

# Story in the watershed

## Averting Bersina River's Damage and Enhance Production

Ras Amba is one of the micro watersheds in Ensaro woreda of Amhara region. The woreda is located in at 130km from Addis Ababa. The watershed is located in a lowland area with 1300 meter above sea level and with average annual rainfall of 1050 mm. As a result, Ras Amba suffers from extreme flooding emerging from Bersina river, which is a route for flood running down from the surrounding highlands and crosses Ras Amba micro watershed. Deforestation in micro watershed along with high level of flooding from Bersina river aggravated soil erosion and degradation in the communal land and farms of the community in the area which covers more than 250ha of land.

In 2015, the woreda office of agriculture and SLM project started deploying various SLM practices, provided awareness raising and capacity building trainings on various aspect of NRM and SLM practices.

Ato Tekalign guche is one of the youth farmers living in Ras Amba micro watershed. He owns a farmland by the Bersina river side.



*Figure 1 Young farmer Tekalign guche near to his fruit farm. August 2021 GC.*

His farm was located 150 meters away from Bersina riverbank but gradually the river wiped out the area and reached to his farm and wiped out 0.25 hectares of the farm. In addition, the flooding washed away top soil of the farm which accounts around 0.5 ha. Tekalign says, back then I lost all my hope of making a living from farming in this area. But SLMP's support and community's effort to construct stone filled gabion check dams along with other conservation practices has prevented the river from causing further damage. "... around one hectare of my farmland is saved from the damage due to SLMP's intervention and now I have regained

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my hope and started cultivating the land. This year, I've irrigating the farm produced onion and sorghum" said Tekalign while explaining how the SLMP's support enabled him make a living again. In the 2021 cropping season he produced 400 quintal of onion and gained 320,000 ETB. In addition, he planted mango trees around his farm that gave him annual income of 30,000 ETB just last year.



*Figure 2. Secondary protection of sand filled gabion constriction to protect and save the land from Bersina river attack. 2021 GC*

The stone filled gabion covered about 1.75 kilometres protecting the farmland along the riverbank including owned by the community and a church.

The gully formed and more than 40 ha of eroded land have revived after two years of continuous treatment.



*Figure 3. Revived landscape from Bersina river attack, mirafe kidusan belbelit church farm land. 2017.*



*Figure 4. Revived farm land from river Bersina attack, ras amba micro watershed, August 2021*

After two years of continuous effort to rehabilitate the eroded land and gullies formed due to the flow of Bersina river, about 44ha of land has now revived and the endangered areas are protected .

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*Figure 5. Onion produced on Mr. Tekalign farm land, January, 2021*

Finally, Mr Tekalign witnessed that he is reaping higheryields and his village is better-off because of the efforts made in the last six years, and this is motivating the community to work more and bring a better future.

## Contributors

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