

# Story in the watershed

## The Benefits of Closed Area: The Case of Ejere Woreda, Oromia Regional State



*Figure 1 closed area in Bilo micro watershed, Oromia Region, Ejere woreda 2021*

“Farming in Billo micro watershed was challenging due to extreme soil erosion and silt deposit” said Obbo Lelissa Gabissa, a farmer living in Ejere Woreda for more than four decades. His hometown Ejere is a rural area about 43 km from Addis Ababa.

The hilly topography of the woreda exposed most of the farmlands to severe soil erosion.

The SLMP commenced the land management interventions in the woreda back in 2014/15. The project conducted thorough discussions with stakeholders and the community to identify the underlying causes of the land degradation problems in the watershed and proposed possible solutions to tackle the challenges. The land management practices

on the hillsides of Bilo Micro watershed at Chri kebele started 2014/15.

Obbo Lelissa explained that the community discussed with Ejere woreda Agriculture office about SLMP’s proposed interventions and the community’s role. Finally identified and agreed to bring 4.75 ha of land under area closure treatment (fig-2). In addition, different soil and water conservation technologies such as hillside terrace, stone faced soil bund, planting trees and desho grass planting were deployed. As a result, 80 hectare community farm lands including Obbo Lelissa’s farm is now protected from erosion.

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Figure 2: Community planting trees in Bilo micro watershed on closed area, 2016

In addition to protected erosion hazards, the community members have now gained grass for livestock feed from the closed area which allowed to practice cut and carry system to keep their cattle (9 HHs with 8 livestock heard size per HHs) in the backyard to promote stall feeding.

The SLM practices in Billo micro watershed has also increased discharge of the spring in the micro watershed which is being used as a source of drinking water for the community (40 HHs and beyond). “The spring has relived us from travelling for two hours to fetch drinking water” said Obbo Lelissa while explaining how the community benefitted from the spring. Moreover, this spring is serving the town residents during dry period where there is shortage of water supply.



Figure3: Farm land below the area closer with soil and water conservation technology and growing Teff, 2021

According to Obbo Lellisa’s brother (Obbo Tesfaye Gebissa), in the past five years, the crop productivity in the area has increased on average with 25% at increasing rate due to reduced erosion and improved land productivity.



Figure 2.Obbo lelissa on this farm Bilo micro watershed, 2021

“Trees are everything to us, we improved our livelihoods as we protected the land from erosion and plant trees. It also improved productivity of our farms and gave us a better environment” said Obbo Lelisa while summarizing the benefits he and the community reaped from the SLM interventions (Area closure and its package) in Billo micro watershed.

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## Contributors

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