

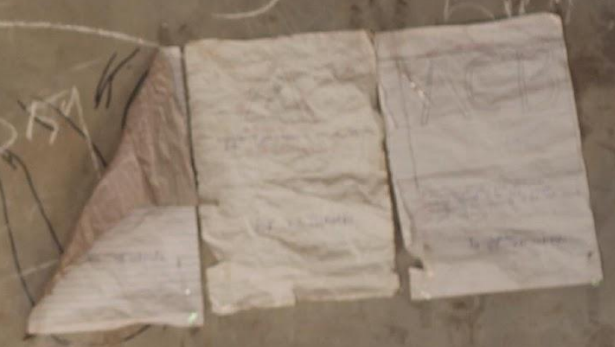
# Changing aspirations and the realities of climate change adaptation for the young people in Ethiopia and Kenya

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For pastoralists and farmers in Ethiopia and Kenya, wellbeing and livelihoods are closely linked to the environment. Many are having to adapt to climate change, and the scarcity that can result from it. This scarcity often leads to trade-offs, and these affect each generation differently. **ASSAR's research enables us to consider how young people and their parents' aspirations are changing in the face of climate change.**

Many parents aspire for education and salaried employment for their children rather than agriculture. Some are motivated by their own lack of opportunity to learn, others by the need for their children's support in the future.



**‘Education is an advantage; previously we didn’t have it. [My children] know – they read, they speak, they learn. If they are educated they have the chance to find jobs in government and they won’t keep livestock as we do.’**

*Ahmed, pastoralist, Afar Region, Ethiopia*

Many young people echo their parents' aspirations for education and salaried jobs.



**'No way [do we want to farm]. That is the advantage of staying in school. So we can get white collar jobs. Farming is difficult. Hard work. There are insufficient rains. This year what people have planted has dried up and there is nothing to replace it.'**

*Meryam, age 17 and Florence, age 18 – Gituli, Meru County, Kenya*



Both young and old feel that life today is harder than it was for previous generations. Unemployment, a lack of job opportunities and rising food prices are limiting young people's choices.

**'The last 14 years have been fine but things have changed lately. Badly. The current situation is that there are no jobs and no opportunities. Most young people have no job and it is the same everywhere round here.'**

*Fatuma, Awash, Ethiopia*

**'My aunt's youth seems to have been better than ours because we are facing a lot of challenges relating to modern day lifestyles. They never wanted white collar jobs like we do. Their life was less demanding in all aspects.'**

*Meryam, Gituli, Meru County, Kenya*



Without the guarantee of a well-paid job or needing to support siblings and other family members, many young people are delaying the move into family life. This is especially true for young men, who face social pressure to marry, but first need to show that they can take care of a wife and family's needs.

**'You can't marry without a job and I do worry about this. I am held back. I need to 'complete'. It is not the same for girls, they can get married, but young men need money/job to marry as that is their responsibility.'**

*Mohammed, Awash, Ethiopia*

**'Though I am of age, I have decided not to marry till I plan my things including getting a better house and also seeing to it my siblings complete schooling.'**

*Meryam, Gituli, Meru County, Kenya*



Some young people do see their future in farming and feel as though they need to help out. Others dream of a different future.

**'I have a responsibility to help my father as he brought me up so now I look after him.'**

*Abdo, Afar Region, Ethiopia*

**'Everything depends on income; if I got money I would buy and sell livestock. Ultimately I want to buy a Bajaj (*like a tuk-tuk*); that's my dream.'**

*Ali, age 15, Afar Region, Ethiopia*



Sometimes, jobs do not match up to young people's expectations. They can be low paid, leaving little opportunity to save for the future – especially for those who have not been able to complete their education.

**'I was educated to Grade 4 and then dropped out because my brothers were at school and I was needed to herd. I work as a daily labourer at the factory. I usually work every day, unless I feel unwell, which happens because the work we do is very hard. I help the household by also building fences and shelters for livestock and herding livestock in the afternoon after my job. I don't earn enough to save.'**

*Ali, Ethiopia*





## **Adaptation and resilience need to be supported.**

This could include generating forms of employment that are not reliant on natural resources or affected by climate uncertainty or providing opportunities for skills training that match the needs of the job market and consider young people's aspirations for working outside farming.



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