

RESILIENT LANDSCAPES AND LIVELIHOODS PROJECT (RLLP)

STORIES IN WATERSHEDS



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CLIMATE SMART FARMING TO CHANGE LIVELIHOODS

Gura Senbete' is a micro watershed located in Woliso woreda, Oromia Region. There are 15 micro watersheds in the woreda established to enhance soil and water conservation activities that cover about 750 hectares of land.

Grua Senbete is one of these watersheds exclusively implementing Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) along with three other watersheds in the woreda. The CSA scheme in Grua Senbete covers more than 180 hectares of farm and involves 169 farmers of those 35 are female.

Ms. Bizunesh Mulugeta is one of the farming households practicing CSA in Gura Senbete micro watershed.

"My farm land had been affected by erosion and execute soil loss resulting low productivity and reduced income , then, five years ago I decided to practice various SLM techniques with the support from kebele development agents" said Ms Bizunesh.

Farmers in the CSA watersheds first implemented various SLM practices such as gully rehabilitation, terracing, construction of soil bunds and planting various plants to stabilize the soil bunds and to incur additional income from the farmland.

Once the basic soil and water conservation measures put in place, farmers are trained on benefits and techniques of climate smart farming. Furthermore, the community agreed to keep their cattle in the backyard and feed them from freshly cut grass, crop by products and other fodder.

"Based on the experts' training and orientations, we planted 'Desho grass' and other forage trees along the soil bunds, prepare compost, uses improved crop varieties. In addition, we prepared vermin compost and plough the land as per the CSA technique" said Ms Bizunesh with passion.



Figure 1: Desho Grass planted in the field, Gura Senbete micro watershed, Welliso woreda.

According to Bizunesh, after practicing the soil and water conservation practice and CSA, the result is highly motivating

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WORLD BANK GROUP

"I have harvested 16 quintals of maize from half hectare of land besides using fresh corn for home consumption a month, due to longer maturity period and the wheat production has increased from six quintal per 0.25 to 10.5 quintals, which I have never seen in the past" said Bizunesh comparing the current yield with the previous.

As part of the CSA, Bizunesh and her neighbouring farmers are now accustomed to cover their farm with crop residues and straws to maintain the soil moisture and prevent weed infestation. "Previously, after harvesting, we clear our farm and feed the straws to cattle and the farm stays bare until the next cropping season; but now we learnt that covering the farm with crop residues would enhance soil fertility and productivity" said Bizunesh



Figure 3:

Ms Bizunesh's farm covered with crop straws. Gura Senbete micro watershed,

Following the consensus reached among the community, Bizunesh started to keep and feed two cows, a heifer, and oxen in the backyard.

"Since I started keeping the cattle in a yard and feed them from freshly prepared fodder and crop by products, I realized that they are healthy, and cows are producing more milk. The milk production from a single cow has now increased by half litter" said Bizunesh.



Figure 2: Ms. Bizunesh feeding the cattle in her backyard.

The crop yield and milk production increase has directly contributed for the livelihoods of the community in the watershed. Ms. Bizunesh testified that previously, as the land was not producing enough, she and her neighbours have been renting farm plots from nearby village to produce more to meet the household needs, which was difficult and utilizes high female casual labour. "The farming techniques we are practicing is different from that of our fathers'. Now we are doing thing differently and getting more benefits from the farm and cattle. Apparently, we are protecting our lands from erosion and degradation. Thanks to the RLLP!" said Ms. Bizunesh

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