

Testimonial 1: a male farmer from Wadla Woreda, Amhara Region

Never had Five Birr in My Pocket

Name: Achenif Fante

Age: 55

Marital Status: Married

No. of Children: 8



Ato Achenif is the head of household for a family of 9 (one of his daughters is married). Educating four of his children in the local elementary school costs him additional expenses. Before the project, Ato Achenif was growing crops using traditional methods on his two hectares of farmland. He feels he was living a destitute life. He couldn't produce enough to feed his family for the year without proper seeds and fertilizers.

"But now, after the project came to our Kebele, my life is changing. Since I am always cooperative with my Kebele Development Agents (DAs)¹ and accept their new ideas, they have selected me as one of the beneficiaries of the project and the whole community had fully agreed".

Achenif received training for three days on increasing crop productivity, preparation of compost, use of improved seeds & fertilizers and row planting, poultry (egg production), sheep fattening and natural resource management.

"Then, after the training, they advised us to construct houses for chicken and sheep separately within two weeks. As I have said, I always like to accept and implement advices of the DAs. I went home immediately and cut down trees for the construction of the houses. I finished it in a week and called the Kebele DAs to visit. They have approved the houses and gave me 25 chickens for egg production. Then, after two months, they gave me two quintals (200kg) of improved wheat seeds and four quintals (400kg) of chemical fertilizers (DAP & UREA) for my farmlands. Finally, they gave me five male sheep for fattening."

¹ Extension workers

As a result, "I cultivated my farmland with the improved seeds and fertilizer, and using row cropping. I harvested almost three times as much wheat than I did the previous year: about 54.5 quintal (5.45 tons) from my two hectares of land (the yield increased from 10qt. to 27.25qt. Per ha). Now, the wheat is sufficient to feed my family for the year and I can even sell the excess, some three quintals, to add to my savings. Starting from September my chickens are producing about 20 eggs per day. So far, I have sold them for Br 6000, which I deposited in my Amhara Credit and Savings Institution (ACSI) saving account. Additionally, I have sold two kids from my sheep and gained Br 6,500. Commenting on the specific features of the project, Achenif stated, "the project has given us professional training that we could pass to the next generation. Its NRM activities are of good quality, particularly the construction of water collection points. The project has made me wealthy enough to save money after feeding my family. I personally know three farmers in our Kebele who copied from us and started poultry and sheep fattening. The only complaint I have is on the hand-held tractors. They are not usable under our conditions. I know nobody who used them."

Achenif was also positive about the impact of the project on the rest of his life, explaining "the project has solved the problem of my children's education. They are now able to pay their school fees and fulfil whatever their needs. All the family members are helping each other on project activities. I help my wife on poultry and sheep fattening and she and the children help me on crop production. We use the money and the crop by consulting each other, there is no domination in my family."

But "there are many farmers who are not included in the project. Some of them were not able to construct the poultry and sheep houses in 15 days. Others were not included because there were not enough seeds and fertilisers, chicken, and sheep. Thus, I hope the project will grow to cover all the farmers in our watershed, Kebele and Woreda in the future."

Achenif concluded with full smile on his face: "I would like to say again that the project has made me a wealthy man that has more than Br 12,000 saved in my account and I, who never had five Birr in my pocket, for a night have now become an owner of a saving account book".

Testimonial 2: a female farmer from Enebisie Woreda, Amhara Region

Life Changing

Name: Alemitu Maaza
Age: 42
Marital Status: Divorced (FHHH)
No. of Children: 3



Alemitu has been divorced for 10 years and has been the head of her household ever since. Two of her children are male and now over 22 years old. They have already started their own life, but still support her on farming. She has an 18-year-old daughter who recently completed her 10th grade education.

Prior to the project, Alemitu was using her farmland for share cropping because she could not afford seeds and fertilizers. The income from share-cropping was not enough for the needs of her household. She had to fill the gap by distilling a local alcohol called araki and preparing injera for teachers. "

But now, things have changed as Alemitu explained " After the project came to our Kebele, my life is changing. Since the whole community knew my situation, they selected me as one of the beneficiaries of the project". She was trained for three days and received improved wheat seeds and fertilizers, 25 chickens of an improved breed for egg production, and six sheep (one male & five female) for breeding."

As a result, "I am able to cultivate my farmland by myself. I got a good harvest which is about four fold of the previous. Now I can fully cover the consumption needs of my family. I am selling my eggs for about Br 100 a week and paying Br 20 per week to a local *Ikub* (a financial saving group). And the sheep have started giving lambs. I have sold two of them at Br 1300, which I deposited in my Kebele saving account, and I have still three lambs."

Alemitu concluded that "thus the project is life changing for me and I wish all other poor women in our Kebele get the opportunity to resolve their problems like me."

Testimonial 3: a male from Ensebie Woreda

Preventing soil erosion helps us

Name: Tenaw Adamu

Marital Status: Married

No of children: 4



Tenaw is married with four children, aged between 1 and 15 years old. Before the project, he cultivated 1 hectare of land, mainly with wheat, cowpeas, and chickpeas. He also kept 2 oxen, 2 sheep, and 1 donkey. He was selected to receive 1 heifer, 20 chickens, 6 sheep, and seeds and fertiliser.

Tenaw has received free artificial insemination service for his heifer, now pregnant. He will keep the calf for breeding if she is female. The artificial insemination service existed before the project in Ensebie Sar Midar town, but is now freely available. He also received materials for the cow shed and 3 quintals of cattle feed. Tenaw took out a loan of ETB 13,000 in order to acquire the heifer. He believes the market value of the heifer is now around ETB 18,000.

The six sheep have already multiplied. Last year, he sold three lambs for ETB 2,500 ETB. Now, he has two more lambs and the original six sheep.

Before the project, Tenaw had been able to access fertiliser from the Farmers' Cooperative at a 5% rate. This meant that he could only afford to buy a small amount. This year he was able to get enough fertiliser to use on all the wheat he planted. His harvest doubled.

Tenaw and his wife work together on their family farm. He explains "We work together. Our good relationship makes our farm successful," Tenaw explains that his wife manages the poultry and the income from the eggs. Now, they have their own separate savings accounts and Tenaw has been able to save on average around ETB 80 per month.

This project has stressed the importance of natural resource management activities – to ensure the livelihood gains they have made can be sustainable. Tenaw has constructed soil bunds on 0.25 ha of his land and has planted trees. He recognises that getting involved in communal activities on watershed management is vitally important, as Tenaw explained "*preventing soil erosion helps us all and we cannot do it alone.*"

The project has had a dramatic effect on his livelihood. He rates the sheep his most prized asset. They breed quickly and can be used to generate additional capital through sales. His goal is to ensure that he can educate all his children at the Secondary School in Ensebie Sar Midar town. This will require him to construct a house in the town for his children to stay in whilst they study. "With all the support I have received, I believe this will be possible" he explains.

Testimonial 4: a female from Dessie Municipality

No longer unemployed

Name: Debrework Mekuanin

Age: 33

Marital Status: Married

No. of Children: 4

Currently, Debrework is the chairperson of Addis Tesfa (New Hope), a Sanitation Cooperative in Dessie town in Agar Gizat Sub City. She has been elected by Addis Tesfa's 50 members.



Debrework has worked as a solid waste collector since 2005. But prior to the project she felt unemployed. She did not get enough education, a decent income from her job, and she was depending on her husband's meagre income: "before this project, there were only 25 solid waste collectors in the cooperative. We had to collect the fees for waste collection from each residence. This was a big challenge because service users were never happy to pay their fees and often did not pay. I was not getting more than Br 300 per month".

"But my working condition changed after the project came to our town. I have participated on different trainings, including how to make compost, self-protection, and how to effectively collect solid waste. And now, I have protection materials. I have a hat, a mouth mask, hand gloves, boots, and overall cloths. And now that tractors have also been assigned to each Sub City, we are not waiting in queue to transport waste by hand to the city refuse dump. It also makes a difference that the dump has also been newly re-constructed. It has shower rooms and toilets. Ten members of the cooperative are now preparing compost under the newly constructed shade. This is something we had never done before.

Above all, I became a regular employee with a fixed salary of Br 800 (Br 725 net) that is paid by the Municipality. We are no longer engaged in collection of fees from the service users! ". Moreover, "we can present any complaints to general meetings of all solid waste collectors from the 10 Sub Cities twice a month at the Municipality. Now we can get solutions."

Debrework concluded “the project has improved our working condition in many ways and now I can say I am **no longer unemployed**. In the future with my friends I will try to produce tree seedlings and sell to others for greening their compounds.”

Testimonial 5: a female from Wadla Woreda, Amhara Region

Solved Domestic Dispute

Name: Tena Adamu

Age: 41

Marital Status: Married

No. of Children: 6



Tena is married and has six children. Her husband is also a farmer participating in Natural Resources Management activities.

Before the project Tena was struggling to feed her six children: “We were not able to use enough fertilizer and improved seed varieties. The yield could hardly feed our children for a few months. Then, two years ago, I was selected to be a beneficiary. ”

She was trained for three days on crop production, poultry, sheep fattening and Natural Resources Management. The project provided her with an improved variety of wheat seeds and fertilizer, 25 chickens for egg production, and five male sheep for fattening.”

“Now, I can fully feed my children and also save part of the income that I get. We used the improved seed and applied the standard amount of fertilizer. We got a harvest which is about double of the previous one. In addition, I am getting up to 80 eggs per week, which, after feeding my children, I sell for more than Br 120. I have also sold fattened sheep and gained income. I started saving.”

Tena concluded that *“above all, I am using my income from egg sale to buy food additives that I need for domestic use. I used to request the money from my husband. This was a major issue and created conflict at home. Thanks to the project, our domestic dispute is now resolved.”*

Testimonial 6: one male from Aubarre woreda, Somali Region

I became a sedentary farmer

Name: Umar Jama

Marital Status: Married

Umar Jama is one of the 15 beneficiaries who received oxen for fattening, crop seeds and tools for irrigating his farm. Before the project, Umar' was living the life of a pastoralist, moving from place to place with his cows in search of grazing pasture and water: "I used to grow some crops – but only sorghum for feeding my cows".

The project helped him to become a sedentary farmer. Now, he grows several crops and has obtained two young oxen for fattening. In the last year, he harvested 5 tons of onion, 3 tons of maize, and a considerable amount of tomatoes, pepper, and watermelon. He sold the produce in neighbouring Somaliland: "I can now earn more from irrigated farming and can save about 1000 Birr each month".

Testimonial 7: one male farmer from Aubarre woreda, Somali Region

Our children are now able to go to the new school

Name: Muktar Hassen Ahmed

Age: 41

Marital Status: Married

No. of Children: 6

Prior to the project, Muktar was a pastoralist. He is now a sedentary farmer and one of the 15 beneficiaries who received oxen for fattening, crop seeds, and tools for irrigating his farm: "the community has obtained enormous support – the most ever". "Now, we are able to better pump water for irrigation, and can obtain three harvests per year. We also have access to improved (grafted) orange stock, and sell oranges to the nearby market." Oxen fattening has helped to increase household income.

"I learned from the project how to grow crops using irrigation and I obtained cement and a water pump. I also received training for growing onions and watermelons. I am currently producing them. I am able to earn a higher income now than before". The project changed my

old belief that ploughing land is shameful: “that belief is not relevant anymore. I have learned a lot from the project”.

As a result of the shift from pastoral to sedentary life, children are going to a primary school, which was constructed with support from the woreda’s budget: “the school was needed as the community is no longer nomadic but leads a settled life - our children are now able to go to the new school rather than the old school devised for nomadic or pastoralist people.

Testimonial 9: one female farmer from Sofi woreda, Harari

Improvements on your own land

Name: Saro Aliyi
 Age: 21
 Marital Status: Married
 No. of Children: 2



Saro Aliyi and her husband have up to 10th grade education (unusual for the kebele) but they both had to abandon school to work. They have two children. Prior to the project, Saro would buy mangos from the local town/market and then sell them on the road.

As part of the project, Saro and her husband received a payment of ETB 4,000 for building soil bunds on their land. They planned for building the soil bunds with less workload. They were able to achieve the plan, build the soil bunds, and save part of the ETB 4,000. They believe that their education helped them to design a good plan: “the project has been better than other projects because you do the work (the soil bunds) on your own land and benefit from the money, but also from the more lasting impact of the soil bunds. We now have more spring water available downstream due to the improved bund construction and trees planted on the hill slopes. We can use the water for irrigation.”

But Saro was most excited about the poultry. She received 13 chickens and wished to start a chicken farm. But unfortunately, she received 11 roosters and only 2 hens. The roosters provided by the project are very aggressive and have killed the two hens. She is now planning on buying more hens and continuing the poultry development. She has already built a corrugated iron sheet house for her poultry with the income & savings she had already.

Saro is glad that the project gives goats and chickens to needy women, who were previously unable to send children to school. She also thinks that the weather is now more comfortable, and the land more productive, thanks to more trees and water.: *“previously production from the land was not that good, but productivity has increased with the seeds supplied, water availability, and greater incomes that can be used to rent machines”.*

Testimonial 10: one male farmer from Sofi woreda, Harari Region

Milk for the kids is an additional benefit

Name: Mohammed
Ibro Yesuf

Age: 41

Marital Status: Married

No. of Children: 5



The idea for the project was presented to the community at a gathering. The community was provided an opportunity to comment on the project. It was then left to the community and DA together to select the beneficiaries for the project. When Mohammed was selected, he was so happy and he explained *“the project has visible results and that is very motivating, particularly the soil bund payment structure”*.

Mohammed received five goats, vegetable and sorghum seeds, and is benefitting from the soil bunds. He has seen a significant change as a result of the project- particularly in income. In the last five months, he has earned ETB 8,000 for growing vegetables. Originally, he wanted cattle, but received goats instead. He was disappointed, but the project has exposed him to new ideas and he has seen the value that goats have. He is selling goat milk. The initial 5 goats also increased to 7: *“milk for my children is an additional benefit”*.

The soil bund construction has been the most important activity. The soil bund is of good quality and has increased water retention. More water is available and can be accessed more easily. Afforestation on hillside also contributes positively to water availability. Now, irrigation is easier.

Mohammed is of the opinion that the project has made a difference in terms of climate and in stabilising the local environment. But poverty is his most important issue. He wants to participate in projects that address poverty. He is just beginning beekeeping now and wants this to be another income stream that helps him diversify his livelihood.