

Stories in the watershed

Gully Rehabilitation to Save Life: the case of Hawassa Zuria, SNNPR

Hawassa zuriya is one of the woredas in Sidama Region, 305 km from Addis Ababa. The woreda is surrounded by mountains and characterized by silt loam soil which is affected by excessive runoff that threatened

"For the past three years, this gully took my farm land and my hope to live in Obolo-dankaka kebele; spending every night at my home near the gully was a nightmare for my family and myself as we were afraid that the landslide would kill us all. But SLMP gave me second chance to live in a place where I belong." Maritu Sintamo

the lives of the community in the area. According to W/ro Maritu, the runoff from the surrounding highlands and roads has eroded the farmland and resulted in deep gullies.



Figure 1 Gully erosion in Hawassa zuriya woreda at Fechena micro watershed in Obolodankaka kebele, 2015

Due to this massive soil loss, the Woreda administration proposed to resettle farmers to another area in 2015. However the community has not endorsed the resettlement proposal. In the same year the Sustainable land management project (SLMP) started working in the kebele to control Gully erosion with Soil and water conservation practices and introduction of sustainable livelihood approaches.

The woreda administration with the support of SLMP has consulted the community and started to deploy participatory SLM practices to rehabilitate landscape and fix the gully that threatened community's livelihood.

Construction of physical structures followed by planting various trees and elephant grass has significantly reduced the runoff. The elephant grass has become alternative source of feed for livestock owner farmers.

After three years effort the depth of the gully reduced and became a site to grow feed for livestock. The elephant grass grown in the gully is used as feed source and house construction in addition to conserving the soil and controlling erosion.

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Figure 2 Treated gully in Hawassa Zuriya Woreda in Fechena micro watershed, 2021

Learning from the successful SLM interventions, 40 households living around the gully organized and manage their lands by controlling the formation of small and active gullies around by constructing deep trenches. As result of these efforts, the water saturates into the soil and it has enhanced off-season crop production.



Figure 3 W/o maritu cutting forage from the treated gully of Fechena micro watershed, 2021EC

Maritu says, first we healed the gully and produced feed in the Gully but it is not an end. The landscape needs additional work to rehabilitate in a sustainable manner. She further condemns the situation they had faced due to the gully erosion and appreciates the

project support that enabled them rehabilitate the land and relived them from resettlement. Mrs Maritu now own small ruminants, chickens and she earn cash incentive for engaging in the watershed development activities.

Maritu also reconstructed her house using the woody elephant grass and purchase three sheep and heifer. .She also produces maize, haricot bean and planted enset (Kocho) for household consumption. Maritu teaches her kids nearby school and she says SLMP gave me second chance to live in the village.

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