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Interviewer: This interview will have two parts. In the first part, I will ask you some questions, and you will respond to it . The second part will involve drawing to visually represent everything in a way that you understand.

Interpreter: He says the interview has two parts. First, he will ask you questions, and you’ll give your answers. The second part will involve drawings to help explain things clearly.

Interviewer: I was informed that you are the Abaerega, and that you took over the position from someone else who held it before but has since left. Is that true?

Interpreter: He’s asking whether you took over this position from someone who was in charge before you.

Interviewee: Yes, that’s true.

Interviewer: After the previous Abaerega left the position, who chose you to take over and be in charge?

Interpreter: He’s asking who decided that you, Ali Boru, would take over after the previous Abaerega left.

Interviewee: It was the elders of this area who chose me. In such situations, the community itself usually decides on this Erega role. And as the leader, it’s the elders who determine who will guide the livestock to water and manage everything related to it.

Interpreter: So it was the elders of the area who decided, “We now choose this person to manage and lead our livestock to water and oversee all related matters from now on.”

(1:48) – [Audio unclear]

Interviewee: So that’s how they decided to choose me. And it’s not only the animals from this region that drink water here, but also animals from other areas. I took over the responsibility after the previous Abaherega left.

Interpreter: It’s not only animals from this area that drink from this water point. Animals from other places also come here, so he is responsible for directing both the local and visiting herds.

Interviewer: What about the rules that govern those who come here to drink and then leave—how do those rules work?

Interpreter: He’s asking how the law works for animals that are just passing through and come to drink water here.

Interviewee: When they leave their own water points and come here, they first ask for permission to drink. Since the water is flowing and the animals are thirsty, we allow them to drink.

Interpreter: When herders are on transit, they usually send a representative to communicate how many herds they are moving with and whether they are staying or just passing through. They come and give him this information.

Interviewer: And then are they allowed to access the water?

Interpreter: So he’s asking what happens next—what do you do in such a situation?

Interviewee: When they get here, I confirm with the owner how many days the animals have gone without water. I also count the number of animals and consider their level of need.

Interpreter: He checks the number of animals, how long it’s been since they last drank water, and assesses how urgently they need water.

Interviewee: That’s what I do. If I find that the animals are extremely thirsty and cannot wait until the next day—yet there are already animals scheduled to drink tomorrow—I advise them to wake up very early. They can bring their animals before the others arrive. I might allow two of their herds to drink in the early morning if they have four, and then the other two can drink in the evening or early the next day before the local animals arrive. We have a routine where only four herds can drink per day, so when they come early, it’s manageable.

Interpreter: So once he confirms that the animals are in critical need, he arranges them into the next day’s schedule in a way that balances the needs. Since the rule is that only four herds can drink per day, he makes sure that no animals suffer by letting the most urgent cases drink early before the others arrive.

Interviewer: In one day, how many herds can drink from a single water point?

Interpreter: He’s asking, from one point, how many herds can drink in a day?

Interviewee: If they are goats, up to 15 herds can drink. But if they are camels—especially the strong camels we used to have—then about 6 to 7 herds can drink from one point.

Interviewer: And those 15 herds are they made up of both goats and sheep?

Interpreter: Yes, it’s a mix of both goats and sheep.

Interviewer: Has there ever been a time when you denied animals from other areas access to this water point?

Interpreter: He’s asking if you’ve ever refused animals coming from other places access to this water.

Interviewee: No. What we do is this—when they arrive with their animals, we assess how urgent their need is. If the animals are very thirsty and at risk of dying, as I mentioned earlier, we give water to the first two herds before others. Then the remaining herds can drink in the evening after the local animals have had their turn.

Interpreter: So, you’ve never completely denied them access?

Interviewee: As I said before, depending on the urgency, we help them. For instance, we allow the most in-need animals to drink immediately, and the others can wait until evening. I have never denied any animals the chance to drink water.

Interviewer: Even when they belong to other tribes?

Interpreter: Even animals from other tribes?

Interviewee: Yes, we treat everyone equally regardless of tribe. But it’s only when there is peace that other tribes can bring their animals here to drink water.

Interpreter: So it’s only during times of peace that other tribes come here for water.

Interviewer: What happens when there is conflict among the communities?

Interpreter: What happens during times of war?

Interviewee: When there is conflict, they can’t bring their animals here.

Interviewer: How do you determine the maximum number of herds that can drink from one water point?

Interpreter: He’s asking how you know that lets say only fifteen herds of goats can drink from a particular water point.

Interviewee: I know the capacity of the water point. Also, animals only drink from it during the day; at night, it’s left for wild animals. Livestock start drinking from the point at 7 a.m. and continue until 6 p.m. I can estimate how much water the point holds based on that.

Interpreter: He says livestock drink from the water point only during the day, and at night it’s reserved for wild animals. He understands how the water table replenishes as animals drink, how the water level drops, and how much is available to sustain 15 herds of goats.

Interviewer: If more than 15 herds of goats drink from it—even though it’s meant for only 15—what happens? Will the water point dry up completely, or will the water just become shallow and dirty?

Interpreter: He’s asking if more than the expected 15 herds drink from the point, will the water level just drop and become dirty, or will it dry up completely?

Interviewee: Mud sometimes enters the water, but we always manage that. Even if the water level drops, it doesn’t get dirty. For example, when five herds have drunk and are resting, the ground naturally releases more water and the level rises again.

Interpreter: They always ensure the water remains clean. Even if the level drops, the water doesn’t get dirty. Between the times when the herds are drinking, the water table naturally rises and replenishes the supply.

Interpreter (asking the interviewee): Has there ever been a time when the water point dried up completely while the expected 15 herds were drinking from it?

Interviewee: Yes, the water point can dry up if time is not given for the water level to rise again.

Interpreter: Sometimes the water dries up, but the level slowly rises again. This happens when animals drink continuously without allowing time for replenishment. And since they remove mud, the water doesn’t get muddy.

Interviewer: So the water doesn’t get dirty from overuse?

Interpreter: Does it get dirty when overused?

Interviewee: Yes, it sometimes gets dirty, but we clean it whenever that happens.

Interviewer: Is there a trough aside from the well where the animals drink?

Interpreter: Do all the water points have troughs?

Interviewee: Yes, the animals drink from a trough.

Interviewer: Is the water in the trough left for wild animals at night?

Interpreter: So the water wild animals drink at night—is it in the well or the trough?

Interviewee: It’s the water in the trough that wild animals drink at night. But during the rainy season, dirt from elsewhere sometimes gets into the wells, making them dirty. When that happens, we dig the well deeper, usually until we reach the rocky layer. The outside dirt is what we clean from the well.

Interpreter: He says dirt sometimes enters the well from outside, but the well is mostly dug into rock. They remove that dirt by de-silting the well.

Interviewer: So let’s talk about the water left for the wild animals. That water is from the trough, not the well?

Interpreter: So the wild animals drink from the trough, not the well?

Interviewee: Yes, it’s the trough not the well.

Interviewer: And during droughts, that water is still left in the trough for wild animals to drink?

Interpreter: He’s asking if, during the drought, the water in the trough is left for wild animals?

Interviewee: Yes, after the livestock drink in the evening, we leave the remaining water in the trough for wild animals. In the morning, we clean the trough, pour out what’s left, and fill it again with clean water for the livestock.

Interpreter: He says in the morning he comes, cleans the trough using soil, and refills it with clean water for the animals.

Interviewer: So is it your job to clean the trough every morning?

Interpreter: Is it your responsibility to clean the trough?

Interviewee: My role is to supervise. Since it may not be my animals’ turn to drink that day, I guide the person responsible or the herders on what to do.

Interpreter: He only supervises. The herders whose turn it is to water their animals are the ones who clean and refill the trough. Women or children usually restrain the animals until everything is ready. The animal owner must declare that it is their turn to clean, which is called thabartu. Every herd has a thabartu.

Interviewer: Is thabartu like signing up or adding oneself to the list?

Interpreter: It means arriving at the water point before the animals to prepare it. If the person assigned for the day arrives early, he guides them to clean and make any needed repairs. As Abaherega, he supervises this process.

Interviewer: How do you choose who drinks first and who drinks last?

Interpreter: When several herds say 15 come to the water point, how do you decide the order?

Interviewee: I don’t go by who arrives first or last. Drinking order is not based on arrival. We select herds randomly and assign specific times for each to drink.

Interpreter: It’s a rotational system. People know whose turn is next based on who drank the previous time. There’s no fixed method just a cycle everyone follows.

Interviewer: What are your other responsibilities as Abaherega?

Interpreter: What else do you do as Abaherega?

Interviewee: If someone makes a mistake on their watering day, they’re brought to me. All complaints come to me first. If someone fails to clean the trough properly, it’s reported to me. I handle the matter, though I consult with elders. If someone tries to sneak into a group that’s not their turn, I have the authority to punish them for example, by making them go last.

Interpreter: All complaints and violations are handled by him. If the trough isn’t cleaned well, he is informed. If someone tries to push their way in when it’s not their turn, he can penalize them, including making them go last.

Interviewer: Who reports these violations to you?

Interpreter: Who brings such matters to your attention?

Interviewee: The people present that day the other herders bringing their animals are the ones who report.

Interpreter: It’s just the people who’ve brought their animals to the water point that day who report any rule-breaking.

Interviewer: Who’s responsible for keeping the well in good condition? Is it a health officer or the community?

Interpreter: Who maintains the well and prevents damage ,yourself or the community?

Interviewee: Preventing damage from floods, for instance, is my responsibility. But the elders are also involved. I’m the one who raises the alarm when repairs are needed.

Interpreter: He says it’s mostly his responsibility to protect the well from damage, but elders also help. He’s the one who initiates any necessary repairs.

Interviewer: How many wells are you responsible for?

Interpreter: How many wells are under your management as Abaherega?

Interviewee: The main one is called El-Isacko Mala, and the other is El-Bura, which has less water.

Interviewer: Do both have troughs?

Interpreter: Do both wells have troughs?

Interviewee: Yes, both have troughs.

Interviewer: Why are you in charge of those two wells and not the ones with hand pumps?

Interpreter: Why are you responsible for these two and not the hand-pumped wells?

Interviewee: The hand-pumped wells are for domestic use in homes. The others are open wells where people draw water by getting inside. They have troughs for animals.

Interpreter: He says the hand-pumped wells are mainly for household use. The others involve people entering the wells to draw water with containers. Hand-pump wells are not used by animals and don’t require the same kind of organization.

Interviewer: We heard that the water from hand-pumped wells is salty and not fit for drinking—is that true?

Interpreter: Is it true the water from hand-pumps is salty and not used for drinking?

Interviewee: The hand-pump wells like the one at the school and another at the mosque aren’t in use. Their water is salty (khuro), so we don’t drink it. We prefer to scoop water from the sand near the river or use Bales Gombo.

Interpreter: Yes, the water is salty, so people prefer shallow wells scooped from sand. Bales Gombo is a shallow well where the ground is broken, cemented like a dam, and dug until rock is reached. It yields less water than a regular well, but it’s better than salty water.

Interviewer: Do you also guard and manage those shallow wells?

Interpreter: Are you also in charge of those shallow wells?

Interviewee: No, I’m not in charge of the water used for human consumption.

Interpreter: He says he doesn’t manage water for household use—it doesn’t require much organization.

Interviewer: So who is responsible for protecting the water points meant for human consumption from getting dirty or damaged?

Interpreter: Who ensures that these water sources are not contaminated or destroyed

Interviewee: It’s everyone’s responsibility to guard and protect them.

Interpreter: He says it is a collective responsibility; everyone is expected to help in protecting those water points.

Interviewer: In your opinion, what affects the quality and taste of the water?

Interpreter: Why do people say that the water tastes bad or is of poor quality?

Interviewee: When soil is pushed into the water or when a species called Qurtumii—a creature that looks like a fish but isn’t and algae develop in the water, that affects both the taste and quality.

Interpreter: He says the presence of Qurtumii a fish-like species—and algae contaminates the water, changing its taste and lowering its quality.

Interviewer: Are Qurtumii and algae found in hand-pumped water sources or in deeper wells?

Interpreter: Is the Qurtumii and algae problem common in hand-pump sources or the deeper ones?

Interviewee: It occurs in both, depending on how frequently the water is used. When the water is not drawn for a long time, algae and Qurtumii tend to form.

Interpreter: It can be found in both types of water sources, especially when the water has not been used for a while.

Interviewer: Have you ever observed this contaminated or “bad-tasting” water causing illnesses in either people or animals?

Interpreter: Have you ever seen poor-quality water causing diseases in humans or livestock?

Interviewee: Yes, we have seen that. When animals drink this contaminated water, they become unusually thirsty. Normally, they can go three to four days without water, but after drinking this kind of water, they become thirsty again quickly. We usually say that the animals only drank because they were desperate, and that water doesn’t quench their thirst.

Interpreter: He says that when animals drink this water, they remain thirsty and need water again very soon.

Interviewer: What effects does this water have on human beings?

Interpreter: What happens to people who consume the water?

Interviewee: People usually suffer from vomiting and diarrhea, especially during the rainy season.

Interpreter: He says that cases of vomiting and diarrhea are common when people drink such water, particularly during the rainy season.

Interviewer: Why do you think this happens?

Interpreter: What, in your opinion, causes this?

Interviewee: It’s because floods bring dirt into the water. And also, when the water sits unused for a long time, it develops staleness and becomes stagnant.

Interpreter:He believes the contamination comes from floodwater carrying dirt into the source, and the water becoming stale or stagnant when not used regularly.

Interviewer: So, during the rainy season, does the water in the wells go bad because it is not being used?

Interpreter: He is asking if the well water becomes stagnant due to disuse during the rainy season.

Interviewee: Yes, during the rainy season, the water in the wells is not used because water is readily available everywhere. As a result, the well water goes bad from staying unused.

Interpreter: He says that since people rely on other water sources during the rainy season, no one uses the wells, and the water stagnates and deteriorates in quality.

Interviewer: Why do people prefer fetching water from rivers rather than using the wells?

Interpreter: He is asking why you prefer to fetch water from the water streams (Lagaas) and not the wells.

Interviewee: It’s because the wells near us all have salty water.

Interpreter: He says that the wells close by are salty, and the alternative wells, like Balesa-Gombo or the sand shallowing sources, are too far away.

Interviewer: In your opinion, what else could be causing diarrhea among the people?

Interpreter: He is asking if there are any other causes of diarrhea apart from water.

Interviewee: It is mostly the water, especially during the rainy season.

Interpreter: He says water is the main cause, nothing else.

Interviewer: What other human health problems are people here facing?

Interpreter: What other illnesses are common among people here?

Interviewee: In this region, there are different kinds of diseases, but mostly people suffer from colds and flu, which are very common.

Interviewer: Have any health officials or researchers come to do TB tests here?

Interpreter: He is asking if anyone has come to do TB screening in the community.

Interviewee: No, no one has. Also, during the rainy season, we experience malaria due to mosquito infestations.

Interpreter: He says malaria is also common during the rainy season because of mosquitoes.

Interviewer: What about during the dry season?

Interpreter: Is malaria present during drought or dry periods?

Interviewee: No, during the dry season, there are no mosquitoes, so no malaria.

Interpreter: He says malaria doesn’t occur during dry seasons.

Interviewer: Has there been a time when severe drought killed most or all of your animals?

Interpreter: He is asking if there was a time when drought killed your animals completely.

Interviewee: Yes, just three years ago, we experienced such a severe drought.

Interpreter: He says it happened three years ago.

Interviewer: What happened during that time?

Interpreter: What led to the death of your animals?

Interviewee: There was no rain for two years, so there was no pasture. The animals died from malnutrition. They became so weak that they only shed tears before they died. Even after the rains came, the few that had survived still died. We tried feeding them during the drought with 1kg of maize and some wild fruit called Qonne that we ground, but the supplements were minimal. Many still died because it couldn't sustain them well..

Interpreter: He explains that there was no rainfall for two years, leading to a total lack of pasture. The animals became emaciated, weakened, and eventually died—some even after the rains resumed. Only about five goats survived after being fed small amounts of maize and the Qonne wild fruit, but many others died because they couldn’t be sustained with the little food available.

Interviewer: Did you consider selling the animals before they died?

Interpreter: He is asking if you thought of selling the livestock during that time.

Interviewee: No, we didn’t. We had never experienced such a long and severe drought before, so we didn’t anticipate it or prepare in advance.

Interpreter: He says the drought caught them off guard. They were unprepared and didn’t take action in time, so the animals died.

Interviewer: Did even the camels die?

Interviewee: Yes, even the camels didn’t survive. While the goats could at least be sustained a little with the wild fruits like Qonne, the camels needed larger quantities of bulky feed to survive, and we couldn’t provide that

Interpreter: They died too.

Interviewer: If you had known in advance that the severe drought was coming, would you have sold your animals?

Interpreter: He is asking whether, if you had known beforehand that drought was coming, you would have sold your livestock.

Interviewee: Yes, I would have.

Interpreter: He says yes, he would have sold them.

Interviewer: Would that have been by choice or because you were forced to?

Interpreter: He’s asking ,would you have sold them by your own choice, or only because of the coming drought?

Interviewee: I would sell them if I was told in advance that the drought was coming because once it arrives, it will kill the animals.

Interpreter: But if the drought wasn’t coming, would you still sell them?

Interviewee: Yes, I would still sell some if I had personal needs. But if the drought wasn’t a factor, I would allow the animals to multiply and sell a few when I needed money, without incurring losses. However, when we sell because of the drought, we are forced to sell at throwaway prices just to reduce the number and remain with only those we can manage.

Interpreter: There is a difference between selling animals due to drought and selling them for personal needs. When drought is the reason, people are forced to sell many animals at once—often at low prices—and remain with just a few. But when selling for personal needs, you only sell the number you choose.

Interviewer: How do you know that a drought is approaching?

Interpreter: What indicators do you observe that signal the arrival of drought?

Interviewee: When the clouds that usually bring rain disappear, when pastures begin to shrink and dry up, and when both weather forecasters and traditional forecasters give their predictions, that’s how we know. The traditional ones even inspect animal intestines to forecast the weather.

Interpreter: Sometimes people listen to weather or climate reports. Traditional forecasters also predict drought based on signs, including inspecting animal intestines to read weather patterns.

Interviewer: How does diarrhea affect the livelihoods of people?

Interpreter: He is asking how diarrhea impacts people’s daily lives and survival.

Interviewee: When someone has diarrhea, they become dehydrated and weak.

Interpreter: He says it causes dehydration and makes people weak.

Interviewer: Do animals also suffer from diarrhea at the same time when people do?

Interpreter: He is asking whether animals also experience diarrhea during the same period as people.

Interviewee: No, they do not happen at the same time.

Interpreter: No, they occur at different times.

Interviewer: When animals have diarrhea, does it affect them significantly?

Interpreter: When animals suffer from diarrhea, does it have serious effects on them

Interviewee: It’s a serious problem just like in humans, diarrhea makes animals weak and eventually kills them. Recently, it killed many of our goat kids that had survived the drought. Just before January 2025, they developed diarrhea with blood stains and died.

Interpreter: He says that diarrhea has been a major issue. They lost many goat kids that had survived the drought, but later died from diarrhea with blood in it. This happened recently, just before January 2025. The animals became weak and died.

Interviewer: When did this kind of bloody diarrhea first start?

Interpreter: When did the diarrhea with blood stains begin?

Interviewee: It started in 2024.

Interviewer: What do you think caused it?

Interpreter: What led to the outbreak?

Interviewee: I’m not sure, but there was a restocking project that brought goats from Waso and Ethiopia. We believe those goats might have introduced the disease.

Interpreter: There was a restocking project here that brought goats from different areas like Waso and Ethiopia. They believe this may have introduced the infection that affected their local animals.

Interviewer: So the water had no role in causing that illness?

Interpreter: He is asking whether the water contributed to that animal sickness.

Interviewee: No, it didn’t.

Interpreter: No, it didn’t.

Interviewer: What measures do you take to prevent diarrhea in humans?

Interpreter: What steps do you take to prevent diarrhea in people?

Interviewee: Sometimes, we add medicine to the water to kill germs, but we only get that medicine occasionally—not all the time.

Interpreter: They occasionally receive water treatment medicine from nearby health facilities, but access is irregular.

Interviewer: Do you put the treatment directly into the well, or how do you use it?

Interpreter: How do you apply the treatment?

Interviewee: We just put it into the water containers at home.

Interpreter: They add it to household water containers—not directly into the well.

Interviewer: When it comes to watering livestock, is that the work of men or women?

Interpreter: Who is responsible for bringing the animals to the water points?

Interviewee: That’s the work of men.

Interpreter: Men handle that.

Interviewer: And who prepares the water before the animals arrive? Is it the herders, elders, or youths?

Interpreter: Who goes ahead to draw water and prepare the troughs for the animals?

Interviewee: It’s usually anyone who is strong enough to do the work—who can draw water from the well for the animals.

Interpreter: It’s someone physically strong, because the job requires pulling water up from the well into troughs.

Interviewer: What about the women,what roles do they play?

Interpreter: What is the role of women in relation to livestock and water?

Interviewee: Women also help when there’s no one else available to bring the animals to the water. But their main role is to fetch water for domestic use and to wash clothes near the well. They don’t usually draw water for livestock. In the past, strong girls could go into the well and draw water, but girls nowadays are not as strong, and many live in town.

Interpreter: Women do help with bringing livestock to water when no one else is available, but mainly they come to collect water for household use and do laundry nearby. They generally don’t draw water for animals. In earlier times, strong girls used to go into the wells, but most girls now are weaker or live in urban areas.

Interviewer: Is it because of certain laws, or because they lack the strength to draw water?

Interpreter: Is it due to a lack of physical strength, or are there specific rules that prevent women from drawing water from wells?

Interviewee: It’s mainly because they are not strong enough. But if there’s no one else available, and the animals need water, a strong girl can step in and draw water from the well. There’s no law that prohibits girls from drawing water or entering the well.

Interpreter: He says it’s not about any law if the need arises, a strong girl can draw water from the well. There are no rules forbidding girls from doing this work.

Interviewer: Have you seen any changes in the way herds are managed,for example, separating animals between those that graze in the bush and those that stay at home?

Interpreter: Are there changes in herd structure ,like how before some animals would go to the “fora” (bush) while others stayed at home? Does that still happen?

Interviewee: That doesn’t happen anymore. In the past, we used to keep some animals at home, mainly for milk, while others were taken to the bush to graze. But nowadays, people have very few animals, so that kind of separation is no longer possible.

Interpreter: He says they used to separate the animals some would stay at home for milk, others would be taken to the bush. But now, because herd sizes have decreased significantly, it’s no longer practical to make such distinctions.

Interviewer: Since when has this been the case?

Interpreter: He wants to know when this change began.

Interviewee: It’s been like this for about three years now.

Interpreter: Less than three years.

Interviewer: Was it after the severe drought?

Interpreter: Was this after the drought?

Interviewee: Yes, it started after the 2022 drought.

Interviewer: In your opinion, what can you say about the efforts by the government or NGOs when it comes to water?

Interpreter: What do you think about what the government or NGOs are doing to help with water?

Interviewee: There hasn’t been any major project here. Only a few small hand pumps have been installed for shallow wells, and even those were provided by NGOs not the government. The last time the government did anything here was the Balesa water project, and that was way back in 2009.

Interpreter: He says the government has done nothing since 2009, when the Balesa project was implemented. The only help they’ve received has been from NGOs, who installed hand pumps on the small wells.

Interviewer: Now, let’s talk about food. If you don’t get enough food from your animals, where else do you get it?

Interpreter: If you can’t rely on livestock for food, where else do you source food?

Interviewee: We have nowhere else to get food from only the one or two goats and camels that remain. Sometimes, the government sends food, but it’s very little—maybe 1 to 2 kilograms of maize and it only comes every three or four months.

Interpreter: He says they don’t have any other sources of food except the few animals left. Government food aid is rare and unreliable. When it does come, it’s only about 1 or 2 kilograms of maize, and it comes every 3–4 months, which is not enough.

Interviewer: Does this relief food come regularly, or only during drought?

Interpreter: Do you receive this relief food consistently, or only when drought becomes severe?

Interviewee: The 1–2 kilograms of maize are given even outside of drought seasons, though there are delays. If they skip one month, they’ll provide some in the following month. But during the last severe drought, there was a separate project that gave us more support.

Interpreter: Mostly, the relief food comes periodically. But during the severe drought, there was a specific project that provided more consistent support at the time.

Interviewer: Does that food aid come only during drought, or is it available even when there’s no drought?

Interpreter: Does the government’s relief food come regularly or only during drought seasons?

Interviewee: That two kilograms of food is not just during drought it also comes when there’s no drought.

Interpreter: It comes even during non-drought times.

Interviewer: But during the drought, it comes every month?

Interpreter: During the drought period, does it arrive monthly?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interpreter: He says yes.

Interviewer: Is that aid provided by an NGO or by the government?

Interpreter: The one or two kilograms of food does it come from an NGO?

Interviewee: That food aid comes from the government. At the moment, we are not receiving any food from NGOs. What I’m telling you is what happened during the last severe drought, when a project provided us with a good amount of food. The county government, however, gave us nothing.

Interpreter: He says the two kilograms of food comes from the government. Currently, there is no NGO food support. He’s referring to assistance they received during the last drought from a project, but they did not receive any support from the county government at that time.

Interviewer: Where do you get food like maize flour and vegetables or do you not eat them?

Interpreter: Where do you get maize flour and vegetables? Or do you not consume them?

Interviewee: We buy them from shops after selling some of the small animals we have.

Interpreter: They sell the few small animals they still have and use the money to buy food from shops.

Interviewer: Are the shops nearby, or do you travel far to get to them?

Interpreter: Are the shops close, or do you have to travel far?

Interviewee: We travel all the way to North Horr town to buy food.

Interpreter: He says they go to North Horr town for shopping.

Interviewer: So, how often do you eat vegetables in a week?

Interpreter: He is asking how many times per week you eat vegetables?

Interviewee: About once a month.

Interpreter: Once a month.

Interviewer: So otherwise, your meals consist of meat, milk, and ugali?

Interpreter: Other than that, you just eat meat, milk, and ugali?

Interviewee: Yes, but in small quantities. Sometimes, we also slaughter our goats.

Interpreter: They mainly eat milk, meat, and ugali sometimes available in small portions—and occasionally slaughter a goat for food.

Interviewer: We are now done with the questions. Let’s proceed to the next section, which involves drawing.

Interpreter: We have now completed the first half of the questions. Now we proceed to the mapping section.

Interviewer: Let’s try using the “low,” “medium,” and “strong” association technique.

Interpreter: We’ll now apply the “low,” “medium,” and “strong” method based on what you are asked.

Interviewer: Starting with water quality, what happens when water quality deteriorates?

Interpreter: We’ll refer back to what we discussed earlier to make this easier. So, what happens when the water quality is poor?

Interviewee: Poor quality water causes illnesses, especially among humans. Diseases like vomiting and diarrhea are common.

Interpreter: It leads to sicknesses, particularly diarrhea and vomiting, and it mainly affects humans.

Interviewer: So how would you rate the effect—low, medium, or strong? Are there times people drink dirty water and don’t get sick?

Interpreter: He’s asking if there are times you drink dirty water and sometimes it causes illness, and other times it doesn’t?

Interviewee: You see, the degree of contamination varies. Some dirty water doesn’t cause illness.

Interpreter: The type of contamination differs. Sometimes even if the water is dirty, it doesn’t cause illness.

Interviewer: Can you give an example?

Interpreter: For example?

Interviewee: When it floods, the water carries a lot of dirt like manure—because there are no latrines in this area. People defecate and urinate everywhere, even close to the water streams. The water collects this waste and stagnates.

Interpreter: Stagnant water usually gathers this kind of waste and becomes contaminated, which leads to illnesses.

Interviewer: What kind of dirt causes diarrhea and vomiting?

Interpreter: What specific contaminants cause these illnesses?

Interviewee: It’s mainly from floodwaters during the rainy season. But stagnant water that forms algae and small fish-like creatures can be filtered out, so it doesn’t cause as much illness.

Interpreter: The floodwater carries surface waste and collects in low-lying areas, which leads to illness. But stagnant water, when filtered, is less risky.

Interviewer: So, how would you rate the association between contaminated water and sickness-strong, medium, or low?

Interpreter: Comparing those two types of contamination, what would you say is the strength of the association between water and sickness?

Interviewee: Either way, the water still causes sickness.

Interviewer: So according to you, algae form on water when it’s not in use?

Interpreter: Earlier, you mentioned that algae and small fish-like species appear when water isn’t used. Is that correct?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Why is the water not being used?

Interpreter: He is asking why that water is left unused.

Interviewee: Because people usually collect water from streams when it rains, and the remaining water is what’s left behind on the ground.

Interviewer: Do you think when people have diarrhea it contributes to water contamination?

Interpreter: Does human diarrhea contaminate the water?

Interviewee: Yes, especially during rain. The stool is washed into water sources, leading to more diarrhea.

Interpreter: Yes, when it rains, human waste gets carried into the water sources, worsening the contamination and leading to more diarrhea.

Interviewer: Earlier you said that for livestock, there is no link between water quality and their sickness?

Interpreter: He’s asking if animal sickness can result from poor water quality?

Interviewee: No.

Interpreter: No.

Interviewer: What effect does animal sickness have on human health?

Interpreter: How does it affect you when your animals fall sick?

Interviewee: When animals get sick, they produce less milk and meat, and since we depend on them for food, our health is affected too.

Interpreter: The animals’ productivity drops, and since the people depend on them for food, it negatively affects their health and livelihoods.

Interviewer: So does that mean you also don’t get money to buy food?

Interpreter: So when animals are sick, does that also affect your ability to earn money?

Interviewee: Yes. We only sell animals when they are healthy and fat, which brings in good money. If they are sick or weak, no one wants to buy them.

Interpreter: Animals bring good income when they are strong and healthy. When they are weak and sick, their market value drops.

Interviewer: Regarding food aid, does that mean you receive more food during droughts than in normal times?

Interpreter: So do you get more food aid during droughts compared to other times?

Interviewee: Yes, although sometimes it takes a long time to arrive it doesn’t always reach us on time.

Interpreter: He says sometimes it takes a long time for the food aid to arrive, so there’s a delay, but eventually they do receive the food.

Interviewer: So does that mean food security doesn’t improve, even during times of drought?

Interpreter: He’s asking if you mean that food does not come in plenty even during drought?

Interviewee: No, it’s not plenty. Even during drought, food security actually worsens.

Interpreter: He says food security does not improve during drought; in fact, it deteriorates.

Interviewer: When it comes to livestock, what do you think causes their health to decline?

Interpreter: What leads to animal sickness, in your view?

Interviewee: The animals fall sick in different ways. For example, during drought, they become thin, making them vulnerable to pests like flies and termites. In camels, signs of illness include a reduction in stomach size, poor feeding, reduced milk output, changes in body color—especially around the ribs where they turn brown and they also drink less water. All these are signs of sickness.

Interpreter: A healthy camel can start showing signs of illness like eating less, producing less milk, shedding fur, and refusing water. These are signs that it’s unwell.

Interviewer: During drought, do women still fetch water from the hand-pumped wells?

Interpreter: Do women still go to fetch water from the hand-pumped wells during the drought season?

Interviewee: During the drought, women sometimes go to fetch water from “ada”—a shallow water source in the sand near the bridge, which is quite far. They use donkeys for this. For cooking and washing clothes, they use water from the hand-pumped wells. But for drinking, they go all the way to the ada.

Interpreter: They use donkeys to fetch drinking water from ada, which is farther away, while using hand-pumped well water for cooking and washing.

Interviewer: Why do they prefer using donkeys over camels to fetch water?

Interpreter: Why do you prefer using donkeys now instead of camels like you did before?

Interviewee: Donkeys are easier to manage. With camels, once you return from fetching water, you must take the camel to rejoin the rest of the herd for grazing, and they need to be fed. Donkeys are simpler to handle.

Interpreter: Camels require extra care ,after fetching water, they must be taken to graze with the other camels. Donkeys don’t have that issue, making them more convenient.

Interviewer: How has the shift to a more sedentary lifestyle affected the Gabra people?

Interpreter: Compared to before, when you used to migrate, how has staying in one place impacted Gabra life?

Interviewee: Before, when our area had no rain, we would migrate to places like Badaa Hurri for pasture and water. We would go as a whole family and camp there. Now, although the animals still go there to graze, we no longer migrate with them. The modern houses we live in cannot be carried on camel backs like before. In the past, every part of the house had a designated place on the camel. Now, the building materials are heavier, made from unknown or modern trees, and the traditional trees like sisal and “Aroresa” are disappearing or have become extinct due to drought. There was once an organized system for building and migrating with houses, but that is no longer possible.

Interpreter (interjecting to clarify): In the past, there was a systematic method to construct houses using lightweight, traditional materials suited for migration. Today, these materials are no longer available, and the houses are too heavy to transport.

Interviewer: Have social amenities like schools and hospitals restricted your ability to move?

Interpreter: Have schools and hospitals made it harder for you to migrate to other areas?

Interviewee: Yes. We now take our children to school, and moving constantly would mean always asking for school transfers, which is difficult.

Interpreter: Yes, education has limited migration, because the children must stay in one place for school.

Interviewer: What has motivated your community to start sending children to school?

Interpreter: What has convinced you to take your children to school?

Interviewee: We are constantly sensitized by the government on the importance of education, and we are also inspired by people from our community who have gone through school and become successful.

Interpreter: They are encouraged by government campaigns to educate their children, and they are also motivated by role models ,those who have attained higher education from the community.

Interviewer: How has permanent settlement in one area affected the water situation in this region?

Interpreter: What impact does staying in one place have on water quality when you consider various factors?

Interviewee: Staying in one area leads to water contamination. For example, we try to prevent people from bathing inside the water sources during droughts, but during the rainy season, floods bring dirt into the wells. In the dry season, the water is not affected as much. However, during rains, human and animal feces especially from donkeys are washed into the water sources. Donkeys eat leftover human food, and their feces resemble human waste, leading to contamination.

Interpreter (clarifying throughout): Floodwaters during the rainy season collect human and animal waste and carry it into water sources, making them dirty. This is especially concerning in places with no proper sanitation.

Interviewer: Does the presence of animal feces in the area contribute to human illness?

Interpreter: Does the animal stool around the area cause sickness among people?

Interviewee: Yes, when the stool is washed into the water, people get sick. They suffer from stomach problems like diarrhea and vomiting. When water stagnates, it also becomes a breeding ground for mosquitoes, which leads to malaria.

Interpreter: The contaminated water leads to stomach illnesses, and stagnant water creates mosquitoes that bring malaria.

Interviewer: Now that animals no longer migrate as often, what effect does that have on them?

Interpreter: What happens to animals when they don’t migrate regularly?

Interviewee: They become weak and age faster. Also, parasitic worms become a problem since they are common in this area and the animals are more exposed to them when they stay in one place for long.

Interpreter: He says the animals grow weak and age prematurely. They also suffer from parasitic infestations due to remaining in one location for extended periods.

Interviewer: What has led to people staying in one place instead of moving as before?

Interpreter: What has made you settle here and stop migrating?

Interviewee: It’s mainly because of the towns and schools. We stay near schools so that our children can attend.

Interpreter: They prefer to stay close to schools and towns for the sake of their children’s education.

Interviewer: How does insecurity affect this situation?

Interpreter: How does insecurity impact both people and livestock?

Interviewee: Insecurity causes many problems. Even if there is enough pasture, animals cannot graze peacefully when there is conflict.

Interpreter: He says that insecurity restricts grazing. Animals cannot move freely to graze because of fear and danger in the surrounding areas.

Interviewer: What can help reduce insecurity?

Interpreter: What do you think can reduce insecurity in the area?

Interviewee: Insecurity can be reduced by fostering good relationships and mutual understanding between communities. This happens when both sides come together, sit down, and reach an agreement.

Interpreter: He believes peace comes through dialogue and understanding—communities must come together and intentionally choose peaceful coexistence.

Interviewer: Is it possible for peace to be maintained during drought periods?

Interpreter: Can peace still prevail when there’s drought and everyone is struggling to access resources like water and pasture?

Interviewee: Actually, drought is the best time for peace. This is because the pasture and water points are shared between the two communities, and since both groups are in need, they are more willing to maintain peace and coexist so that they can access resources together.

Interpreter: He says drought often encourages peace, as the communities must work together to share limited resources like pasture and water.

Interpreter: That kind of understanding between communities usually arises during times of scarcity. For instance, when the remaining pasture is located between two rival communities, they are often compelled to hold peace meetings and agree to coexist so both can access the resource.

Interviewer: So, is there generally more peace during times of drought?

Interpreter: He is asking whether peace is more common during drought periods?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interpreter: Yes, that is correct.

Interviewer: So, during drought, peace prevails because everyone wants to benefit from the limited pasture and water?

Interpreter: He is asking if peace is common during drought because the rival communities all want access to scarce pasture and water?

Interviewee: Yes, since the animals suffer from lack of pasture and water, people see the need to cooperate. There’s no point in fighting when what matters most is saving the livestock from dying.

Interpreter: During droughts, people prioritize peace so they can share the limited resources and protect their animals. The focus shifts to survival, especially saving livestock, which is their main source of livelihood. Interestingly, he adds that conflicts are more likely to arise when there is an abundance of pasture and water, not during scarcity.

Interviewer: What does the government do to address insecurity?

Interpreter: Does the government take any action regarding insecurity?

Interviewee: Yes, they do intervene, especially when conflict arises. The government organizes peace meetings and mediates between the communities.

Interpreter: Yes, the government does intervene and calls for meetings when there is conflict.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you’d like to add about your livelihood that we may have.

Interpreter: What else would you like to add that concerns your community and may have been left out of our discussion?

Interviewee: Regarding water, as I mentioned earlier, we do not have latrines, so people relieve themselves everywhere, and this contaminates our water. There was a project that once promised to build latrines for us, but they never returned. We even tried constructing a makeshift latrine ourselves, but it collapsed when it rained.

Interpreter: He says that lack of latrines is a major concern. Although a project had promised to build some for them, it was never implemented. They also attempted to build one, but it sank during the rainy season.

Interviewer: What happens when people defecate near the water streams?

Interpreter: What do you think is the impact when people go into the bush near water streams to relieve themselves?

Interviewee: When it rains, the floods carry the human waste to the water sources, which then contaminates the water. Also, animals, especially those accustomed to eating maize at home, end up eating the human stool, which is harmful because we depend on those animals for milk and meat. We even eat the intestines of these animals. Additionally, when animals consume stool, their skin deteriorates it no longer glows.

Interpreter: He says that rainwater carries human waste into the wells, polluting the water. The animals also feed on the stool, especially those that are used to eating maize, and this affects the quality of their milk and meat. Since the community consumes both the milk and the intestines, it becomes a health concern. He also notes that the animal’s skin quality declines after eating human stool.

Interviewer: Do animals actually get sick from eating human waste, or do they just become physically weaker?

Interpreter: He is asking whether the animals develop diseases after eating stool, or is it just a decline in their condition?

Interviewee: When animals eat human waste, their skin becomes unhealthy. It stops glowing and changes in appearance.

Interpreter: He says the animals’ skin condition worsens after eating stool. It becomes dull and unhealthy-looking, even during the rainy season.

Interviewer: Why do you think NGOs often come to this area and show interest?

Interpreter: According to your opinion, why do you think NGOs are interested in coming here?

Interviewee: They usually come to assess the situation and understand the needs of the people. After doing their survey, they sometimes return and assist with one or two issues out of the many problems we shared with them perhaps one out of six.

Interpreter: He says NGOs first come to conduct surveys and understand local challenges. They often return later to address some of the issues, although not all. Out of several problems the community raises maybe six they usually only help with one or two. Their interest may also be influenced by information they get from the government or other partners.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Interpreter: Is there anything else?

Interviewee: Another issue is with the Balesa Gombo water source. People enter the water to fetch it while still wearing their clothes, and even men do this. During the dry season, the sanitation is especially poor.

Interpreter: He says that the Balesa Gombo water point faces serious sanitation issues. People get into the water fully clothed while collecting it, which compromises the cleanliness of the water, especially during the dry season.

Interviewer: Was this situation caused by the permanent settlement of people in this area?

Interpreter: Was this poor sanitation a result of people settling permanently in this area?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interpreter: Yes.

(The interviewer thanks the interviewee for his time and concludes the session.)

End of the Interview