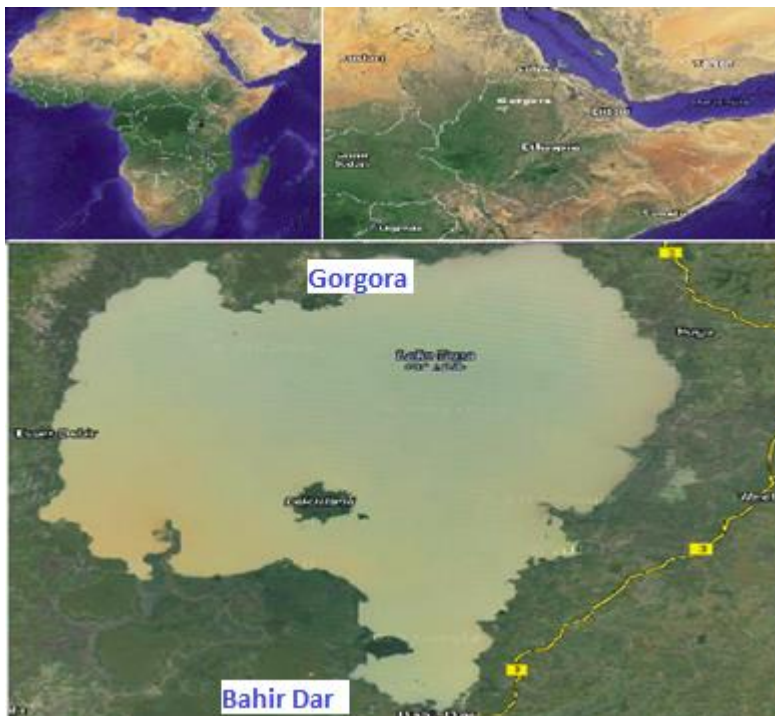


Fig.1 Location of Gorgora

Based on the 2013 census conducted by the local administration, Gorgora has a population of 2,045 in 555 households, of whom 1,124 are male and 921 are female. The majority of the inhabitants practice Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, with 97.8% reporting that as their religion, while 1.8% of the population is Muslim, and the rest practice other religions.

Poverty, lack of adequate infrastructure in the areas of healthcare, transportation, skill training, and high unemployment has been major obstacles for sustainable development in the town. In a town where the average household income is less than ten dollars (\$7.50) a month and unemployment rate is 90% among working age group, a carefully designed baseline study to understand and gather qualitative and quantitative data is highly desirable.

Recognizing the desperate need of the community, Gorgora Renaissance and Development Association (GRDA) was formed by individuals who grew up in Gorgora, now residing in the United States of America and

¹ The data was obtained from <http://www.hindawi.com/journals/isrn/2013/636103/>

Canada. Gorgora Renaissance and Development Association (GRDA) is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue code. The sole purpose of the organization is to find ways and spearhead the development and revitalization efforts of the town.

GRDA's Vision

The rebirth of our hometown being vibrant and livable place for all its inhabitants through development and community participation.

GRDA's Mission Statement

GRDA's mission is to work hard to improve the lives of the residents by initiating projects that would facilitate self-help through hard work and innovation. GRDA's mission is to support in the areas of microfinance, healthcare, education, environment, agriculture, and community development by mobilizing resources from members, donors and other fundraising activities.

GRDA initiated the idea of a baseline study in July 2013 during the first get together held in the Washington D.C. area. The association's primary mission is to improve the quality of life in the community and seek a sustainable development and revitalization activity by working together with donor organizations and individuals.

Due to the wide-spread and chronic nature of the poverty in the community, GRDA was compelled to choose the poorest of the poor whose daily lives depended on begging in the streets to help on short-term bases. Accordingly, twenty-four individuals most from the elderly group were chosen by the local committee in 2013. Each recipient gets an equivalent of \$15 in the local currency from the funds remitted by GRDA on a monthly basis since February 2013. This issue became part of the subject matter of the study to explore alternative solutions and expand the service and obtain funding on a long-term basis.



Fig.2 Current beneficiaries of GRDA

Besides this, it also provided a digital copy machine for the secondary school that otherwise had to travel 19 miles for any of their printing needs.



Fig.3 The digital copy machine being received by community leaders

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- To gather sufficient and reliable data, identify, and prioritize the needs of the community.
- To identify areas of intervention and facilitate development in the education, healthcare, and self-help.
- To serve as a measure of performance, a benchmark for future community-based development projects.

2. Study Approach and Methodology

2.1 Approach

The study was conducted by providing training to a group of high school students under close supervision by Mr. Berhanu Berhe. Mr. Berhanu has a wealth of knowledge and professional experience in community development.



Fig.4 Baseline Socio-Economic Study Team

The group members are residents in the town with a full knowledge of the subject being studied. The factors taken into account to conduct the study and craft questionnaires were:

- Socio-economic indicators (income, education, healthcare, and employment opportunities).
- Main problems and urgent needs of the community.
- Infrastructure for future projects.
- Skills and other resources necessary to implement the projects.

2.2 Primary Data Collection Tools

The study team applied a general framework suitable for the given tasks. Applied frameworks encompass the review of the existing documents, collection of primary and secondary data, whereby interviews, discussions and household questionnaires are part and parcel of methods to collect primary data. Both qualitative and quantitative data was gathered by:

- Collecting data about the town's profile such as, the demography, gender, income level, education, age, housing, access to healthcare, and job opportunities.
- Household questionnaire that comprised the number of household members and income, and level of education.

3. Study Findings

3.1 Population

The town's 555 households were divided among the team members and the following information was gathered:

Table 1: Population by gender

Age (in years)	Male	Female	Total
0-4	64	65	129
5-19	232	274	506
20-29	297	175	472
30-39	263	94	357
40-49	114	86	200
Over 50	154	227	381
Total	1,124	921	2,045

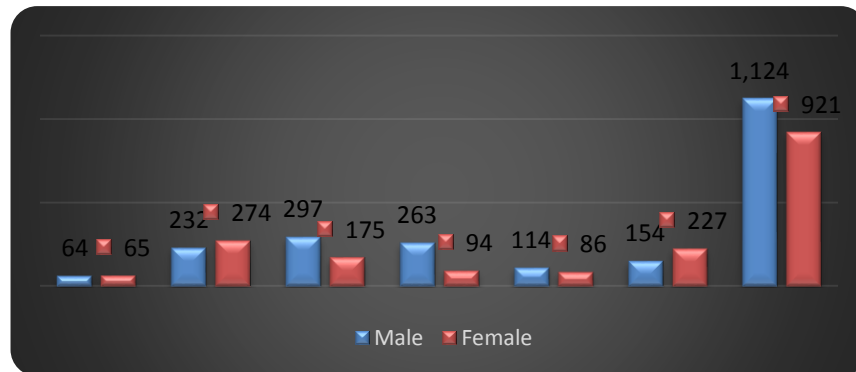


Chart 1: Age group by gender

The study team further stratified the population into three age groups for clarity and better analysis of the subjects being studied. The first group (506) consists of ages between 5 and 19 which are considered school aged children (primary school through college), 46% are male and 54% are female. The second group (1029) comprises ages between 20 and 49, by the country's standard deemed potential workforce. Out of this group, 66% are male and 34% are female. Please note that there is a huge gender gap in the potential workforce. The third group (381) includes ages 50 and over, 40% are male and 60% are female. This group is relatively speaking the elderly individuals making up 19% of the total population.

3.2 Housing

Housing is one of the major problems in the community at large. Based on the observation by the team and information obtained from the local administration, out of the 555 household dwellings, only four are considered suitable for human occupancy.



Fig. 5 Typical houses at Gorgora

3.3 Education

The town has one elementary and one secondary school. Children from the surrounding rural communities also attend both schools. As per the Federal Government education system, primary school education has two cycle grades 1 to 4 and grades 5 to 8. Regional exams are taken at the end of grade 8 (Primary school certificate exam). Secondary education has two cycles grades 9 to 10 and grades 11 to 12 leading up to the national exams. The Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (EGSECE) is taken at the end of grade 10 and requires a pass in at least 5 subjects to pass to the next level. The Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Examination (EHEEE) is taken after completing grade 12. Students passing the EHEEE are eligible for university if their grades are sufficiently high.

After completing 10th grade, those who pass the examination and want to continue do not have an opportunity to learn at Gorgora. Instead, they have to travel to the nearest town, 19 miles away. For the vast majority of the school children, this is unimaginable due to poverty and very few students make it to this point.

An average class size is 50 students per teacher and few school supplies are available to each student; for example both schools lack pens, books, paper, and clean water and useable toilets are nonexistent. The secondary school has been built long time ago and has never been maintained. Because of this most of the school infrastructure has been damaged and deteriorated. Both schools do not have an equipped library, laboratory, computer equipment, and have no internet access.



Fig.6 Kindergarten students learning



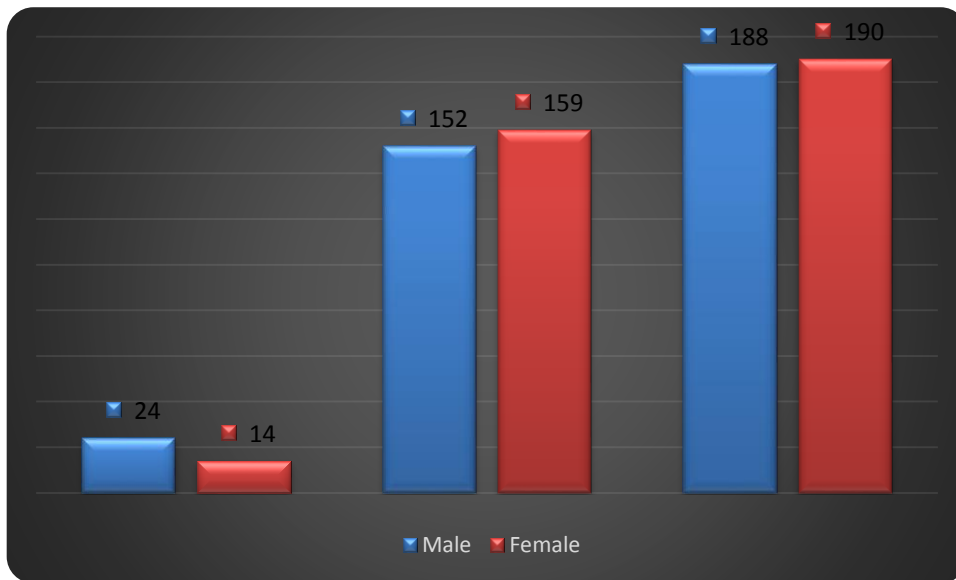
Fig.7 Kindergarten students-hoping for a better future

The school enrollment chart below includes enrollments from the surrounding rural communities who walk to school two to three miles daily. The parents' of these children earn a living by traditional farming and herding cattle. These children are often compelled to help their parents by working in the fields.

Table 2: School Enrollment by Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Kindergarten	24	14	38
Elementary School	152	159	311
Secondary School	188	190	378
Total	364	363	727 ²

Chart 2: School Enrollment Chart



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3.4 Healthcare

Gorgora has one clinic that provides primary healthcare services including prevention and control of communicable diseases. The town does not have safe drinking water supply and sanitation. The unsafe nature of the water supply coupled with unhygienic living condition of the community allows intestinal parasites to flourish.

School age children are one of the groups at high risk for intestinal parasitic infections due to poor hygiene, low immune system, close contact with soil and to each other, and the school’s unsanitary condition. These

² The total number of school age children includes children attending school from other areas and the surrounding hamlets who walk to school two to three miles a day. Therefore, this number is higher than the town’s 506 school age children.

infections have known negative effects on children’s growth, appetite and cognitive performance of the school age children.

Based on a sample study of 326 children (170 male and 156 female) performed from November to December 2010, a high prevalence of intestinal schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminthiasis shows the need for “integrated control program including improving sanitation and access to clean water, appropriate health and environmental measures to have a lasting impact on transmission.”³

The town doesn’t have an ambulance service. There is only one ambulance service stationed at the district level in Koladba, 19 miles away. Because of this, it has been difficult to get help on urgent medical needs such as pregnancy, accidents, etc.

3.5 Economy

Most households’ income is derived from pensions from the now-deceased head of the households who served their country in one form or another. The average monthly pension is less than ten dollars (\$7.50).

The economy depends primarily on traditional farming, fishing, pension income, and Lake Tana transportation. Ninety percent of the working age group is unemployed. Even though agriculture is the backbone and means of livelihood for the surrounding farmers, it remains underdeveloped and employs ancient agricultural methods that are extremely inefficient.



Fig.8 Subsistence farming

The magnitude of this problem can be observed from hand-to-mouth existence of the community around this farm lands. Productivity can increase and problems can be alleviated by focusing and employing better farming methodologies and employing local resources, such as manpower and irrigation. The main crops in the area are teff, maize, and sorghum.

Just like any other parts of Ethiopia, gender inequality is prevalent in the farming community around Gorgora. In a society where patriarchal family structure is dominant, women often face discrimination and

³ <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2222180813600134>

seldom sent to school. Rather, school aged girls and women are compelled to work in farm lands and other household chores, such as cooking, fetching water, collecting wood for cooking and more.



Fig.9 Girls working on household chores



Fig. 10 Girls fetching water from the lake helping their families

3.5.1 Agriculture

The economy of Gorgora and its surroundings is mainly based on agriculture. Since most of the land around Gorgora lies around Lake Tana, with its abundant water resources and favorable climate, the area is ideally suited for horticulture, fruits, vegetables, different crops, and even coffee.



Fig.11 Coffee plantation at Gorgora Port Authority



Fig.12 Community owned land near the lake which could be irrigated

Lake Tana is an important source of fish for Gorgora and its surroundings. The fishing potential of Lake Tana is untouched, with only 8% of the potential being used at this time.

Currently, there is some fishing activity around the lake but most of this is subsistence in nature, or relatively small-scale. Most fishermen use a traditional boat named Tanqua. Frozen fish market is almost non-existent since it needs resources such as freezers which couldn't be afforded by local fishermen.



Fig.13 Traditional boat used for fishing, Tanqua

Nevertheless, there is a very high potential for irrigated agriculture, livestock, fishing, and bee keeping. The mini-farm developed by Gorgora Port Authority is a living testimony to the potential of Gorgora in agriculture.

Agro-industry is one of the investment opportunities at Gorgora. Due to the existence of ample crop production around the area, the possibility of food processing industries is justified. Even if there is a higher potential for fruit processing, currently there is none around Gorgora.

3.5.2 Business

There are no as such big businesses at Gorgora. There are few businesses that are very small, mainly family owned, employing two or three people. The businesses are poorly managed and don't provide that much economic opportunity for the community. Please take a look to the table below for more information.

Table 3: Businesses at Gorgora

Type of Business	Amount	Remark
Hotel	1	Government owned
Restaurant	5	Private-small scale
Resort	1	Private
Grinding mill	2	Private
Small shops	10	Private

3.6 Energy

People in Gorgora use wood as their principal source of energy. Not long time ago, Gorgora used to be covered with a huge forest. Now, the situation is entirely different. Trees have been continuously cut for different reasons (fuel wood, construction, farming, etc.) without being replaced. Gorgora and its surroundings have turned into almost a desert. The availability of electricity is limited. Because of this, people have to travel to the neighboring town, 4 miles away, for their grinding mill needs.

3.7 Transportation

Transportation is one of the major problems in the community. Even though it is inadequate, there is a bus transport from Gondar to Gorgora twice daily. There is also transport by lake to Bahir Dar, the Amhara National Region's capital city, only once a week. Reliable transportation is critical for free flow of goods, binds communities together, and supports economic growth. Often times, special needs that can be alleviated through medical facilities, social services, and educational programs are forgotten or abandoned because of the lack of adequate transportation facilities.

4. Major problems of the community

After analyzing the data and thorough discussion with the community representatives, the following major problems have been identified:

- Unemployment: More than 90% of the working population is unemployed.
- Education: Need supporting students from poor families who can't afford to continue education after 10th grade.
- Healthcare: Absence of ambulance service for urgent medical needs such as pregnancy and accidents.
- Economy: Need assistance providing initial capital for small scale businesses. Land grabbing is the main problem as investors occupy the land from the residents but do not provide any job opportunity.
- Housing: Most of the houses are not habitable.
- Transport: There is no sufficient means of transport from and to Gorgora.

5. Recommendation

5.1 Project components

During the completion of the baseline study, meetings were held with focus groups and community representatives to determine which problems need to be addressed or find solutions based on the urgency of the situation. Accordingly, the participants have set the community priorities as follows:

- Skills training for the unemployed.
- Micro-finance and initiate business venture at a household level.
- Funding for students whose families cannot afford to send their children to school.
- Modern farming methodologies and access to irrigation that can help each household secure food and income for basic needs. Despite the availability of irrigable lands and water resources, irrigation scheme is not practiced.
- Clean water resources and sanitation.
- Need for helping the elderly and disabled. To strengthen the ongoing support provided by GRDA for 24 elders.

Agriculture plays a central role in decreasing poverty and increasing growth in Gorgora. Within the agricultural sector, livestock, fishing, bee keeping, dairy, horticulture, etc. should be given priority because of their superior capacity to contribute to poverty reduction. Agricultural growth also requires concurrent investments in roads, access to market, and job opportunities for women, healthcare, and skilled labor.

The town is affected by widespread land grabbing more than any other place in the region. Land is a factor of production and has to be returned back to its rightful owners, the community. It is a lifeline to the community's wellbeing and stability. These issues must be addressed promptly by authorities to achieve the desired goal of community development.

5.2 Feasibility study

With this background, the survey team recommends to conduct feasibility study on each intervention area and design project document. The implementation can be undertaken phase by phase according to priorities and availability of resources.

A feasibility study is needed to explore the possibilities and limitations to implement the project ideas and their output in improving the livelihood of the community. Furthermore, it also enables to assess the human and financial potentials available in the project areas. The information obtained through the study helps to design the project by defining the objectives and target groups of each project component.

6. Conclusion

The study concluded that poverty in the area is deep-rooted and widespread. The exhibits presented in with this document show the gravity of the condition. With the cooperation of all stakeholders, GRDA is striving to make a difference in the poverty stricken community in Gorgora. In fact, the major problems, such as housing, education, healthcare, and unemployment have to be addressed by the respective government ministries down to the local administration. GRDA can only fill small gaps and contribute in the improvement of the livelihood of the community.

Land grabbing by “would-be-investors” has become a major problem for the community. Most of the potential residential and farm lands have been grabbed, simply fenced without any activity by the so called “investors”, providing no job opportunity and economic growth for the community. Even once considered public parks and arable land area are now off limits to the local population. This issue must be resolved by local and regional authorities level in order to stop the fraudulent possession of these potential resources that can be utilized in the development and revitalization of the town and its environs.

The feasibility study on the selected and endorsed project components has to be conducted. The study can enable to design the project proposal with the envisaged activities by each component.