

Building Ethiopia's future



**The Sida-Amhara Rural
Development Programme**

Building Ethiopia's future

The Sida-Amhara
Rural Development Programme

Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme
2010

ORGUT



Published by the Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme (SARDP)
c/o Bureau of Finance and Economic Development
P.O. Box 271 and 621, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia
www.amharabofed@gov.et/sardp/index.php

ISBN 978-99944-851-0-9

© 2010 Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme

Editing and layout: Paul Mundy, Kürten, Germany, www.mamud.com, and Anna K Lindqvist, Terra Verba, Sweden, www.terraverba.com

Drawings: Yitagesu Mergia

Cover photo: Bo Tegnäs

Photo credits: Habtu Assefa: pages 15, 16, 43 (top), 46, 49, 52; Adera Bekele: pages 125, 127, 133; Thomas Dubois: pages 7, 13, 20 (middle and bottom), 153; Veli Pohjonen: page 163; Ahmed Salih: pages 79, 87; Yitbarek Semeane: pages 25, 55; Wubit Shiferaw: pages 108, 111, 113, 117, 120, 121, 123; Bo Tegnäs: pages 1, 23, 27, 33 (top), 43 (bottom), 48, 57, 58, 63, 67 (top), 77, 101, 115, 145, 159; Habtamu Tsegaye: pages 67 (middle and bottom), 68, 72; Fasil W/Michael: page 33 (bottom); Assefa Workie: page 129; ORGUT archives: pages 20 (top), 41.

Correct citation: Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme. 2010. Building Ethiopia's future: The Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme. Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme. Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

The content of this publication may be reproduced without special permission. However, acknowledgement of the source is required.

Keywords: agriculture, Amhara, decentralization, development, enterprises, Ethiopia, gender, infrastructure, land administration, land tenure, poverty reduction, rural development, Sida, Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme

Printed by Al Ghurair Printing & Publishing House, Dubai, www.agpph.ae

Contents

Foreword	v
Preface.....	vi
It's market day.....	1
Providing secure land tenure	7
Improving farming methods.....	23
Creating jobs and income	57
Building and maintaining infrastructure	77
Promoting equality for women and men	101
Responding to the threat of HIV/AIDS.....	115
Decentralizing decision-making	125
Managing the SARDP programme.....	145
Analysing SARDP's achievements	153
Appendices	163

How this book was prepared

This book was prepared during the final months of SARDP, at a time when the programme had phased out of many *woredas* and the number of technical advisers attached to the programme had been much reduced. The book was prepared through editorial clinics with technical advisers as authors, two editors and an illustrator. The editorial clinics were held in Bahir Dar on 1–14 February 2010.

The authors had previously prepared draft manuscripts on the intervention areas of the SARDP programme. During the clinics, the editors and authors discussed each of the manuscripts in turn, then substantially revised the manuscripts to clarify details and make the text easy to understand for those without technical knowledge. The artist drew illustrations to accompany the text. The clinics resulted in near-final versions of each chapter, which the editors combined into the finished version.

Exchange rates

Birr 100 = 63 Swedish kronor = 8.33 US dollars (average 2009)

Foreword

THE AMHARA REGION, WHICH includes one-fifth of Ethiopia's population and land area, has immense potential: water, land, livestock, hard-working people, cultural and historical attractions, and varied agro-ecologies. But despite this potential, Amhara suffers from deep-rooted poverty. Some 89% of its people live in rural areas and rely mainly on subsistence agriculture. Traditional farming practices, environmental degradation, and a lack of infrastructure and social services keep agricultural production and productivity low. The Region has been affected by recurrent droughts, and 64 food-insecure *woredas* with a total of 2.5 million people (out of the Region's 20 million total) need support.

The Regional government and its development partners are trying to overcome this serious situation by fostering sustainable development, reducing poverty, and ensuring food security and good governance. Achievements have been commendable in many fields. Amhara has contributed greatly to national economic growth over the last six years, and hundreds of thousands of farmers are now better off. But much remains to be done. Scaling up best practices is our current method to achieve this end.

Swedish support for Ethiopia in general, and the Amhara Region in particular, dates back to the early 1950s. This support has intensified since 1997 through the Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme (SARDP). The Regional government's strong sense of ownership for this programme is one reason it has achieved its objectives. SARDP has changed the lives of rural people in South Wollo and East Gojjam in many ways. It has contributed much to food security by improving agricultural production, managing natural resources, improving service delivery, generating income and employment, building institutional capacity, and empowering communities. Its block grant system for transferring budgets to *woredas* and *kebeles* is commendable. It has pioneered a land administration system for registering land, issuing land title deeds, and computerizing land information. This has ensured tenure security in Amhara, and the lessons have been shared with other Regions. SARDP has also supported Bahir Dar University, where the Institute for Land Administration has been established to train staff who are in high demand in the sector. Poor people have been able to get jobs and start businesses as a result of SARDP's training and its enterprise development facility. Many poor women have been empowered economically and socially. Harmful traditional practices and violence against women have declined, and women's burdens have been reduced. SARDP has also been instrumental in containing HIV/AIDS.

As SARDP comes to an end, it is time to build on its successes, scale up the best practices, communicate its lessons and ensure sustainability of its many initiatives. We hope Sida will renew and strengthen its commitment and unreserved support to the people and government of the Amhara Region. The Amhara Regional government will be committed more than ever to be on its side in a bid to eradicate poverty, ensure sustainable development and good governance. The Regional government would like to re-affirm that Sida is indeed the millennium partner of the Amhara Region.

H.E. Ato Ayalew Gobezie

Regional President of the Amhara National Regional State

Preface

SWEDEN AND ETHIOPIA HAVE strong historical bonds. Ethiopia was the first country to receive Swedish “development aid” – in 1946, long before the expression had become customary. Sweden and Ethiopia established what can be regarded as the world’s first bilateral agreement for development cooperation. Since then, Ethio-Swedish development cooperation has been characterized by long-term goals and priorities.

The present Swedish country strategy for development cooperation with Ethiopia aims to contribute to reducing poverty. It has identified three main areas for Swedish development cooperation; democratic development and respect for human rights, social development and economic growth. The Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme, or SARDP, which begun in 1998 and ends in mid-2010, has fitted very well into this strategy.

Many inhabitants of the Amhara Region have benefited directly from the programme. SARDP can indeed demonstrate impressive and tangible results, in the form of schools and health posts, roads and bridges, irrigation systems, and much more. SARDP should be particularly proud of having introduced a modern land administration system, which provides landholders with secure land tenure. Land tenure security is a vital element for long-term investments in the land, enabling farmers to improve the management of their natural resources and increase their income and self-sufficiency in food. This is a historical achievement that together with other Swedish support to Ethiopia has made significant changes for millions of Ethiopians. Previous major achievements with the help of Swedish bilateral support to Ethiopia are the establishment of Ethiopian Air Force in the 1950s; the Elementary School Building Unit in the 1960s; the Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit, and Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources.

Over the years, SARDP has been able to create an unusually strong sense of ownership in the areas where it has operated, which has come as a result of its participatory approach, trying to meet the development needs expressed by the local communities and thereby contributing directly to empowerment.

All along, SARDP has systematically built capacity, in institutions as well as in individuals. This means that when SARDP closes, the prospects for scaling-up and maintaining sustainability are particularly good.

SARDP has operated successfully in a large geographical area with a range of different activities. The programme has affected and touched the lives of many men, women and children in East Gojjam and South Wollo. The possibility for children to attend school, for communities to have health services nearby, roads to access markets, and microfinance systems to provide small loans, are all examples of how SARDP interventions have improved lives and livelihoods. This is what SARDP has been all about: reducing poverty, providing opportunities, linking remote areas with their rural centres, increasing education and bringing social development, all to build a better future.

Jens Odlander

Ambassador of Sweden

It's market day...



Farmers in the highlands of Amhara sell their produce and buy many of their daily needs at markets like this one in Albuko

It's market day in Quiy

IT IS MARKET DAY, and the farmers in Wodeb Eyesus, a village in East Gojjam, in the highlands of Ethiopia, are getting their produce ready to sell. A pile of jute sacks, full of cabbages, beetroots, onions and shallots, waits by the side of the road. The farmers have hired a lorry to take the produce to Quiy, 14 km away. When the lorry arrives, they pile the sacks on it, and then climb on top of the load.

Twenty minutes later, they have arrived at the market and can unload and sell the vegetables. There are a lot of customers: local consumers from Quiy itself, and traders who want to take large amounts of produce to Debre Markos or Bichena, two larger towns further along the road.

It takes a couple of hours to sell everything, and another couple of hours to go shopping for seed and household items that they cannot find in Wodeb Eyesus. Then a public bus will take them back home in time for lunch.

Farmers all over the world take their produce to market. But this is a new experience for the people of Wodeb Eyesus. Until recently, they had no way of getting their produce to Quiy: there was no road. Without a market, there was no point in growing vegetables. Most farmers could not grow them even if they wanted: only 50 hectares of land could be irrigated by an old traditional irrigation scheme that drew water from the Muga River, a tributary of the Blue Nile. Instead, they grew teff, barley and faba bean for their own use. They could not send their children to school, visit the health centre when they were ill, or buy seed and other farm inputs.

* * *

What caused the change in Wodeb Eyesus was a series of interventions by the Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme (SARDP), a multi-year project implemented by the Amhara Regional Government and funded by Sweden. Wodeb Eyesus has benefited in many ways from SARDP:

- SARDP upgraded the irrigation scheme, increasing the irrigated area by more than five times, to 260 hectares. It taught the farmers how to grow the new crops, and helped them find markets. The number of farmers who could grow irrigated crops quadrupled to over 1,000.
- It supported the construction of a compacted earth road to link Wodeb Eyesus and the neighbouring village of Debre Eyesus with Quiy.
- SARDP capped several springs and dug two hand-dug wells to supply clean drinking water to the villagers.

- It constructed a health post that provides basic health care to Wodeb Eyesus; it built a larger health centre in Quiy to deal with cases that the village health post is not equipped to handle.
- It built a primary school in Debre Eyesus, as well as several extra classrooms to house the large number of pupils who wanted to attend the school.

As a result of all this effort, three-quarters of the villagers in Wodeb Eyesus now produce enough food for their own use (up from less than half). More than two-thirds now have a corrugated iron roof on their house instead of the traditional thatch (up from a quarter), 75% send their children to school (up from 40%), and one-quarter use improved farming practices (up from 10%).

Development challenges in Amhara

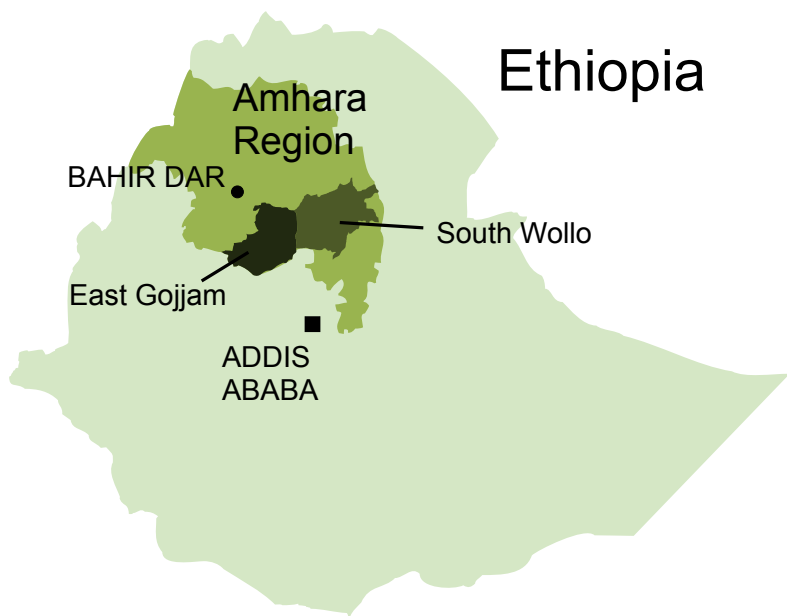
Wodeb Eyesus is by no means unusual in Amhara, one of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia's ten Regional States. Amhara is a mountainous area, famed as the source of the Blue Nile. Much of the land is roadless: the rugged terrain and steep slopes keep villages isolated from each other and from the outside world. Amhara has a population of close to 20 million, with the vast majority living in rural areas, where they scrape a living from the land. The highland population is dense – around 170/km² – and is growing rapidly – by some 3% a year. The landholdings are small, with an average around 1 hectare: not enough for many families to grow enough to eat, especially if drought strikes. Education and health services are poor, resulting in low literacy rates and life expectancy. Women are traditionally at a disadvantage: they do much of the work, but have little say in how a family allocates its resources. As with many other parts of Africa, HIV and AIDS are a serious problem.

SARDP interventions

That is an impressive set of challenges. Where to start? The government of the Amhara National Regional State already had an active set of development programmes, but was short of funds to implement everything it wanted to. In some fields, it recognized the need to develop new approaches. Institution building and increasing the capacity of staff was a major need at all levels of government – Region, Zone, *woreda* (district) and *kebele* (sub-district).

SARDP aimed to improve food security and reduce poverty of rural people to develop two of the ten Zones in the Amhara Region: East Gojjam and South Wollo (see the figure and box on the next page). It did this in several ways:

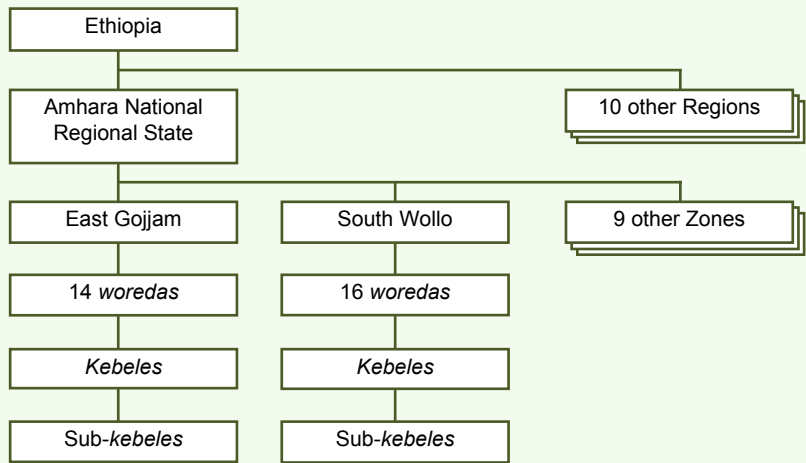
- **Support for land tenure security** – introducing a land administration system, and providing landholders with certificates to their land to encourage them to invest in it.



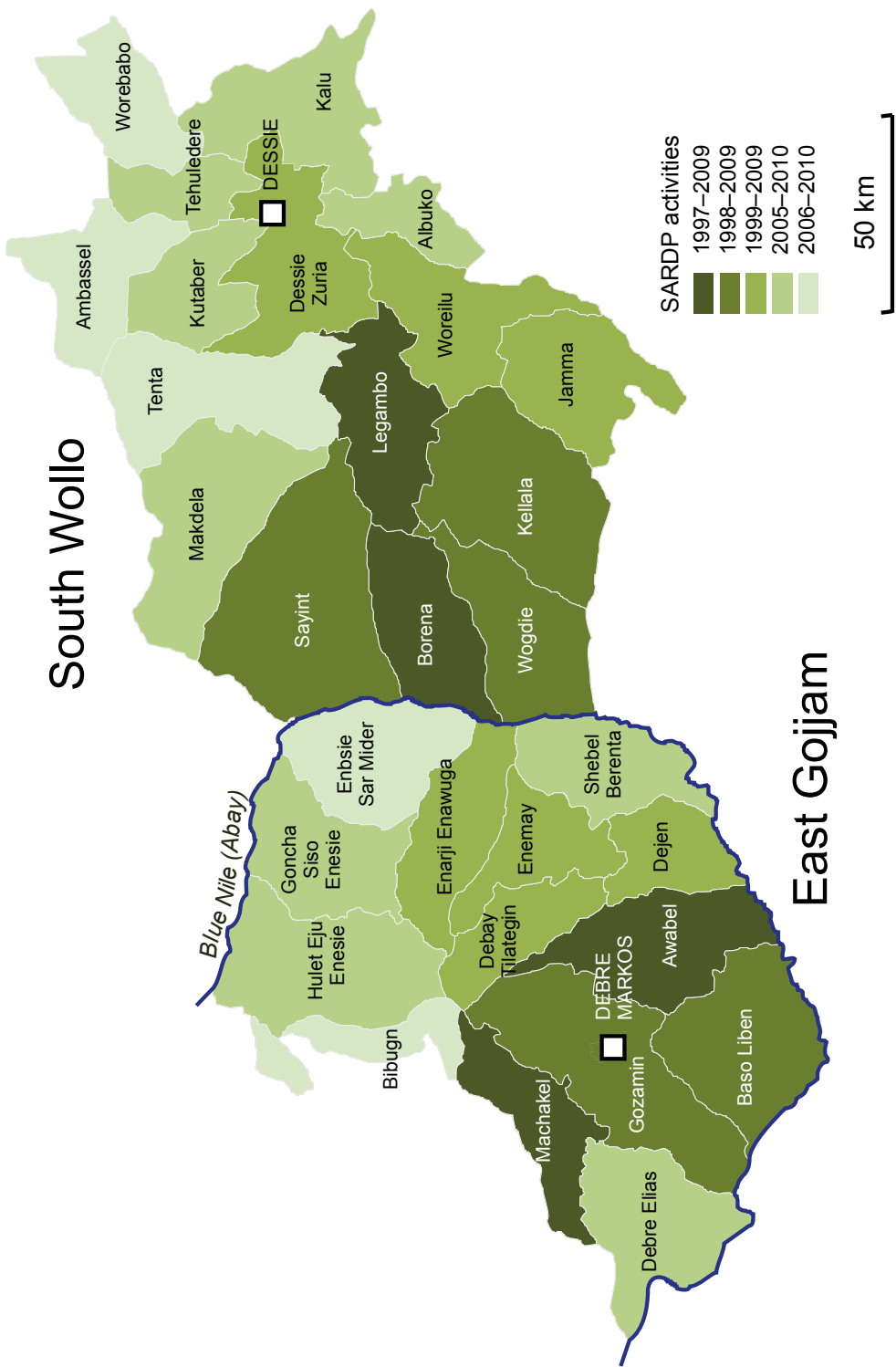
Location of East Gojjam and South Wollo in Ethiopia

Ethiopia's local government structure

Ethiopia is a federal country, with extensive powers devolved to Amhara and other National Regional States. Below the Regional level, the administrative system is organized into Zones (of which there are 10 in Amhara); each Zone has a number of *woredas*, and each *woreda* is divided into *kebeles*. Within each *kebele* are sub-*kebeles*, or individual villages.



The local government structure in East Gojjam and South Wollo



- **Improving agricultural productivity and natural resources management** – introducing new crops, livestock breeds, farming techniques and small scale irrigation together with innovative approaches.
- **Economic diversification** – supporting the development of non-farm enterprises and creating new sources of income for local people.
- **Developing infrastructure and social services**, such as roads, bridges, drinking water supply schemes, irrigation systems, schools, health posts and centres.
- Promoting **gender equality** and **mainstreaming HIV/AIDS** into programme activities
- **Decentralization and capacity building** – enabling local governments and communities to make decisions that concern them, and ensuring that government staff and local people have the skills and resources they need to promote development.

During the 14 years from 1997 to 2010, SARDP invested some 926 million Swedish kronor (about USD 130 million) in the two Zones. It built roads and other infrastructure, introduced improved farming practices, stimulated non-farm enterprises and promoted local-level decision making in all 30 *woredas* in the two Zones.¹ The result was a major improvement in the incomes and quality of life of many of the area's rural people.

This book describes SARDP's major achievements and outlines some best practices and lessons that other rural development programmes in Ethiopia and the rest of Africa can learn from and adapt. The next seven chapters focus on the project components listed above. We then describe the management of the SARDP programme, before drawing some overall lessons from the programme (in addition to those offered in each chapter).

1 With boundary changes and subdivisions, there are now over 30 *woredas* in the two Zones.

Providing secure land tenure



Surveying the boundaries of land holdings as part
of Amhara's land administration system

Providing secure land tenure

Habtu Assefa, Yitbarek Semeane and Thomas Dubois

IMAGINE THAT YOU OWN a small tailoring business. You make clothes and sell them in a shop. You buy cloth, thread, patterns, buttons, zippers – everything you need to make the sort of garments that fit the latest fashion. Business is going well: customers like your products, and there is a queue outside your door.

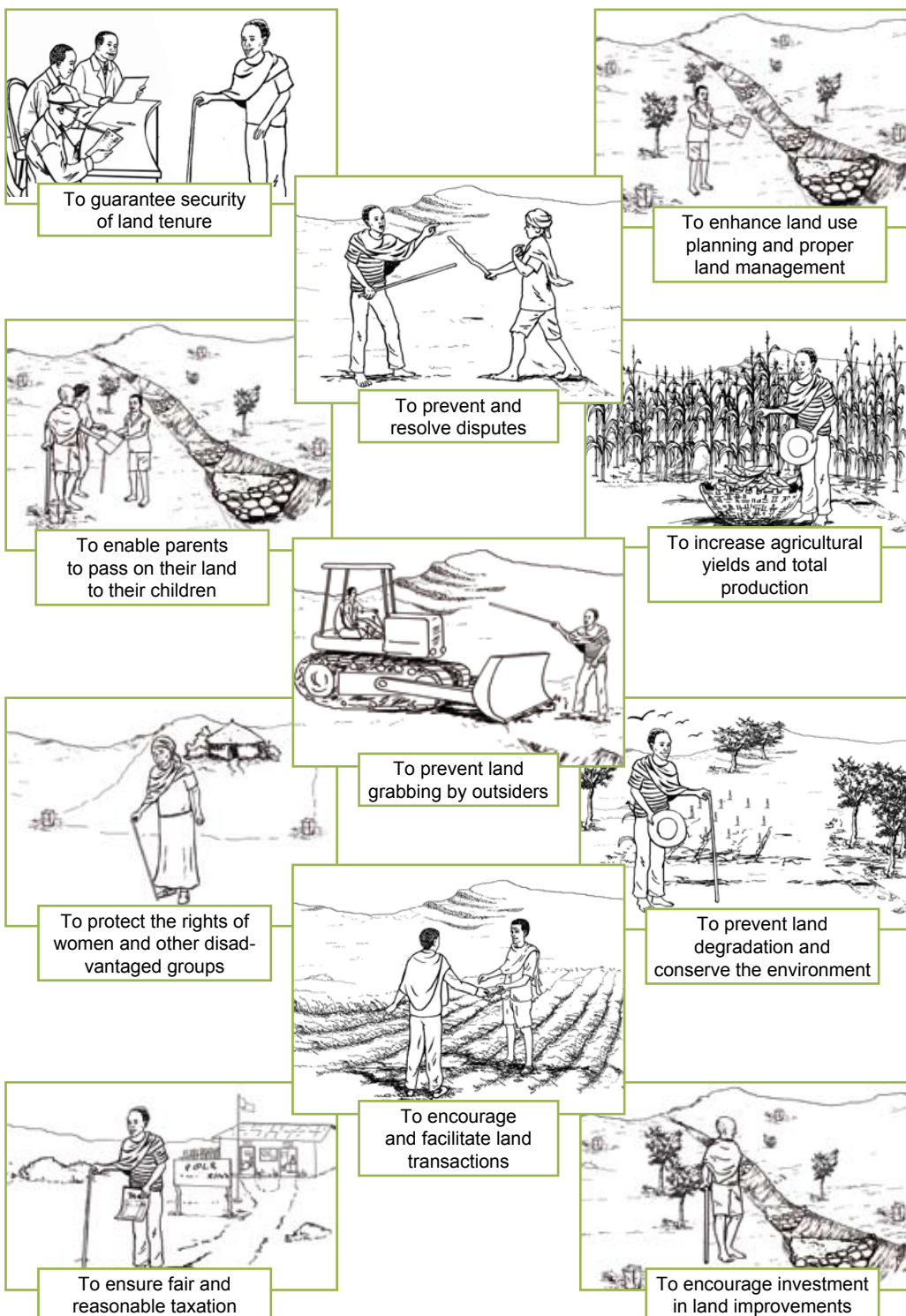
But your shop is rented from someone else. You are afraid that one day, the landlord will tell you to move. After all, that happened to your neighbour a couple of years ago, and she had to start again from scratch in a new location. Faced with such uncertainty, you do not have the confidence to invest in new equipment. You do not want to redecorate the shop and put up new display shelves – as you may lose your investment tomorrow. That limits your productivity and means you cannot sell as much as you would like.

Millions of farmers in Ethiopia used to face a similar situation. The land they farm is owned by the State, which holds it in trust. Until recently, the government redistributed land periodically in an attempt to correct historical inequities and ensure that everyone in a rising rural population has somewhere to grow food.

For farmers, that meant land tenure insecurity: they could never be sure that next year they would still be able to farm the same land. They were unwilling to invest in improvements such as terracing and other soil conservation measures; they did not invest heavily in irrigation; they were reluctant to plant trees because they were not sure they would ever be able to harvest the fruit or wood. That resulted in lower soil fertility, accelerated soil erosion, led to overgrazing and deforestation, and caused biodiversity loss. It meant short-term perspectives, poor farming practices, lower productivity, food insecurity, and huge lost economic opportunities.

That is important for Ethiopia as a whole because agriculture accounts for such a large part of the national economy. In East Gojjam and South Wollo, for example, it provides around 90% of total employment. Any attempt to improve people's livelihoods must be based on solving the issue of land tenure insecurity.

The government has recognized this. It has ceased the practice of land redistribution. Through SARDP, it has tried to improve land tenure security by creating a land administration system that gives farmers the right to hold the land they use, and to transfer it to their heirs or family members.



Eleven reasons to set up a land administration system

Nine steps

The first part of the land administration system involves providing certificates to land holders. This certification consists of nine steps:

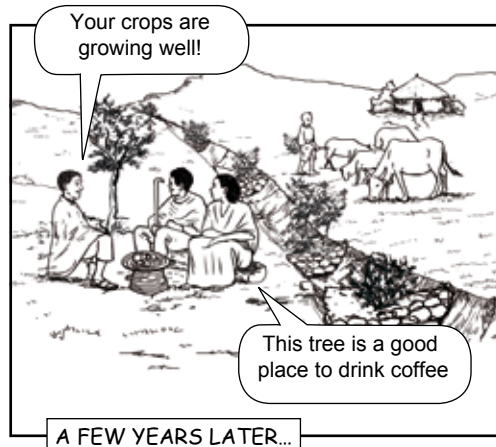
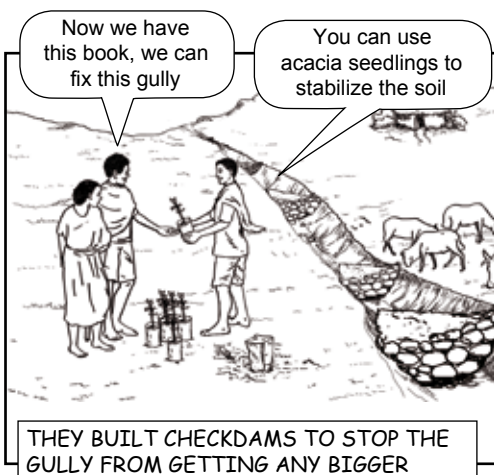
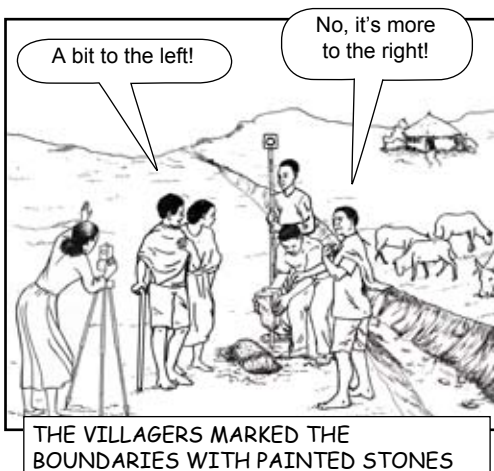
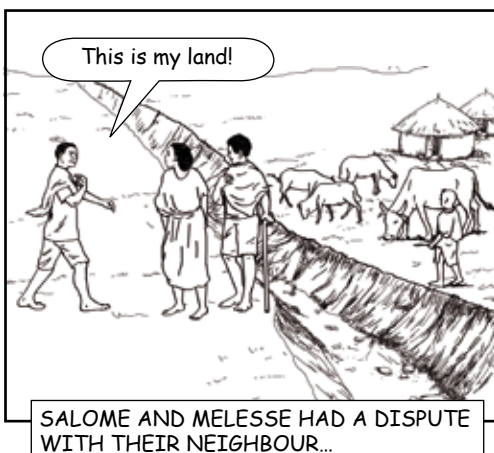
- 1 **Preparation and awareness raising**
- 2 A participatory procedure to **identify land parcels and holdings**
- 3 Creation of an **initial record of landholdings**
- 4 A **public hearing** to confirm the initial information and resolve disputes
- 5 The **first registration** of land rights in the land registry book
- 6 The issuing of a passport-style **primary certificate**
- 7 A **computerized land administration system** using specially designed software
- 8 **Creating maps of each land parcel** using surveying equipment and satellite and aerial photos
- 9 **Issuing second-level certificates** that add detailed maps to the initial records.

1 Preparation and awareness raising

The first stage in registering land in a rural area is to explain the goals and procedures to the local residents. This is done through a series of meetings in the *sub-kebele*. The residents elect a land administration committee consisting of five to seven members: respected and trusted members of the community who are literate and know the area well. At least two members must be women. Two members are elected as chairperson and secretary. They represent their *sub-kebele* on a similar committee at the *kebele* level.

2 Participatory process to identify land parcels and holdings

The landholders are invited to submit an application to have their land recognized to the *sub-kebele* land administration committee. This committee makes a list of all the landholders and their holdings. Along with the *woreda* land administration staff and contract labourers, they go out into the fields with a group of neighbouring landholders, who identify each land parcel and its boundaries. If possible, they mark the boundaries with painted stones, then write the details of each holding on a special form. This form shows the name of the landholder, the names of the neighbouring landholders, the location of the parcel and its in local measurement units, and the current land use (grazing, crops, homestead, etc.). For married couples, the land is registered in both their names. Each land parcel is given a unique code to identify it, and the landholder and the committee members all sign the form. This process – of determining the boundaries of land parcels and identifying who is occupying what – is called “adjudication”.



The new land administration system helps resolve disputes and encourages farmers to invest in the land

3 Creating an initial record of landholdings

The sub-*kebele* committee checks the forms and sends them to the *kebele* land administration committee, which checks them for completeness and accuracy.

4 Public hearing to confirm information and resolve disputes

The results of the initial identification are displayed in public for one month. The committee invites all the community residents to a public hearing, where everyone has the opportunity to question claims – for example, to challenge someone who has (illegally) occupied a piece of communal grazing land and then claims the right of occupancy. This hearing gives the final approval to the results of the first registration.

Disagreements inevitably arise when registering land. Neighbours may quarrel over exactly where a boundary lies. More than one person may claim the rights over the same piece of land. Boundary markers may get moved or lost. Husbands and wives may disagree on whether a parcel should be registered in their joint names. People who are not present during the initial registration process may disagree with the results. Resolving such disputes can be complicated, expensive and time-consuming, and can delay the land certification process. The public hearing procedure speeds up the process and gives as many people as possible certainty over their land tenure as quickly as possible. It is transparent and involves the whole community, leading to trust in the system.

From there, the forms go to the *woreda* Environmental Protection, Land Administration and Use (EPLAU) office.

5 First registration of land rights

After the public hearing, the landholders will receive a temporary certificate showing their landholding. After a period to allow any remaining disputes to be settled, the initial records are transcribed into a handwritten land registry book for each *kebele*. Two copies are made: one for the *woreda* office, and one for the *kebele*. These registry books are the official primary land record, which shows who has rights to which piece of land.

The data on each land parcel is given a code that contains six items, reflecting the Region and Zone right down to the individual land parcel (see the explanation at the top of page 14). This code uniquely identifies each land parcel, enabling the land administrators to know exactly which piece of land is being dealt with.

All the residents in a community come to help mark the parcel boundaries

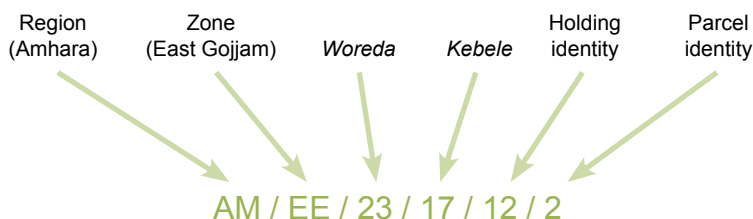


Placing a corner stone and fixing its position with precision GPS equipment during land reallocation for an irrigation project



Children carrying corner stones to the field to mark land parcel boundaries





The code for each land parcel contains six items

6 The primary certificate, or “green book”

The details of each landholding are noted in a book of holding, known as the “green book” because of the colour of its cover. This book looks like a passport: it has the names and addresses of the landholder (both husband and wife if the land is held jointly), their photographs, and the names of their family members. It lists each land parcel (a landholding may consist of several parcels), their estimated areas, the land use, the names of the neighbouring landholders. It also summarizes the landholders’ rights and obligations.

Each landholder receives such a green book, signed by the head of the *woreda* EPLAU office and the chairperson of the *kebele* land administration committee. These green books are permanent evidence of the landholders’ legally protected land rights. People guard them carefully: they put them in a safe place in their homes. When they get their green books, many landholders start investing in their land immediately.

7 Computerizing the data

To make the land administration system manageable, it is necessary to computerize it. SARDP designed a customized database software called Information System for Land Administration, or ISLA for short. Data from the handwritten land registry books are entered into the ISLA database. They can then be outputted in various formats: a list of all landholders or holdings in an area, details on particular landholdings, and so on. Correcting errors and updating are much easier in the computerized system than using the handwritten books. This system also allows networking among *woreda*, Zonal and Regional land administration offices.

8 Creating maps of each land parcel

The primary certificate is enough for many purposes. It gives the landholders security of land tenure and the confidence they need to start investing in their land. But for some purposes, more detail is needed. Exactly how big is each parcel? Where are its precise boundaries? How much is the land worth? It may be necessary to know such details to resolve disputes between neighbours over

Twenty stone terraces and a little green book

Seid Hassan Ali and his wife, Fatuma Seid Ali, farm a hillside in Derba village, Kalu *woreda*. Their land was waterlogged or heavily eroded. Seid's elderly parents were unable to manage it, and had abandoned it to nature.

Seid and Fatuma decided to take on the task of rehabilitating the land, and with his parents' support, they applied for a landholding certificate. As soon as they received their green book, they started building stone terraces and soil bunds to stop the erosion. It was back-breaking work, but in just 3 years, they had built more than 20 terraces. Their maize and sorghum output rose from just 200–300 kg in 2004 to 1,000–1,200 kg in 2008.

They plan to grow forage on the terrace bunds to feed their cattle and goats, dig wells so they can water their crops, and then improve their thatched house and perhaps buy some more animals.



Fatuma Seid Ali and her husband, Seid Hassan Ali, have constructed 20 stone terraces since they received a primary certificate that guarantees their right to use their land.

a boundary, to plan projects such as irrigation or roads, to compensate farmers who may lose some of their land to a new irrigation canal, or to allocate an equivalent area of land to such farmers (taking into account the area's fertility and its distance from the farmer's home).

SARDP has begun building "cadastral maps" (a map showing the precise boundaries in an area, as well as features such as roads and buildings) using "precision GPS", high-resolution images and "total stations" (see the box on page 18).

To create such maps, a survey team from the *woreda* visits each community in turn. The team explains the purpose and procedure to the local people, then visits each land parcel in turn, together with the local landholders. They double-check the parcel identity, then use the equipment to survey the corners of the parcel. They then move to the neighbouring land parcels and repeat the process.

Back in the office, special software draws lines to connect the points that have been surveyed. That produces a map showing the boundaries of each parcel quickly and easily – in half an hour or less – showing the results of the day's surveying work.

9 Issuing second-level certificates

Once this has been done, each landholder is given a map showing all his or her land parcels, together with the relevant details. This map is attached to the green book to complete the second-level certification.



Fate Ali Muhiye and her husband Indris Ahimed Muhiye show off their “green book” certifying their landholding. Some of their eucalyptus trees are behind them

Trees: A long-term investment

Indris Ahimed Muhiye and his wife Fate Ali Muhiye used to grow only annual crops such as sorghum, teff and faba beans. Their yields were low, but they did not want to invest in improvements because they feared they would be forced to leave the land.

As soon as they received their “green book”, the couple decided to plant perennial crops to diversify their farm income. They chose a mixture of fruit trees, commercial crops and timber species. They now have 50 orange trees, 20 guava, and 30 papaya trees, as well as 50 grevillea and 20 buckthorn trees, 80 coffee bushes, and thousands of eucalyptus and acacia trees.

They have built eight terraces to conserve the soil on their hillside fields, and make compost to fertilize their fruits and vegetables. They have dug channels to harvest rainwater, which they store in a pond lined with a plastic sheet for use during the dry season. They have also invested in livestock; they now are proud owners of six cattle, a horse and two donkeys, as well as chickens, sheep, goats and bees.

Creating institutions, building capacity

Establishing the land administration system has required creating an entire Regional institution to manage it. SARDP supported the establishment of the Amhara Environment Protection, Land Administration and Use Authority in 2001 (this has since been upgraded to form the Bureau of Environment Protection, Land Administration and Use, BoEPLAU). This institution developed a set of procedures for land certification, surveying and record-keeping. A legal framework was enacted, and the capacity to implement it was established. SARDP provided short- and long-term training to the Authority staff, as well as offices and equipment.

The Authority established land administration offices at the Zonal and *woreda* levels, recruited and trained staff, and developed guidelines and instruction manuals for them to follow. These staff in turn coordinate and train members of the *kebele*- and sub-*kebele*-level land administration committees. In 2010, the *woreda* administrations began recruiting specialists to work at the *kebele* level on land administration matters.

A separate Sida-funded project, a spin-off from SARDP, has supported the establishment of a Land Administration Institute at Bahir Dar University. This institute trains specialists in land administration and provides them with the skills they will need to implement the system.

Developing software

Why develop the ISLA custom software rather than use off-the-shelf applications? There were several reasons for this:

- **The need to handle information in Amharic**, which has its own alphabet. Information must be entered in Amharic, and data must be sorted according to the Amharic alphabet. Seemingly simple functions like this cause ችግር (*chigir* – or “problems” in Amharic) for off-the-shelf software.
- **The need to identify landholdings uniquely**. In some areas, there are many people with exactly the same names, especially in predominantly Muslim areas, where “Mohammed” is a very common first name. This problem was overcome by also noting the names of the landholders to the north, south, east and west of each parcel – something that off-the-shelf software is not designed for.
- **The high cost of licensing and customizing off-the-shelf software**. It was cheaper to develop new software from scratch rather than adapting an existing application. The software can now be used at no extra cost throughout the whole of Ethiopia, without having to pay for extra license fees, and can be adapted to the country’s specific needs.

From zero to 4.9 million in 6 years

Registration of landholdings. It sounds like an impossible task to create a register system and cadastral maps from scratch for Amhara, with its mountainous terrain and millions of land parcels, most of which are between 0.25 and 4 hectares in size.

But progress has been rapid. Launched in 2002, SARDP’s land administration programme began work in 2004 in two pilot *kebeles*: Adis Ena Gulit in East Gojjam, and Gerado Endodber in South Wollo. By 2010, BoEPLAU had completed the first registration in nearly all *woredas* in the two Zones. It has registered 4.9 million land parcels and over 1 million landholdings in all (see the table on the next page). Nearly 900,000 households have already received their primary certificates (the green books), and the primary certification in the two Zones will be 100% completed by 2010. This is a huge success by any standard, and the Amhara Region now has one of the leading systems for land administration in the whole of Africa. The goal of registering all 17 million land parcels in the Amhara Region no longer looks unrealistic.

Making maps

In order to do the second-level certification, precise maps are needed showing the location and boundaries of each parcel. There are several possible ways to create such maps.

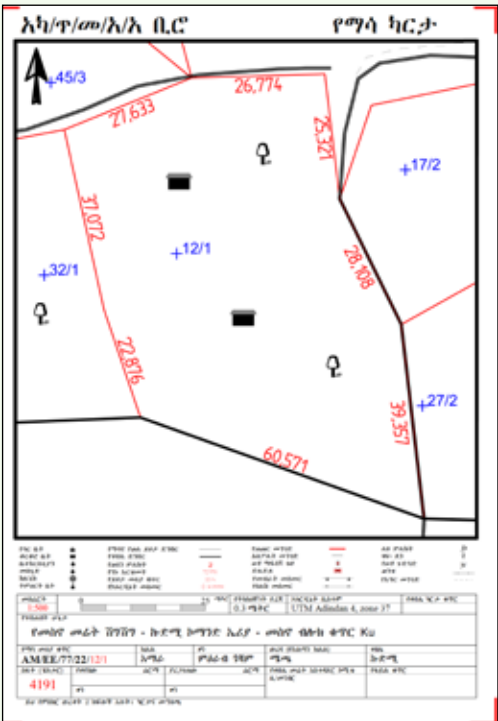
Sketch maps drawn by the community. These are helpful as a general guide, but are not accurate enough for land administration purposes.

Handheld GPS equipment. Small global positioning system (GPS) devices use radio signals from satellites to work out their position. They are inexpensive (they cost around USD 200) and easy to use, but they are accurate only to within about 6 m. That is not accurate enough for valuing small parcels of land (a farmer who holds a 25 x 40 m plot may “lose” or “gain” 25% of the plot because of such errors), for determining the precise location of a boundary in case of a dispute, or for compensating a farmer for land used to build a canal or road.

Precision GPS equipment. This uses the same satellite signals as the handheld GPS, but can give the position to an accuracy of a few millimetres. It is much more expensive than handheld GPS.

High-resolution satellite and aerial images. These are an excellent aid for planning, verification and error checking. It is possible to mark land parcels on the image, as well as features such as roads, rivers and buildings. In this way it is possible to create a preliminary cadastral map that can be checked with local people on the ground.

Total station. This is a sophisticated surveying instrument, mounted on a tripod, that measures angles and distances electronically and can cal-



Map of a land parcel produced during the second-level certification procedure. A copy of this map will go in the landholder’s green book

culate positions and build a map directly in the field. Total stations are expensive – around USD 50,000 each – but are necessary if it is not possible to use precision GPS equipment – for example among trees or buildings, which can interfere with the satellite signals.

First registration: SARDP achievements, December 2009

	East Gojjam	South Wollo	Total
Number of parcels registered	1.2 million	3.7 million	4.9 million
Number of landholdings registered	440,000	600,000	1,040,000
Area of landholdings registered	0.98 million ha	1.87 million ha	2.85 million ha
Number of households receiving primary certificates (“green books”)	310,000	580,000	890,000

Enthusiastic community response. The land certification system has been met with unreserved approval and enthusiasm by the farming community. Farmers who have been issued with a green book are proud that they are recognized as the true landholders.

Land tenure security and land management enhanced. When landholders receive their green books, they gain confidence that their land will not be taken away. Many have for the first time started to invest in improvements to their land – planting trees, conserving water, controlling erosion and restoring soil fertility.

Compensation upon expropriation. The green books give the landholders evidence that they are entitled to compensation if their land is expropriated for some reason – to build a road or school, for example, or if the government decides to lease the land to a company to grow commercial crops.

Women's empowerment. The certificates are issued in the joint names of the wife and husband (this accounts for 53% of the certificates issued), or for female-headed households, to the woman alone (another 26%). That gives women confidence and bargaining power with the community. The remaining 20% have been issued to men alone.

Land rental market. Traditionally, many people were willing to rent out land only to people they could trust – usually their close relatives. Once they hold a certificate, they are readier to rent out their land to non-relatives and even strangers because they are confident that they will not risk losing it.

Establishment of institutions. Regional, Zonal and *woreda*-level institutions have been established to manage and implement the land administration programme, and land administration committees now exist at the *kebele* and sub-*kebele* levels. A law passed by the Amhara Regional government determines the powers and responsibilities of BoEPLAU: implementing laws and policies on land and the environment, designing and implementing the land certification programme, drafting policies and legal instruments on land administration and environmental protection, and establishing environmental impact assessment procedures.

In each Zone and *woreda*, institutions, trained staff and equipment now exist to complete the first registration and continue with the detailed surveying work required for the second-level certification.

Impact on the rest of Ethiopia. SARDP's success in the Amhara Region has encouraged the Federal and other Regional governments to take up land as a major development issue. They have issued various laws and guidelines on land administration; these strengthen landholders' rights to use the land to grow crops, trees etc., transfer land to their children, exchange and lease land to others, and get compensation in case of expropriation. As a result, the Federal government is studying ways to streamline land administration countrywide and strengthen public agencies responsible for land affairs.



Farms in Amhara are generally small, and most land parcels are tiny



Training staff how to use the mapping software



Surveyors learning how to use a “total station” surveying equipment

Challenges

Nevertheless, many challenges still remain.

- **Capacity building.** Staff turnover is high: once they are trained, many staff can easily find other jobs that pay better than government service. That means it is necessary to recruit and train new staff continuously.
- **Second-level certification.** The second-level certification involves detailed surveying, which is more expensive and takes more time and resources than the first registration (which is now complete in East Gojjam and South Wollo). Sustained effort is required to continue and complete the second-level certification in East Gojjam and South Wollo, and to expand it to other Zones in Amhara.
- **Compensating committee members.** The members of the local land administration committees have a lot of work to do without any payment. Ways need to be found to compensate them, especially during the second-level certification process, to give them an incentive to continue their work, as well as to avoid corruption.
- **Updating records.** Maintaining trust means that BoEPLAU must continually update the records to reflect changes: the transfer of land from one generation to another, the exchange of parcels to consolidate holdings, changes in use, and so on. Close to 30,000 transactions are reported a year in the Amhara Region. This is a time-consuming and never-ending task that requires dedicated staff and a reliable system, as well as close collaboration between the court system and the land administration office.
- **Maintaining records.** Written records may be lost, damaged by water, eaten by termites, or burned. Computer records may be destroyed by computer viruses, or lost if a hard drive malfunctions or a computer is stolen. Software becomes outdated as operating systems change. Documents therefore must be stored safely, computer files backed up frequently, and software updated.
- **Cost recovery.** Over the long term, a system for cost recovery must be introduced to make the land administration system self-financed and fully sustainable.
- **Communal lands.** Communally held lands are often used for grazing, but are being converted to crop production at an alarming rate. Systems for managing such lands must be developed, tested and introduced.
- **Dealing with commercial farming.** An increasing number of (often foreign) investors are seeking land in Ethiopia to start commercial farming. The land administration must be able to deal with this phenomenon, for example to ensure that landholders are adequately compensated if their land is expropriated.
- **Other landholding systems.** Some minority ethnic groups in Amhara, such as the Gumuz in the west of the Region, have a land tenure system that is quite different from that used in the rest of Ethiopia. The land administration system may need to be adapted to accommodate such customs.



A young woman is shown in profile, walking barefoot through a field. She is wearing a blue headscarf and a patterned dress. She is holding a large blue watering can and pouring water onto the soil. The background is a vast, open field under a clear sky.

Improving farming methods

Agriculture is the most important economic activity
for the majority of the people in Amhara

Improving farming methods

Habtu Assefa and Yitbarek Semeane

THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IS the backbone of the Ethiopian, and the Amharan, economy. It provides food and employment for people and raw materials for industry. Exports of coffee, livestock products and oilseed are major earners of foreign exchange.

Yet, most farmers are subsistence smallholders, depending on rainfed agriculture. Their farms are small, and many are fragmented into tiny fields. The average farm size in East Gojjam Zone is 1.3 hectares, while in South Wollo it is a mere 0.9 hectares. Land degradation – a result of soil erosion, overgrazing and deforestation – is a serious threat to productivity. The soil fertility is declining, and droughts recur periodically. At the same time, the population is increasing rapidly. As the farmers are poor, they cannot afford to use fertilizer and other inputs, and most are not aware of modern agricultural technologies. Poverty and land degradation continue in a vicious cycle.

Low agricultural production and productivity are major concerns for the Amhara Regional government. Despite various interventions and development initiatives, the Region is not able to feed its population, and the gap between supply and demand for food is widening.

SARDP supported a range of interventions in agriculture and natural resources management in East Gojjam and South Wollo, with the aim of increasing farm productivity and reducing land degradation, and thereby improving people's livelihoods. The new land administration system secured farmers' land rights and gave them a strong incentive for making long-term investments, such as building soil-conservation measures or planting trees (see the chapter *Providing secure land tenure*, page 7). Permanent irrigation structures have increased the irrigated area in the two Zones, allowing two or three harvests per year where only one was previously possible. Irrigation also allows farmers to plant new types of crops, improving their diets and increasing their incomes. Piloting and promoting a range of agricultural technologies showed that it is possible to raise agricultural production in a short time, given targeted and integrated support. In certain areas in East Gojjam and South Wollo, the production of milk, seedlings, fruit, durum wheat and other agricultural products has risen significantly.

SARDP used various participatory approaches and innovative ideas in these interventions. The main ones were:



Farmers are forced to grow crops on steep slopes, leading to severe land degradation, as here in Yekendachi kebele, Enbsie Sar Mider woreda in East Gojjam

- **Participatory on-farm research.** Researchers, extension staff and farmers tested crop varieties, livestock breeds and agricultural practices on a limited number of farms to discover which functioned best under real farming conditions. On-farm research was a major approach for introducing new varieties and farming practices.
- **Farmer field schools for integrated pest management.** Farmers evaluated a range of modern and traditional techniques to control crop pests and diseases on their own fields. In the process, they learned the new practices and adopted those they found useful. The approach is in some ways similar to on-farm research, but focuses on pest and disease management.
- **Farmer–research–extension groups.** Groups of farmers, extension staff and researchers conducted participatory on-farm research and multiplied seed of various crops. The groups had a dual objective: linking farmers to research, and giving research and extension staff an opportunity to learn how the farmers choose what crops to grow. The farmers (not researchers or extension staff) had the biggest say in such groups.
- **Informal seed system.** The informal, or local, seed system is the means by which farmers sell or share planting material. It is called “informal” because the seeds are not graded and certified, and there is no strict quality control. Using this approach, farmers were organized into seed-grower groups to

multiply improved seed. The seed were then sold locally through *kebele*-based multipurpose cooperatives.

Whichever approach was used, the SARDP interventions were always introduced in an integrated manner, giving support to the whole production chain, from support providers to marketing and distribution.

Women were encouraged to take part in all interventions, though to various degrees depending on the type of activity. Groups of people affected by HIV/AIDS were addressed specifically within each project. For example, they might be provided with a shed to rear or fatten sheep, or a plot of land to start a nursery or plant vegetables.

Some successful interventions

SARDP was a large programme that continued for 13 years. It is not possible here to describe all its interventions in agriculture and natural resources management. This chapter presents six of the most successful initiatives:

- **Irrigation.** This initiative addressed what farmers see as one of their biggest problems – a shortage of water for crops. SARDP's irrigation interventions showed how training in improved irrigation agriculture could be combined with new, high-value crops.
- **On-farm seed multiplication.** Through on-farm testing, farmers evaluated crop varieties and chose those which grew best on their farms. They multiplied these varieties, enabling big rises in crop production in many areas.
- **Durum wheat.** Through on-farm experimentation with seed production for durum wheat, the farmers chose the best varieties and improved their management techniques. Plans to sell durum wheat to the pasta and macaroni industry did not succeed, but farmers found alternative buyers.
- **Seedlings for fruit.** As a result of focused SARDP interventions, farmers in two *kebeles* in the highlands of South Wollo produced and sold seedlings of apples, pears and plums and established fruit orchards.
- **Milk production with cross-bred cows.** Smallholder dairy farming is an example of how an intervention can succeed only if it targets the whole production chain, from growing forage to selling milk.
- **Improved sheep.** The Awassi sheep improvement scheme is an example of an on-farm research project that resulted in farmers upgrading their stock through cross-breeding and selling high-quality breeding rams as a business.

Irrigation – and some new food crops

The Muga is one of many rivers that cross East Gojjam. Wodeb Eyesus, in Debay Tilategin *woreda*, is one of the communities that use its water. Some 245 households in the village watered their land using traditional, temporary diversion structures. Made of bags filled with sand or soil, large sheets of bark, and clay and branches, these structures had to be rebuilt every year. The farmers used the diverted water to grow faba bean, fenugreek and rapeseed, which they used for home consumption. But the structures were easily damaged by heavy rains, and had to be rebuilt and repaired frequently. Meanwhile, the thirsty crops would wilt in the sun.

As in many other parts of East Gojjam, Wodeb Eyesus was poor: the farmers had no oxen for ploughing, so had to hoe their fields by hand. Their houses were ill-built shacks, and many of the children never went to school.

Improved irrigation structures offer much better ways to control water. They make it easier to irrigate regularly and produce a more reliable harvest. If there is enough water available, fields can produce a second or even third crop rather than lying idle in the dry season. With better management, the same amount of water can irrigate larger areas and benefit more people.



SARDP introduced onions, potatoes and several other crops that benefit from irrigation

Traditional irrigation

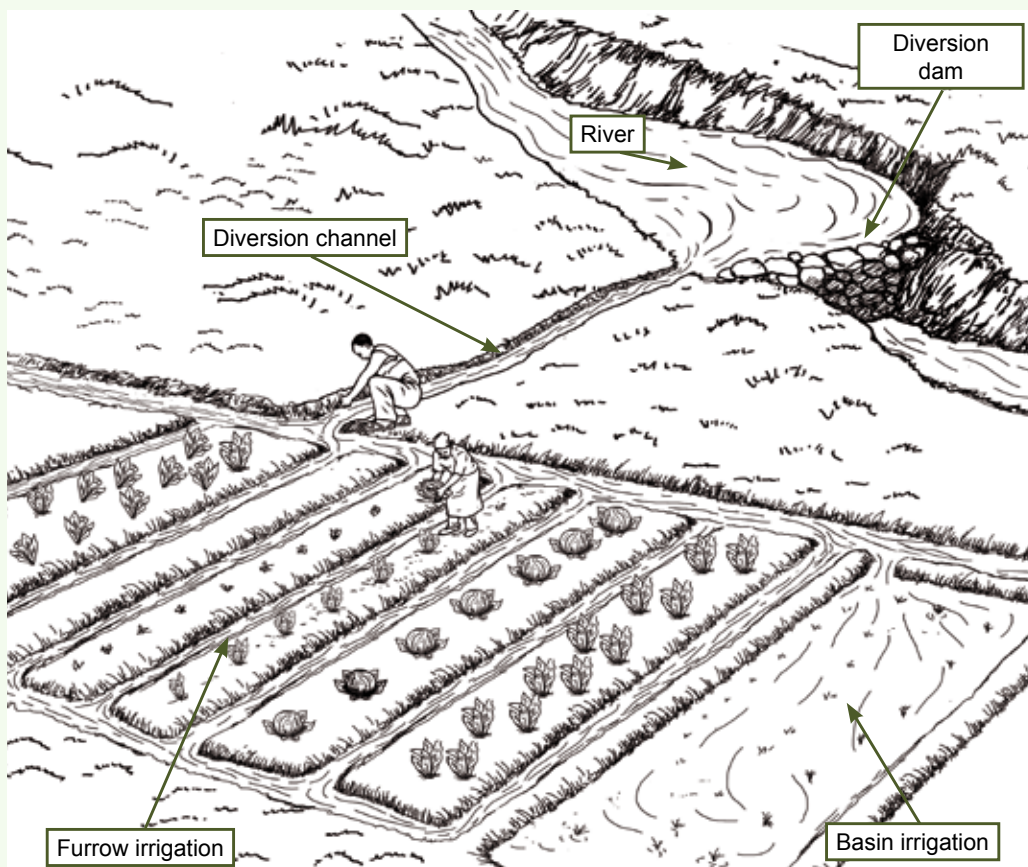
Most traditional irrigation systems use one of three techniques: furrow irrigation, basin irrigation and wild or flood irrigation.

- With **furrow irrigation**, the water is led through the field in furrows, while the crops grow on slightly raised beds. This is the most common practice, and the water usage is reasonably efficient.
- With **basin irrigation**, the water is led into a plot surrounded by bunds, forming a basin in the field. The water is kept there while it seeps

into the soil. This technique is used mainly for fruit and some vegetables.

- The third type, called **wild or flood irrigation**, requires only some low bunds around the entire field. Every one or two weeks, according to a schedule, the water is let to freely flow over the field, allowing it to infiltrate slowly. Flood irrigation is used when there is good access to water for each piece of land.

SARDP relied on these techniques when improving the traditional irrigation systems.



Traditional water diversion and irrigation system

SARDP interventions

Many of the communities served by SARDP identified a shortage of irrigation water as their main constraint. SARDP tried to address most of these requests, mainly during the latter phase of the programme, from 2005 to 2009. The interventions consisted of two main parts:

- **Making water available** by building water diversions and irrigation structures.
- **Improving water usage** by promoting water management, training local people in irrigation, and introducing new crops suitable for irrigated land.

These interventions aimed at increasing production per unit of land, improving local people's diets and food security, and increasing the farmers' incomes.

Making water available

The irrigation schemes resulted in completely new water diversion and irrigation structures, or enlarged and stabilized existing ones. Irrigation engineers first identified potential sites together with each community. Feasibility studies and further discussions with the community laid the basis for a detailed plan, including costs and how the people would contribute. Suggestions on how to improve the livelihoods of women and disadvantaged groups were part of each plan. Depending on the particular site, the water might be channelled to backyards or to fields further away from the houses. Before installing a structure, the team assessed possible side-effects, such as erosion and landslides around the river diversion structures, and worked out how best to avoid such problems.

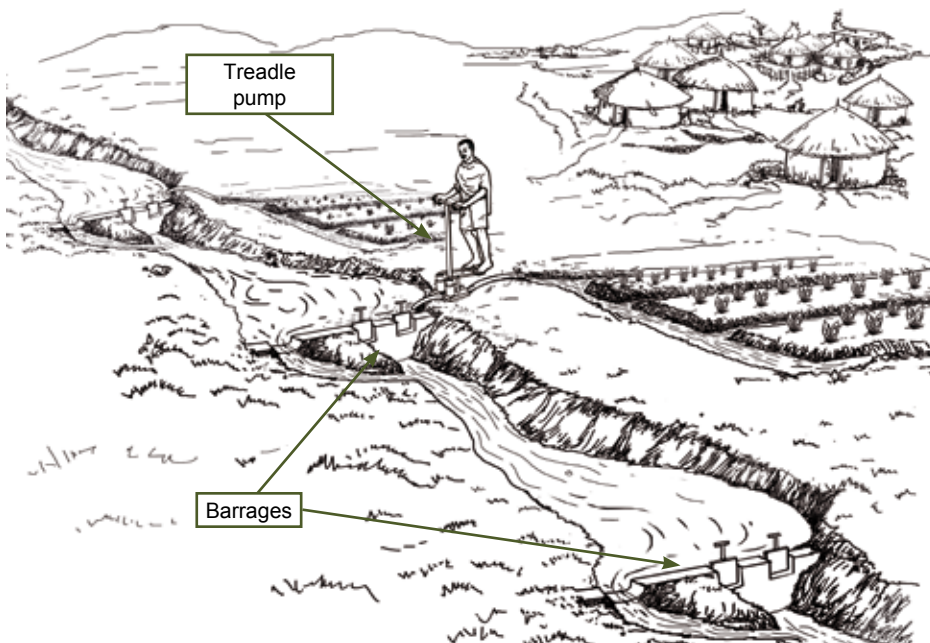
The type of structure depended on the type and size of the water source:

- **River diversions** consist of a weir to raise the water level of the river, and canals to lead the water to the fields. Sluices can be opened or closed to control the volume of water in the primary canal, from where secondary canals lead the water to each field according to a schedule. River diversions can require large structures and can irrigate hundreds of hectares. Zonal irrigation experts designed the structures, while the *woreda* administrations hired private contractors to build them with machinery. For those sections that could be built by hand, the contractor hired local people as day labourers.
- **Smaller stream diversions** can irrigate a few hectares or up to 100 hectares. *Woreda* engineers designed and planned these structures in collaboration with the community. The communities then built them by hand, and also contributed construction materials such as stone, wood, gravel and sand.
- **Spring development** can mean enlarging the spring so it produces more water; protecting the spring from siltation and landslides by capping the spring itself and its immediate surroundings with masonry; and constructing an earth-and-masonry canal to lead water to the fields.

- **Shallow wells** can be dug in valley bottoms where the groundwater is shallow. Such wells may be up to 8 m deep. The water can be withdrawn by rope pump or pedal pump.
- **Run-off harvesting and water reservoirs** consist of basins and dams, usually lined with plastic sheeting, that receive and store runoff water from slopes.
- **Barrage construction** is a low-cost technology introduced and modified by SARDP to harvest water from very small streams. Barrages are constructed like masonry checkdams, often one after the other along the stream. They have metal gates that can be opened to let the water through during the rains, but closed towards the end of the rainy season, to store water for irrigating the fields during the dry season.

Improving water usage

As each scheme was completed, local people were trained in irrigation management and irrigated agriculture. They learned how to record rainfall, estimate water usage, and when best to irrigate and fertilize different crops. They learned how to use the water effectively – for example to use furrow irrigation rather than flood irrigation. Many such training courses included study tours to other irrigation sites.



With a treadle pump and a pipe, water from behind a barrage can irrigate a nearby field, allowing a second crop to be grown

Bringing water and wealth to Wodeb Eyesus

The Muga River is suitable for large-scale irrigation as it passes Wodeb Eyesus. Local people suggested a site for a dam, and the SARDP technical advisers went to work, designing a weir with the shortest crest that would enable the largest area of land to be irrigated.

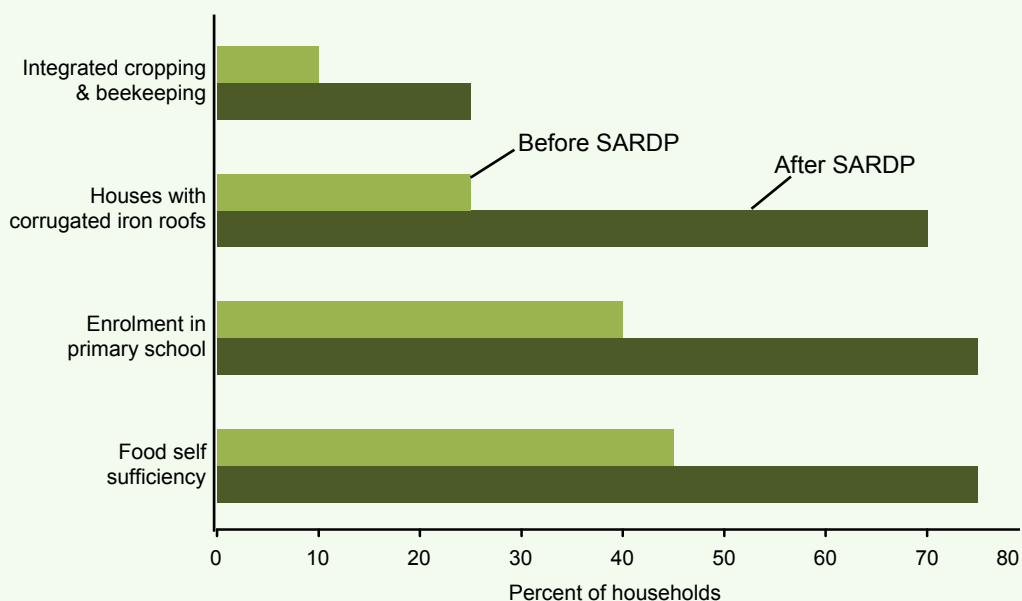
In 2005, a contractor built a permanent weir and one-third of the canals (1,075 m), while the community built the remaining 2,275 m of canals, and lined them with cement. At a cost of birr 572,000, around 260 hectares of land could be irrigated, benefiting 1,080 households.

Development agents trained local people in irrigation techniques, and also introduced cabbages, carrots, onions, apples, pears, plums and peaches – all high-value cash crops that were new to local people. The traditional water association was registered with the authorities.

Four years later, the changes in the community were amazing. There are now well-built houses with corrugated iron roofs; the children go to school, and at the market place there is a large variety of fruits and vegetables that had not been seen there before.



Availability of irrigated land in Wodeb Eyesus before and after the irrigation scheme



Lifestyle of villagers in Wodeb Eyesus before and after the irrigation scheme

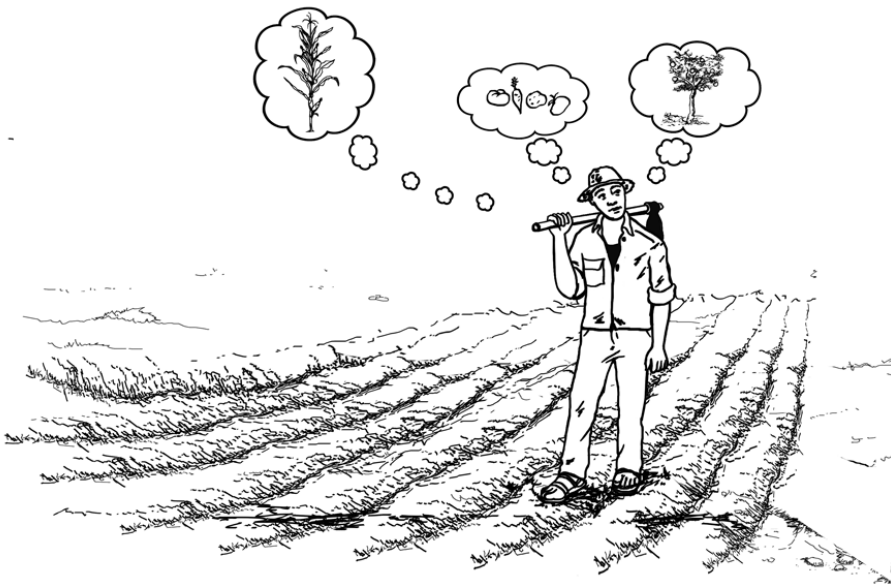
All irrigation structures must be maintained regularly. That involves removing silt from the canals, cleaning the weir of sediment and debris, and repairing damaged structures.

Traditionally, a group of respected and trusted community members form a water usage association to allocate water, monitor its use, and to coordinate the maintenance work on the structures. Sometimes they collect fees or contributions to cover the maintenance costs. Such traditional water usage associations were strengthened, or new ones established. Some were registered as cooperatives, making it easier for them to collect water fees and give receipts, and allowing them to deposit their money with a local microfinance institution. Cooperative status also gives their decisions legal weight. For example, if a dispute over water use arises, the association's decisions are likely to be accepted in court. Every year, the association elects a committee to managing the water scheme and make sure the maintenance work is done.

Introducing new crops

In many parts of the Amhara Region, fruits and vegetables are not part of the traditional diet. Eating better would improve people's health, in particular that of children, pregnant women and those affected with diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

SARDP used the training in irrigation management as an opportunity to introduce new crops that do well on irrigated land and that fetch good prices. These included tomatoes, potatoes, onions, shallots, beetroots, cabbages and garlic. In highland areas, such as Wodeb Eyesus, SARDP promoted apples, pears and plums.



With irrigation, farmers have a larger choice of crops to grow

Irrigation scheme serves 1,200 farms

Unreliable rains had turned agriculture into a risky business in Addis Alem, a *kebele* in Hulet Eju Ensie *woreda* in East Gojjam. Farmers frequently left the village in search of a better life. In 2006, plans were made to build a dam and irrigation canals on the Tijan River. Two years later, the scheme was completed. SARDP provided a budget support of birr 2.3 million, while the community contributed birr 357,000.

The Tijan irrigation scheme is one of the larger schemes constructed by SARDP. It waters 212 hectares for the benefit of 1,211 farms (of which 135 are run by women-headed households). As food security has improved, farmers can now stay in the village instead of leaving their homes in search of work.



Lined irrigation canals (right) are a big improvement, but they need regular maintenance to prevent them from silting up

The weir feeds a river diversion canal (below)



Planting materials for these new crops were distributed, together with training in marketing and how to use the fruits and vegetables in preparing meals.

Involvement of women

In Amhara, the cultivation of field crops is taken care of mostly by the men, while the women are responsible for backyards and home gardens. Women were invited to all trainings and study tours, including on how to use the new crops. They were given seed, and often the vegetables were grown near the house. In general, the irrigation schemes proved to be just as useful for women as for men.

Growing achievements

SARDP built or expanded 129 irrigation schemes that now allow close to 19,000 people to harvest two or three times a year. With the new crops, people eat better, and by selling some of their high-value crops, their income has increased.

At the market place and in nearby towns, new types of fruits and vegetables are being sold and eaten, bringing income to the farmers and better diets to consumers. The dietary advantages of this change are difficult to overestimate.

The new barrage structures made it possible to irrigate land far away from streams, producing double crops in fields that would otherwise had lain idle in the dry season. For example, chickpeas, commonly used as a second harvest after teff, could give 5–6 tons per hectare instead of only 1.2 tons.

Irrigation schemes built through SARDP support

	East Gojjam	South Wollo
Built in 2002–4 (SARDP II)	4	24
Built in 2004–10 (SARDP III)	37	64
Irrigated land	1,800 hectares	2,400 hectares
Farmers reached	6,600 (5,600 men; 1,000 women)	12,000
Cost	Birr 10.8 million	Birr 7.6 million*
Community contribution (material and labour)	Birr 1.6 million	Birr 1.9 million*

¹ SARDP III only, 2004–10

Emerging issues

As the irrigation schemes have increased the area under irrigation, sensible and economical use of water is important to reduce the risk of conflicts between upstream and downstream users. Caring for the watershed – maintaining a vegetation cover so that rainwater sinks into the soil and recharges the spring or stream – is equally important.

Local seed multiplication and distribution

Farmers have always saved some seed from their best crops. They store it in a safe place, or exchange it with other farmers for other seeds. Sometimes they buy new good seed from the market. Farmers know that if they have no seed to plant at the start of the rains, they will go hungry next year. But if the crop fails or disaster strikes, the seed may be lost or destroyed. At such times, farmers have to rely on their neighbours or relatives, the local market or relief agencies to get seed for sowing.

A major way to boost yields is to plant improved varieties and apply fertilizer. Ethiopia's poor food security is partly because farmers cannot afford to buy such inputs. The Ethiopian Seed Enterprise, a state-owned company, supplies improved seed, but few farmers can afford it, and the firm anyway does not have enough to supply everyone. Currently, only around 6% of farmers in Ethiopia use improved seed.

SARDP started a scheme where farmers test, multiply and distribute seed, so as to produce reliable, local supplies of high-quality seed at affordable prices. During the four years from 2001 to 2004, this scheme was piloted in two *woredas*, one in East Gojjam and the other in South Wollo. After that it was expanded to cover most *woredas* in the two Zones, with the aim of multiplying the best-performing varieties.

Local and improved varieties of 35 important grains, pulses and vegetables were tested on-farm and multiplied. At the start, *kebele*-based multipurpose cooperatives were responsible for cleaning, shelling, storing and distributing the seed. Later, the Ethiopian Seed Enterprise became a partner, taking care of handling and distribution.

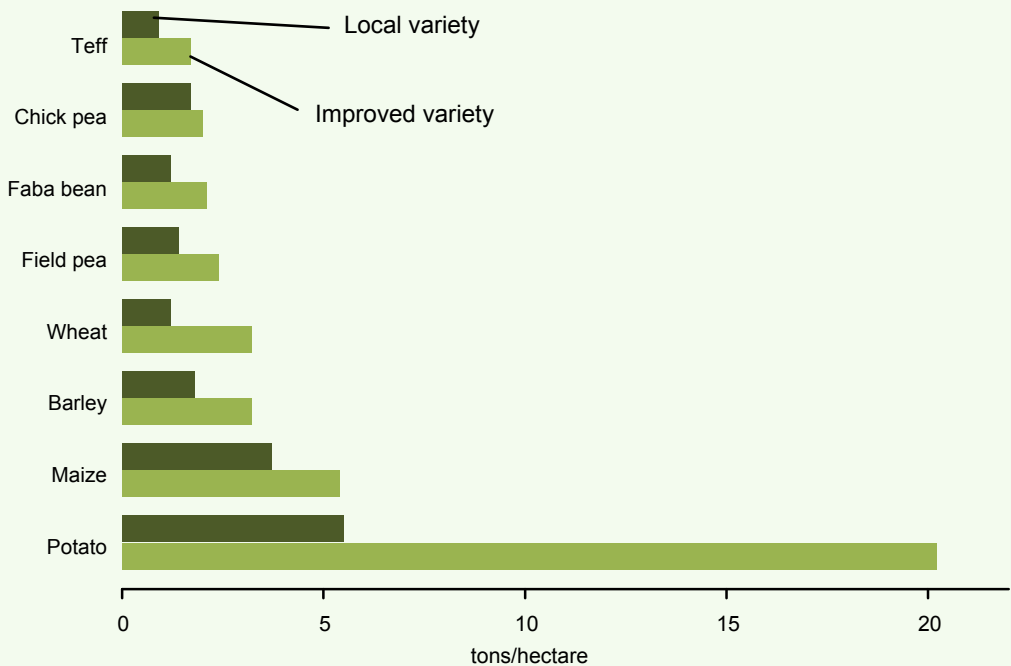
On-farm experiments

Together with *woreda* and *kebele* extension staff and a research representative, the farmers tested the new varieties on their farms. They formed farmer-research-extension groups – three in each *woreda*. These groups were responsible for planning, testing and evaluating the crop varieties in their area.

Potential for improved yields

The yield differences between the local and the best improved varieties give an indication of Ethiopia's farming potential. The graph below shows the average yields over three years (2004–6) of the local variety and the best improved variety in the on-farm experiments. The management was the same for

all the varieties of the same crop. This graph shows that for some crops (such as chickpea), there was relatively little to be gained by switching varieties, while for most others (especially teff, wheat, barley, maize and potatoes), yields could be boosted significantly, sometimes more than doubled.



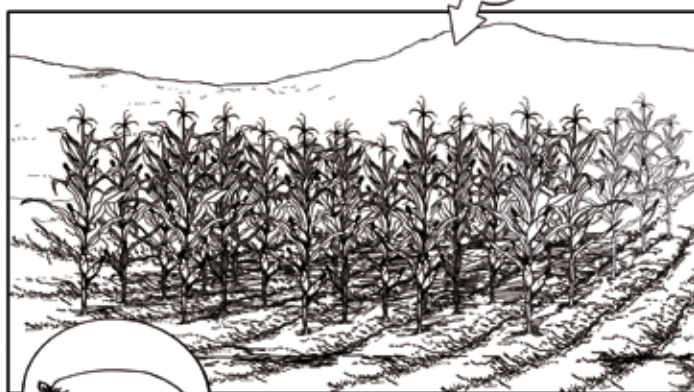
Yields of improved and local crop varieties in on-farm tests

Every year, a workshop was held in each Zone, where one or two farmers from each group and the development agents met researchers and planned the next season's tests. Based on the previous year's experiences, they selected the crops they wished to test. Each farmer planted test plots with various varieties. During the cropping season, the farmers documented how each variety performed. The development agents visited frequently to check on progress, and the researcher also came to see the crops. The farmers assessed the varieties' performance; their opinions and acceptance of the crops were the basis for the decision on which varieties to multiply.

On small experimental plots, farmers compare the performance of different varieties of local and improved crops



The best varieties are multiplied on farmers' fields



The improved seed are sold to other farmers for production



Different crop varieties were evaluated through on-farm research. The best varieties were multiplied, also in farmers' fields. Then the seed was sold for grain production.

Seed multiplication

The best varieties were taken for multiplication. Each farmer-research-extension group engaged interested farmers in its area to form seed-grower groups. These farmers were provided with improved planting material.

All farmers who took part in the on-farm research and seed multiplication were trained in seed production practices, post-harvest handling, quality control, distribution and seed marketing.

Seed distribution

Two systems were used to distribute seed: the informal system within the *kebeles*, and the formal system through contracts with the Ethiopian Seed Enterprise.

The informal seed system. Agreements were made with the *kebele*-based multipurpose cooperatives to process and distribute seed for the farmers. These cooperatives are run by the farmers themselves; they sell their members' agricultural products and buy farming inputs and household commodities in bulk. The cooperatives were trained in seed production practices, post-harvest handling, quality control and basic business administration and marketing. The programme provided them with equipment for threshing, shelling and cleaning. After processing the seed, they packed, labelled and stored it until the next season, when they sold it to local farmers. This system is called "informal" as there is no grading or certification of the seed.

The informal seed system enabled seed to be distributed widely within the locality. But for various reasons it did not continue, and after two years, SARDP had to find another distribution channel. Reasons for the discontinuation were:

- There were no formal contracts or legal framework for the cooperatives to handle seed, and the scheme relied only on a few interested individuals.
- Some fertilizer retailers viewed seed processing as competition, so they purposely occupied the cooperative's storage area, leaving no room for the seed. Some saw seed as a business opportunity, and bought up all the seed and resold it at higher price to the farmers.
- The linkages between the producers growing the seed and the cooperatives that bought it for sale to users were not strong enough.

Contract-based seed production. Ethiopian Seed Enterprise is a government-owned company that produces improved varieties on its own farms and sells the seed throughout the country. This company was the other option for distributing seed. It had no experience in producing seed with local farmers, but agreed to try. After some orientation on the formal seed system with quality grading and certification, each farmer signed a contract with the enterprise. In the first year, the farmers received credit to buy certified seeds and fertilizer.

These contracts could not cater for all the crops that had been tested on-farm, but focused on major crops such as teff, wheat, maize, faba bean, field bean and chickpea. However, for the farmers, this system had two major advantages:

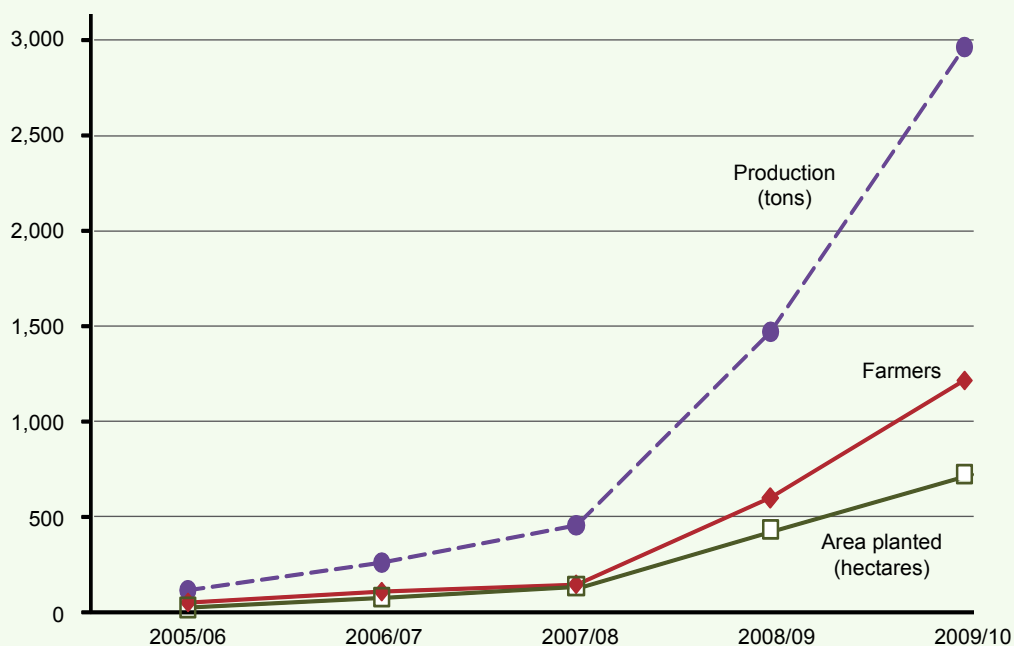
- The farmers were paid 15% over the local seed price for that crop.
- The farmers could keep up to 10% of the produced seed. They could plant this themselves in the next year, or sell it or exchange it with neighbours.

Disadvantages with the contract-based seed production were that the seed was not necessarily distributed only locally, and at first the price was too high. But after some time, Ethiopian Seed Enterprise cut the price, making the seed more accessible also for small-scale farmers.

Debre Elias, famous for wheat

As seed production increased in Debre Elias, many farmers started using improved seed, either buying from the seed company or through farmer to farmer exchange. Currently more than half of the farmers in Debre Elias (the best-performing *woreda*) produce bread wheat grown from improved seed

and using new techniques (see figure below). The *woreda* has become well-known in Amhara for its bread wheat production. Some local mills appreciate the quality and pay the farmers more. Traders from other areas come to buy the grain: truckloads of wheat go as far as Addis Ababa.



Bread wheat seed production in Debre Elias woreda, 2005–10

Some achievements

There has been a dramatic increase in seed production in the two Zones, especially in East Gojjam. The first year, 160 tons of seed of all major cereals and pulses were harvested. In 2007, as many as 5,000 tons of seed were produced in East Gojjam alone.

After the setback with the multipurpose cooperatives, the collaboration with Ethiopian Seed Enterprise functioned well. Reasons included the formal contracts and the company's professional view of the business; plus, 10% of the seed stayed in the local area. This practice contributed greatly to a wider use of the improved varieties.

To include women in seed production, both wives and husbands were invited to all trainings. However, crop management is mostly seen as the men's chore (though post-harvest handling such as storing, processing and cooking are the

women's responsibilities). Although the development agents encouraged women to participate, in reality most of the seed production was practised by the men.

Lately, there have been some attempts to produce hybrid seed for maize. In 2008, hybrid seed was produced on 44 hectares in five *woredas* in East Gojjam, on contract with Ethiopia Seed Enterprise.

Growing durum wheat for pasta

Durum wheat is a common crop in Amhara, where it has been grown for centuries. Some even believe Ethiopia is where it originated. Locally, Ethiopians use it to make bread and local beverages, while industrially, it is used to make macaroni, spaghetti and other types of pasta. The Ethiopian church uses durum flour to make the altar bread used during mass. There are many types and varieties – usually referred to as “landraces” – most of them tolerant to drought and diseases. Farmers plant the crop late in the rainy season, as a second crop after barley or early maturing teff, but due to the lack of moisture at that time, the durum wheat yields poorly.

Pasta is gaining popularity in Ethiopia, and the pasta industry needs enormous amounts of durum wheat. One plant in Kaliti, near Addis Ababa, for example, requires over 80 tons a day, while another in Dire Dawa uses 200 tons a day. But the durum landraces grown in Amhara do not fulfil these plants' quality requirements: they lack the right grain size and protein content. That forces the pasta factories to import most of their grain, mainly from Australia.

Various research institutions in Ethiopia have worked on improving durum wheat production since the 1980s, and many high-yielding varieties have been released.



The late-planted durum wheat (left) is struggling to grow because of lack of moisture, while the early planted variety (right) is ready for harvesting

Why farmers like durum

In 2005, Ato Nebro Tamiru and his wife, who farm in Geta Eyesus *kebele*, Shebel Berenta *woreda*, attended a training in how to grow durum wheat. They registered to test the new variety on their only piece of land – one-quarter of a hectare.

The first year they harvested 900 kilograms, which is almost three times more than they had grown using traditional practices. The factories did not accept the output, but they could exchange it with other farmers for the same amount of teff.

Now Ato Nebro and his wife have produced durum wheat for three years in a row. They have expanded their farm to 2.5 hectares: they grow durum wheat on one hectare, high-yielding teff on another hectare, and pulses on the rest. Ato Nebro has renovated their house and bought some animals, and his wife has started a small retail store. They can now afford to send their oldest child to school.

Despite the interrupted pasta market outlet, Nebro Tamiru and his wife had other good reasons for growing more durum wheat:



- The durum mixed with teff makes very tasty *injera*, the pancake-like staple food of Ethiopians. It is easy to exchange for teff or other commodities the family needs.
- Ato Nebro and his wife thought the early planted crop would be tiresome, but it fits ideally into their cropping calendar.

However, less effort has been placed on improving the quality of the grain. To attain higher quality, the crop has to be planted at the start of the rainy season, not towards the end; fertilizer must be applied, and it is important to make furrows to drain away excess water. No effort had been made to introduce the improved varieties together with recommendations on agricultural practices.

In collaboration with Adet Research Centre, SARDP tested and introduced the improved varieties in seven *woredas* in East Gojjam, aiming at producing durum wheat that would meet the quality requirements of industrial pasta production. The *woredas* were Enemay, Awabel, Enarji Enawuga, Aneded, Dejen, Shebel Berenta and Debay Tilategin.

On-farm research and seed multiplication

In the 2003 cropping season, experiments began on individual farmers' plots to test the new varieties of durum wheat and fine-tune the agronomic recommendations under real farming conditions. Three farmers were engaged in each of the seven *woredas*, covering both black and red soil areas and different agroclimatic zones. They received training in the production practices, and they were given seed and inputs. The farmers managed the crops, and documented and evaluated the performance of each variety.

To promote the new varieties and their production techniques, the most promising varieties were selected during field days where other farmers were invited. But there was still a shortage of seed.

In 2005, 19 farmers in two *woredas*, Awabel and Enemay, planted a quarter-hectare each of the most promising varieties to increase the volume of seed. To obtain enough good-quality seed, each farmer was offered an incentive: they would be paid 40% more than the current price for good bread-wheat seed. At harvesting time, promotional workshops and field days were held, with the aim of transferring the technology to as many farmers as possible and also to present the achievements to the industry.

Exploring the pasta market

In 2006, the Amhara Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development established a coordinating committee to lead the production and marketing of durum wheat. Farmers were engaged as producers, and contracts were signed with the factories. Farmers in all seven *woredas* received training in how to grow the crop.

In only a few years, the harvest of improved durum increased tremendously. From 19 farmers in 2005, by 2007 production had expanded to 1,000 farmers in the seven *woredas*. Yields were good. Where the farmers planted on time and followed the recommendations, some harvested as much as 4.5 tons per hectare.

But only 30% of the durum wheat produced met the industries' quality requirements. Why? The farmers did not always apply the right amount of fertilizers, and some were too enthusiastic: they planted more than the recommended quarter-hectare, but failed to manage it properly. Despite of the low quality, these farmers had no problem selling their output as seed, or exchanging it – one to one – for top-quality teff.

These problems mean that attempts to market to the pasta factories had to be discontinued.

Although the prospect of using durum wheat for pasta was the original motivation for increasing production, farmers are still interested in growing the crop, and production is still expanding. In 2009, more than 600 farmers planted durum wheat in Shebel Berenta *woreda* alone.

Smallholder dairy farming

In the rolling lowlands of South Wollo, the farmers grow sorghum and teff, mainly for home consumption. They keep local breeds of cattle, maybe some hens, and a hive of bees. But the landholdings are tiny, the soil is degraded, and the animals produce little. A cow may give as little as a litre of milk a day, a hen just 80 eggs a year, and a beehive only four kilograms of honey. This makes it difficult to

support a family, and many farmers depend on handouts from the government and safety-net programmes.

Furthermore, as most farms produce for subsistence only, there is a shortage of milk and other products in the towns.

There have been previous attempts to improve livestock production and productivity. The multipurpose cooperatives in the *kebeles*, as well as a few individuals, have tried to introduce crossbred bulls, cows and heifers. But due to lack of coherence and continuity, such efforts have not succeeded well.

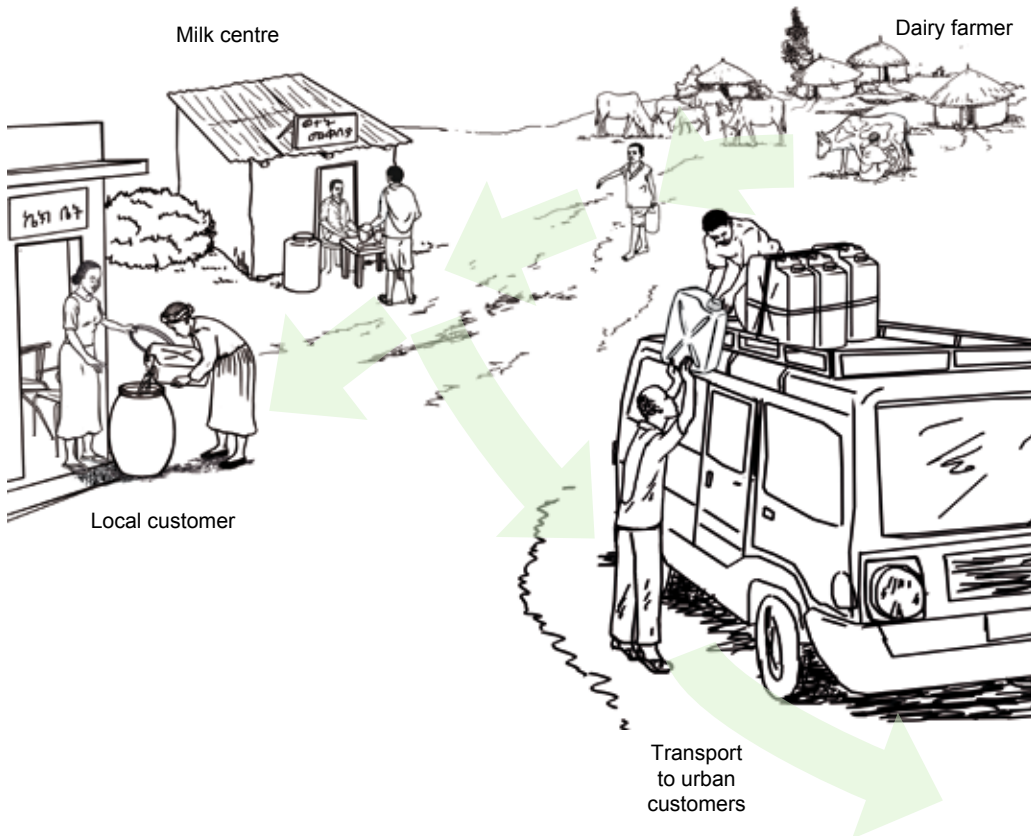
Beginning in 2006, SARDP introduced smallholder dairying in four communities in Kalu *woreda* in South Wollo, in order to raise farmers' incomes and meet the local demand for milk. Unlike previous initiatives that merely distributed heifers, SARDP aimed to make the dairying a sustainable enterprise. That meant preparing and training the farmers, ensuring that milk processing equipment and routines for distribution and marketing were in place, developing veterinary and insemination services, and establishing nurseries to multiply forage planting-materials.

*Dairy cows are kept confined,
and need more care and better
feed than local breeds*



*Separating cream from the
milk at a milk centre*





The farmers bring their milk to the centre twice a day. From there it is sold to local consumers or taken to town

The cooperatives' role

Organizing the dairy farmers into producer cooperatives was essential. These cooperatives helped the farmers to prepare themselves before they acquired their first heifers. They administered a credit scheme, lending money to farmers to buy the heifers. When the farmers started repaying their loans, the cooperatives used the money as a revolving fund, lending it again to other farmers to buy heifers and get started with milk production. The cooperatives selected and bought the heifers, and transferred them to the farmers. They also build centres to process the milk and distribute it to buyers. After cooling and processing the milk, the cooperatives transported it to the town for sale.

Starting production

Starting up a milk-production enterprise is a complicated business. SARDP helped the farmers in various ways:

- **Selecting the farmers:** they had to be both able and interested in producing milk, and they had to live near the milk centres so they could deliver their milk easily.
- **Organizing farmers into producer cooperatives** which purchased the heifers and distributed them to the farmers. The cooperatives managed the milk centres where the milk was collected and processed before it was sold.
- **Training the farmers** – both husband and wife – in dairy husbandry, forage production, financial management, accounting and group management. As part of this training, some members and development agents were sent to the North Shoa Angulala milk producers' cooperative to learn directly from established dairy farmers.
- **Lending money for heifers.** The money was paid out to the dairy cooperatives; they used it to buy heifers to hand over to the farmers on a long-term (3-4 years) credit basis.
- **Preparing forage and housing.** The farmers had to plant fodder plots and build an animal shed before they could take delivery of their first heifer.
- **Organizing purchasing committees.** The cooperative members elected respected individuals to choose and buy heifers from within the *woreda* or elsewhere.
- **Continuous training and follow-up** were needed on livestock husbandry, insemination techniques, forage production, milk marketing, etc.
- **Preparing for the dry season.** Every year, the farmers must store enough forage to maintain their animals during the dry season. If they do not have enough feed, they must have enough cash to buy supplementary feed.

Ensuring support

While the farmers and cooperatives were getting ready, SARDP also made sure they would have the support they needed:

- **Ensuring continuous forage production.** That meant strengthening government-run nurseries in each *woreda* that multiply planting materials of forage species such as elephant grass, sesbania and alfalfa.
- **Strengthening the artificial insemination unit.** To maintain productivity in subsequent generations of animals, all the crossbred females had to be inseminated with sperm from improved bulls. That required the *woreda* extension staff responsible for this to be trained and supported.
- **Equipping the milk centres.** The cooperatives were provided with processing equipment to cool milk and make butter and cheese.

A family milk enterprise

A quarter of a hectare is not big: it is about one-third the size of a standard soccer pitch. But it was all the land that Habil Abdu Teferi and his wife, Meaza Tewolde Abay, had to support themselves and their two children. They grew vegetables and fruit, and kept a few animals and some bees, but it was not enough: Habil still had to earn money elsewhere.

In 2007, Habil and Meaza joined the Derba milk producer cooperative. They learned about dairy production, and started growing elephant grass, pigeonpea and alfalfa as feed. They bought a heifer on credit, and had it inseminated. When the calf was born, they were able to start milking.

Now they have two cows, two heifers and one calf. Meaza brings 30 litres of milk per day to the cooperative's milk centre. A neighbour has rented them 2 hectares – the size of three soccer pitches – which they have planted with forage. They now grow mango, citrus and lemon trees, and have expanded their poultry and honey production. There is money in the bank, their children go to school, and they have bought a television. And they have already paid back half their loan to the cooperative.



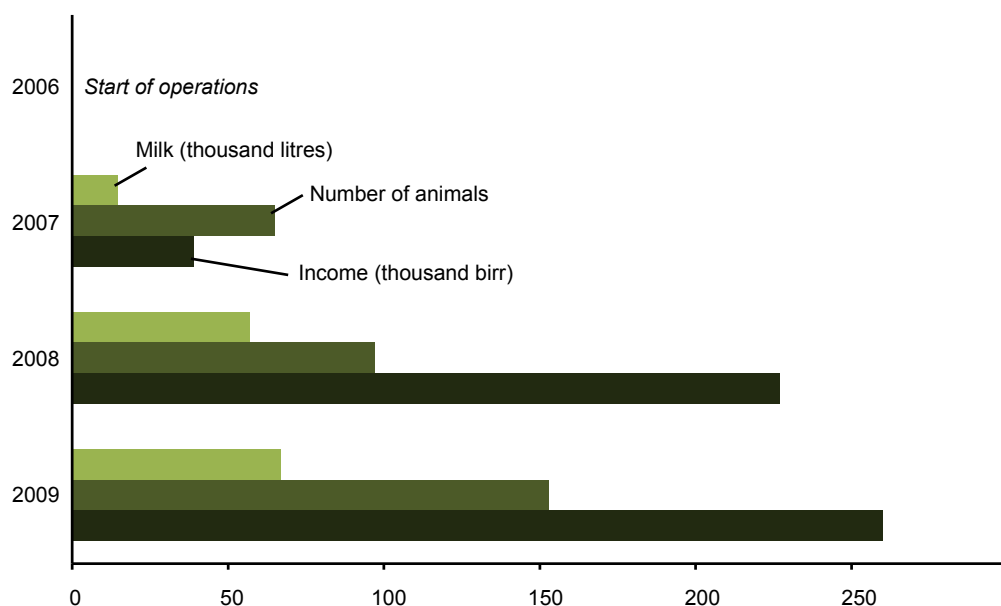
Involving women

Usually it is the men who are responsible for producing forage, while the women care for and feed the cows, and do the milking. SARDP trained both husband and wife in milk and forage production. Formerly, only one person from each household (usually the husband) was a member of the cooperative, but the business included the whole family.

Some achievements

When the project began in 2006, it established four milk-producer cooperatives with a total of 163 members. Initially, 65 crossbred heifers worth birr 390,000 were provided to these farmers. Three years later, the farmers owned 90 cows and heifers, seven bulls and 56 calves, with a total value of birr 746,000 (see the figure on the next page).

In contrast to local cows that produce 1–2 litres a day, the improved stock can produce an average of 12 litres a day, and the best animals can produce up to 18 litres a day. The farmers have increased their monthly incomes to around birr 1,000. They can now send their children to school, pay medical expenses and



Milk produced, number of animals and income of four dairy cooperatives, 2006–9

improve their houses. The increased milk production has also improved local diets, both among the farmers and in the towns.

Challenges

The availability of crossbred heifers and cows is a main constraint for expanding the programme. For this reason, artificial insemination efforts have been increased, and in a few years there will be many more crossbred cows.

The farmers do very well as long as the cows are healthy. But if a cow dies, the owner loses both income and capital. Some cooperative members have therefore proposed instituting some form of insurance to cover them against such losses.

Sheep improvement

Sheep raising is an age-old practice in the Ethiopian highlands, with shepherds (often children) grazing flocks of sheep on communal lands. Most of the sheep are of local origin, and exotic breeds are not common. The local sheep are hardy and easy to look after, but not very productive.

SARDP introduced crossbreeding between the local animals and Awassi sheep, a higher-yielding breed in two communities in the highlands of South Wollo. The idea was to let farmers use animals with Awassi blood to upgrade their flocks,

The Awassi sheep

The Awassi is a fat-tailed sheep, and is the most common and widespread type in the Middle East and southwestern Asia. Large and robust, it was introduced to Ethiopia by researchers to improve the local sheep's meat and wool quality.



so developing rams with more than 50% Awassi blood. After 3 years of breeding and training, the successful farmers formed an Awassi ram producers' group to run the breeding as a business, selling cross-bred rams to their fellow farmers.

SARDP covered the costs of the rams, the training and a community field assistant, as well as strengthening the *woreda's* veterinary services.

The Awassi sheep breeding scheme

In 2002, the Debre Birhan Research Centre (part of the Amhara Regional Agricultural Research Institute) provided Awassi rams to farmer groups in two *kebeles*, Yedo in Jamma *woreda*, and Chiro in Legambo *woreda*. There were 25 farmers in each group; each group received five rams. Five of the farmers in each group managed a ram for 2–3 months each, before handing it on to the next farmer.

The introduced rams were 75% Awassi breed. Initially, they were allowed to mate with ewes in the flock at random. But when their offspring were ready to mate, the farmers followed a strict upgrading scheme to avoid inbreeding. A new 75% Awassi ram was brought in to mate with the females, producing lambs with progressively more Awassi blood.

After three generations, the resulting animals had 56% Awassi blood, and were ready to be used as improved breeding stock. When mated with local animals, the resulting lambs had 28% Awassi blood; they would grow and produce better, but still be easy to care for.

Managing the 75% Awassi rams was new to many farmers, and they were unfamiliar with such a breeding scheme. Many were sceptical at first, not least because

An eye for sheep breeding

In 2002, Ato Ali Teshome Yimer was one of a group of five farmers in Chiro *kebele* to take care of an Awassi ram. At that time he owned eight sheep of a local breed, and lived with his family in a rented house. As he took particular interest in the breeding scheme, he was appointed as the *kebele*'s field assistant.

Six years later, he had increased his herd to 160 sheep, all with some Awassi blood. The same year, 2008, he lost half of them in a severe drought, but managed to rebuild his flock. So far, he has sold 30 rams and 10 ewes with more than 50% Awassi blood. He is sending his children to school, lives comfortably in his own house, has money saved in the bank, has invested in his farm, and is building a house in town. He dreams about increasing the Awassi breeding business even further.



the new breed was more aggressive than the local animals. During the first 3 years, the farmers received continuous training in flock management, feeding and breeding methods.

Researchers, extension workers and the community collaborated closely on the project. The researchers provided the rams and the necessary breeding skills, while the extension service identified suitable farmers, organized them in groups, and advised on feeding and care.

In each of the two communities, one farmer was appointed as community facilitator, or field assistant. This person acted as the link between the farmers, the extension workers and the researchers. He was responsible for keeping records of the breeding scheme, and for registering and marking each crossbred lamb according to guidelines provided by Debre Birhan Research Centre. He also made sure the lambs were vaccinated and treated for worms, ticks, skin diseases, etc.

Selling hundreds of sheep: The Chiro ram producers' group

Description	Numbers
Members in the group in 2009	43 (41 men; 2 women)
Rams introduced in 2002	10
Rams sold by end 2009	395
Ewes sold by end 2009	165

The business

The farmers in one of the *kebeles*, Yedo, did not continue with the breeding scheme. After some time they merely kept their rams for random mating of their whole flocks.

But in Chiro, the other *kebele*, 16 farmers persisted. By 2004 they were producing enough rams to start selling to outsiders. The rams fetched good prices – sometimes four to five times higher than for the local animals. That was a strong incentive to continue their breeding work, which meant maintaining the Awassi blood level slightly above 50%, which is the acceptable level for buyers.

The Chiro farmers formed an Awassi ram producers' group, and were trained in ram husbandry, business administration and marketing. Because of their success, other farmers became interested, and today the group has more than 40 members. The group has sold rams in Legambo *woreda* and outside, and even to other Zones. The members earn a respectable income: they have sold 400 rams and 165 ewes, earning the group more than birr 450,000. Chiro is even getting itself a name as a centre for improved Awassi-cross ram breeding.

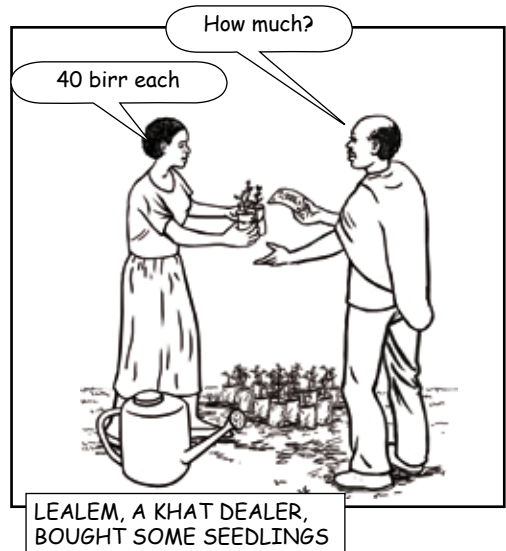
Some basic requirements must be met for the improved sheep to do well. For example, they must have a reliable supply of feed. Droughts or erratic rainfall may mean losing animals. To ensure they can produce enough forage, the farmers have asked that a centre be set up to multiply forage seed – a wish that has not yet been realized.

Under the right conditions, on-farm breeding can work well. One key for success proved to be the community facilitator, who in Chiro took a great interest in the breeding scheme and himself became very knowledgeable on how to breed and keep the animals.

Fruit trees instead of khat

The highlands in South Wollo are steep and have shallow soils. The area is densely populated and has small landholdings. Farmers have few options for what to grow: some common crops are wheat, barley and pulses, but yields are low. Many resort to growing *khat* (*Catha edulis*), the leaves of which are chewed as a stimulant and sold at a high price.

But the cool, highland climate of South Wollo makes it a good place to grow temperate fruits like apples, pears and plums. Although exotic, these fruit trees are not completely new to the area. In the 1980s, seedlings of temperate fruits were handed out to farmers, but free of charge and without plans for sustainable wide-scale production. Some of these trees still stand, but many farmers are sceptical of the “strange, dry stick” that loses its leaves once a year.



Seedling producers graft good varieties on hardy rootstocks and sell seedlings to fruit growers. The growers tend the seedlings for a few years before they bear fruit to sell

Selling seedlings

Before 2007, Mohammed Adem Abegaz and his wife could not grow enough to feed themselves and their two children on their small farm. They were dependent on food handouts to make ends meet.

A trip to Chenchu in southern Ethiopia to study temperate fruit tree production was a turning point for Mohammed. He borrowed some money, bought materials, made compost to improve the fertility of his soil, and turned part of his land into a seedling propagation plot.

The first year he sold only 17 tree seedlings for birr 15 each. But the next year he managed to propagate and sell 250 seedlings, fetching birr 9,500. And in 2009, he propagated 700 seedlings, which earned him more than birr 23,000. For 2010, he is aiming at producing 1,500 seedlings.

Mohammed's family now has enough to eat. He has money saved in the bank, pays his children's school fees, and can cover his family's health expenses. He has bought corrugated iron sheets to roof his house. He rents some land to grow cereals and legumes, and is looking forward to seeing his own orchard of 42 young apple trees begin to bear fruit.



However, temperate fruits fetch good prices in towns, and could form an appealing, income-creating alternative to the current practice of growing *khat*. That is why SARDP in 2005 started a project to promote the fruit.

First the seedling – then the fruit

Apples, pears and plums are planted as seedlings, each with stem and branches of a fruit-bearing variety, grafted onto a hardy, slow-growing rootstock. Some government nurseries used to produce seedlings for farmers, but they were no longer in operation. To make production sustainable and to avoid relying on seedlings from outside, SARDP trained farmers in seedling production and helped them set up their own seedling nurseries.

To start this process, nurseries for seedlings (so-called “fruit foundation blocks”) were established in 2006 to provide initial propagation materials for the seedling

nurseries. At least one such nursery was set up in each *woreda*. They also acted as training grounds for farmers and development agents to learn how to raise seedlings.

After some time, the farmers in Kalu *woreda* stood out above the others in skills and interest, and were therefore selected for more intensive interventions. These included a study tour to Chenchu in southern Ethiopia, and further training in rootstock production and grafting techniques.

In 2007, 60 farmers started a producers' group, which later became a formal co-operative. By the end of 2009, its membership had risen to 140. Each new member was required to prepare a small piece of land in his or her backyard to be used as a nursery, fence it, prepare seedbeds for rootstocks and grafted seedlings, and manage the nursery properly.

Large-scale plans

By 2010, temperate fruit production in Kalu had reached a new stage. A large number of smallholders are now engaged in multiplying apple, plum and pear seedlings in their private backyard nurseries. Each of these can produce 500 to 1,000 seedlings a year. The seedlings sell for birr 40 apiece. As a result of successful sales and rapidly increasing demand, more farmers are joining the cooperative.

Because nearly half of South Wollo is highland, the Zone has a huge production potential for temperate fruits. So far, the small amount of fruit that has been produced has sold well at nearby markets, and people believe there is a great potential for more production. That leads to a high demand for seedlings.

The Regional Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development has recognized the need for higher fruit (and food) production in the Region, and has also realized the potential of these skilled seedling producers. It would like to see over 1,000 seedling producers in Kalu, and hopes that they can produce close to a million seedlings a year. The *woreda* is proposed as a focal point for temperate fruit seedling production for the whole Amhara Region.

Seedling production in Kalu *woreda*

Year	Farmers	Seedlings produced	Income of seedling producers (birr)
2007	60	138	3,300
2008	60	7,000	104,000
2009	140	15,000	406,000

Achievements

This project shows the benefit of focusing development interventions in one area, and of selecting the area with the most engaged and ambitious farmers and development agents. Advisory support, close follow-up, mentoring, on-the-job training and field visits were some of the approaches used by SARDP. The results were astonishing (see the table on the previous page).

Women were involved in the grafting, nursery management and rootstock production together with their husbands. In 2009, two members of the group were from women-headed households.

One advantage of the project was the opportunity of this market niche – the unexpected high demand for the seedlings. Another advantage, not to be overlooked when assessing the Kalu seedling production, is the *woreda's* access to a good all-weather road.

Lessons

It is difficult to summarize a set of activities as diverse as SARDP's agriculture interventions. But here is an attempt to draw some lessons.

Capacity building. For each intervention, all those involved must be trained and well aware of the practice. SARDP devoted a lot of effort to capacity building for the Zonal and *woreda* experts, development agents and farmers. When the experts and development agents are well aware of a new practice, they can spread it to the farmers on a larger scale.

Continuous training. It takes time for staff to become knowledgeable about an intervention and to gain the farmers' trust. So it often happens that the staff are transferred to new assignments just as they are reaching their peak effectiveness. Recurrent staff turnover was a serious concern for SARDP, which attempted to overcome it through continuous, repeated training. For development interventions to have a chance of success, staff should remain in place, and more training should be offered direct to local people.

Integration of disciplines. Farming is a complex enterprise. For each intervention, inputs from a range of disciplines and institutions are required. For example, dairying depends on forage seed production, breeding stock, veterinary services, credit, packing and processing equipment, distribution and marketing. Unless these all function, there will be no milk to sell. Similarly, growing improved varieties of crops depends on the availability of improved seed, fertilizer, credit to buy the inputs, a market to sell to, and distribution channels that work.

Developing private service providers. As stated above, modern farming depends on support from many providers. Such providers do not have to be government-run: cooperatives or private individuals could also provide artificial insemina-



An entrepreneur in Debre Elias rents out a combine harvester to farmers at harvest time

tion and veterinary services, produce forage seedlings, sell fertilizer, or provide harvesting services.

Market planning. Although they are small compared to Ethiopia's or Amhara's overall needs, SARDP's interventions have had a major effect locally. In a few years, there will be milk, vegetables, apples, pears, durum wheat, and so on in large quantities in certain local markets. The next challenge will be to find outlets for these products. Even if the first few kilos of apples sell easily at a good price, not every consumer knows what to do with them. Clear marketing strategies are needed for each product, including improved farmer knowledge, storage and distribution facilities, market information, and a well-prepared processing industry. There is a huge potential in Ethiopia, and the agricultural sector can easily become an even greater contributor towards the country's food security and poverty alleviation efforts.

The logistics that support marketing must function. One reason that the production of durum wheat for the pasta industry failed was the time needed to analyse the quality of the output. Some farmers with acceptable quality had already sold their wheat to other buyers before they heard that the factory would accept it.

Develop with the farmers – then scale up. Innovative ideas should always be piloted on a small scale, together with interested farmers, before they are scaled up. The approaches used by SARDP, such as on-farm research and farmer-re-

search-extension groups, have all proven useful in developing practices that work well with the communities.

Make sure the risks are clear. When promoting a new crop with special requirements, like improved durum wheat, it is important to make sure the farmers are fully aware of the risks of not following the recommendations. Some farmers enjoyed very good returns; others compromised with the location, weeding, drainage or fertilization, and suffered a complete crop loss.

Increasing water efficiency. Water is a precious and limited resource that must be used wisely. More efficient irrigation methods makes the water go further, last longer into the dry season, and enable more farmers to irrigate their crops.

Backyard irrigation. Irrigation schemes that included backyard irrigation benefited women in particular, allowing them to work around home while caring for their children and doing their other household chores. They were also able to earn money from their backyard farms.

Introducing new crops made the biggest changes in the communities that received improved irrigation technologies. Building irrigation schemes opened opportunities for other interventions, and for many communities, both livelihoods and income have dramatically improved.

Sustainability of irrigation schemes. Even if they are well-built, modern irrigation structures must still be regularly maintained. Establishment and strengthening water users' associations and registering them with the authorities are vital for the sustainable use and maintenance of such irrigation schemes.

Creating jobs and income

A man in an orange shirt is working on a wooden frame, possibly a piece of furniture or a small structure, under a large orange tarp. In the background, several other people are standing around, and a building is visible. The scene is outdoors, and the tarp provides shade.

Expanding small-scale industry is one way that Amhara's rural people can improve their living standards

Creating jobs and income

Habtamu Tsegaye

FARMS IN THE AMHARA Region are small, and the land is degraded. As the population increases, the farms are divided into ever smaller plots – too small for a family to make a living. Without capital to buy fertilizer, improved seed or livestock, even people with enough land find it increasingly difficult to rely solely on agriculture. So rural people need to earn income in other ways. One option is to start their own trade, manufacturing or service enterprises.

The Ethiopian government recognizes that developing the rural non-farm sector is vital for economic growth. Its strategy for stimulating micro- and small-scale businesses identifies six main sectors – where both demand and raw materials are available locally – as having growth potential: woodworking, metalworking, textile and garment making, food processing, construction, and handicrafts.



People who run small businesses – like this tea house – need skills and capital

Although opportunities are there, prospective entrepreneurs face many obstacles:

- **Capital.** The major constraint is capital to buy raw materials and machinery, equipping a workshop or office, hiring labour or transporting products.
- **Technical skills.** A second hindrance is technical skills: how to manufacture a product that customers will want to buy.
- **Business skills.** Few potential small-scale entrepreneurs know how to run a business. They need skills on how to market, display, distribute and sell their products, how to calculate production costs and set prices, and how to administer a business through proper bookkeeping and accounting.

Interventions

Since its inception, SARDP supported the development of rural non-farm enterprises. Initial activities were limited to skills training and strengthening co-operatives. In the third phase of SARDP (2005–10), support for developing the rural private sector – to generate jobs and income for rural people – was a major programme component, covering both financial and non-financial services. This economic diversification component included the following interventions:

Enterprise development. This provided credit for rural entrepreneurs to start a small business or expand existing ones. In addition, the underlying objectives of creating well-functioning institutions and establishing networks among them created a nurturing environment for entrepreneurship in rural areas.

Business development services. A new entrepreneur needs assistance with a range of services: preparing a business plan and applications for permissions and loans, training in business management and administration, and advice on product quality, distribution or marketing. SARDP strengthened the Amhara government's existing business development services by building the capacity of institutions and training staff at all levels. It also pioneered a new type of business development service, provided by private firms that charge for their services. These private providers were seen as essential to expanding rural entrepreneurship on a sustainable basis.

Skills training. SARDP established new or supported existing skills training centres or “business incubation centres”. There are now one or two well-equipped centres in each *woreda* in East Gojjam and South Wollo. These were mainly used for training, especially for improving unemployed youths' vocational skills and increasing their ability to find jobs or enhancing their capabilities in their existing jobs. The centres also provided working facilities for new enterprises.

Strengthening cooperatives. SARDP supported the establishment of several types of cooperatives:

- **Multipurpose cooperatives.** These supply farming inputs and farmers' daily needs, as well as selling the farmers' produce.

- **Single-purpose cooperatives.** Also called marketing and processing cooperatives, these process, package and sell their members' produce, such as milk or honey.
- **Savings and credit cooperatives.** Sometimes known by the acronym SaCCos, these encourage personal savings and provide members with credit to invest in farming activities or small enterprises.

Infrastructure development. SARDP supported the establishment of new market places and upgraded existing markets in rural centres.

The rest of this chapter focuses on three aspects of SARDP's interventions for creating non-farm jobs in rural areas: credit provision for small businesses, skills training, and initiating village-based savings and credit cooperatives.

Credit for rural enterprises

Ask a group of rural small-scale entrepreneurs about their biggest problems, and they are likely to mention the lack of capital. Existing businesses need capital to expand, to buy larger quantities of raw materials at competitive prices, or to hire extra labour. New businesses need capital to buy tools, equipment and raw materials. Without capital in the form of credit, they cannot get started.

Banks might offer loans, but their branches are found only in distant towns, and most are reluctant to lend money to small rural enterprises. They regard such loans as insecure, as most small-scale entrepreneurs lack collateral. The costs and risks of small loans are higher than for bigger loans to larger businesses.

The figure on the next page depicts this. Petty traders (on the left) who sell traditional handicrafts or local produce need relatively little money for their operations. To expand, they can join a savings and credit cooperative and access small loans. Large-scale businesses (on the right) have collateral and get loans from banks.

Small-scale entrepreneurs (in the centre) need more money than can be supplied by microfinance institutions or savings and credit cooperatives. But they are too small and remote to interest the banks, and they have no collateral. They are what has been called "the missing middle".

Enterprise development facility

SARDP established an "enterprise development facility" to provide small-scale entrepreneurs with credit to launch their businesses. This was a pilot scheme and new to Amhara, so it was necessary to learn by doing. It took 2 years of preparatory work, from 2005 to 2007, to agree on the approach, select financial intermediaries to administer the funds, get private business service providers in place, establish detailed procedures and guidelines, and provide training and other support to all actors involved. Important aspects included the following:



Sources of credit for businesses of different sizes: there is no institution to serve the needs of small-scale entrepreneurs – the “missing middle”

- **Loan guarantee scheme.** The main component of the enterprise development facility was the loan guarantee scheme, which provided loans to individuals and cooperatives.
- **Partner institutions.** It was necessary to establish new and strengthen existing institutions: both in the private sector, and government organizations at Region, Zone and *woreda* levels. This capacity building included training and the provision of office equipment.
- **Networking.** For the facility to operate smoothly, it was essential that all the actors collaborated, pooled their support and worked in the same direction. The actors met frequent to exchange information, assess progress, and make necessary adjustments.

The programme aimed for half of its beneficiaries to be women. It especially encouraged women to become private business service providers, as they would be more sympathetic to women applicants and could be expected to work closely with them.

The first loans were disbursed in July 2007 in eight pilot *woredas*; in January 2008, it was extended to 14 *woredas*, seven each in East Gojjam and South Wollo.

Institutions working together

Several institutions were involved in the enterprise development facility.

Amhara Micro and Small Trade and Industry Enterprises Promotion Agency (AMSTIEPA) is the Regional body with overall responsibility for coordinating and overseeing the enterprise development facility. Together with SARDP, the

Baking better bread

A group of ten young women in Wonka *kebele*, Gozamin *woreda*, wanted to set up a bakery. They formed a cooperative and approached a business services provider to help them get a loan. The provider helped them prepare a business plan, and the Amhara Credit and Savings Institution lent them birr 55,000 so they could get started.

The cooperative produced bread, and sold most of it to a hospital in the vicinity.

But the hospital was not satisfied with the quality of the bread; it did not rise properly, and the crust had

no colour. So it complained to the cooperative, who asked the business service provider for advice.

The provider discovered that the problem was a lack of baking skills, and suggested the women get some training.

The provider arranged for a baker from a nearby town to come to train the women for 3 days in their own bakery, at their own cost.

The result: better bread, and a more satisfied customer.

Agency developed procedures for the scheme, and was responsible for establishing the screening committees, coordinating the service providers, and selecting and appointing the credit institutions. SARDP trained the Agency staff, provided office equipment, and gave technical assistance and operational funds. The Agency in turn provided training to the other actors.

The **Micro- and Small Enterprises Promotion Office** is a branch of AMSTIEPA in each *woreda*. It was responsible for implementing the enterprise development facility in its *woreda*.

The **Screening and Selection Committee** in each *woreda* was composed of representatives from the *woreda* Micro- and Small Enterprises Promotion Office, the Women and Youth Affairs offices, the lending institution, and the *kebele* chairperson. The committee met twice a month. It had two major tasks:

- Screening and selecting eligible applicants for receiving credit.
- Evaluating the status of the loan disbursements and repayments, and the quality of the business providers' services. If need arose, it called on a business service provider for information about a particular entrepreneur.

Private business development services providers are individuals based in the *woredas*, who – through their own private firms – provide a range of counselling and advisory services to micro- and small enterprises. These services providers have at least a diploma (2 years of university education) in business administration or a similar field. In addition, the Amhara Micro and Small Trade and Industry Enterprises Promotion Agency trained them further in business management – usually for 1–3 months – with SARDP funding support. They then got a licence to operate in the *woredas*. The providers who would be engaged in the SARDP-funded enterprise development facility were selected through a bidding process.

There were at least two private business development services providers in each *woreda*. They offered the following services:

- They advised clients who apply for credit about the business requirements, and checked whether they really needed additional finance.
- They helped the applicants prepare a business plan that was acceptable for the lender, and they assisted each applicant through the loan-approval process.
- They trained the applicants in bookkeeping and business management.
- After an enterprise was up and running, they visited regularly to monitor and advise their clients. This assistance included bookkeeping, procurement, costing and price calculations, product display, marketing, customer care, product development or any other aspect the provider found the client needed. This service continued until the loan was fully paid back.

Lending institutions. A major task at the start of the credit scheme was choosing suitable finance institutions to issue loans. The Amhara Micro and Small Trade and Industry Enterprises Promotion Agency invited several microfinance institutions and some banks for discussions and tender. After a bidding process, two institutions were selected:

- **Amhara Credit and Savings Institution**, a microfinance institution working throughout the Amhara Region.
- The **Abay ber Saving and Credit Union**, a member organization for various types of cooperatives, which previously provided loans only to its members.

To qualify as lenders to the scheme, these two institutions adjusted their lending terms and procedures. Both previously gave credit mainly for investments in farming; now they also had to serve clients who were not farmers. Their maximum loan size of birr 5,000 was too low, and their repayment period of one year too short. The credit institutions feared they would be taking on too high a risk, so the enterprise development facility, through SARDP, provided a loan guarantee to pay half of the losses in case clients failed to repay their loans.

Abay ber Saving and Credit Union was one of the institutions selected to provide loans to small rural enterprises through SARDP's enterprises development facility. The manager, Yenebthon Simegn, had to increase the credit institution's loan size and repayment period

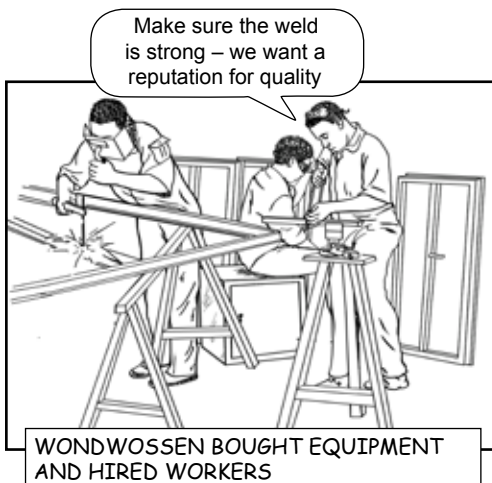


Loan approval process

The loans varied in size and repayment period, depending on the type of business as well as the anticipated risk and expected profitability. An individual could borrow up to birr 30,000, and a registered group up to birr 75,000. The longest repayment period was 3 years. The interest rate followed the market rates (currently 10%).

All loan applications passed through a series of well-defined stages.

- **Application.** A person or an organized group requesting a loan approached the *woreda* Micro- and Small Enterprises Promotion Office with a written application.
- **Screening and selection.** The *woreda* screening and selection committee ensured that the applicant was resident, had access to enough working space, and had the required skills, a clean record and a good reputation. Applications that passed the first screening were referred to a business development services provider for further screening. The provider checked whether the applicant really needed a loan to get started, and if any problems were anticipated in the proposed business. The results were sent back to the *woreda* office. If the problem was non-financial, for example a lack of skills, the office might suggest that the applicant should attend a training course. If the business idea was sound and the problem was financial, the office nominated a business development services provider to help prepare a business plan.
- **Buying a voucher for services.** To cover the cost of the services of the provider, the clients were entitled to buy a voucher, at a subsidized price. This voucher, with a total value of birr 1,100, entitled the client to all services by the provider until the loan was repaid.
- **Business plan preparation.** The provider helped the client prepare a business plan, giving details about the enterprise and its intended activities. The *woreda* checked that it complied with the relevant laws and regulations, and the credit institution then evaluated it. If it fulfilled their criteria, the loan would be approved. If necessary, the provider could clarify and correct the plan.
- **Disbursement of loan and starting up.** Once the loan was disbursed, the client could start the planned business operations.
- **Monitoring and advice.** Every 2 weeks, the business service provider visited the enterprise to monitor progress and give advice. These visits continued until the loan was fully repaid.
- **Reporting.** The business services provider reported back to the *woreda* office, where the screening and selection committee met regularly. If there was progress and the loans were being repaid as planned, all was well and good. If the enterprise was not going well, the committee and the provider tried to help resolve the problems.



The enterprise development facility helped people start small businesses

Enterprise Development Facility clients

A survey of people who had received loans from the Enterprise Development Facility found that:

- The average age of borrowers was 33 years.
- Most loans were for business expansion (65%); new businesses took up the remaining 35%.
- 32% of recipients were engaged in manufacturing, 32% in trade, 20% in services and 16% in agriculture.
- The average loan size was birr 13,000 (loans could range from birr 5,000 to 30,000).
- Each borrower had created jobs for an average of three more people.
- The borrowers' average income (after the loan was repaid) had doubled, and most (92%) said their livelihoods had improved since taking the loan.
- The majority (58%) found the loan size the most attractive feature of the facility.

The survey was conducted in November 2009, after the facility had been operating for over 2 years. The 203 respondents included 132 men and 71 women of the 1,400 clients who had received loans.

A model system in place

It took time to prepare this system and build the capacity of the various institutions involved to run it. By 2010, the SARDP scheme had been running for only 2.5 years. Nevertheless, progress was very good. By the end of December 2009, birr 23.8 million had been disbursed as loans to 1,858 individuals and 41 cooperatives. Some 98% of the entrepreneurs were repaying their loans according to plan. Lending to women improved over time, and in 2009 the share had reached 34%. The clients were doing well in terms of business turnover, income and employment. Several new enterprises in East Gojjam and South Wollo introduced new products on the market. Two examples are the manufacturing of weighing scales (which used to be imported) and peanut butter.

Private business development services providers are now established in the *woredas*, offering services on a demand-driven and cost-sharing basis. They earn a good income and are expanding their range of products and services. As many as 62% of the providers are women.

The financial institutions improved their lending skills and now offer more diversified loan products to a wider clientele.

There is a well-functioning system in place, designed to serve the underserved segment of rural small-scale entrepreneurs with credit and business development services. In a short time, it became fully operational within the governmental institutional set-up. The government now has an opportunity to build on and scale up this initial success.



A small, SARDP-financed, metal workshop serves the local market and generates income for a family



This wood and metal workshop makes doors; it received credit from the SARDP enterprise development facility



A loan enabled a young man in Mota town to start making scales

Expanding with peanut butter

Esmail Issa comes from a farming family, but he moved to Wojel, a small town in Awabel *woreda* in East Gojjam, to work as a truck driver. Despite working long hours, he could not earn enough to cover his family's needs.

Together with three friends, he decided to start an enterprise to make peanut butter. Groundnuts, the raw material for peanut butter, are a common crop in Wojel. The four friends formed a trade association and rented a building. They had the skills, raw materials and equipment as well as the prospect of an attractive market. But they did not have the money to buy enough groundnuts to make production efficient.

In 2007, SARDP's credit scheme was piloted in Awabel. Seeing the opportunity, Esmail contacted a private business development services provider, prepared a business plan, and got a loan. He and his friends could then buy the raw materials they needed, and they could also get continuous assistance from the provider. As they have expanded production, the government has granted them land, and they are now building a workshop and store.



The business has grown rapidly, and now employs ten people. It sells in bulk to retailers in East Gojjam, mainly along the road to Bahir Dar.

What have been the main factors for their success? "Our commitment, together with availability of both the raw materials and a market was one factor", says Esmail. "But without the credit, the opportunity would not have been easily tapped."

Challenges

Absence of advocacy institutions. Business chambers exist at the national and Regional levels, as well as in every *woreda*. These might have played a central role in assessing the credit scheme from the beneficiaries' point of view, explaining the exact needs of the entrepreneurs and how to improve the system. But these institutions are weak and were not able to voice the beneficiaries' needs.

Limited awareness of the programme. The enterprise development facility was only up and running for 2.5 years, and in this short time, it was difficult to get an understanding for the setup in all quarters. To succeed and make the credit scheme functional, *woreda* institutions and leaders must give their full support and help solve problems as they arise. One example is the voucher system, which was administered by the *woreda's* finance and economic development office, although it was not a partner of the programme.

Identification of beneficiaries and their needs. Initially, there was confusion over who should benefit from the programme. It proved crucial to identify the target groups clearly in order to focus the intervention. For legal and practical reasons, the loan terms had lower maximum levels than originally envisaged, which prevented the programme from assisting clients who planned larger enterprises.

Improving skills through training

Many adults and young people in Ethiopia have not completed formal school, and cannot pursue higher education. They have no experience in entrepreneurship, and they lack technical knowledge and skills. Most people of working age either work on small farms or are unemployed.

But if more people had the right knowledge and practical skills, there would be many more job opportunities in rural areas. That is especially so for manufacturing using local raw materials and simple technologies. Improving people's technical skills would help small businesses expand their production and improve their product quality, so creating more jobs.

From its inception, SARDP supported skills training in all the *woredas* it served by establishing and equipping skills training centres and supporting training programmes. The Amhara Micro and Small Trade and Industry Enterprises Promotion Agency was responsible for coordinating this programme. The training was provided by a variety of institutions, both government and private.

Strengthening training centres

In each of its programme *woredas*, SARDP funded the establishment of new community skills training centres, or renovated existing ones. In many cases this meant building specially designed workshops. All the centres were equipped with tools and machines, depending on the type of training each centre would offer. The centres not only provided training; they also offered working premises for new enterprises and in some cases access to machines, using spare capacity at the centre.

Training

The types of training offered varied from *woreda* to *woreda*, depending on the opportunities and needs in each place. The training aimed to equip the trainees with skills so they could get a job or start a viable enterprise. The courses followed ten steps:

- 1 **Analyse the situation**, identifying potential natural resources, demographic features and possible opportunities for developing a business.
- 2 **Survey the market**, identifying products and services needed but not available; technologies needed but not sufficiently available; and trades, products or services needing improvement.
- 3 **Assess training needs**, identifying lack of skills and abilities, and who needed what types of training.

- 4 **Analyse the institutional setting**, identifying the capacities and needs of the skills training centres. At this stage, feasible skills training areas were identified and prioritized.
- 5 **Develop an annual training plan** using a simplified logical framework approach.
- 6 **Develop selection criteria for the target group**, to clarify whom the training should address.
- 7 **Select trainers** who had the right skills and could address the types of trainees envisaged.
- 8 **Develop training curriculum** fulfilling the needs of each group of trainees.
- 9 **Manage and implement the training**, including administration, supervision, monitoring and documentation.
- 10 **Evaluate the training and assess impacts.**

The trainees

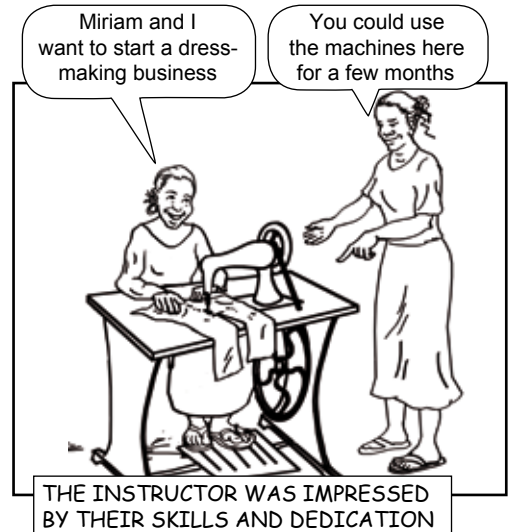
All the trainees were poor, landless and unemployed. Most were young people with little or no education. The training courses fell into three main types, depending on the education level of the trainees:

- 1 **Illiterate people** were given training that would help them improve their personal situations – for example, sewing, embroidery, making fuel-saving stoves, making mud bricks, pottery, home management, horticulture and poultry raising.
- 2 **People with some school education** received training to enable them to produce marketable products or provide services that were in demand. These included tailoring, dry food preparation, bamboo work, basic construction, welding and tyre repair.
- 3 **Young school leavers and dropouts** were offered training to improve their educational qualifications. Such training was more standardized than for the other groups, and were offered mainly by technical and vocational education and training institutes.

Achievements

In each of the *woredas* served by SARDP, there are now one or two well-functioning community skills training centres. They are equipped mainly with hand tools, as well as sewing machines, and equipment for leatherwork, woodwork, metalwork and tyre repair. The centres can offer training in at least three, in some cases up to twelve, different skill areas.

After completing their training, many of the trainees have started their own businesses. According to a survey in 2008, 60% had an income sufficient to support their household needs. Of the trainees who took loans, 70% had started repaying



The training centres made facilities available to help businesses get started

A new start with wire-mesh boxes

Wherever there are roadsides to be strengthened, gullies to be stabilized or water to be diverted, there is use for “gabions” – boxes made of wire mesh that are unfolded on-site and filled with stones so they act as walls that hold back soil. In Awabel, a *woreda* in East Gojjam, the SARDP technical adviser identified a good local market for gabions, and suggested that the training centre arrange a course on how to make them.

In 2007, twelve young men and women in Lumanie received training in gabion manufacturing. They were trained for a month, and after that they formed a cooperative, borrowed birr 50,000 to buy the only raw material they needed – metal rods – and got started. They used the training centre’s compound to make the gabions. After a year and a half, they had repaid the loan, and the cooperative had earned birr 400,000.

At this time, eleven of the members decided to quit and look for other opportunities. In a short time, they had earned good money and learned how to manage a business. Some went abroad to find better work, others joined the university, and some started their own business.



Only Tesfaye Damte remained. He recruited 19 new people, whom he trained himself, and together they formed a new cooperative. Soon, the cooperative employed and trained 60 more young men and women.

Tesfaye looks back on the time he was trained: “It was an opportunity that greatly improved our livelihoods”, he says.

them. Around 50% of the trainees had expanded their business or started a new one, and the majority had managed to improve their living conditions. Above all, the entrepreneurs seemed optimistic about their future, with nearly all experiencing increasing demand for their products.

Three-quarters of the participants in all trainings were women.

The main reason for this success was that the training responded to market opportunities and training needs. A second reason was that, besides offering training, the centres also sought to link the trainees to the labour market or prepare them to start enterprises; they also stimulated them to start savings and credit cooperatives so they could access small loans.

As a result, the image of the training centres and demand for a place on a course increased tremendously. This in turn led to a steady increase in the *woredas*’ programme budget allocation to skills training.

Village-based savings and loans

A farmer who wants to buy some fertilizer or a dairy cow has few choices. The local moneylenders are happy to offer a loan, but their interest rates are horrendous. Banks are far away in town, and anyway are not willing to lend to farmers lacking collateral. Some microfinance institutions are open for rural people, but they are too few and have limited capital. If the farmer has some money set aside, he or she is lucky. The only other alternative is to start saving.

To improve rural people's access to credit, the Amhara government promotes the formation of rural savings and credit cooperatives. In the towns, such cooperatives have existed for many years, mostly as saving schemes for government employees. Rural savings and credit cooperatives, though, are a recent phenomenon.

SARDP was involved in this initiative from its beginning. It provided all the savings and credit cooperatives in its programme area with equipment such as office furniture, safe boxes and accounting books. It also offered training in accounting, bookkeeping and cooperative administration, and helped existing cooperatives to share their experience with new cooperatives.

Starting and running the cooperative

- **Forming a group.** Interested people in a *kebele* form a group. They prepare their bylaws and elect a committee.
- **Getting registered.** When the membership reaches between 30 and 40 members, the group can register itself as a legal entity at the *woreda* cooperative promotion office.
- **Day-to-day activities.** An elected committee is responsible for day-to-day financial transfers and keeping the books. Its members are trained by *woreda* cooperative promotion office experts. As the committee is elected every 3 years, new committee members have to be trained.
- **Sources of money.** The primary source of money is the members' savings. There should be a balance between lending and borrowing. Sometimes, members who want to borrow have to wait until enough savings have been collected. Another way to even out a cooperative's surplus and deficits is for several cooperatives to form a second-level cooperative, a so-called "union".

Saving and borrowing

- **Saving.** As soon as the cooperative has started, the members have to begin saving a compulsory amount each month. The amount is stated in the bylaws; it is often at least birr 10 a month. On top of the compulsory saving, each member is welcome to make voluntary savings as well. The member can withdraw the voluntary saving at any time, while the compulsory saving

Tesfa Savings and Credit Cooperative

During a meeting at Subshengo, in Dejen *woreda* of East Gojjam, some residents heard about a savings and credit scheme that functioned in a similar way to their multipurpose cooperative. They liked the idea and decided to give it a try. They gathered 79 members (49 men and 30 women) and in 2003 formed the Tesfa savings and credit cooperative. After they had agreed on bylaws, the cooperative was registered at the *woreda* office.

Apart from compulsory savings, the cooperative encourages voluntary savings from its members. In 2009, it had 285 members (141 men and 144 women), who together had saved birr 220,000. The monthly deposits per member range between

birr 10 and 50; the biggest individual deposit is birr 1,230.

During its 6 years of operation, the cooperative has issued 485 loans of an average of birr 870 each. W/o Manalebish Atnafu has taken two. She used the first to buy fertilizer and improved seed. After she had repaid it, she took a new loan to buy an improved dairy cow.

She explains the importance of the cooperative: "Apart from its inspiration towards thrift, the cooperative is the cheap source of loans that I can access quite easily and promptly".

stays with the cooperative until the member decides to leave the organization for good. To increase the amount of money within the cooperative, voluntary saving is highly encouraged.

- **Borrowing.** After saving for at least 6 months, a member is entitled to take a loan. The maximum loan that the member can get is 3.5 times his or her savings. A member who wants to borrow more must provide collateral, often by asking another member to put this up.
- **Terms for loans.** The maximum loan period is one year, during which time the member has to continue to save. The rates for both savings and loans follow the bank rates.

Hundreds of savings and credit co-ops

Some 600 savings and credit cooperatives are registered in the whole of Amhara. Of these, 140 in East Gojjam and 100 in South Wollo received support from SARDP. Up to June 2009, the cooperatives in these two Zones had mobilized a total of birr 3.4 million in savings, and had paid out birr 2.5 million as loans.

The savings and credit cooperatives are performing well, both operationally and financially. They are all profitable, and the loans are repaid on time. No corruption or theft has been discovered. Apart from the compulsory savings, voluntary savings are increasing. New forms of savings have been developed, for example the so-called "children's savings" that encourage children to save what little money they may have.

Women have been encouraged to attend promotional meetings and become members of cooperatives. It is recommended to include women in the co-op executive committees. Women members account for 40% of the cooperative members in East Gojjam and South Wollo. Some cooperatives have women members only.

To increase their access to capital, many of the cooperatives have created umbrella unions. There are three such unions in East Gojjam, and one in South Wollo.

Most loans have been used for productive investments like improved dairy cows, improved seed and fertilizer, and irrigation equipment such as pumps.

The main reason for the success of the savings and credit cooperatives is that they are based in and run by the community. A cooperative is easy to manage; the modalities for saving and borrowing are simple; and the members have full insight and control over the operations.

A challenge

Even though the scheme is successful, after a decade the coverage is still very limited, reaching merely 1% of the Region's whole population. The main reason is the limited capacity of the cooperative promotion agency (both at Regional level and in the *woredas*). The agency is responsible for promoting these enterprises, but has the burden of auditing each cooperative's accounting books once a year – although its capacity to do so is limited.

Lessons

Reaching the right people. Poverty is prevalent in rural areas, but not all the poor will be able to benefit from an enterprise development programme. Therefore, the screening of credit applicants and selection of trainees are important to identify those individuals who have the capacity to benefit. It is also necessary to clearly identify the target groups and target sectors for a programme, especially if funding is limited.

Manufacturing most viable. Of those enterprises that were launched, manufacturing proved more profitable than trade and services. Examples include food processing and post-harvest handling such as sorting, roasting, grinding and packing. These add value to the product and earn good money. Services such as tyre repair, haircutting salons and small retail shops were less rewarding.

Established enterprises more successful. The training programmes provided training to both new and established entrepreneurs. The most effective trainings were those that aimed at upgrading the skills of already established entrepreneurs, as they immediately could use the newly acquired skills in their work.

Well-functioning infrastructure. Without roads, transport and telephones, it is difficult to access raw materials and reach customers. Working premises are a necessity, and reliable electricity makes a difference when using machines.

Engagement of the government. The government plays a crucial role in effective rural development programmes, especially in providing infrastructure and support services. To make development initiatives sustainable, projects and

programmes should also be aligned with government policies. However, promoting rural non-farm enterprises does not necessarily mean that new government institutions are needed. Rather, successful and sustainable development of non-farm business requires effective and functioning markets.

Continuous capacity building. As government staff turnover is high, training of new staff must be a continuous process at all levels.

Networking. One institution alone cannot boost the number of sustainable non-farm enterprises. A joint effort is needed. All must know what the others are doing; they should all pull in the same direction, and they must adjust procedures as required.

Adjustment of lending terms to reflect demand. The credit scheme needs to expand its scope so it can also serve medium-sized enterprises and cater for potential agro-processing industries. That means raising the maximum loan ceiling to several hundred thousand birr, extending the repayment period (currently set at 3 years), and reassessing the interest rates charged.

Developing the whole. Farming and non-farming activities, as well as rural and urban business linkages, must be viewed as a whole. The rural non-farm sector is influenced by the pattern of agricultural growth, and conversely, the rural non-farm sector influences the course and rate of agricultural development. The rural non-farming sector must therefore not be viewed as a magic bullet for solving all problems of rural development and poverty alleviation. Only when agricultural development is regarded as a necessary precondition can rural non-farming activities have the potential to eradicate rural poverty.

Integrated support. Any attempt to reduce poverty through enterprise development requires associated efforts, integrating training, financial and other non-financial support.

Continued support to private providers. Private business development services providers make up a new business sector. These providers are fundamental for sustainable growth in private entrepreneurship. But they are not yet self-sufficient. Like caring for a child as it grows, the government and development programmes will need to support these providers for some more years to come.

Research and data. To address the intended beneficiaries most effectively with suitable interventions, development programmes must base their plans on reliable information. Unfortunately, much of the information available on agriculture and non-farming linkages, the performance of micro- and small enterprises, current market opportunities, etc., is old and inadequate, and does not properly reflect the current situation. More updated information through research and periodical data collection – reflecting new trends and developments – would give higher accuracy to any future programme.

Increasing the time frame. To achieve high impact, future programmes (especially the enterprises development facility) should have a longer time frame of continuous implementation: at least 7–10 years.

Building and maintaining infrastructure



Providing basic infrastructure – such as roads, water supplies, schools and health care services – is vital if Amhara is to prosper

Building and maintaining infrastructure

Ahmed Salih and Zenebe Ayele

ALACK OF BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE is a major constraint to rural development. Without roads, safe water, schools and health facilities, it is very difficult for local people to break out of the vicious cycle of poverty. Without access to a market, there is no point in growing crops to sell; without education, people lack the skills they need to improve their livelihoods; without clean water and primary health care, they fall victim to diseases and lack the energy to invest in their own and their children's future.

A lack of infrastructure also makes it difficult for the government to provide the services local people need. Teachers need classrooms in which to teach. Nurses need somewhere to treat patients. Government staff need offices and equipment to plan, build and maintain roads and other basic services.

A certain level of basic infrastructure is also necessary to avoid problems such as drought, and to deal with disasters when they occur. Irrigation and water harvesting systems not only help people grow more crops; they also help them survive when drought strikes. It is easier for a community to overcome food insecurity and promote their own development if local institutions are strong, and the strength of these institutions depends to a certain extent on adequate infrastructure.

The reverse is also true. The planning and sustainable functioning of infrastructure depends on the involvement and support of local people. If local people participate in identifying and planning the infrastructure interventions in their area, and if they contribute to the construction work, they are far more likely to make sure that the structures are maintained.

SARDP's infrastructure interventions

East Gojjam and South Wollo both have large populations, scattered in thousands of villages over a large area of rugged terrain. That means major infrastructure needs: each village needs a school, a health post, a supply of clean water, a road, and so on. But in 1997, at the beginning of SARDP, most villages had little infrastructure. Roads linked the main towns; some villages were served by tracks



Many community roads link remote villages cut off by rugged terrain

that turned into mud during the rainy season, while most lacked any roads at all. Without bridges, many villages were cut off when the rivers were in flood. There were few schools or health posts, and most villages relied on seasonal rivers and springs for their water supplies.

SARDP's infrastructure programme aimed to address these constraints. It covered several types of interventions:

- **Rural roads and bridges.** The construction, maintenance and upgrading of community roads and bridges.
- **Drinking water.** The construction of rural water supply systems.
- **Health and education.** The construction of health posts, health centres, primary schools and adult education centres, as well as supplying furniture and equipment.
- **Irrigation.** The development of small-scale irrigation schemes.
- **Building institutions and strengthening capacity** of government staff at Regional, Zonal, *woreda* and *kebele* levels.

This chapter discusses SARDP's interventions in roads, water, health and education. The irrigation interventions are described in the chapter on agriculture (page 23), while the institutional and capacity development work are discussed in each of the sections below.

SARDP learned from the problems encountered in previous rural development interventions, which neglected community participation at the planning, monitoring, implementing and operational stages. That resulted in unsustainable projects: roads that rapidly deteriorated, buildings that were neglected, and leaky pipes that were never repaired. SARDP attempted to overcome such problems by involving the communities in each stage of the work. That created a sense of ownership among the beneficiaries, thus assuring sustainability of the undertaking.

The results were impressive. In SARDP phase III (2004–10), 1,251 km of community roads were constructed, an additional 251 km of roads were further upgraded to Regional standards, 10 major bridges were built, and numerous pipe culverts were installed. In 2004, there were only 85 m of roads for every square kilometre in East Gojjam and South Wollo; by 2010, there were 120 m of roads – a 40% increase in road density. More than 4,000 hectares of land were irrigated through many small-scale irrigation schemes. More than half a million people now have clean water from 1,192 local water supply schemes. Over 240 primary schools, 216 health posts and 35 health centres were built – increasing the number of schools by 68%, raising primary school enrolment rates to 95%, and increasing access to basic health services by 151%.

First, build a road

You have harvested your vegetables and want to take them to market. You fill baskets with tomatoes and lettuce, and load up your donkeys, ready for the long trek to the nearest road. But it has been raining, and when you get to the river, it is flooded. It will be three days before the water has receded – by which time the lettuce will be wilting and the tomatoes rotting.

That is the situation faced by many people in South Wollo and East Gojjam. Living in scattered villages, they face overwhelming transport problems. When SARDP started in 1997, it took an average of 6 hours to walk to the nearest all-weather road. Several large rivers cross the two Zones, and the terrain is rugged, especially in South Wollo. In the rainy season, most of the few village roads that do exist are impassable. People and their pack animals have to wait for hours or days to cross a river that is in flood. The result: lack of access to markets, health centres and schools, few economic opportunities, and many people and animals swept away trying to cross rivers in flood.

“To get rich, first build a road”, say the Chinese. The same is true for Ethiopia. Roads are a prerequisite for all kinds of economic and social development, including the provision of electricity and other basic infrastructure. Teachers and medical personnel are reluctant to be posted to places where there is no road.

Major SARDP achievements in road infrastructure

1997–2004

- 437 km of roads rehabilitated
- *Woreda* road desks established
- Length–person maintenance system established

2004–10

- 1,251 km of community roads constructed
- 251 km upgraded to Regional standards
- 10 major bridges built
- Road density increased from 85 m to 120 m per square kilometre
- 350 road foremen trained
- 1,350 road caretakers trained

Three types of roads

Ethiopia has three types of roads, each the responsibility of a different body, and each complying with specific standards:

- **Federal roads** – those between the country’s major towns and cities – are built and maintained by the Ethiopian Roads Authority. These are all-weather roads; about one-third are asphalted.
- **Regional, or “rural” roads** connect Zonal or *woreda* capitals to federal roads. They are managed by the Regional roads agency – in the Amhara Region, this is the Amhara Rural Roads Authority. They are all-weather roads and have a gravel surface, with drainage ditches on each side, bridges over major rivers, and culverts over minor streams.
- **Woreda, or “community” roads** connect villages to each other or to the *woreda* centre. Most have a surface of compacted earth, except in difficult areas such as steep slopes, where they have a gravel surface. Most cross streams by way of pipe culverts or fords rather than bridges. They are designed for use only in the dry season; in the wet season pedestrians and pack animals can use them. When SARDP started, no formal institution managed these roads.

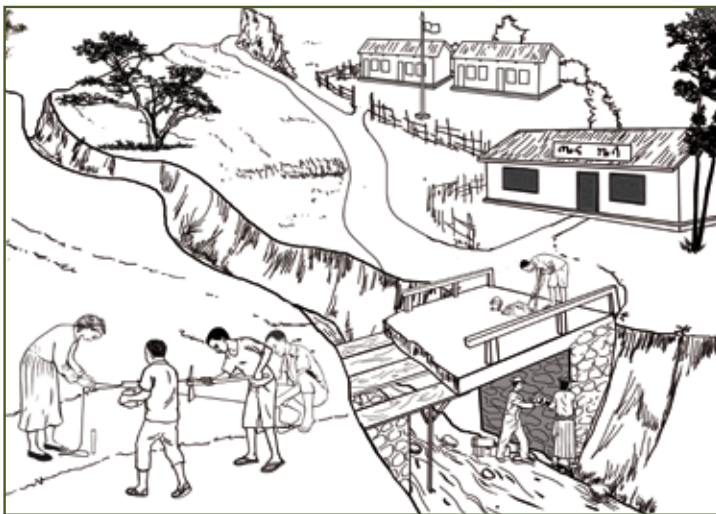
The first phase of SARDP (1997–2001) concentrated on rehabilitating rural roads and constructing community roads. During the second phase (2001–4), this work continued, and road agencies (“road desks”) were established in each *woreda* to manage community roads. The third phase (2004–10) focused on the community roads: upgrading existing roads and maintaining and expanding the network.

Rehabilitating rural roads

In the early 1990s, numerous responsibilities were decentralized to Ethiopia’s new Regional governments. The Amhara Rural Roads Authority was formed in 1995 and took over responsibility for over 1,500 kilometres of rural roads from



Rivers are a major barrier in the Amhara Region, especially in the wet season



SARDP supported the construction of 10 major bridges



A new bridge makes it easier for people to climb out of poverty

the Ethiopian Roads Authority. But these roads were in poor condition: they had been badly maintained, and many were impassable, even for four-wheel-drive vehicles. Heavy rains turned poorly constructed drains on either side of the roads into gullies that ate into the landscape.

In its first two phases, SARDP rehabilitated or reconstructed over 437 km of such roads (306 km in South Wollo, and 131 km in East Gojjam). Two of these are described below.

Bichena–Debre Markos

This 67 km road connects the towns of Bichena (capital of Enemay *woreda*), Quiy (Debay Tilategin *woreda*) and Debre Markos (capital of East Gojjam Zone). The 22 km section from Bichena to Quiy was in poor condition but usable, but the 45 km from Quiy to Debre Markos was impassable, forcing people to walk or travel via a roundabout route of 120 km.

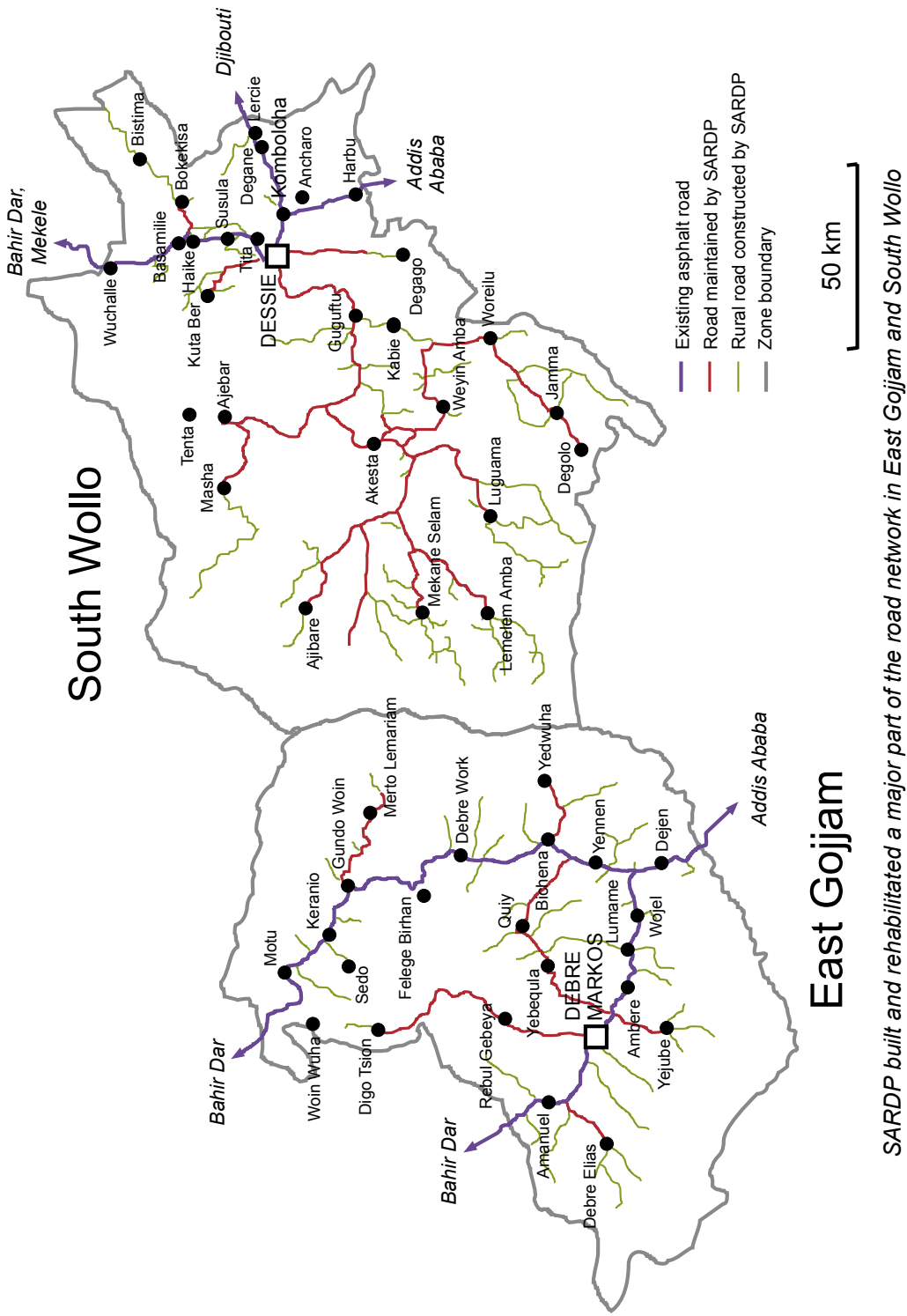
After the entire 67 km stretch was rehabilitated, traffic of both passengers and freight vehicles grew quickly. Farm produce can now be sent easily from Debay Tilategin to markets in Debre Markos and beyond, while agricultural inputs, consumer products and people can easily reach Quiy. Vehicles no longer have to travel via the roundabout route, and the lack of a road is no longer a constraint to economic and social development in these towns.

Guguftu–Mekane Selam

The road from Guguftu to Akesta and Mekane Selam is 140 km long. Before the rehabilitation, it used to take 12 hours to travel from Guguftu to Mekane Selam using a four-wheel drive vehicle. Buses and heavy trucks were unthinkable. A fare then cost between 70 and 100 birr per person, and only lucky people were able to get a place on one of the few, unreliable vehicles plying the route. Transporting goods and grain depended heavily on pack animals.

Since the road was rehabilitated, public and freight vehicles operate regularly. It now takes just 3 hours to travel from Guguftu to Mekane Salem. The cost of transport has fallen dramatically. In addition, other roads that link to this main route have also been rehabilitated or maintained, providing transport links to seven *woredas* in western South Wollo.

The number of vehicles on the road has boomed: from only five vehicles a day before rehabilitation, to more than 100 vehicles only a year after completion. That reflects a major boost to the local economy and a reduction in poverty in the area. A unit has been established in Akesta to maintain the road. Because of its potential to contribute to the national economy, the road is currently being extended to Merto Lemariam and Gundo Woin, and the federal government is upgrading it to the federal road standard to cope with the expanded traffic.



SARDP built and rehabilitated a major part of the road network in East Gojjam and South Wollo

Like climbing a mountain

It is only 21 km by road from Gerba to Adamie, in Kalu *woreda*, South Wollo. But only the first 3 km are flat: the rest means negotiating steep slopes. Until 2007, the only way to do so was on foot, and a one-way journey took 5–6 hours. Farmers would leave Adamie 3 hours after midnight to lead their horses and camels over the mountains to get to the market in Gerba, then start back to Adamie the same day: 12 hours' hard travelling for just a 42 km round trip.

The only crop that made this journey worthwhile was *khat*, a mildly intoxicating herb that many Ethiopians chew. But *khat* has to be delivered fresh – forcing growers and traders to make daily return trips. Farmers in Adamie could grow other crops – beans, peas and lentils – as well as raise eucalyptus seedlings and livestock, but they found few buyers in the small local market, so fetched low prices.

When SARDP offered to fund a project in Adamie, the community said a road was their top priority. They readily agreed to provide the 25% of the cost, as required by SARDP, in the form of labour, materials and funds. Construction of the road began in 2007 using local labour and heavy equipment rented by SARDP; it was completed in 2008.

The community had agreed to maintain the road, but the construction standards were high and the route is important, so the Amhara Rural Roads Authority agreed to upgrade it to a Regional road and take over responsibility for the maintenance.

Now nine medium-sized trucks and five buses (which can each carry 30 people) serve the route. Several of these vehicles are owned by local people. The farmers in Adamie still grow *khat*, but they can now also sell other crops and livestock at distant markets. Prices of agricultural produce have risen in the Adamie market as a result: a eucalyptus building pole grown in Adamie used to sell for a mere 3 birr; now it fetches 25 birr. Farmers have diversified into cattle fattening, growing fruits such as apples, and selling fruit-tree seedlings. Many local residents have opened shops along the road.

Health workers and teachers are now willing to work in Adamie. Adamie and other villages on the road now have electricity from the national grid. Children from Adamie can attend secondary school in Gidan, 12 km to the other side of Gerba; it is too far to come home every day, so they have to stay in Gidan, but their parents can send them fresh food every day.

Length–person maintenance system

It is vital to fill potholes, repair bridges, remove silt from drainage ditches, and spread fresh gravel on steep sections. Otherwise even the best constructed road will quickly fall into disrepair. Potholes grow and multiply; heavy downpours turn ditches into gullies, and roads turn into rivers.

Every roads authority knows this. But what is the best way to maintain the thousands of kilometres it is responsible for? Money is short, equipment is scarce, and the potholes are many. Until recently, the Amhara Rural Roads Authority would send out teams with heavy equipment to repair each road on a regular basis – perhaps once every 2 or 3 years. But this system was expensive and ineffective: a year between repairs is a long time for a road that climbs steep slopes and crosses poorly drained swamps.

SARDP introduced a solution to this problem. It paid individual local residents as contractors: each person had to maintain one kilometre of a road. They were given hand tools and a cart, and could work whenever they wanted, for as long as they wanted. They could employ family members or get together with neighbouring contractors if they wished. This flexibility meant that they could also

Testing road-maintenance methods

It was difficult to convince the heads of the maintenance offices that the length-person maintenance method would be a good approach. So SARDP suggested an experiment: a comparison between the old system and the length-person method. The Rural Roads Authority selected two roads in South Wollo: a 48-km stretch from Buso to Sayint, and a 26-km road from Amba Mariam to Masha. These two roads were of similar age, standard and traffic volume. About half the Buso–Sayint road was over mountainous and hilly terrain; this was chosen to test the length-person method. The Amba Mariam–Masha road was over flat and rolling terrain; it was maintained using the conventional method.

With SARDP support, the Wollo maintenance office contracted 48 individuals each to maintain one kilometre of the Buso–Sayint road. The first 2 months were difficult: the supervisors were too lenient, and the contractors regarded themselves as casual employees who would be paid monthly even if they did not do any work. These initial problems were quickly corrected, and all the contractors im-

proved their performance, so it was not necessary to terminate anyone's contract.

After two years, the Authority and all the heads of the roads maintenance offices checked the two roads. They found that the Buso–Sayint road was in good condition, even though it was on more difficult terrain than the Amba Mariam–Masha road. The maintenance cost was only birr 2,250 per kilometre – far less than the 20,000 birr needed for capital-intensive maintenance on the Amba Mariam–Masha road.

That was enough to convince the Roads Authority and the maintenance office heads. They understood that close follow up by supervisors was key to success: administering an apparently simple contract was complex. They also realized that the length of road that one person could maintain depended on the terrain: they adjusted the contracts so that someone in a flat area would be responsible for maintaining up to 2 km of road, while in a hilly area one person would look after only 1 km.

do their farm work when they needed to. They were also to report any damage to the road that they could not repair themselves. The Roads Authority then brought in heavy equipment to fix the problem. The contractor was paid birr 90 at the end of every month, provided that the road was in good condition. If not, no money was paid.

This “length-person” maintenance scheme requires that a supervisor frequently inspect each contractor’s stretch of the road. If the stretch is poorly maintained, the supervisor may reprimand the contractor orally or in writing, withhold payment, or even terminate the contract.

The Amhara Rural Roads Authority has since adopted this system to maintain all the roads under its jurisdiction. Gradually the federal road agency, the Ethiopian Roads Authority, and roads authorities in all the Regions in Ethiopia have adopted the same approach. The length-person maintenance system is now part of the operations in every road agency in the country.

Constructing community roads

Before the commencement of SARDP, nobody was responsible for building and maintaining community roads – the small roads that link villages to other villages and to the *woreda* capitals. Some roads were just expanded trails, while others had been built by a project but had been allowed to degrade over time.

The bridge over the Muga River in Dejen woreda, East Gojjam, avoids a hazardous river crossing where many had lost their lives



To build a road to their village, one community in Sayint woreda, South Wollo, used hand tools to dig out the rock to a depth of 12 m



It was necessary to involve the community in building and maintaining these roads. Under the local planning programme introduced by SARDP (page 128), the communities themselves selected their priorities. If they chose to construct a road, they had to agree to maintain it after its completion. The community members also had to contribute 25% of the cost of the construction, normally by contributing labour and building materials, or even their scarcest resource – money.

Building and maintaining a road takes skill. The *woreda* administrations selected unemployed youths and sent them for 3 months' training at the Ethiopian Roads Authority's training centre. The trainees were assigned as foremen to lead the communities in building and maintaining roads. Some 350 foremen were trained, with SARDP covering training costs for the first two groups.

The foremen still lacked experience, so SARDP employed engineers to assist and guide them. SARDP also provided the equipment to maintain the roads: two tractors with trailers and a motorbike to each *woreda*, as well as one heavy motorized roller for two or three *woredas*. SARDP allocated the budget needed to build the planned roads through its block grant scheme (page 126).

Maintaining community roads

The *woreda* road desks organize the community, but it is the community that is responsible for maintaining its roads. Each community appoints one or more local people as road caretakers to handle this task. They check the condition of the road in their area and decide if any work needs to be done. For small repairs,

they organize a group of villagers to do the work. For larger repairs, or if they need materials or equipment, they call on the *woreda* road desk, which sends a foreman to assist. SARDP has arranged for the foremen to train more than 1,700 road caretakers on how to check the road condition and on simple maintenance techniques.

The length–person maintenance system is not used on community roads: residents of roadside communities are expected to provide labour for free. The length–person system is used on the larger, Regional roads which have a budget managed by the Amhara Rural Roads Authority.

If a *woreda* upgrades a community road to a Regional road standard (e.g., by adding a gravel surface and making it all-weather), it can, with the agreement of the Amhara Rural Roads Authority, hand over responsibility for the road to the Authority. The costs of maintenance are then covered by the federal road fund, and routine repairs are managed through the length–person system.

Capacity building for roads

SARDP built a fully equipped office building, a warehouse and workshop for the Amhara Rural Roads Authority in Bahar Dar, and it provided tractors, trailers, motorized rollers, stone crushers, four-wheel-drive vehicles, and other equipment.

There used to be no organization at the *woreda* level to manage community roads. As a result of SARDP's initiatives, the Amhara Rural Roads Authority has established a "road desk" in each *woreda* to manage its roads. A road desk has a staff of 5–8 people: a head, several trained foremen, and two tractor operators, as well as the equipment they need. They organize the communities into work gangs to build, upgrade or maintain roads that serve each village.

A number of long and short-term training sessions were organized for *woreda* and Amhara Rural Roads Authority staff, as well as on-the-job training for *woreda* staff on road-building techniques, surveying, pipe culvert installation, slab culvert design, contract administration and other activities.

Impacts of roads

The impact of SARDP's work on roads is easy to see. Passenger and freight vehicles can now operate regularly on the upgraded roads, and transport costs have fallen. Larger vehicles can now serve the routes, and some local entrepreneurs have bought lorries or buses to meet the rising demand for transport. Farmers can sell their produce more profitably at more distant markets, and they have been able to diversify their crops. People in remote areas can now reach markets, schools and health facilities more easily. They can buy farm inputs and manufactured goods more easily and at lower prices. Teachers and other government staff are now more willing to be posted to remote areas.

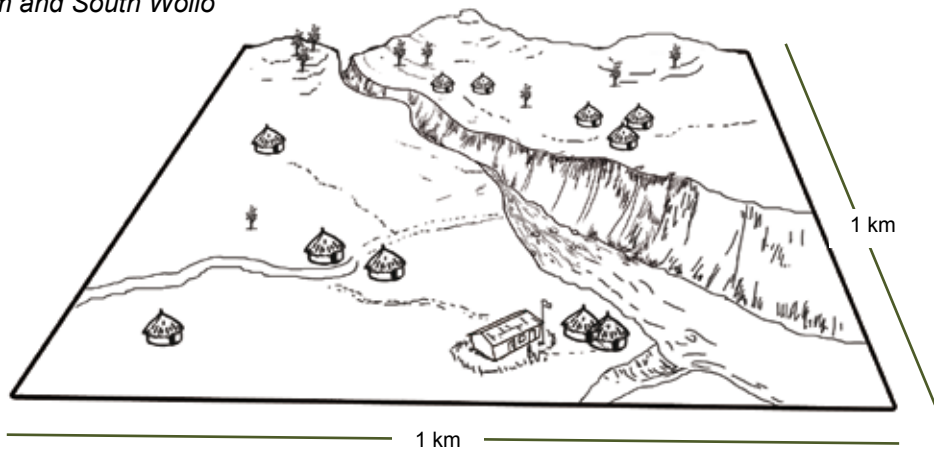
The hole in the floor is closed forever

Ato Jemal Mohammed owns a lorry in Adamie. "I was a farmer and petty trader", he says. "I worked hard, but I did not earn much. I used to hide my little money in a hole in the floor underneath my bed."

After the road to Gerba was built, the market at Adamie began to grow fast. It attracted farmers and traders from nearby *woredas*.

"I made business trips to nearby towns. My income doubled, tripled and quadrupled. I bought a lorry, expanded my trade and intensified my farming. Now I use the banks to keep my money safe; the hole I dug in my floor is closed forever."

In 2004, there were 85 metres of roads per square kilometre in East Gojjam and South Wollo



In 2010, at end of SARDP, there were 120 metres of road per square kilometre



Road construction supported by SARDP between 2004 and 2010

Safe drinking water

Many people in villages and rural towns in the Amhara Region have access only to unsafe drinking water. They get the water they need for drinking, washing and other domestic uses from springs, open wells, rivers or ponds. This water may be contaminated with human or animal excreta, and people drink it unboiled, either because they do not understand the need to boil it, or because they lack the fuel. The inevitable result: diarrhoea, dysentery and giardia – which kill many people, especially children. The lack of water means people cannot wash, resulting in various skin diseases.

Fetching water is normally the job of women and children. They may have to walk several kilometres to fetch a jerry can of water from the nearest well or stream. In the dry season, many water sources dry up, forcing them to walk even further.

Supplying water

Most improved rural water supply systems in the Amhara Region fall into three types: hand-dug wells, shallow or deep wells, and capped springs.

Hand-dug wells. These may be up to 16 m deep, and are dug by hand and lined with reinforced concrete. The well is capped with a masonry-and-concrete cover to prevent the water inside from being contaminated, and a raised masonry structure where people fetching water can place their jerry cans while they are filling them. The water is drawn out using a hand-pump. A hand-dug well can supply water for drinking and cooking for an average of 180 people – the size of a typical village in the Amhara Region.

In villages, people come to fetch water at the well itself. The wells are sited well away from the village to prevent the groundwater that feeds the well from being contaminated by excreta.

Shallow wells and deep wells. For larger settlements, hand-dug wells cannot supply enough water for everyone's needs. One option is to drill shallow or deep wells by machine. A shallow well can be 50 m deep, while deep wells can be as much as 250 m deep. Both types are narrow (15–20 cm wide) boreholes, lined with a steel casing which is perforated at the bottom to allow the water to percolate into the well. The water is drawn out by a submersible pump inside the well, powered by electricity or a diesel generator.

Springs. In some areas, it is possible to tap natural springs – either fed by gravity (for example, at the foot of a slope) or artesian (in a flat area where the pressure forces the water up to the surface). The spring is capped with masonry and concrete, and the water is piped into a collection chamber from where people can fill their jerry cans.

From the well or spring, a pipe leads the water to the rural town, which may be several kilometres away. It feeds a reservoir – either built on the ground, or a steel



A typical hand-dug well can supply enough water for 180 people

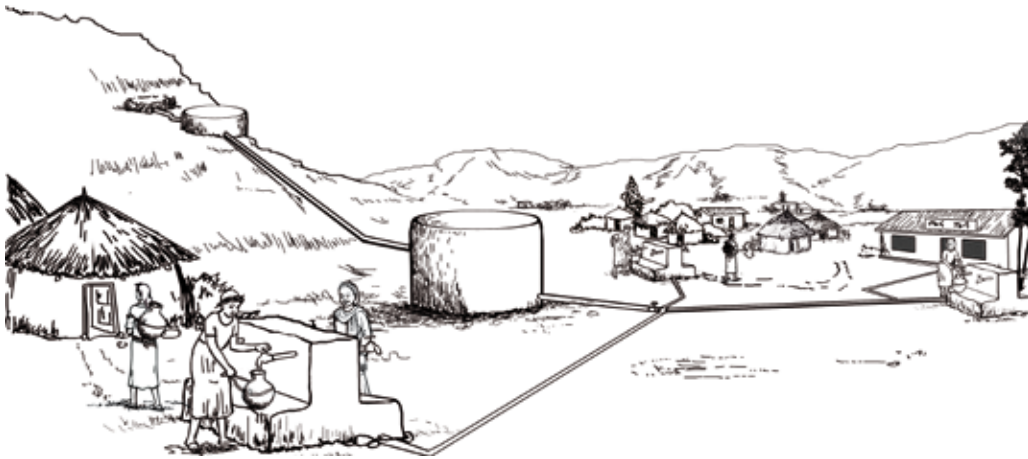
water tower, depending on the local topography. The reservoir in turn feeds public water points or taps in individual houses or institutions such as schools, offices and clinics. Where possible, the water flows by gravity, though it may be necessary to pump it up to a higher level using diesel- or electric-powered pumps.

Some of these schemes supply water for livestock as well as people. It is necessary to keep livestock out of the catchment area to conserve vegetation and prevent contamination.

Planning and building

When a community requested a water supply scheme, the *woreda* water resources development office studied the feasibility of various alternatives and selected the best option. The water office experts designed the scheme and estimated the cost with the help of a SARDP technical adviser. They together submitted a proposal to the SARDP programme coordination office for approval. The water office could then begin construction. Larger structures and complex schemes were contracted out using a tender procedure; the water office's own construction team handled smaller and less complex schemes itself. The community had to contribute 25% of the total cost of the scheme – normally in the form of labour and construction materials such as wood, stone and sand, and the hand tools the labourers used.

If everything ran smoothly, the process was very fast: from first proposal to completion, it could take as little as 6 weeks. Such a quick response was very encouraging for local people: they could see that the government was responding to their requests quickly and efficiently. This was possible because the activity and the SARDP funds were managed by the *woreda* itself, without complex bureaucratic procedures at the Zonal or Regional government levels.



Water from a capped spring can supply the needs of a small rural town

Maintenance and payment

In many countries, maintenance is a frequent problem in rural water supply systems. In the SARDP *woredas*, maintenance is generally more successful because of a combination of elected water users' committees and user fees. The water supply schemes supported by SARDP adopted this approach. It works like this:

- For each scheme, the community's general assembly elects a water users' committee of seven members, including 2–3 women. This committee is responsible for the day-to-day running of the water supply scheme: collecting fees from each water user, and performing minor maintenance (such as replacing a hand pump or repairing a fence). They report problems that require more expert maintenance (such as burst pipes) to the *woreda* water office. They use the fees they collect to cover the costs of the maintenance.
- The fee payment depends on the type of scheme. For village schemes, the general assembly sets the amount of the fee – typically 5–10 birr per person per year. The water user's committee collects this fee at the annual general assembly.
- In towns, the public water points are fenced, and a guard collects a fee for each jerry can from each water user. Individual standpipes have water meters, and the committee charges per cubic metre of water used each month. Larger schemes are managed by town water service offices.
- The water committee is also responsible for encouraging people to use the improved water supply (which they have to pay for), as well as to practise good hygiene and sanitation. Because the committee members are community residents, they know about the problems and concerns of their neighbours and can deal quickly with problems as they arise.

Three springs to serve Yedwuha

The people of Yedwuha, the capital of Shebel Berenta *woreda* in East Gojjam, used to fetch their water from wells and unprotected springs around the town. Contaminated supplies resulted in many cases of water-borne diseases, and women had to devote a lot of time to fetch water every day.

Providing water to the town's 6,500 residents proved a challenge. There was no large spring nearby that could be capped. Then there was the topography: the area is flat, so the water would not flow under gravity into the town.

SARDP allocated birr 1.92 million to build a water supply system for Yedwuha. Engineers capped three springs up to 7 km away from the town, then laid pipes to bring the water to a large, circular reservoir. From this reservoir, they installed pipes and an electric pump to bring water to the town.

The whole scheme is now managed by the town's water supply office, which collects fees from users. The office has a reserve of birr 100,000 to pay for maintenance and repairs.

SARDP's rural water supply work

Before 2004, water was the responsibility of the *woreda* offices of agriculture. But the demand for water supply systems was so great that it was decided to transfer this function to a newly created *woreda* water resources development office. This office has about a dozen staff: surveyors, construction specialists and technical staff. SARDP technical advisers trained them in the particular skills needed to plan and build water supply systems in collaboration with the community. The SARDP technical advisers and *woreda* staff also trained *kebele* artisans in digging wells, building masonry and laying pipes, and so on.

Between 2003/4 and 2010, SARDP developed 1,192 water supply systems for villages in East Gojjam and South Wollo (see the table below). It built systems to serve four rural towns in East Gojjam (Digo Tsion, Yedwuha, Amanuel and Segno Gebeya) and one in South Wollo (Salmeni), and paid part of the cost of supplying water to Gundo Woin, Yejube, Dejen, Debre Eyesus and Lumame in East Gojjam, and Mekane Selam in South Wollo.

Water systems built through SARDP, 1997–2010

	Systems built	People served
Village supply systems		
• Wells	620	220,000
• Capped springs	560	230,000
Rural town water supplies	12	90,000
Total	1,192	540,000

Supplying water to Digo Tsion

Digo Tsion is a small but rapidly growing town in East Gojjam. Its water supply system – built in 1998 and using a diesel pump to raise water from a bore-hole nearby – was designed to serve a population of 3,000. But by 2008, the town's population has grown to more than 12,000. A new supply of water was urgently needed.

SARDP allocated birr 1.4 million to construct a new scheme to bring water from an artesian spring 4 km away, and pipe it to a 30 m³ capacity water tower

in the town. From there it flows into a distribution network supplying eight new public water points (as well as the four older ones), as well as the secondary school, health centre and government offices.

The new scheme was completed in 2009, and is expected to serve the town's needs until 2024. Because the scheme relies on gravity rather than on an expensive pump, it has been possible to reduce the fees the users have to pay.

By 2009/10, more than two-thirds of the rural population of East Gojjam and South Wollo had access to safe water. The majority of this was supplied by SARDP-supported initiatives (see the figure on page 97).

Building these water systems has two major benefits: the incidence of dysentery and other water-borne diseases has fallen, and women and children have to spend less time each day fetching water, since they have to walk only around 500 m to the water source instead of 1–2 km or more. This frees time they can better spend on other tasks, such as running small businesses and doing their school work. The result: healthier people, and a more prosperous community.

Building schools and health facilities

Education and health are two major needs in the Amhara Region. Ethiopian parents are prepared to go to great lengths to ensure that their children get an education. But many children have no opportunity to attend even primary school: there are few schools, and those that do exist are overcrowded and have few of the facilities that they require, such as furniture and chalkboards. Children have to walk for miles to reach school: they arrive tired and hungry. There is a very real danger of the girls being molested on the way – or even being kidnapped by young men seeking a wife (sadly, abducting young women and forcing them into marriage is a tradition in much of rural Ethiopia). Understandably, many parents prefer to keep their daughters at home rather than subjecting them to such risks. The result is that many more boys than girls receive an education.

Many adults have not had the opportunity to learn how to read and write, or they have lost their skills because of lack of practice.

Malaria, diarrhoea and contagious diseases are common. Most mothers deliver their babies at home. Many mothers and children die because of elementary complications that require equipment and assistance from experienced health workers. Few children receive periodic health checks and vaccinations.

All these problems are easily overcome if adequate health facilities are nearby. People can prevent many problems by themselves if they know how. But health services are scarce, and preventive care and awareness of health and hygiene are limited.

Building schools

SARDP has contributed to solving these problems by building primary schools and extra classrooms, adult education centres, as well as maintaining existing schools, throughout East Gojjam and South Wollo.

A typical primary school built by SARDP consists of two blocks of four classrooms each, plus a staff room, pit latrines, a playground, and perhaps residential quarters for the teachers. A classroom can hold 50 pupils, so the school can serve 400 children in all. The school also needs desks and benches for the children, as well as chalkboards, books and teaching supplies. SARDP built 241 such schools between 2004 and 2010 (see the figure on page 97).

SARDP has also built alternative basic education schools for adults in most *kebeles* in the two Zones, and has provided them with furniture and books. Adults can learn basic literacy skills as well as new farming techniques. These schools are run by the *woreda* office of education.

Providing health facilities

A SARDP health post is a single building with rooms for outpatients, a surgery to treat injuries and an office for the nursing staff. It is designed to serve a population of about 5,000 people.

A health centre is a larger facility: it has several buildings to house an outpatient unit, a laboratory, a pharmacy, a surgery, a delivery room, a family planning clinic, perhaps a tuberculosis and leprosy section, and so on. Equipment includes furniture, cabinets, a refrigerator, a microscope, etc. The health centre is managed by a health officer, several nurses, two pharmacists, and a laboratory technician. It is designed to serve a population of 25,000 people.

SARDP built 216 health posts and 35 health centres between 2004 and 2010, and upgraded 40 health posts to health centres.

From planning to handover

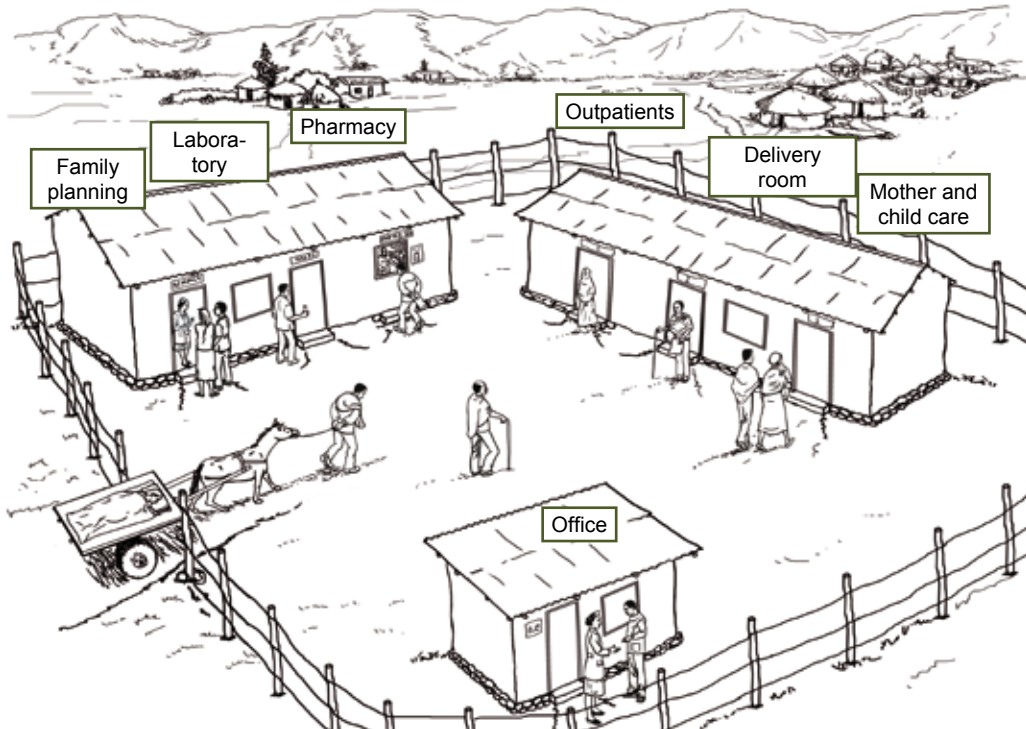
SARDP constructed and furnished primary schools and health facilities when they were requested by *woredas* through the block grant (page 126) and community development fund schemes (page 136). As with other items funded under these

schemes, the local community was required to contribute 25% of the cost, usually in the form of labour and construction materials.

Once built, the schools were handed over to the *woreda* education office, which provided the teachers and managed the school from day to day. The facilities were maintained by the *kebele* board for education and training. The health facilities were staffed by the *woreda* health office; the health centres were maintained by the *woreda* office, while the health committee established by the community was responsible for maintaining the health posts.

Impacts

The schools and health facilities have had a major impact on local people's lives. Through SARDP, the number of schools in East Gojjam and South Wollo rose by 68% between 2004 and 2010. Most rural *kebeles* in the SARDP *woredas* now have a primary school – making it possible for thousands of children to go to school for the first time. The quality of education has greatly increased, and parents no longer fear to send their daughters to school as the schools now are located close to their homes.



A health centre offers a range of primary health services

Malaria and diarrhoea under control in Kork

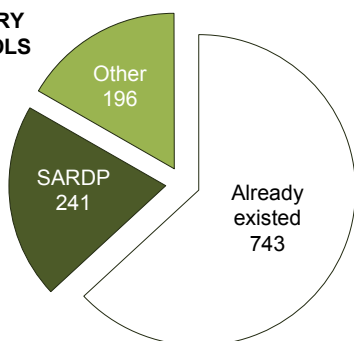
The health centre in Kork, a small town in Baso Liben *woreda* in East Gojjam, was completed in 2007. It has a staff of ten. Five nurses operate sections dealing with outpatients, child-delivery, family planning, mothers and children, and tuberculosis and leprosy. Two pharmacists run a pharmacy, while a laboratory technician does diagnostic tests and analyses samples. A health extension worker provides advice on disease prevention to residents of the surrounding *kebeles*. The centre is managed by a health officer.

The centre serves a population of about 25,000 people. It is supported by four health posts (also built by SARDP) serving 5,000 people each, that provide first aid and educate people about hygiene and malaria prevention.

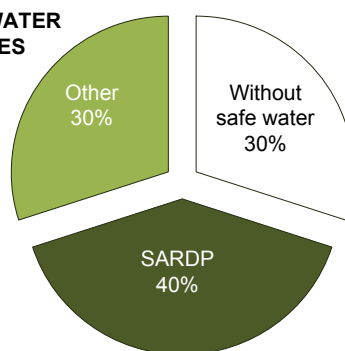
Solome Fanta, head of the health centre, says that malaria and diarrhoea have declined dramatically since the health centre was built. Malaria used to be common all year round, she says.

The health staff have encouraged people to drain stagnant water to destroy mosquito breeding places, and to use bed nets. Diarrhoea has declined because of hygiene education, the provision of clean water (another SARDP initiative), and treatment at the health posts and centre. Maternal mortality has also declined; the health centre provides delivery services to 3–4 mothers a day. Couples are more able to plan their families because of the awareness activities by health centre staff, who also provide free birth-control pills and contraceptive implants supplied by NGOs.

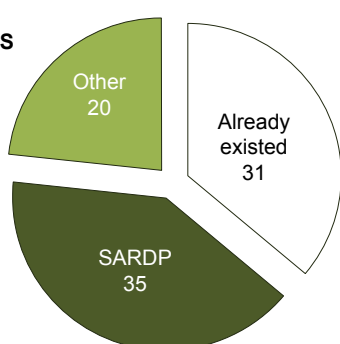
PRIMARY SCHOOLS



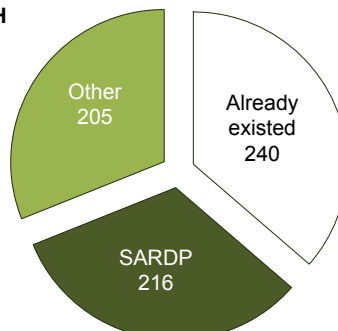
SAFE WATER SUPPLIES



HEALTH CENTRES



HEALTH POSTS



Rural water supplies, schools and health facilities in East Gojjam and South Wollo built by SARDP III, 2004–10

Staff at the health posts and health centres not only provide treatment; they also educate local people about hygiene, the benefits of clean water and how to prevent diseases. They vaccinate children, advise adults about family planning (and provide contraceptive pills and implants), and raise awareness about HIV and AIDS. They give pregnant women regular check-ups, and refer problems they cannot handle to the nearest hospital.

The incidence of diseases has fallen as a result of the expansion in the health facilities. Malaria, diarrhoea and other diseases have become less common, and people can get treatment more easily and closer to home. As a result of awareness programmes, they have eliminated breeding grounds for mosquitoes and have fitted nets on their beds. Infant and maternal mortality have fallen. Access to family planning means women have fewer children, are healthier, and can contribute more to the family's income.

Better health means a more productive workforce. People waste less time traveling in search of treatment, and spend less on medicine. Overcoming basic health problems pushes a community into a virtuous cycle: healthier people can produce more food, so have a better diet, so are better able to work and produce more.

Lessons

Capacity building of *woreda* institutions and staff is vital for successful infrastructure development. Staff not only need technical capabilities in design and construction. They also require training in contract administration and project management. For participatory projects, they need to know how to work with the community right from the start – from project identification and design all the way through to construction and maintenance. This requires a wider range of skills than is normal for technically trained engineers.

Continuous training. Ethiopia has a major shortage of qualified infrastructure specialists. People who are trained can easily find jobs elsewhere, often with better pay. Staff turnover is inevitably high, and it is necessary continuously to recruit and train new staff. From the point of view of a specific development project, this can be seen as a waste of resources. But from the point of view of the country as a whole, it is not – since staff will use their new skills in other areas, spreading their knowledge and benefiting the country's broader development.

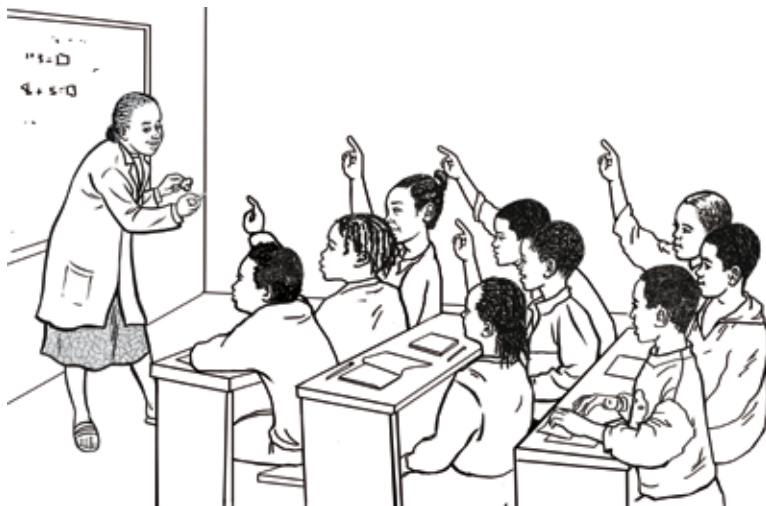
Community participation in decision making is an integral part of every intervention. Committed participation from planning to implementation stage is vital for the benefits of infrastructure development to be sustained over the long term. A community that sets its priorities and makes plans will contribute to the work while gaining a strong sense of ownership, and is far more likely to maintain the project into the future. This is very different from a situation where everything is decided top-down, and people wait for the government to solve even the smallest problems.

Local community organization and responsibility. It may be best for community members to manage and maintain certain types of infrastructure to ensure their sustainability. To do this, they must be organized and given the authority and responsibility. For water supply and irrigation schemes, for example, users elect committees to operate the schemes, collect user fees, employ guards, and encourage people to use clean water. These committees have their own bylaws to govern their work.

Creation of institutions to manage infrastructure. For other types of infrastructure, it was necessary to create local government institutions to manage the structures. An example of this is the *woreda* road desk, which was created to manage community roads, employ a small team of trained foremen and technical staff to manage the roads, and have equipment for construction and upgrading. Community participation is vital for this system to function: the road desk staff organize local people to contribute the labour necessary to maintain roads serving their villages.

Contracting maintenance to local entrepreneurs. For certain types of infrastructure, it may be best to contract out the maintenance to individuals or groups of people. The length-person maintenance system is an example of this approach. It is cheaper and more effective than the previous method of maintaining Regional roads at periodic intervals. The local contractors must be supervised closely and paid according to their performance. They cannot be expected to solve all problems that arise: a skilled team with heavy equipment must be ready to come to do major repair work when necessary.

Learning and scaling up. SARDP has developed a number of techniques and approaches that have been adopted at a Regional and a national scale. Its success with community road construction and maintenance has inspired a demand



Building local schools gives more children – especially girls – the chance to get an education

to improve and expand such roads throughout Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Roads Authority, the federal road agency, later launched the Ethiopian Travel and Transport Programme to build community roads throughout the country. It has opened a new training centre, at Chanco, to handle the demand for training foremen. Other Regions have copied the idea of managing roads at the *woreda* level; each Region has adapted the model to suit its own situation. Road desks have been established in all *woredas* in the Amhara Region. The length-person maintenance scheme has been copied throughout Ethiopia.

Still a lot to do. SARDP has achieved notable successes in rural infrastructure development. But there is still a lot to do. The road density is still low compared to many African countries. Half of the rural population in East Gojjam and South Wollo are still without access to safe water. Many areas that could be irrigated remain dry. More schools and health centres are needed. But SARDP has shown that in a short time it is possible to make a significant contribution to improving the infrastructure of a large area, and it has developed approaches that make this possible.

A close-up photograph of a woman with a black headwrap and a green shirt. She is looking down at a green cup she is holding, from which water is being poured. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with wooden poles and dry ground. The text 'Promoting equality for women and men' is overlaid in large white letters on the right side of the image.

Promoting equality for women and men

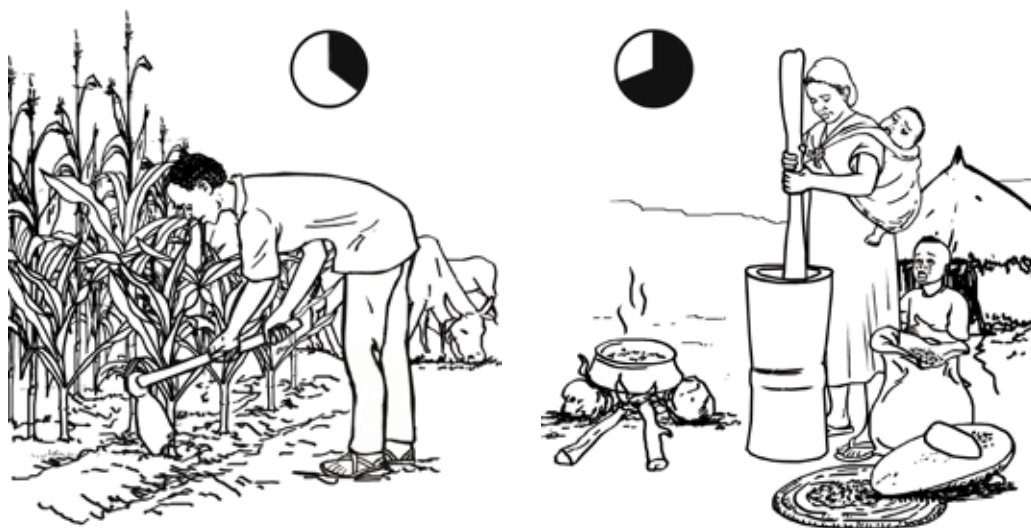
Providing safe drinking water nearby is one way
to reduce the workload of rural women

Promoting equality for women and men

Wubit Shiferaw

GET UP BEFORE DAWN in rural Ethiopia, and someone will be awake before you. The men will be on their way to the fields, or maybe driving the cattle off in search of pasture. The women will be cooking food for the day, preparing the *injera* (a type of fermented pancake made of teff that is the staple food in much of Ethiopia). The sun rises to reveal the smoke from cooking fires rising over the village.

Work continues throughout the day. After the children have eaten and have left for school, and when the chickens have been fed and the house cleaned, the women go off to the fields to help their husbands with the weeding or harvest, taking with them the food they prepared earlier. They come back home in the afternoon, and take their earthen pots down to the spring to fetch water. If the family's stock of cooking fuel is low, they collect firewood or dried dung to burn. When the



Men and women tend to be responsible for different types of work. Women generally work longer each day than men

Three major roles of women (and men)

Men and women have many tasks in their daily lives.



“Productive work” brings in money or food. It includes growing crops, raising livestock, making items to sell, marketing goods, wage labour, and formal employment. Many of these tasks are seen as a man’s responsibility, though women also spend many hours doing them.



“Reproductive work” maintains the family and the household. It includes grinding flour, cooking food for the family, house-work, childbearing, taking care of children, making clothes, fetching fuel and water, and building and repairing houses. The majority of these tasks are normally done by women.



“Community work” contributes to the community as a whole. It includes preparing for weddings and funerals, taking care of sick neighbours, building and maintaining community facilities such as roads and schools, as well as attending meetings and resolving conflicts. Both men and women are responsible for such activities, though the tasks differ: the women do the cooking, while the men tend to make most of the decisions.

children come back from school, they have their own chores: the boys go out to cut grass from the roadside and feed the young animals, while the girls help their mothers water the vegetable garden beside the house, or look after their younger brothers and sisters while their mothers prepare the food. The men come home as the sun goes down, by which time the clothes must be washed and a meal ready. The men can relax, but there is still a lot of work for the women to do: preparing the next day’s food, sewing, spinning, weaving, putting the children to bed. The women may not get to bed themselves before midnight.

As in many countries, men and women in Ethiopia tend to be responsible for different things (see the box above). The men are generally in charge of large animals, ploughing, planting and harvesting crops, construction work, and transporting and selling goods. The women tend to be responsible for maintaining the

Harmful traditional practices

Female genital mutilation. This is the surgical removal of the clitoris and labia, without anaesthetic and often under far-from-hygienic conditions – such as using a rusty razor blade. Many girls die from the resulting infection; many women endure constant pain when urinating or during sex. Millions of women are permanently denied sexual pleasure because of this procedure.

Early marriage. Parents may marry their daughters off at a very young age, often to far older men. The girls concerned have little choice in the matter.

Forced to leave school, they have no opportunity to continue their education or choose an independent career. Unhappy with the husband imposed on her, unable to cope with the responsibility of running a household, and rejected by their families, many young women run away to the nearest city, where they may resort to commercial sex work to support themselves. Those that remain with their husbands start bearing children at an early age, leading to large families and rapid population growth, as well as health problems for the mother.

household: cooking, cleaning, making clothes, caring for children, looking after the sick, and fetching fuel and water, as well as taking care of chickens and young animals, and milking cows and goats. They also work in the fields, especially on weeding and watering, as well as planting and harvesting. And of course women do things that no men can do: they bear and breastfeed children.

In many ways, women are held in high esteem in traditional Amhara culture. The Ethiopian Constitution recognizes the equal rights of women, and the country has very progressive laws concerning women's rights. But the laws are not always enforced, and in practice, women tend to have fewer opportunities, especially in rural areas. Traditionally, women are subordinate in family and society. Even though they have many responsibilities and do much of the work, their contribution tends to be less valued, and they have relatively little say in how the household's resources are used. Men make most of the important decisions, even on issues that directly concern the women. In the community, women seldom speak in public, though they are expected to prepare food for funerals and festive occasions. Women are also under-represented in politics and government.

Women in Amhara are also subject to various traditional harmful practices: customs that exploit, harm or degrade them. Two of the worst practices are female genital mutilation and early marriage (see the box above). These practices are declining as a result of increased awareness and law enforcement, though they are still prevalent in many areas.

As in all other countries, women and girls in Amhara are subject to rape and domestic violence. They are especially at risk of rape when they are on their way to school, when herding animals in the bush, or if they are living away from their families. Many husbands beat their wives or force them to have sex. Many women are not permitted to eat certain types of food when they are pregnant – just when they need a better diet to guarantee their and their unborn children's health. Many couples accept these practices and see them as part of a woman's lot in life.

SARDP's gender interventions

Increasing gender equality was a major emphasis of SARDP. Rather than organizing it as a separate set of activities, SARDP incorporated gender in all its interventions. These aimed to:

- Increase women's participation in decision-making bodies
- Increase the enrolment of girls in schools
- Increase women's capacity to generate income
- Reduce women's workloads
- Reduce the frequency of harmful traditional practices and violence against women.

SARDP used a three-fold strategy to achieve these goals: awareness raising and capacity building, mainstreaming gender, and specific initiatives.

Awareness raising and capacity building

SARDP increased the understanding of gender issues among the staff of various institutions and local people, and helped them find ways to enhance the equality of men and women. This was done in various ways:

- **Training and meetings** to raise awareness about gender issues.
- **Gender analysis exercises** to help participants understand the roles and responsibilities of men and women in the family and society.
- **"Women's forums" and "gender conversation groups"** to encourage local people to discuss development issues and plan activities to improve equality between men and women. These are described below in this chapter.
- **Gender focal persons** were assigned in each *woreda* sectoral office to ensure their colleagues included gender concerns in their planning and activities.
- **Networking**: bringing all the gender focal persons in a *woreda* or Zone together, along with NGO staff, to discuss and share ideas and experience on gender-related activities.
- **Woreda- and kebele-level committees and school clubs** working against harmful traditional practices.

Mainstreaming gender into interventions

Mainstreaming means ensuring that gender issues are incorporated in all aspects of programme activities. Mainstreaming efforts in SARDP included:

- **Representation in decision-making bodies.** SARDP required that women and men were equally represented in decision-making bodies. For example, at least three of the seven members of a community development fund planning committee had to be women (page 136).

- **Planning interventions.** In order to ensure that women had an opportunity to express their opinions, separate groups were organized for them when identifying local development needs for block grants (page 128).
- **Beneficiaries.** Activities were designed so that both women and men would benefit. Mostly, mixed groups of men and women were organized.
- **Initiatives to reduce women's workloads.** Examples included building drinking water supply systems (page 90) and health facilities (page 94), and promoting technologies such as fuel-saving stoves, pedal pumps, backyard woodlots and forage plantations.
- **Developing guidelines and strategies.** SARDP developed a series of guidelines, manuals and strategies to support and guide its gender sensitivity and mainstreaming efforts.

Initiatives specifically to benefit girls and women

Some SARDP initiatives were designed specifically for women and girls:

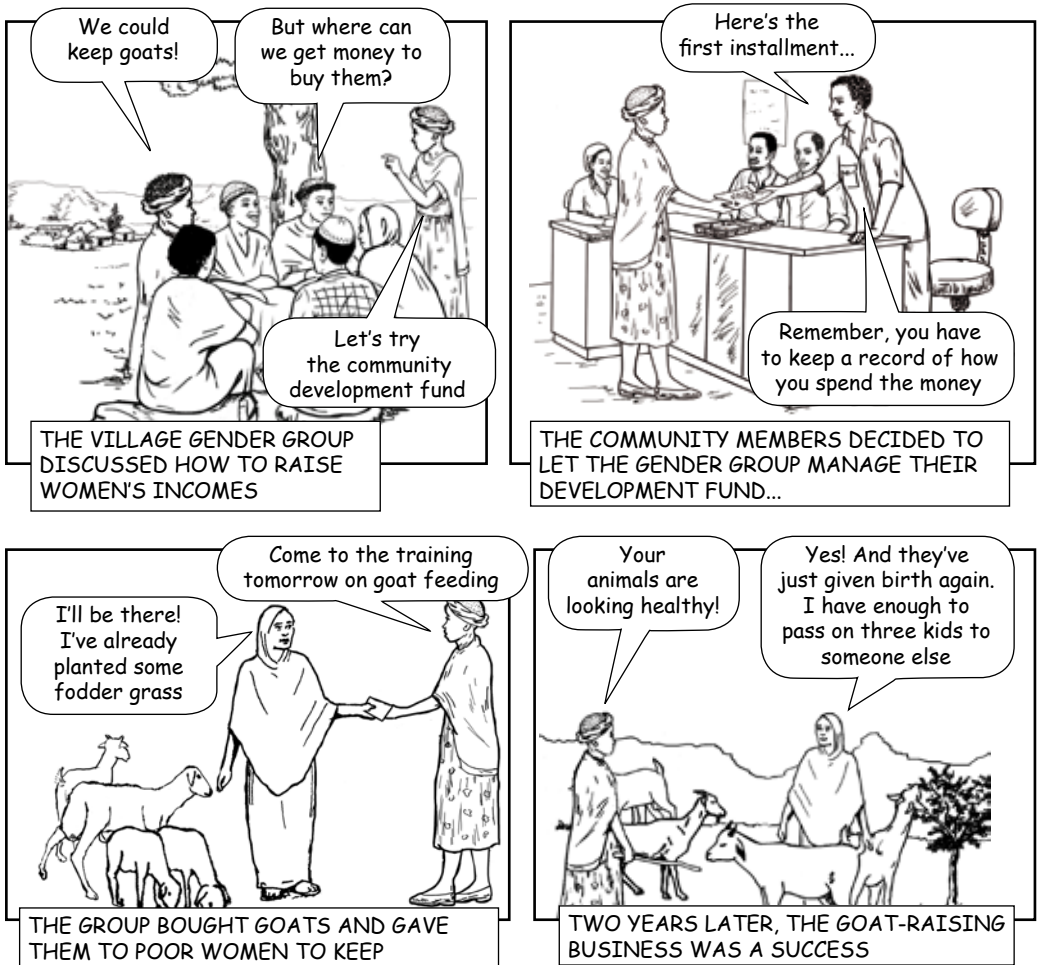
- **Women-only groups.** Where appropriate, SARDP encouraged the formation of women-only groups to generate income.
- **Girls' dormitories.** SARDP supported an initiative to build dormitories to make it easier and safer for girls to stay in school and continue their education.
- **Women's hostels.** SARDP has built hostels where women who have fled their families because of domestic violence, rape or forced marriage can find refuge and support. They can stay there while their court case is being heard, while they are on their way to hospital for treatment, or while they look for somewhere else to live.

The rest of this chapter discusses three of these initiatives: women's forums, gender discussion groups, and girls' dormitories.

Women's forums

Women's forums are discussion groups of interested women in each *kebele*. The forums aim to create opportunities for women to discuss issues freely that concern them, to exchange experiences and gain confidence in expressing themselves in public and making decisions, without the intimidating presence of men.

A forum commonly has from 50 to 150 members, who meet once a month. They select a steering committee and agree on bylaws. They identify their interests and develop an action plan. This may involve planning individual or group enterprises to earn money. For example, they may decide to start raising sheep and goats, start a handicrafts cooperative, or grow vegetables. Or they may want to focus on home improvements, such as introducing pit latrines or fuel-saving stoves.



SARDP trained the forum members about the programme's interventions and topics that members had identified: e.g., leadership skills, health, farming skills, legal literacy, crime prevention, harmful traditional practices, and government policies relating to women. The forum members sought help from the *woreda* agriculture and health offices, which considered these requests during their annual planning. They responded by providing advice, training, materials (seeds, plastic sheets, fruit tree seedlings, etc.) and financial support to the forum members so they could begin work on their chosen enterprises or home improvements.

Forum members contribute a small amount each month into a fund to support members facing an urgent need, such as paying medical expenses, taking an ill person for treatment, or buying gifts for a wedding or the birth of a child. They also contribute to an *ikub*, a traditional rotational lending scheme where everyone contributes an amount into a pot, and a lottery is held to decide who gets the pot. Many members invest their winnings as seed money for a small enterprise.

“I want to be a *kebele* administrator!”

The members of the Chereka Women Forum thought a long time about how they could make some money and feed their families better. Formed in 2006 by a group of 30 women in Adamie *kebele* in Kalu, a *woreda* in South Wollo, the group had received training on gender and various aspects of development. They listed their priorities, and in 2007 came up with a plan to start raising sheep and goats.

Because the Forum was well organized, the community decided to give it responsibility for managing the *kebele*'s community development fund. The Forum members decided to use the money to buy over 100 goats and sheep. The Forum selected 37 members to receive three animals each. Within 2 years, each of these initial beneficiaries had a flock of 10–15 animals, worth between 3–4,000 birr. Each of the initial beneficiaries was obliged to pass on three animals to another Forum member who had not received any animals. They will continue passing on animals in this way until all the women in the community have started their own flocks.

The Forum has brought many changes to the community. Many of the members' husbands have realized the contribution their wives make, and they have started doing more of the household chores. The women now have more control over the household's budget and a bigger say in decisions, both within their families and in the community as a whole. The Forum has grown; by 2009 it had 114 members.



Ansha Ali and her neighbour, Zyinetu Ahmed, with their flock of goats

Groups of women in Arabo, Harbu and Keteteya, the three other *kebeles* in Kalu *woreda*, have copied the Chereka Forum's approach and are building their own women's forums.

Ansha Ali, the Chereka Forum treasurer, is ambitious. She has decided to go one step further: to sell her goats and buy a cow. She has a strong vision for the future of women in the *kebele*. “I want to be a *kebele* administrator!”, she says.

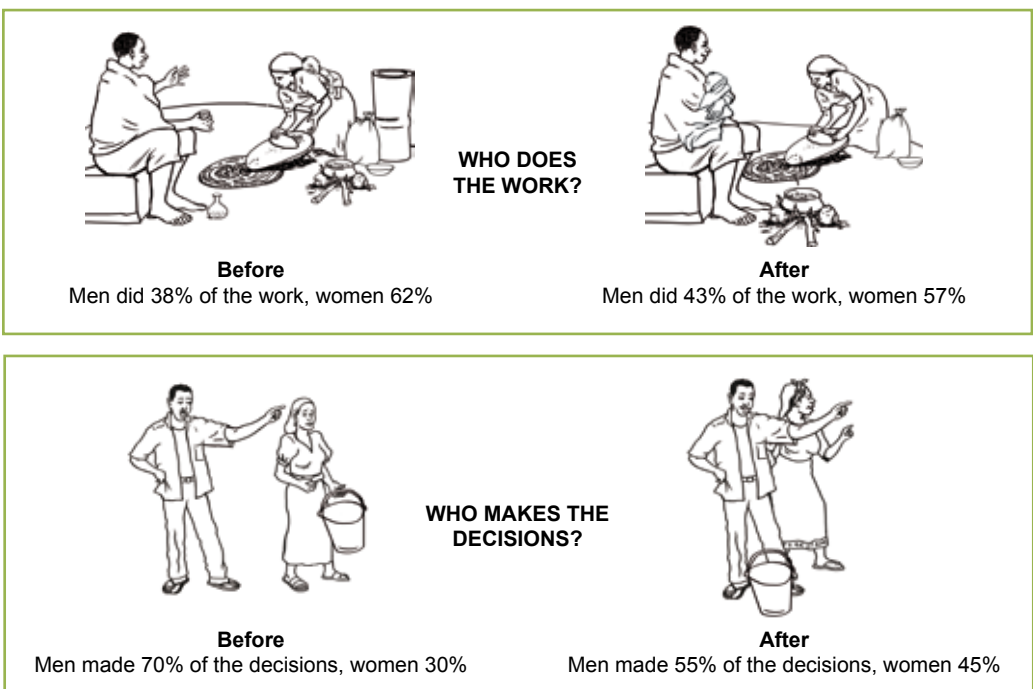
Gender conversation groups

A gender conversation group is similar to a women's forum, only it includes men as well as women – most often married couples. Such groups are formed after a gender analysis exercise. This exercise brings husbands and wives together to discuss who does what types of work in the household, who controls the money and other family resources, who makes what decisions, who has access to services such as education, health and water, and how benefits are shared among the family. This exercise is often an eye-opener for both husband and wife: both come to realize that normally the man manages most of the family's resources and makes the big decisions, while the woman does more than half the work, but benefits relatively little. After taking part in these exercises, both men and women become eager to change the situation.

The gender conversation group is formed immediately after such an exercise. Husbands and wives who have taken part in the exercise together become members. The objective of the group is to improve gender equality by narrowing the gender gaps – i.e., by involving both husband and wife in planning and decision-making, increasing women’s control over assets, dividing the burden of labour, and increasing the accessibility of services also for women.

Instead of the men alone making the major decisions about farming and family affairs, the husband and wife can discuss the issues and make joint decisions. Men and women share the labour burden or invest in labour-saving techniques, such as a fuel-saving stove to reduce the amount of wood that needs to be fetched, or planting forage grass to save time used to collect fodder. The women can use the time they have spared to earn money and attend public meetings. After attending a gender analysis exercise, many men are more faithful to their wives, drink less alcohol, and avoid spending money on unnecessary expenses. Family arguments also tend to subside because the husband and wife understand each other’s positions better. The figure below shows the effects of gender analyses in five *woredas* in South Wollo: it shows that men took on 5% more of the work, while women gained a greater control over the family’s resources and took more of the decisions than before.

Over time, the gender conversation group may develop its own plans and activities, similar to the women’s forums.



As a result of the gender conversation groups, men took on more of the family work, and women had more say in decisions

Impacts of women's forums and gender conversation groups

Women's forums and gender conversation groups have been formed in 405 *kebeles* – 324 in South Wollo and 81 in East Gojjam (the latter Zone gave priority instead to combating harmful traditional practices).

The forums and conversation groups give their members experience in planning and making decisions, implementing activities, managing resources, and developing their leadership skills. Some, including the Chereka Women Forum (see the box on page 108) even run their own community development fund. The forums and conversation groups quickly corrected the common misconception that women are not capable of identifying their needs or articulating what information they seek. Their bargaining power and ability to make demands have progressively increased on issues related to women and children. The result has been a significant reduction in early marriages and violence against women.

Within the family, individual members of forums and conversation groups have increased their earnings by 2,500 to 10,000 birr a year from various farming and off-farm activities. They have improved their ability to found and manage businesses as a result of training, financial support from SARDP and members' willingness to mobilize their own resources.

Members can also allocate their existing budget more wisely: in Dessie Zuria *woreda* in South Wollo, a study showed that families had each saved between 500 and 2,100 birr a year by cutting unnecessary expenses.

Percentage of women members in various local authority bodies

Local authority body	East Gojjam		South Wollo	
	Before 2006/7	2009	Before 2006/7	2009
<i>Woreda</i>				
• Cabinet	13	14	12	18
• Council	18	38	21	44
<i>Kebele</i>				
• Cabinet	13	22	16	26
• Council	20	35	18	37

Percentage of women members in SARDP intervention committees

Committee	East Gojjam	South Wollo
Water management	42	40
Community development fund	41	45
Land administration	29	34

Members of the Adamie Women's Forum meet to plan their activities



A male member of the Jamma Gender Conversation Group has taken up spinning cotton



Another member of the Jamma Gender Conversation Group is roasting coffee – normally a woman's job



Before, they found it difficult to get credit from moneylenders because they lacked collateral; other people even refused to let them join their microfinance group because they feared they would default. Now they are members of forums that have grown into savings and credit cooperatives.

Group members say they now enjoy greater respect in the community. Their greater confidence enabled them to speak up in public, discuss with outsiders, advocate their own interests, and gain the support of others. That increased their ability to plan, contribute to, and benefit from development activities, to the profit of the community as a whole.

The number of women (and especially the leaders of women's forums) on decision-making bodies has risen. Such bodies include social courts, *kebele* and *woreda* cabinets, councils and development committees (see the tables on page 110). Women's membership of SARDP committees also improved from 25 to 44%.

Girls' dormitories

Relatively few girls from rural Amhara have a chance to attend secondary school. One reason is the lack of suitable accommodation: the schools are located in the *woreda* towns, far from their villages, so commuting each day is impossible. Some girls stay in rented accommodation, but this is often expensive, far from the school, or in dangerous areas of town. Others live with relatives, and are expected to do the housework or look after their hosts' children, distracting from their school work. Far from their families and finding themselves in a threatening environment, some seek protection by moving in with their boyfriends. Many become pregnant or are exposed to HIV. These fears deter families from sending their daughters to secondary school, and many girls who do begin their secondary education never manage to complete it.

Nevertheless, educating girls is one of the most important ways for a government to promote economic and social development. SARDP supported the Amhara Regional government's efforts to promote secondary schooling for girls by constructing dormitories for girls in various *woreda* towns. These dormitories provide safe, affordable accommodation for girls, close to their secondary schools. Dormitories were built in five initial *woredas*: Borena and Ambassel in South Wollo, and Enemay, Enbsie Sar Mider and Machakel in East Gojjam. Two other *woredas* (Enarge Enawuga in East Gojjam and Worebabo in South Wollo) also later built dormitories. Building and equipping the dormitories was the responsibility of the *woreda* women's affairs and education offices. The total budget was birr 900,000 in South Wollo and birr 500,000 in East Gojjam.

A dormitory can house between 16 and 36 students. It includes bedrooms, dining and reading rooms, a kitchen, store, toilet and bathroom. The furnishing is basic, and the building has water and electricity services. Cooking utensils, a cupboard, table, chairs and some books are provided for the kitchen and reading room. Dormitories in some *woredas* have computers, television and audio equipment so that students can learn the technology and get news and entertainment. Students pay a small rent (birr 10–15 per month), which covers minor maintenance and supplies such as candles and cleaning materials. The students bring sheets, blankets and food from home.

The dormitories are managed by a committee consisting of representatives of the *woreda* women's affairs office, the education office, the *woreda* administration, the parent-teacher association, the school director, the girls' club, dormitory residents and school councillors. A house-mother who lives in the dormitory compound takes care of the students, advises them, and helps them solve problems they encounter. The house-mother's salary is paid from the *woreda* budget.

The dormitories house students in the 11th and 12th grades (the final classes in secondary school). Priority is given to girls from the countryside who perform well in school and who come from poor families. From 2008 to 2010, a total of 125 students have stayed in the dormitories. All 35 girls who have graduated so far have gone on to university – a 100% record.

100% university acceptance rate: The dormitory in Borena

A dormitory was built in the secondary school compound in Borena, in South Wollo, to accommodate 36 girls, at a cost of birr 360,000. When it opened its doors in October 2008, it became home for 24 girls in 11th grade, and 12 in 12th grade. After the older girls graduated and left for university, another batch of 12 11th-grade students was accepted in the 2009/10 academic year.

The girls' academic performance improved markedly as a result of the more secure and conducive environment in the dormitory. For example, in 10th grade (before moving into the dormitory), only 13% of the girls were in the top ten students in their class, while nearly half were in the "low performance" category. After a year in the dormitory, 44% were in the top ten, while only 9% were among the poor performers. In 2008/9, all the grade-12 residents who applied for university were accepted.



Students prepare for the formal inauguration of the Borena girls' dormitory

The dormitories allow the girls to study without fear of psychological or physical harassment. The rent is reasonable, so they can use the money they save to buy school materials. The experience of living in a group helped the girls develop social skills and strong mutual bonds. While at the dormitory, the girls were given training on gender issues, HIV/AIDS, harmful traditional practices, life skills, and policies related to women.

Safe in the dormitories, the girls do not feel they have to go home as often, and their parents do not have to visit them so often to check that all is well. That saves time and money. The parents are happy with their daughters' academic performance. Rather than fearing for their safety, they support their daughters' study.

The dormitories have been welcomed by students, parents, and some *woreda* authorities. But Zonal and Regional educational bodies have yet to recognize their potential and allocate them enough funds and attention. Girls' dormitories should be included in the regular planning and budgeting process of these bodies.

Lessons

A **conducive environment** is necessary to enable women to contribute to development. A women's forum provides such an environment: it enables them to practise their skills, and gain experience they will need to press for their interests in the larger community. Such forums provide a springboard for women to overcome traditional restrictions and play a larger role in society. Children need a favourable environment so they can perform well academically. Ensuring such

an environment is more difficult for girls than for boys because of the extra difficulties they face. A dormitory provides such an environment.

Combining awareness with income generation. The women's forums and gender conversation groups not only raise the awareness of their members about gender issues in the society. They also enable their members to plan and launch profitable enterprises in which women can play a key role – thereby helping correct the gender imbalances in a very practical way.

Involving both women and men. It is not enough to work just with women. Men also need to understand women's actual and potential contributions, and to change their own attitudes and behaviour so the women can take on new roles. A small number of married couples, such as a gender conversation group, provide a non-threatening environment where everyone can honestly analyse their own attitudes. Pressure from others in the group can be very effective to change behaviour.

Enhancing understanding of gender issues. A gender programme is unlikely to succeed in isolation. It needs the support of local government staff, development specialists, and the local community. They should be involved from the beginning to ensure that they understand the issues and can contribute to the process.

Not a complete solution. Promoting female-specific initiatives (such as dormitories or women-only groups) can improve the chances for some girls and women to get an education and improve their livelihoods. But it is not a complete solution. More important is a broader change in attitudes towards women in society as a whole. Factors reducing girls' and women's opportunities must be eliminated, violence towards women stopped, and the perpetrators punished. But this is a slow, difficult process. Meanwhile, female-specific initiatives can provide an opportunity for some rural girls and women to achieve their potential in life.

Need for broad-based support in government. Gender issues still need to receive adequate support from government bodies, and many officials tend to downplay their importance. Innovative approaches such as building dormitories sometimes fail to receive the policy and funding support they deserve. Bodies such as departments of education should automatically consider such initiatives, seek ways to promote the interests of girls and women, promulgate policies and allocate funds to support such initiatives.



Responding to the threat of HIV/AIDS

Many young people are likely to be affected by HIV and AIDS: their relatives and friends may fall ill, or they may be infected themselves

Responding to the threat of HIV/AIDS

Wubit Shiferaw

HIV AND AIDS ARE a serious problem in rural Amhara – and not just in terms of health. They affect people in many ways – economically, socially, physically, emotionally and psychologically. People who are infected are less able to work and earn money, and may be forced to depend on their relatives and neighbours. They need antiretroviral drugs and nutritious food to stay healthy. HIV/AIDS tends to affect young and middle-aged adults – when people are in the most productive part of their lives. That reduces overall production and leaves large numbers of children and elderly who need to be cared for. Some AIDS orphans are themselves infected with the HIV virus. People who are infected may be isolated, stigmatized and discriminated against. They may find it difficult to lead a normal life.

Because HIV/AIDS has such wide-ranging effects, and because it can affect everyone in society, SARDP mainstreamed its HIV/AIDS work, rather than establishing a separate programme component to deal with the issue. That meant incorporating measures to raise awareness of and combat HIV/AIDS in all programme activities – in a similar way to SARDP's cross-cutting gender activities. In addition, SARDP supported various activities specifically aimed at overcoming problems caused by HIV/AIDS. SARDP's approach was designed in line with the national HIV/AIDS prevention and control policy and strategy.

HIV/AIDS-related initiatives have included the following:

- **Infrastructure.** The health posts and health centres built through SARDP enable the *woreda* health services to provide advice and treatment to people with HIV and to those at risk of contracting the virus.
- **Building capacity.** All *woreda*-level offices have assigned individuals to act as focal persons on HIV/AIDS. They and other *woreda* staff have been trained on HIV/AIDS-related issues.
- **HIV/AIDS awareness.** SARDP supported the development of information materials and promoted HIV awareness and behavioural change among local people as well as government staff.



Mulu Melaku used to be bedridden. Although she is HIV-positive, she can now run her own grocery store in Sulula kebele, Tehuledere woreda in South Wollo, as a result of SARDP support. She is now planning to buy her own house.

- **Counselling services and medical care.** The *woreda* staff provide voluntary counselling and treatment, and money for transport so infected people can travel regularly to a clinic for antiretroviral treatment.
- **Income generation and support.** This includes helping people and their families who are affected by HIV/AIDS earn an income so they can continue supporting themselves. It may include training, seed money to start an enterprise, and technical advice.

This chapter details two examples of this work: community conversation groups to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and change people's behaviour, and efforts to help people affected by the virus to earn a living.

Community conversations on HIV/AIDS

A community conversation consists of 50–70 community members from various social groups that meet every two weeks for one year. The main topic they discuss is HIV/AIDS and related issues. The discussion follows national government guidelines that explain the subjects to be covered at each meeting. The group members elect facilitators to guide the discussion; these individuals receive training on HIV/AIDS and facilitation skills. Outside specialists supervise and assist them as required.

At the end of the year, the groups are expected to continue their meetings and organize new conversation groups in their locality.

The community conversations aim to help people understand the causes and effects of the epidemic, and to reduce the spread of the virus and mitigate its effects. That means changing local people's behaviour – for example alerting them to the dangers of having multiple sex partners, advising them about condom use, and discouraging the sharing of razor blades and other items that might transmit the virus. It also means promoting efforts in the community to support people who are affected by the virus in some way (either because they are ill or because their relatives are ill or have died), and encouraging community members not to stigmatize people who are infected. It means motivating people who are infected to get treatment and realize that they are able to support themselves – and then providing them with the skills and material support they need to do so.

As part of the community conversation process, the group reaches a consensus on what to do about HIV/AIDS. This may take many forms. They may plough the fields of someone who is not able to cultivate his or her own land. They may fetch water each day for someone who is too weak to do so. They may visit people who are ill, or help them with household chores. They may raise money to support expenses such as food and children's education. They also try to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS within the community to try to stop the spread of the virus and to reduce its effects.

The community conversation approach is part of a nationwide government programme. SARDP supported 833 such groups: 344 in South Wollo and 489 in East Gojjam, with 32,000 men and 22,000 women members. It provided a total of birr 540,000 to support these initiatives.

Community conversations have been widely accepted by the communities and the *woreda* administrations. They are a cost-effective, sustainable way of preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS, improving access to treatment, and mitigating the effects of the virus. They mobilize the resources and knowledge of the community to provide basic care and support services to the neediest people, and to increase their life expectancy and quality of life.

The Kalkidan Women and Girls Association

The cafeteria was not running well. It was not well organized, and the management was not able to control the costs. It has been started by an NGO to earn money to support a group of 27 AIDS orphans and other children under the age of 14 who live with their relatives. But it still lacked some important facilities – there was no coffee-making equipment, and the floor was made of compacted earth. The NGO had many other functions, and could not devote the energy and skills needed to make the cafeteria a success. Service was poor, the cash box was empty, there was little on the menu, and customers went elsewhere for their lunch. It decided to hand over the cafeteria to another organization.

The Kalkidan Women and Girls Association, a group that had grown out of a community conversation in Dejen town, in East Gojjam, agreed to take it over. The Association used the membership fees to buy equipment and food to make the cafeteria functional. SARDP provided funds to cement the floor, put up a new room for three pool tables, and bought a coffee-maker.

Within a few weeks, the cafeteria was a thriving business. Association members volunteered their time to go shopping, cook food, serve customers, wash dishes and keep the building clean. Customers flocked back – the cafeteria has a favourable location, and it is an ideal venue for local office workers to eat their lunch.

The Association hired four women and two men, all from poor families, to help run the cafeteria. The earnings cover the cost of food and running costs, and the staff salaries (birr 1,400 a month). There is enough left over to build a substantial balance in the cafeteria's savings account (currently nearly birr 9,500) and to distribute birr 20 each per month to the children. That is not much, but it does help cover their school expenses.

Other Association initiatives

The cafeteria is just one of many ways the Association helps people affected by (or at risk of) HIV/AIDS to support themselves. It has also helped the families of the 27 orphans as well as 14 poor women who were working as casual labourers or commercial sex workers, to set up their own small enterprises. These include sheep fattening and petty trading in grain, foodstuffs and soft drinks. The Association provides them with training, and an interest-free loan of birr 3,000. The beneficiaries receive the loan on a revolving basis; three months after getting the loan, they have to start repaying birr 160 a month. The Association then loans the money to someone else.

The Association obtained a total of birr 123,000 to run these projects from the Amhara Regional HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office. It has been a wise investment: the beneficiaries have managed to improve their incomes and livelihoods, educate their children, repay their loans on time, improve their houses,

A glass of *talla* at Trengo Fenta's

It is 3 hours after sunrise, and the first customers are heading towards Trengo Fenta's house. Buying and selling in the market is thirsty work, and Mrs Fenta has the ideal solution: a big earthen pot full of *talla*, the local beer. She dips a jug into the pot, and pours the beer into glasses for each customer. Soon the room is full: a dozen people are chatting, comparing prices, talking about community events, or watching the news on television.

Three times a week, on market days in Dejen, Mrs Fenta converts her small one-roomed house on the road to the market into a place where traders and shoppers can get refreshments and relax. She started the business in March 2009. A widow with three children, she was working as a day labourer on a roadbuilding project at Abaye Gorge. But the wages were tiny, and she could not support her family. Her health was deteriorating. She and her family risked becoming destitute.

She was able to launch the business because of a birr 3,000 loan from the Kalkidan Women and Girls Association. She attended training on business management, and decided to start a bar to serve the market-goers. She used the loan to buy chairs, glasses and grain to make *talla*.

Business has gone well: she earns birr 200–250 a week, and can save perhaps a quarter of this. She has repaid one-third of the loan and must repay the rest within 18 months. She has birr 4,000 in her savings account, can afford to continue sending



her children to school, and enough left over to buy a television and a cabinet to furnish the bar and entertain her customers.

"I feel as if I have been born again", says Mrs Fenta. From being one of the poorest and most vulnerable members of society, she is now a respected member of the community. She wants to diversify her income further, and support others through the Kalkidan Association.

and even save some birr 30–60 a week. Association members follow up with the beneficiaries frequently by visiting them in their homes and advising them on business management and other subjects.

In addition, the Association helps care for a number of elderly people who have been left alone. It provides them with clothing and pays for their medical expenses as required.

The Association is named after Kalkidan, a 6-year-old girl whose parents died of AIDS and who lives with her grandmother. It has a core group of 38 full members, who pay a monthly membership fee. These are drawn from a range of social groups: students, unemployed young people, waiters, accountants, housewives, and women who head households. It has another 100 associate members, including members of the original community conversation group, as well as government staff. These associate members also support the Association financially and contribute ideas and other support. All the Association members

Kalkidan is the little girl after whom the Kalkidan Women and Girls Association is named



are women – which made it easier for them to discuss HIV/ AIDS freely, without feeling embarrassed or intimidated by the presence of men.

The members are very committed to achieving the Association's objective of helping those exposed to HIV/ AIDS infection and other vulnerable people secure their lives. They developed this commitment through the initial community conversation process during 2005–6. They began voluntary counselling and treatment services, ran a drama and distributed information materials about HIV/ AIDS, and encouraged people in Dejen and the surrounding area to get tested to find out their HIV status. Some of those who tested positive joined the group. Members also donated time, food and clothing to help people affected by the virus, and several bedridden people started taking antiretroviral treatment and are now able to lead a normal life. At the end of the community conversation period, the members formed the Association to continue this work. They have recently started four offshoot community conversation groups to expand awareness and HIV/ AIDS-related activities further.

SARDP's contribution to the Association has taken various forms: birr 34,000 in financial support, assistance in completing the cafeteria building, help in registering the Association, training on business management, the delivery of home-based volunteer services, the preparation of project proposals and other issues. The *woreda* HIV/ AIDS secretariat has been a key player, facilitating the establishment of the Association, delivering training and technical assistance. Various NGOs have also helped with training, teaching aids, condoms for distribution to local people, and other materials and supplies.

Helping people with HIV earn money: The Warka Association of People Living with HIV

It is a major blow for someone to discover that he or she is infected with HIV. There is the physical damage: the decline in health, frequent illnesses, the lack of resistance to diseases. There is the psychological damage: the knowledge that HIV cannot be cured. There is the economic damage: less energy and more fragile health mean that people find it harder to earn a living. And there is the social stigma: the changed behaviour of friends, neighbours, relatives and loved ones. All these blows come one on top of the other. No wonder that many people living with HIV/AIDS give up.

But that is not the case for the members of the Warka Association of People Living with HIV, an association with 158 members in Makdela, a *woreda* in South Wollo. About half the 53 men and 105 women in the Association come from rural *kebeles* in the *woreda*; the remainder live in the *woreda* capital.

This is a dynamic group. It has come up with various proposals to assist members to earn a living and avoid having to depend on their relatives or the government. The *woreda* administration has responded positively: it has allocated land to members for rearing and fattening cattle and sheep – a task that people with limited energy and poor health can still take on. It has also provided them with buildings to use as an office and a shed for poultry production. Other activities include dairying, production of peas, teff, barley and vegetables, the sale of vegetable seedlings, photocopying and telephone services, and fuel supply. Association members run these enterprises; some are employed as guards or shepherds and receive a salary. Others receive an income from the business as members of the Association.

The Association enjoys the support of a number of government and non-government organizations. The Amhara Regional HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office coordinates and monitors its activities. The *woreda* administration has offered technical advice and materials such as barbed wire for fencing. The *woreda*'s micro-and small enterprises office has trained Association members on small business management. Financial and technical support for the group comes from Unicef and SARDP.

The association has attracted new members who are infected with HIV. It has raised members' incomes, enabled them to improve their diets, and strengthened them physically and psychologically. They have shown others in the community that people living with HIV can work, support their families, and be active members of the community. The Regional government has recognized the Association's achievements with an award of birr 15,000.

Women members of the Warka association run a business selling fuel



Harvesting beans from one of the fields managed by the Warka association



People living with HIV/AIDS are often weak and cannot do hard labour. But there are many other types of work – such as tending crops – they can do to make a living and lead a normal life



Lessons

Community awareness and involvement. It is vital to increase awareness in communities about HIV/AIDS in order to bring about a change in people's attitudes and behaviour. That stimulates a sympathetic response towards people who are vulnerable to or affected by HIV, and enables the limited resources available to be used effectively to help them. Community groups can take the initiative in helping people in immediate need, and can plan and implement care and support schemes on a sustained basis. Community awareness increases people's willingness to learn their HIV status and protect themselves, so reducing HIV prevalence.

Affected people can help themselves. When they are organized and motivated, people who are infected with (or otherwise affected by) HIV can support themselves – as long as they get the right financial and technical help. Close links between responsible staff at *woreda* HIV/AIDS offices, other *woreda* offices, and higher-level officials can ensure that HIV-related issues are addressed effectively. It is important that all offices realize the importance of mainstreaming HIV/AIDS into their work.

Training and support for enterprises. Two closely related aspects stand out: the importance of providing training for people affected by HIV, and the need to help them develop small businesses to support themselves. Such training may cover agricultural techniques that are suited to people with limited energy or poor health, and business and financial management.

Harmful practices. Many women face the risk of infection because of various harmful practices: genital mutilation (the risk of infection through contaminated instruments), rape, domestic violence (forcing them to flee their homes and seek employment in commercial sex work), and so on. Enhanced efforts are needed to combat these practices to reduce the risk of exposure to the virus.

Decentralizing decision- making



If rural people are involved in making decisions, planning and implementation become more effective and sustainable

Decentralizing decision-making

Assefa Workie and Adera Bekele

THE AMHARA REGIONAL GOVERNMENT recognizes that many decisions are best made at the lowest level possible. Local people are in the best position to decide what the priorities are: whether to build a water supply system or construct a school. They know what the problems are, and very often how best to address them. Involving local people in decision making enhances local participation and their ability to plan and implement initiatives. They are more likely to support the initiatives and maintain them into the future. That improves both the effectiveness and sustainability of development interventions.

But how should planning decisions be made? How to prevent the local elites from deciding everything in their own interests? How to ensure that the interests of the poor, of women, or people who live in remote villages, are taken into account? Who should control the money and how should it be managed in a transparent way?

SARDP developed a series of mechanisms to answer these questions. It created a system of **block grants** to *woreda* administrations, and introduced a participatory planning procedure for the administrations to use in allocating the money. It extended this system to the *kebele* and community level, through **community development funds** that each community could decide how to spend.

Decentralization is not just about planning projects and spending money. It also involves resolving disputes and managing information. SARDP strengthened the **local justice system** and developed **information and documentation centres** in each *woreda*.

Block grants

Woreda administrations are responsible for providing a whole range of services to their residents: building and maintaining community roads, and providing primary schools, primary health care services, agricultural extension services, clean water supplies, and so on. It also coordinates the activities of the *kebele*



Building a school classroom in Borena, South Wollo

administrations (the next-lower level of government) and integrating all development activities in their territory.

A block grant was a sum of money allocated each year by SARDP through the Regional government to each *woreda* for identified and prioritized development activities, within guidelines agreed by Sida and the Regional government. Within these guidelines, the *woreda* administration could use the block grant money in the ways it saw fit.

The block grant was not intended to cover the salaries of *woreda* staff – with three exceptions:

- When new units were established (such as the *woreda* road and water desks), the block grants paid the salaries of newly recruited staff until their costs could be incorporated into the regular *woreda* budget.
- The block grant covered per diems and travel expenses of staff working on activities supported by the grant.
- The SARDP focal persons appointed in each *woreda* sometimes received a monthly top-up of his or her salary to coordinate the block grant activities.

Community planning

To ensure that the money was used on community priorities, SARDP designed a participatory planning procedure in each *woreda*. This consisted of a series of community workshops to discuss and prioritize problems and needs, followed by planning activities at the *woreda* level.

Community workshops. The community workshops were held each year in all sub-*kebeles*. Everyone in the community was invited to attend – men, women and young people. A trained facilitator from the *woreda* staff explained the objectives and the planning procedure that the meeting would follow. He or she then advised the participants that they should take everyone's needs into account – especially those of women, children, the elderly and the poor. The facilitator also informed the participants about the agricultural extension services that they could call on if they wished. The facilitator also made it clear that the community residents would have to contribute at least 25% of the cost of projects, in the form of labour, materials or cash.

The meeting then divided into three: one group each of older men, younger men, and women. Each group discussed the problems they faced (such as lack of drinking water, or the long distance to the school), and identified a list of needs (such as a well or a school close by). Each group then put their list in order of priority. Each group then appointed three people to consolidate the three lists and reprioritize them so they would represent the opinion of the community as a whole. These nine representatives wrote their list of priorities on a form and gave it to the facilitator to take to the *kebele* office.

At the *kebele* office, the forms from all sub-*kebeles* were consolidated, with the assistance of the nine representatives from each community. The final agreed list of priority items was then forwarded to the *woreda* office.

Woreda planning activities. In the *woreda* office, the SARDP focal person listed the items from all the *kebeles* in a table, then identified the highest overall priorities according to people in the *kebeles*. This list went to the *Woreda* Programme Coordination Committee, which was responsible for coordinating all SARDP-funded development activities in the *woreda*. The Committee included most of the *woreda* sector office heads, so they were in a position to consider higher-level government policies and plans, other government-funded development efforts in the *woreda*, as well as the activities of other development agencies and NGOs. The Committee selected those priorities identified by the communities that it would be able to support in the current year. It passed these items to the relevant sector offices (agriculture, health, education, etc.) within the *woreda* office for design and budgeting.

These offices submitted their plans and budgets to the *woreda* Committee for approval, which forwarded them to the Regional authorities for funding.

Implementation. Once the first instalment of funds had arrived, the responsible sector office started implementing the planned activities – building roads, hold-

ing training courses, and so on. The following instalments of funds depended on quarterly progress reports of the achievements – meaning that an efficient monitoring system was vital to ensure that implementation went smoothly.

Each year the planning process was repeated, with meetings at the sub-*kebele* and *kebele* level, feeding a list of planning priorities to the *woreda* for selection, funding and implementation.

Problems in planning

Developed in 1997, this procedure was used until 2004. It resulted in significant gains: for the first time, local people had a say in planning activities that would affect them.

But the procedure suffered from several weaknesses:

- **Raised expectations.** It raised the expectations of large numbers of people – everyone who had participated in the community workshops, as well as their friends and neighbours. There were not enough funds to pay for all the good ideas that emerged from these meetings. The result: disappointment.



Block grant planning meeting in Debre Elias, East Gojjam

- **Time and effort.** It was costly in terms of time – both that of the *woreda* staff and of the local people themselves. Holding community workshops in each of the 90 or so sub-*kebeles* in the *woreda* was a major task that required a major coordination effort and absorbed the services of almost all the *woreda* staff. Large numbers of local people also spent up to two days attending community workshops.
- **Repeated meetings.** The meetings were repeated each year. People began to see little point in spending so much effort to develop detailed plans that were not implemented because of a lack of money, only to have to repeat the same procedure the following year.
- **Elite capture.** The process was vulnerable to being influenced or even hijacked by a small number of individuals. Younger people did not dare to contradict opinions expressed by elders; certain vocal people pushed their views through despite scepticism from the majority; richer, better-educated people, who are more articulate, managed to get their ideas adopted.
- **Women disadvantaged.** Despite the separate groups for women, it was still difficult to ensure that women attended the workshops and expressed their opinions. Over time, they gained confidence and ability to express their views, but their concerns were still often forgotten at the consolidation stage.
- **Equity across sectors.** There was sometimes a tendency for *woredas* to divide up the budget equally across the different sectors (agriculture, infrastructure, etc.), rather than to deal with the most urgent need. It required skill, awareness and experience on the part of the *woreda* administrators to balance the available budget to best meet the needs of the communities.
- **Equity across *kebeles*.** The Regional budget allocation guidelines required each *woreda* to solve the urgent needs of each *kebele*. As part of the government budgeting procedure, the block grants followed this procedure. The result was that the small amount of funds available were dispersed over a very wide area.

Improving the procedure

After 2004, SARDP revised a streamlined procedure to analyse the situation and development needs in greater depth, which at the same time made the process more manageable. There were three major steps in this new planning procedure:

- Planning workshops in sample *kebeles*
- *Woreda*-level planning meetings
- Four-year plans

Planning workshops in sample *kebeles*. Rather than holding planning workshops in every community, trained *woreda* staff facilitated a 4-day planning workshop in three or more sample *kebeles*. These *kebeles* were selected to represent the various agroecological zones in the *woreda*. Participants included elected representa-

**1A KEBELE PLANNING WORKSHOP**

Participatory appraisal to identify problems and solutions

**1B KEBELE PLANNING WORKSHOP**

Planning activities and priorities

**2 WOREDA-LEVEL PLANNING MEETING****3 THE RESULT**

4-year plan

The streamlined planning procedure

tives from different social groups in the community, along with *woreda* staff and outside experts.

During the first two days of the workshop, the *woreda* staff facilitated a participatory rural appraisal to collect information about the *kebele*, local agricultural and non-farm economic activities, marketing, credit, local institutions and governance, development trends, and issues such as gender and HIV/AIDS.

On the third and fourth days, the participants converted this information about problems into solutions, and then the solutions into concrete activities that could be supported over the next 4 years.

Woreda-level planning meeting. The planning meetings in the sample *kebeles* gave the *woreda* staff a good idea of the needs in each of the main agroecological zones

in the *woreda*. It also gave them concrete suggestions as to the types of interventions that were required – and that local people thought were a priority.

The next step was a 4-day meeting at the *woreda* level to prepare a plan for the *woreda* as a whole. Participants included the *Woreda* Programme Coordination Committee, representatives from the sample *kebeles*, along with *woreda* staff and outside experts. In some *woredas*, representatives from other *kebeles* also were invited to attend.

The participants analysed the information that had been gathered in the sample *kebeles*, and extrapolated it to the *woreda* as a whole. They divided into four groups, to discuss agriculture and natural resources, economic diversification, infrastructure and governance, and to suggest interventions in each of these areas – again based on, and expanding on, ideas that had emerged in the sample *kebeles*.

The final 2 days of the workshop were devoted to identifying specific interventions that would be supported, such as infrastructure projects, agricultural and natural resource activities, economic development initiatives, and other capacity-building programmes.

Four-year plan. The *woreda* workshop resulted in a 4-year plan, listing development activities and their locations, along with their estimated costs, the number of intended beneficiaries, and the timing of each activity. It indicated the expected outcomes (such as the increase in education coverage or the number of water points to be constructed). This plan used a logical framework showing each activity and indicators that would be used to measure progress and impacts.

It was then easy for the *woreda* administrators to extract an annual work plan from the plan. They could check that the plan complemented (rather than conflicted with) other development activities in the *woreda*, for example those funded by NGOs or other development partners.

Overcoming the problems

This revised procedure overcame many of the problems encountered earlier. Because it involved a smaller number of people, it avoided raising the expectations of residents in many communities, and reduced the amount of time and effort needed to develop realistic plans. *Woreda* staff were able to focus their attention on a smaller amount of information, reducing the danger that the process was captured by local elites. They were also more aware of the needs and concerns of women, so were better able to ensure that women's views were adequately expressed and that the plans reflected their interests.

The *Woreda* Programme Coordination Committee members became more aware of the need to think as a single rural development institution, not as a set of units competing for funding and attention. The staff of all sections realized that all aspects of development are complementary: the success of a water supply scheme

Health post funded by a community development fund in Borena, South Wollo



Hand pump installed in Makdela, South Wollo



(constructed by *woreda* engineers), for example, may depend on a hygiene awareness campaign (handled by health staff).

There was thus less danger of spreading benefits too thinly and more likelihood that they would have a significant impact in priority locations. But it was still possible for the *woreda* administration to respond to urgent and important development needs outside these priority locations. The 4-year plan meant that it was possible to plan for a longer time frame, take previous plans into account when generating the annual work plan, but still revise the annual plan if necessary to take new conditions into account.

Building institutions

Decentralization may become a burden for a local administration if its capacity is limited. It may be unable to implement all the activities that are planned, or manage funds adequately. And it is not possible to introduce such a planning system overnight.

Training and capacity building. SARDP oriented the members of the *Woreda* Programme Coordination Committee on how to coordinate the planning process, and how to manage and implement the activities funded through the block grant. It trained staff on how to facilitate the planning meetings and implement the various activities. SARDP technical advisers provided continuous on-the-

job training and advice to *woreda* staff on technical and administrative aspects of their work. As a result, the *woreda* administrations are now more capable of managing the project planning process, implementing a range of activities, and monitoring progress.

At the *kebele* and sub-*kebele* levels, there are development agents and local residents who have experience of participatory planning techniques and can encourage people to express their views. Local people are in a better position to manage their own resources and development initiatives. In all, some 600,000 people (of whom 20% are women) participated in the various workshops. This represents a significant shift in development practice from a top-down to a bottom-up approach.

Buildings and equipment. SARDP provided each *woreda* with the equipment they needed to implement the activities, including offices, furniture, and vehicles so staff can visit the field.

New institutions for roads and water. There was a huge demand for roads and drinking water systems, far beyond the *woredas'* initial capacity to provide them. SARDP stimulated the creation of special units (known as "desks") in each *woreda* to handle roads and water. It provided equipment such as tractors, trailers and motorized rollers for road building, as well as equipment for drilling wells. It recruited and trained staff to work in these units.

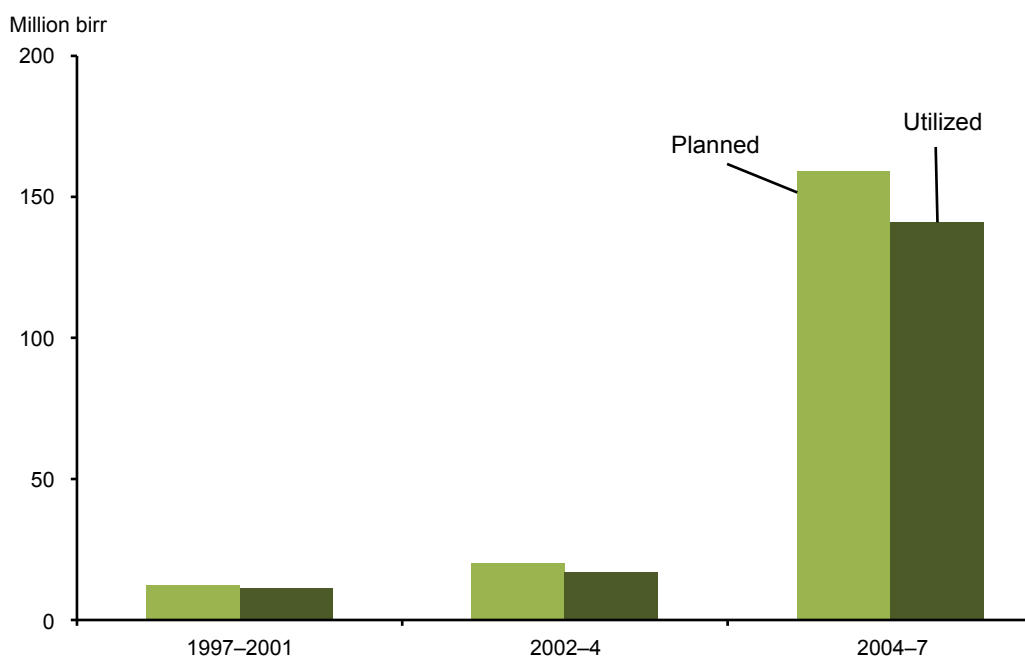
Funding amounts

In the early stages of SARDP, the block grants amounted to about birr 450,000 per year for each *woreda*, plus birr 190,000 for capacity building. In Phase III of the programme, the amount was increased, and ranged from birr 2.5 to 4 million, depending on the population of each *woreda* and its development needs. In the later stages, some 70% of the SARDP budget was allocated to *woredas* as block grants. (The remaining 30% was used for activities at the Zonal and Regional level and for programme administration and backstopping.)

The Regional government observed the success of the SARDP block grant programme and decided to decentralize the entire *woreda* annual budget of around birr 15–20 million per *woreda* in a similar way. In practice most of this money goes for salaries and other recurrent costs. While the SARDP funds thus represented perhaps only a quarter of the total amount of money available to each *woreda*, they formed the bulk of the funds that the administration was free to use for non-recurrent development activities.

Because under the block grant scheme, the communities must also contribute 25% of the cost of activities done in their areas, the amount of resources available is even greater than the funding provided under SARDP.

The figure on the next page shows the huge increase in funds that SARDP made available to *woreda* administrations as block grants. The increase between Phase II and Phase III is partly because of the larger amount of funds allocated to each



Amount of block grants planned and actually used, 1997-2007

woreda as block grants, and partly because the number of *woredas* served by the project nearly doubled after 2006.

Distributing funds to a large number of *woredas* and ensuring that they are used appropriately is a time-consuming process. The Amhara Bureau of Finance and Economic Development, which was responsible for the overall management of the Sida funds, released the funds on a regular basis to the *woredas*. These allocated the funds in accordance with their annual work plans and budgets. They were expected to submit physical and financial progress reports through the Zonal and Regional programme offices before the next instalment could be released. The accounts had to be audited annually by an external auditor.

Problems and delays are inevitable in such a system: reports may be late or incomplete, and queries may remain unresolved. Despite these problems, the figure above shows that the *woredas* used nearly 90% of the funds that had been allocated to them through the block grants. Such a high level is unusual in many development projects, where local governments do not have the capacity to plan and administer the use of funds. The training, capacity building and technical assistance provided by SARDP was vital in ensuring that the *woreda* administrations had the capacity to use the funding provided.

Concrete results

Results can be seen on the ground, often literally built out of concrete and masonry. Much of the block grant funds have been spent on building infrastructure: roads, water supply systems, offices, meeting halls, veterinary clinics, health centres and posts, and so on.

Other results take the form of wood and metal – furniture and equipment for schools, health services and offices. And let us not forget the increased knowledge, changed attitudes and greater skills of the people – local government staff, entrepreneurs and farmers – who have been trained through the block grants programme.

Many of these initiatives are described elsewhere in this book.

Community development funds

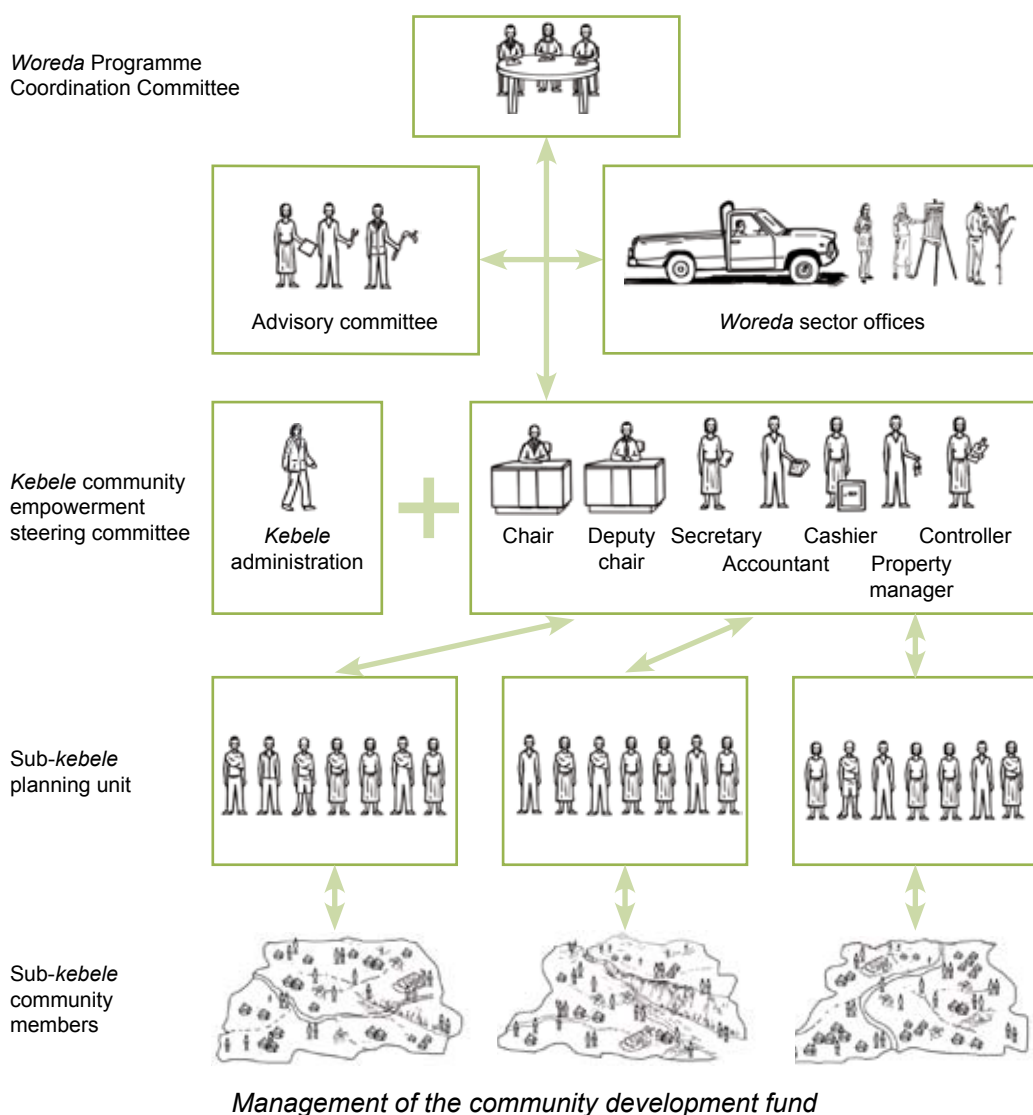
A community development fund was similar to a block grant, but was managed by the community rather than by the local government. It consisted of an average of birr 50,000 to 70,000 a year, allocated by the *Woreda* Programme Coordination Committee to each *kebele*. The people in the *kebele* could decide what to do with the money, following guidelines and procedures established by SARDP. The fund aimed to provide poor communities with sustainable assets and basic services to improve their social and economic standards, and to build their capacity to manage development activities.

There were two key organizations in managing the fund: the sub-*kebele* planning unit, and the community empowerment steering committee (see the figure on the next page).

Sub-kebele planning unit. This consisted of seven people (three had to be women) elected by local residents in each sub-*kebele*. This unit was responsible for for-

Summary of community development fund activities in East Gojjam and South Wollo, 2004/05–2008/09

Description	East Gojjam	South Wollo	Total
Number of <i>kebeles</i> served	42	79	121
Projects funded	298	213	511
Beneficiaries	449,000	451,000	900,000
SARDP share (birr)	5.9 million	8.0 million	14.0 million
Community contribution (birr)	3.0 million	4.8 million	7.7 million
Total cost (birr)	8.9 million	12.8 million	21.7 million
Community contribution (%)	34%	37%	36%



ulating project applications and submitting them for funding to the *kebele*-level community empowerment steering committee. The members were trained on project management, financial and property administration and reporting.

Community empowerment steering committee. This committee was organized at the *kebele* level. The members of the sub-*kebele* planning units came together to elect the committee members from among their number. There are normally three sub-*kebeles* in a *kebele*; all 21 planning unit members gathered to select the committee. They chose a chairperson, deputy chair, secretary, accountant, cashier, property manager and controller. Three of these seven people had to be women, and all sub-*kebeles* had to be adequately represented. The committee was responsible for appraising the sub-*kebele*'s proposals and balancing them against the

Water, education and health: The priorities in Keto

In Keto, in Borena *woreda* in South Wollo, the *kebele* administration called a meeting of local residents to discuss development problems in the area. That led to the formation of a community empowerment steering committee of seven people, representing all the sub-*kebeles* in Keto.

The initial community development fund budget for 2004/5 was just birr 60,000. That was not much, but local people contributed construction materials, labour and additional cash. Little by little, the projects started to add up. By 2009, eight projects

had been completed, costing nearly birr 440,000, and benefiting nearly 7,000 people. Just over a quarter of the total cost was covered by the community's own contributions.

The people of Keto can now point to four water points, three new classrooms for the local school, and a new health post – all the result of their community development fund efforts. Women, especially, have benefited: they say that fewer people fall ill because they now have clean water, and they can send their daughters to the nearby school.

funds available and the priorities set out in the funds operational guidelines. It then allocated the funds to the priority activities. The committee was responsible for project management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

These bodies were elected by local people and were not part of the government structure. So to ensure coordination, the deputy chairperson of the *kebele* was an ex-officio member of the community empowerment steering committee.

The steering committee was advised and assisted by the *woreda* sector offices of agriculture, roads, water, and so on, and a variable advisory group of experts from various sector offices that provided technical support as required. The whole was coordinated by the *Woreda* Programme Coordination Committee, with the *woreda* capacity-building office responsible for the overall facilitation and organizing of the community empowerment process.

Scaling up

The pilot initiative began in January 2004 in 10 *kebeles* belonging to 5 *woredas*. By 2008/9, it had expanded to all 30 *woredas* in East Gojjam and South Wollo. A total of 511 projects had been implemented by 121 *kebeles* in the two Zones, benefiting over 900,000 local residents (48% of them women). The budget to implement these projects was nearly birr 22 million, of which nearly birr 8 million (36%) was the community's contribution (see the table on page 136).

As with the *woreda* block grants (page 126), the community development funds could be spent on anything decided by the local people, represented by the Community Empowerment Steering Committee. The sums of money were not large, so major infrastructure investments were out of the question. But they could still make a significant difference to local development, especially if the initiatives complemented activities funded from other sources (such as the block grants). For example, one community decided to use its funds to install a well to supply water to a health post that had been built using the *woreda* block grant.

A large number of small projects that people could plan gave them the feeling that they could make a difference to their own lives. Community participation was high, with people contributing more labour and other resources than required by the community development fund rules. That gave them a strong sense of ownership in the interventions and encouraged them to contribute further to development efforts. The participation of women was also good, with at least three of the seven committee members at each level required to be women. Community members developed skills in project prioritizing, planning, implementing, purchasing, tendering, financial management, material management and reporting.

Local justice and traditional conflict management

Rural Ethiopia may look peaceful, but as in any society, disputes and conflicts arise. Inheritance problems, boundary disputes, quarrels over water for livestock, complaints about accidents or damage caused by animals, domestic violence, theft and even murder... they all occur even in the most harmonious societies.

There are too many such cases for the formal justice system to handle. The formal courts are anyway remote, expensive and time-consuming. The atmosphere is intimidating for many villagers, who are unfamiliar with legal procedures.

Instead, local cases are normally dealt with by two local mechanisms: a traditional conflict resolution system called a *shimagile*, and *kebele* social courts.

- The *shimagile* is a committee of elders who are recognized for their wisdom and experience. People can refer cases to the *shimagile*, who listen to the arguments of each side and pass a judgement. They can impose punishments such as fines, but their authority is moral rather than formal.
- Someone who is dissatisfied with the *shimagile* judgement can take the case to the *kebele* social court (or cases may be referred directly to the *kebele* court without being heard by the *shimagile*). The *kebele* court has three mediators, three judges, and three appeal judges. At least one of each of these is a woman. A case first goes to the mediators, who discuss it and try to resolve the conflict. If they are unable to do so, it goes to the panel of judges. If a party is dissatisfied with the judgement, he or she can appeal to the panel of appeal judges.

SARDP strengthened both these local institutions by providing *shimagile* members and *kebele* mediators and judges with training on legal procedures, the content of the law, the need for gender sensitivity, and the need for prompt decisions.

SARDP also provided the *shimagile* and *kebele* social courts with items such as furniture, and built shelters for people waiting for their cases to be heard.

As a result, these local mechanisms are able to handle a larger number of cases, more efficiently and with greater fairness. The communities are now able to



The shimagile enables local people to appeal for justice without having to go through the lengthy, intimidating and expensive formal courts system

resolve conflicts more easily and quickly by themselves, without having to refer cases to the formal courts. That reduces the burden on the formal court system, and promotes the healing of damaged relationships among neighbours.

Information and documentation systems

Woreda administrations need all kinds of information: data about the *woreda* itself, laws and policies from higher levels of government, technical manuals, training manuals and so on. Often there is a copy of this information in the *woreda*. But where? Staff may take documents home and forget to return them. They often take manuals with them when they move to a new job. There is no central location where all such information is kept. The result: decisions made on the basis of inadequate or outdated information.

To overcome this problem, SARDP helped all 30 *woreda* administrations create an information and documentation centre. This is a room, or sometimes a separate building, managed by the *woreda's* office of information. It has shelves for books and reports, filing cabinets or box files for documents, photographs and CD-ROMs, and audiovisual equipment such as audio recorder and cameras and a television. Some have computers, a scanner and a printer. The information centre keeps copies of all documents for use by *woreda* staff; a staff member checks docu-



The information and documentation centres are important repositories of information for woreda staff

ments in and out and keeps the room in order. Some have started cataloguing their collections to make items easier to find. They keep softcopies of documents on the computer in a filing system for easy access.

This simple idea has made it a lot easier for *woreda* administration staff to find the documents they need. It has reduced the loss of information materials, improved information exchange, and made it easier for new staff to find out about the *woreda* and get the technical information they need to do their jobs. The computers and audiovisual equipment enable staff to record development activities and important events, and to prepare public information materials.

Challenges

A major decentralization initiative is bound to experience difficulties. Many of the challenges experienced by SARDP in the past were because of limited capacity at the *woreda* and *kebele* levels. Specific problems included the following.

- **Lack of priority for coordination meetings.** Members of the *woreda* programme coordination committees had various political and administrative commitments, so regular committee meetings were sometimes postponed – by up to 3 months. Some matters were attended to only when they became urgent. This disrupted decision making and the implementation of activities.
- **Lack of participation in annual planning.** The 4-year plan was developed through participatory appraisal with full community involvement. The *woreda* administration based its annual work plan and budget on the 4-year plan, but the community was not engaged in preparing these annual plans.

- **Declining participation.** The main purpose of decentralization and the block grants was to promote genuine community participation and ownership of activities. But their participation in implementing activities declined over time.
- **High staff turnover.** SARDP provided strong technical support to the *woreda* administrations in various technical and managerial fields. But high staff turnover in the *woredas* reduced the effectiveness of such support and meant it could not be sustained.
- **Coordination at *woreda* level.** Insufficient integration and coordination among *woreda* stakeholders meant that some activities were poorly planned or implemented.
- **Limited capacity for documentation centres.** The documentation centres suffered from a shortage of trained staff, inadequate facilities (office space, computers, shelves and audiovisual equipment), and limited financial resources.
- **Limited capacity and support at community level.** Activities supported by the community development fund were hampered because of a lack of sensitization and support from *kebele* and *woreda* administrations. Community-level committees had insufficient support on financial matters, forcing them to make frequent trips to the *woreda* finance office to ensure proper accounting.

SARDP's pioneering decentralization initiatives were able to overcome many of these challenges. The federal government noted its success, and in 2004 adopted the decentralized approach to development as a national policy.

Lessons

- **Value of participation.** Real community participation in planning and implementation can bring immediate changes to local people. People are very willing to work on schemes such as irrigation, gully reclamation and water supply systems that they plan themselves and see will benefit them.
- **Importance of *woreda* institutions.** The key institution in decentralized planning is the *woreda* planning committee. If this functions well, the plans can be put into practice quickly and problems can be solved as they arise. But if meetings are irregular or poorly attended, implementation is neglected and the committee must work in crisis mode to solve all the urgent problems that have accumulated since the last meeting.
- **Decision-making process.** Sound decision-making is dependent upon availability of comprehensive, timely and up-to-date information. Information is also needed to facilitate the development and implementation of food security policies.
- **Empowering rural communities.** Information can empower rural communities and give them an opportunity to contribute to the development process. New communication technologies can give rural communities the capacity

to improve their living conditions. Training and dialogue can motivate them and provide them with skills to a level where they can express their views and become part of the decision-making process. The result should be improved policy formulation, more effective implementation, and better buy-in from local people.

Recommendations

- **Need to maintain community involvement.** The current system involves local people in planning and implementing activities, but they are not involved in monitoring or evaluating the work. Once something has been decided, they have little control over it. Interest and participation in activities accordingly declines over time. Measures are required to encourage sustained participation and empower local people at all stages in the process, not just at the beginning.
- **Budget is too flexible.** If *woredas* do not implement what they have planned, they are relatively free to reallocate the money to other purposes. That may disempower the local communities, since the *woreda* administrations can effectively ignore the plans that have been made. Some flexibility is obviously desirable, but it should be limited – perhaps to birr 100,000 only. If they exceed this level, they should seek the approval of the community representatives who helped draw up the original plan.
- **Capacity building at kebele level.** Decentralization should not stop at the *woreda* level. It should also be extended to the *kebele* level. *Kebele* administrations need to be strengthened and technical personnel assigned so they can better integrate the activities of NGOs, community groups and the private sector into government initiatives. Further capacity building is needed for *woreda* and *kebele* staff, as well as for community members. The *woreda* authorities should promote participatory planning and implementation at the *kebele* and sub-*kebele* levels. The *woreda* should provide government funding to *kebele* administrations that can be used also for activities under the community development fund.
- **Improving accountability.** Accountability and efficient financial expenditure can be improved through participatory budgeting, and through greater transparency in procurement and contracting procedures.
- **More participation.** Community participation in planning at all stages is essential if development programmes are to be empowering. More work is needed to devise ways to ensure this occurs.
- **Further decentralization.** The administration of the funds should be decentralized fully to the community. That means also decentralizing financial management and decision-making. The community development fund is a successful initiative that should be continued and institutionalized within the government system.

- **Developing human resources.** The effectiveness of local initiatives like those funded through the community development fund relies on the people who plan and manage them. That in turn means improving their skills and organizational abilities so they can solve their own development problems.
- **Support from higher levels of government.** At the same time, decentralization and community empowerment efforts require strong technical and administrative support from the Regional government, particularly from the bureaus of capacity building and finance and economic development.
- **Information dissemination.** The dissemination of information could be improved by identifying target groups carefully, then selecting the most appropriate communication channels. Possible channels include posters, radio, video and printed materials, distributed in places where local people gather (such as churches, mosques, *kebele* offices and market areas), as well as via schools.

A photograph of two men in a rural setting. The man on the left, wearing a light blue t-shirt, is looking down at a document. The man on the right, wearing a white cap and glasses, is also looking at the document. They are both holding and reviewing a large sheet of paper with text and a table. The background shows a dirt wall and some foliage.

Managing the SARDP programme

Managing a major integrated rural development
programme requires skills and commitment

Managing the SARDP programme

Ayichew Kebede, Håkan Sjöholm and Abebaw Getachew

THE SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT Cooperation Agency (Sida) began work in rural development in Amhara in 1993, constructing roads, enhancing planning capacity and improving natural resources management in South Wollo. Following a planning phase in 1995–6, the much wider Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme (SARDP) started to operate in June 1997 in two Zones: East Gojjam and South Wollo. SARDP continued through three major phases, plus an extension and phase-out stage, until June 2010. It expanded gradually over the years, geographically as well as in terms of types of activities (see the box on the next page). The programme was funded by the governments of Ethiopia and Sweden.

For programme management purposes, these activities were organized into four components or “pillars”: agriculture and natural resources management (which also covered land administration and land tenure security), infrastructure, economic diversification, and decentralization. In addition, several cross-cutting themes were incorporated into all components: gender, HIV/AIDS, family planning, the environment and population. Capacity building was an important aspect of all the components.

Programme organization and administration

Programme coordination unit

SARDP was managed by a programme coordination unit based in Bahir Dar, the capital of Amhara, with sub-units at Debre Markos in East Gojjam and Dessie in South Wollo (see the figure on page 148).

Phases of SARDP

SARDP I : June 1997 to December 2001

- Coverage: Four *woredas* in East Gojjam and five in South Wollo
- Focus: Regional capacity building
- Budget: 286 million Swedish kronor

SARDP II: January 2002 to June 2004

- Coverage: Eight *woredas* in East Gojjam and eight in South Wollo
- Focus: *Woreda* capacity building and *woreda*-level planning and implementation of field activities
- Budget: 250 million Swedish kronor

SARDP III: July 2004 to June 2008

- Coverage: All 14 *woredas* in East Gojjam, and all 16 in South Wollo
- Focus: Continued strong focus on *woreda* capacity building and implementation, with the addition of a community development fund plus strengthening of the components for economic diversification, HIV/AIDS prevention and gender
- Budget: 300 million Swedish kronor, plus an additional 9.5 million kronor to strengthen gender, economic diversification and the community development fund

SARDP III extension and final phase-out: July 2008 to June 2010

- Coverage: All 30 *woredas* in East Gojjam and South Wollo, with a gradual phase-out of *woredas* that had entered SARDP earlier
- Focus: Continued strong focus on *woreda* capacity building and implementation on the remaining *woredas* aiming at consolidation and building of sustainability
- Budget: 80 million Swedish kronor

Government

SARDP worked through the government and local authorities at the Region, Zone and *woreda* levels. Early on, the programme provided significant assistance to Regional government Bureaus. Later, its emphasis shifted to direct support to the *woredas*, while continuing to provide technical support through units at the Regional and Zonal levels.

SARDP was guided by a series of programme coordination committees, drawn from government agencies, at the various levels.

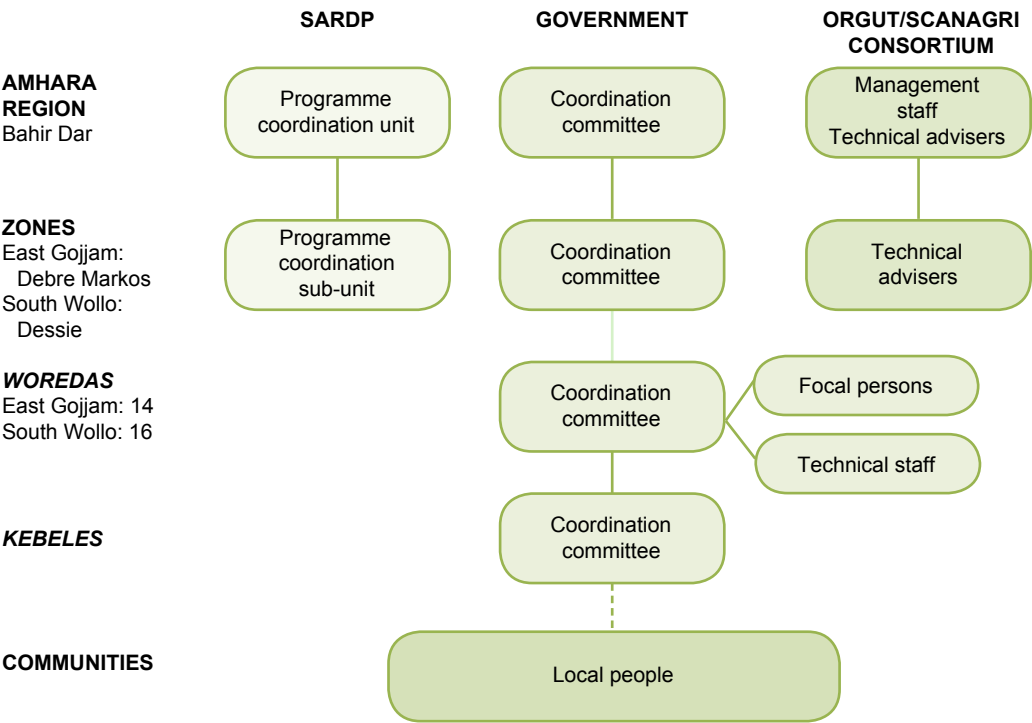
At the *woreda* level, SARDP was represented by part-time focal persons. These were critical to SARDP's work. These were government employees who were assigned additional duties to work with SARDP: they were responsible for planning and reporting, and provided the communication link between the *woreda* and the programme management. Technical staff in each *woreda* worked on particular aspects of the programme.

Technical advisory services

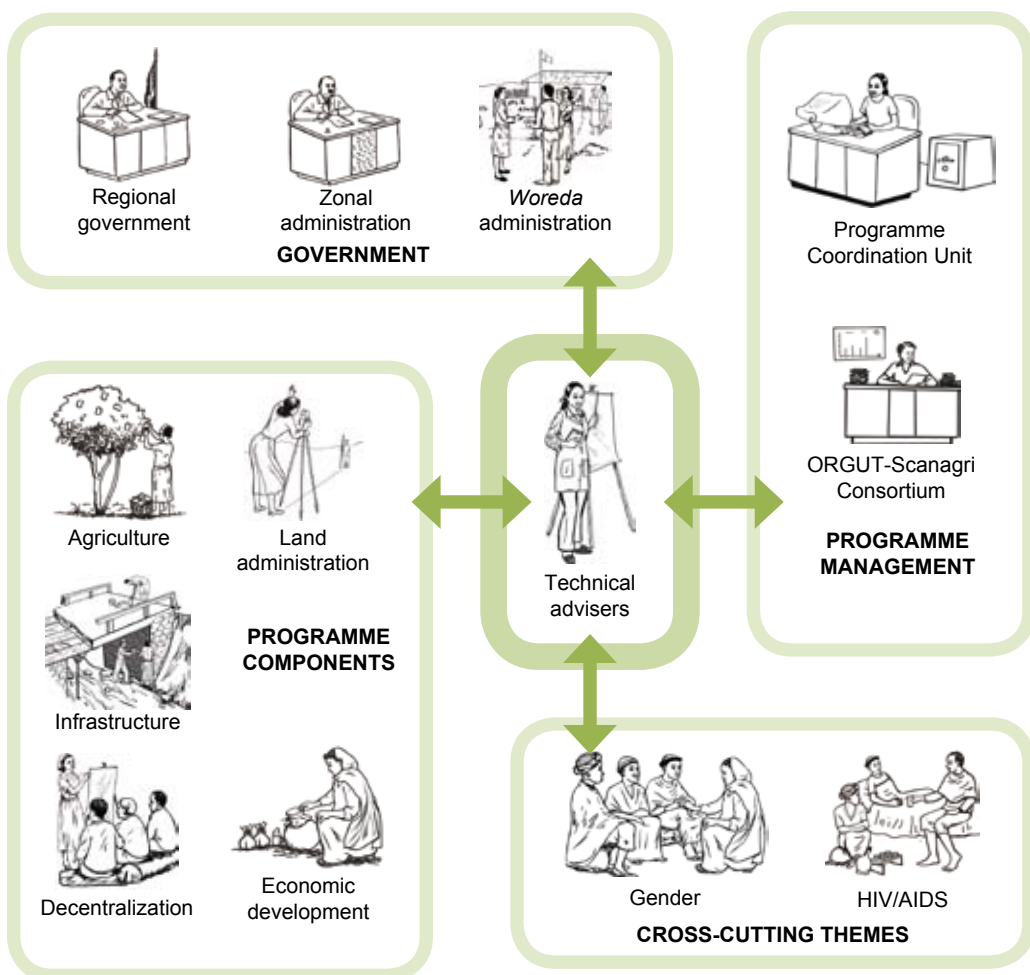
The ORGUT-Scanagri Consortium, consisting of ORGUT Consulting AB (a consulting firm based in Sweden) and Scanagri/NIRAS (based in Denmark) provided technical advisory services and assisted in programme management and implementation. It was supported in Ethiopia by Haddis Consult, a national consulting firm. This consortium fielded a team of international and national technical advisers, headed by a team leader, who were posted at the Regional and Zonal levels. This team of technical advisers (see the Appendix) spent most of their time in the field, working closely and in hands-on-situations with *woreda* staff, farmers, community members, etc.

The technical advice took various forms, including on-the-job training, demonstrations and formal training sessions, assistance with planning and budgeting, as well as working with Regional, Zonal and *woreda* staff on specific activities. In every *woreda*, the technical advisers were assigned a counterpart.

For infrastructure, for example, the ORGUT-Scanagri Consortium had two technical advisers, one posted in East Gojjam and one in South Wollo, who assisted the *woreda* administrations to look after roads, schools, health post, small-scale irrigation schemes as well as water-supply schemes. Working with the technical advisers were road technicians and water technicians, who were responsible for



Management structure of SARDP (simplified)



The technical advisers played a central role in the programme implementation

aspects of implementation, in close cooperation with local communities. The technical advisers as well as the technicians provided technical support throughout the process, from planning through to implementation. They provided training courses to *woreda* staff in various aspects of engineering, as well as contract administration and participatory management. The *woreda* staff in turn trained staff at the *kebele* level. They also arranged for people to be trained as road foremen, caretakers and water artisans.

Somewhat similar arrangements were made for the other components of SARDP, such as agriculture, land administration, economic diversification and decentralization. For gender and HIV/AIDS, SARDP technical advisers worked with staff in all fields to ensure that these issues were mainstreamed into government programmes.

The experiences gained were documented in the form of technical papers, working manuals and guidelines.

Participating woredas

SARDP began gradually, targeting an initial four *woredas* in 1997, and adding five more in 1998 and another seven the following year as staff gained experience, procedures were established, enabling activities to be expanded. From 1999 to 2004, the programme concentrated on these 16 initial *woredas*. In 2005, the remaining 14 *woredas* in the two Zones were added, enabling SARDP to serve all 30 rural *woredas* in East Gojjam and South Wollo (see the map on page 5).

Planning and reporting

The overall planning cycle started with participatory planning in a few selected *kebeles* in each *woreda*, based on which a *woreda* plan was prepared (see the chapter on decentralization, page 125). This plan was then sent to the Zones, and from there to the Regional level. Various consolidations and adjustments of the plans were made at each of these levels to ensure that the plans complied with SARDP's available budget, overall framework and agreements. The *woreda* plans were very detailed, making preparation and follow-up quite time-consuming. Assistance from the technical advisers was normally required to make sure that plans and reports were prepared according to the programme needs.

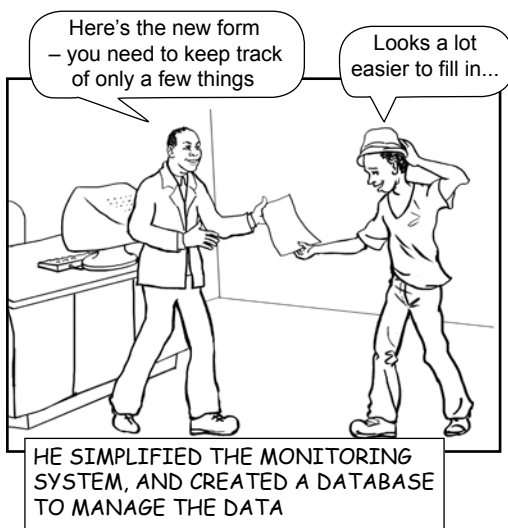
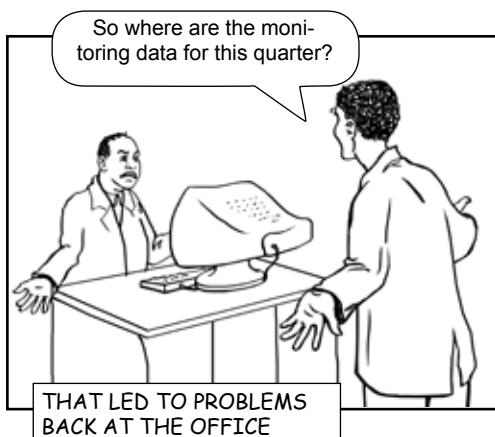
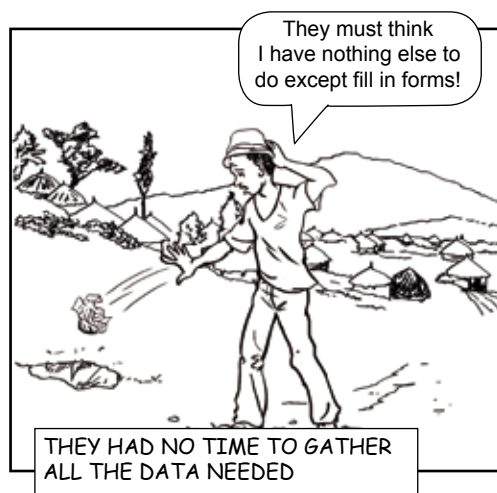
Programme management unit

The Programme Management Unit coordinated field activities, prepared budgets and reports, and facilitated certain activities. This unit was the extended arm of the Bureau of Finance and Economic Development, housed in a separate programme office, to ensure efficiency. It was headed by a programme director, assisted by a programme officer and by a financial section plus support staff, which included a number of drivers for the fleet of vehicles assigned to SARDP. This unit was also responsible for providing administrative support to the technical advisory staff of the ORGUT-Scanagri Consortium. Two sub-units in Debre Markos (East Gojjam) and Dessie (South Wollo) provided additional support to activities in the two Zones.

Regular meetings between the Swedish Embassy and the Programme Management Unit took place for joint decision making and to follow-up programme progress.

Monitoring and evaluation

SARDP was a large, complex programme with many different activities, in a large number of locations, involving many different people and organizations. That made it complex to monitor and evaluate. There were many different indicators



The monitoring system was vital for smooth management of a complex programme

to follow – over 50 measures of outputs and outcomes. *Woreda* focal persons, who were responsible for local level monitoring, found it difficult to report all these in a timely and accurate way. Some of the indicators in the original programme logical framework proved difficult to measure in practice, and forms to collect some of the data were difficult to fill in. It was relatively easy to collect data about the number of water points being built (an activity) or the number of water supply systems completed (an output). But it was harder to measure things like the amount of time needed to fetch water (an outcome). The *woreda* focal persons were overstretched, so had little time or skills to report accurately and on time. The programme coordination level lacked a comprehensive monitoring framework and a central database. In addition, changing conditions in the field and rapid staff turnover meant it was difficult to keep the monitoring system updated.

To overcome these challenges, it was necessary to reduce the number of output indicators from more than 35 to only 20, and to halve the number of outcome indicators to just eight. The technical advisers gave the *woreda* focal persons on-the-job training on how to collect and manage the data using a spreadsheet program. The monitoring and evaluation staff developed simplified forms for the field staff to gather data. They also developed a database and entered the programme data into it.

All these initiatives made the monitoring system more flexible so it could handle changing conditions in the field and make it easier to introduce new staff to the system. It was able to produce consolidated quarterly reports in a more informative way, backed up with the details that managers needed to make the right decisions. It could report on what the programme had achieved (the outputs and outcomes), rather than merely on its activities.

SARDP tried to assess every level of monitoring and evaluation. A results report, which assessed the attainment of the programme purpose, was produced and a separate internal impact assessment was performed to identify improvements in the livelihoods of the beneficiary communities. During its last year, SARDP developed its own monitoring database to compile programme data for consolidation.

SARDP's monitoring and evaluation system is a model that could be adapted by other projects and programmes in the Amhara Region and elsewhere in Ethiopia.



Analysing SARDP's achievements

In this final chapter, we look at how SARDP has improved the lives of people in East Gojjam and South Wollo

Analysing SARDP's achievements

Ayichew Kebede and Håkan Sjöholm

THIS FINAL CHAPTER ANALYSES SARDP's achievements and impacts, and draws some lessons from the programme as a whole.

A summary of achievements

The box on the next page summarizes the programme's achievements in terms of numbers. A few stand out: nearly 900,000 landholders received primary certificates for their land; 4.9 million parcels were demarcated and registered; more than 200 irrigation schemes of various types were completed, and over 100 savings and credit cooperatives were established. Nearly 1,300 km of roads were built, nearly 300 health facilities were built or upgraded, and over 1,000 water supply systems of various types constructed. *Woreda* administrations are now far more able to tackle problems than before as a result of new buildings, vehicles and other equipment, and better trained staff. Thousands of farmers and community members have been trained in various skills.

A tale of four woredas

It is difficult to separate out the effects of a development programme like SARDP from other effects – the impacts of government development efforts, other donor-funded projects, and larger economic social and environmental trends. SARDP was a major development intervention in East Gojjam and South Wollo, but it was not the only one. Other initiatives included bilateral and multilateral funded projects, NGO-supported initiatives, and federal and Regional government interventions. Wider trends included land degradation, changes in world market prices, periodic droughts, and population growth.

The tables on pages 156–7 try to filter out these effects as far as possible. They show the results of a survey of representative households in four *woredas* supported by SARDP: Awabel and Debay Tilategin in East Gojjam, and Borena and Woreilu in

Major SARDP achievements in numbers

Land administration

- 890,000 landholders received **primary land-holding certificates**
- 4.9 million **land parcels demarcated and registered**
- **Institute of Land Administration** established at Bahir Dar University

Agriculture

- 129 **small-scale irrigation** schemes completed
- 23 **fruit foundation blocks** established
- 105 **forage** and 142 **tree nurseries** established
- 51 **veterinary clinics** built
- 2 brooder houses for **poultry** production built
- 51 **farmers' training centres** supported
- 20-year **agricultural research master plan** of Amhara Regional Agricultural Research Institute prepared

Economic diversification

- 2,059 poor households benefited from the **enterprise development facility**
- 448 **cooperatives** of different types strengthened
- 263 **women's and youth groups** supported through income-generating activities
- 427 **rural market centres** strengthened
- 108 **savings and credit cooperatives** established

- 10 **youth centres** constructed

- **Amhara Credit and Saving Institution** secured birr 43 million as loanable funds, strengthened its management information system, and released birr 19.5 million as loan guarantees

Infrastructure

- 1,248 km of **rural roads** constructed
- 19 medium-sized **bridges** and 161 **fords** constructed
- 240 **primary schools** and 80 **satellite schools** built
- 38,187 combined **desks** provided
- 216 **primary health posts** and 33 **health centres** built
- 40 health posts upgraded to **health centres**
- 3,446 **voluntary counselling and treatment centres** established
- 536 **springs** developed
- 660 **hand-dug wells** developed
- **Water supply systems** constructed for 8 *woreda* centre towns
- **Amhara Rural Roads Authority** headquarters offices built
- **Bureau of Finance and Economic Development** headquarters offices built
- Short-wave **radio transmitter station** built at Zege

South Wollo. The compare the levels of various development measures before and after SARDP's interventions in these *woredas*. There is no single date on the columns because the activities started and were completed in different *woredas* in different years. The figures thus include the effects of other development activities and trends that occurred during the years covered by the survey.

Some highlights on living standards and agriculture (page 156): 83% of the households said their standard of living had gone up, and nearly three-quarters had more income and more sources of income (important in an area where relying

Impact of SARDP on living standards and agriculture in four *woredas*

Impact indicators	Before SARDP	After SARDP
Overall living standard		
• Proportion of households whose standard of living had improved		83%
• Households who said their income had increased		73%
Income sources		
• Households who said they had more sources of income		71%
• Households engaged in trade as well as agriculture	4%	11%
Agricultural production		
• Production (in wheat equivalent) of major crops (teff, maize, barley, wheat, beans, peas), 30 <i>woredas</i>	700,000 tons (2003/4)	1,400,000 tons (2007/8)
• Average number of months of household food consumption covered by own production	9 or less	11 or more
• Proportion of farmers using modern agricultural inputs (fertilizers, improved seeds, etc.)	5%	50%
• Proportion of households using veterinary clinics to treat livestock	30%	47%
Land tenure		
• Households reporting increased yield after receiving landholding certificate		51%
• Average number of land-related conflicts per household	0.94	0.24

Impact of SARDP on availability of basic services in four woredas

Impact indicators	Before SARDP	After SARDP
Roads		
Minutes needed to walk to the nearest...		
• dry-weather road	47	26
• all-weather road	50	39
Road density (m/km ²)	85	120
Drinking water		
Proportion of households with access to...		
• drinking water	28%	47%
• spring water supply scheme	5%	24%
• hand-dug well water supply scheme	5%	12%
Minutes needed to walk to the nearest drinking water supply scheme	23	12
Education		
Children and adults attending primary school as percentage of school-aged children (gross enrolment ratio)	68%	98%
Minutes needed to walk to the nearest primary school	35	23
Health care		
Proportion of households with access to primary health care	33%	99%
Minutes needed to walk to the nearest health facility	64	35
Other basic services		
Minutes needed to walk to the nearest...		
• marketplace	59	42
• veterinary clinic	73	47

on a single crop or enterprise is risky). One in nine engaged in trade as well as farming. Agricultural production had doubled, and half the farmers now used fertilizers and improved seeds. As a result, food security had improved: they could produce enough food to cover their own needs for a longer period of the year. This was at least in part as a result of more secure land tenure – including for women: households reported they had harvested higher yields after they had received a landholding certificate. Previously, disputes over land were common in these *woredas*; after the certificates were issued, such disputes fell one-quarter their previous number.

The table on page 157 summarizes findings from the four *woredas* for the availability of basic services. After the SARDP interventions, it took on average less than half an hour to walk to the nearest road that was usable in dry weather, compared to nearly 50 minutes previously. The road density – the number of metres of roads per square kilometre – had increased by nearly one-half to 120 metres per square kilometre. This is still extremely low by developed country standards, but is still a marked improvement.

Access to drinking water also rose dramatically: nearly half of all households in the four *woredas* now had access to drinking water (up from 28%), and it took half the time on average to walk to the nearest source of drinking water – a major improvement in the quality of life for women and children, whose task it generally is to fetch water. Nearly all the primary-school-aged children in the *woredas* now attended school (up from two-thirds), and nearly everyone had access to primary health care (up from just one-third). Access to markets and veterinary clinics also improved dramatically.

Lessons

What lessons can we draw from the SARDP experience for Amhara and the rest of Ethiopia? In addition to the lessons already listed in each of the previous chapters, we can derive five overall major lessons, regarding programme ownership, beneficiaries, land administration, capacity building, and remaining tasks.

A strong sense of ownership

The Regional government, local authorities at the Zone, *woreda* and *kebele* levels, as well as local people, took full ownership for the SARDP programme and its activities. This was demonstrated in various ways:

- The commitment of government institutions and numerous individual officials to ensuring that the activities were successful.
- The high degree of take up of SARDP activities and approaches by the government, and its readiness to continue these approaches even without SARDP support.

*New corrugated metal roofs are
a sign of increasing wealth*



*Terraces and other soil
conservation measures will
maintain agricultural productivity*



- The enthusiasm with which local people contributed labour and materials to activities such as road building and water supply construction – often exceeding the required amounts of inputs.

This sense of ownership can be attributed to two factors:

- Right from the beginning, SARDP was designed not as a stand-alone project but to be integrated into the fabric of government. SARDP has followed the government structure, and funds were channelled through that structure. The programme coordination units and technical assistance team worked closely with local officials. The final decisions on how to use the funds remained with programme committees consisting of government staff.
- The programme activities were highly participatory. Local people had a large and increasing say in planning and implementing activities, ensuring that SARDP addressed their priorities. With the introduction of the Community Development Fund, SARDP clearly demonstrated that communities have the capacity to plan and implement development interventions and fully use technical assistance that was put at their disposal.

High-level leadership and guidance was sought through the establishment of a central programme coordinating committee consisting of Bureau heads and Cabinet members. Unfortunately, these individuals faced many other pressing duties, so their engagement in SARDP turned out to be less than expected. Future

programmes should perhaps delegate power to committees made of lower-level officials who can attend meetings regularly and devote more attention to the programme. Also, full-time focal persons with full powers vested in them would no doubt make day-to-day activities much smoother.

A large number of beneficiaries

Many people throughout East Gojjam and South Wollo benefited from SARDP. Although the programme targeted a large number of villages, it did so in a systematic way: it began in a few *woredas*, then gradually spread its activities to cover all 30 *woredas* in the two Zones. Activities were coordinated to achieve maximum impact: repairing or building a village road made it possible to develop a water-supply system, build and equip a school, or organize a group of farmers to market crops grown in their newly irrigated fields. The wide range of activities meant that many families in each village benefited.

The interventions which seem to have had the clearest impact were in land administration and certification, road and bridge construction and maintenance, small scale irrigation, farming technologies and inputs, skills training, and credit.

The programme was particularly successful in stimulating and maintaining community participation, as a result of efforts to build local capacity and develop community institutions. The community development fund proved an excellent mechanism for doing these: it developed much-needed physical infrastructure according to local priorities, at the same time as empowering local communities. A large share of the SARDP budget was devoted to infrastructure development, largely because the programme's participatory character enabled local communities to set their own priorities.

The opening up of roadless areas meant a lot to rural people, for instance by enabling them to reach markets and other services. Linkages between rural and urban areas improved substantially, enabling farmers to reach new markets with new products. SARDP constructed many bridges, enabling people and vehicles to cross rivers safely.

The creation of job and income generation possibilities through the enterprise development facility has provided critical support to the development of the private sector and established many viable business undertakings in rural areas.

A model land administration programme

A lack of secure land tenure has been a major problem in Ethiopia. The SARDP approach to land administration created a systematic, affordable and quick process that provided nearly all the landholders in the two Zones with primary certificates within a short period. This pioneered the way that the rest of Amhara, other Regions in Ethiopia, and indeed other countries in Africa, can follow.

Skills in land administration were virtually non-existent in Ethiopia at the start of SARDP. Over the years, international and national experts developed systems and procedures well adapted to local conditions. The Bureau of Environment Protection, Land Administration and Use now has the staff, facilities and approaches to act as a strong institutional home for the Amhara Region's land administration programme. The Land Administration Institute at Bahir Dar University, created with support from another Sida project, is a direct result of the SARDP initiative; it provides students with the expertise to manage similar land administration programmes throughout Ethiopia.

Continuous capacity building

Training and capacity building was a key feature of many aspects of SARDP. The programme facilitated numerous training courses for a wide range of participants: farmers, development assistants, land administration committee members, environment clubs, community empowerment committee members, health extension workers, artisans, road caretakers, road foremen, conflict resolution and social court members, administrators, focal persons, and so on. It also provided a many scholarships and enabled key staff to further their education in Ethiopia and abroad. It funded four PhDs, over 55 masters, and over 100 bachelor degrees. Capacity was also built through technical advisers working with their counterparts in the *woredas*.

This effort was necessary for two reasons. One was the need to increase the skills and capacity of people who would be responsible for planning, managing and implementing SARDP's various initiatives. The other was the high rate of government staff turnover, particularly in the *woreda* administrations. This made it necessary to train new staff constantly.

At first, SARDP focused on strengthening Regional and Zonal level institutions. It provided offices, computers and vehicles, trained staff, and helped develop policies and procedures. This focus later gradually shifted to the *woreda* and *kebele* levels. These local government authorities play a key role in providing services, encouragement and resources to support local communities. Although SARDP increased their ability to plan and implement development interventions increased substantially, they still lack capacity, commitment and resources, and cannot yet sustain themselves.

The tasks ahead

Although SARDP has seen important progress in many places, much remains to be done. Most people in East Gojjam and South Wollo are still very poor. A minority of households did not manage to improve their situations much. Most rural households in the two Zones still depend mainly on farming, and land is

seriously limited. Productivity is threatened and production is vulnerable to erratic rainfall.

Further efforts, at several levels, will be needed for people's lives to improve permanently. Infrastructure such as roads and irrigation schemes, must be maintained, and new infrastructure built. There is a huge need for farmers to diversify, and for markets to reach deeper into rural areas. People must develop alternative livelihoods based on off-farm enterprises. A vibrant and effective private sector is required to stimulate and support economic growth. People need to move off the land to enable farming systems to stabilize and become more productive. The revenue and capacity of local government institutions need strengthening.

SARDP has achieved notable successes in many areas. The Amhara Regional government and the Zonal, *woreda* and *kebele* administrations, now have the responsibility to continue, build on and scale up these successes. The Amhara government also has the opportunity to work with the federal government and other Regions to transfer the lessons and approaches pioneered by SARDP to the rest of Ethiopia.



Appendices

Institutions, staff and consultants that contributed to
SARDP, and publications and films produced

Institutions

Participating institutions

SARDP worked through many Regional bureaus and institutions, and their Zonal and *woreda* offices. During SARDP III, the following Regional bureaus and institutions were among the key stakeholders:

Amhara Credit and Savings Institution, ACSI

Amhara Mass Media Agency, AMMA

Amhara Rural Energy and Mines Resources Development Promotion Agency

Amhara Rural Roads Authority, ARRA

Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development, BoARD

- Amhara Regional Agricultural Research Institute, ARARI
- Cooperatives Promotion Agency

Bureau of Capacity Building, BoCB

Bureau of Environmental Protection, Land Administration and Use, BoEPLAU

Bureau of Finance and Economic Development, BoFED

Bureau of Health, BoH

- HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office

Bureau of Justice

Bureau of People's Participation Organization, BoPPO

Bureau of Trade and Industry, BoTI

- Amhara Micro and Small Trade and Industry Enterprises Promotion Agency, AMSTIEPA

Bureau of Water Resources

Bureau of Women's Affairs, BWA

Some of these institutions were reorganized during the life of SARDP, and some have been renamed. The level of support to the individual institutions differed, and not all received support throughout.

The Zonal offices in East Gojjam and South Wollo, representing the above institutions, were all supported by SARDP to provide technical backstopping to the *woredas*. During phase III, SARDP worked in all 14 East Gojjam and 16 South Wollo *woredas*.

Programme coordination committee

The SARDP programme was guided by a Programme coordinating committee representing the following bodies:

- Bureau of Finance and Economic Development, BoFED (chair)
- Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development, BoARD
- Bureau of Trade and Industry, BoTI
- Bureau of Capacity Building, BoCB
- Bureau of Women's Affairs, BWA
- Bureau of People's Participation
- Programme Coordination Unit, PCU

Staff and consultants

Programme coordination unit

Bahir Dar

Programme directors

Getachew Ali
Ayichew Kebede

Finance and administrative head

Desalegn Ayal

Programme officers

Awoke Kassa
Ahmed Yimam

Senior accountant

Ababu Yimam

Information, education and communication officer

Fasil W/Michael

Secretary cashier

Alemtsehay Mekonnen

Accountant

Amelework Tilahun

Assistant procurement and general service

Misganaw Mequanent

Store and duplication

Tensay Geremew

Messenger and cleaner

Etenesh Worku

Driver mechanics

Ibrahim Anwar
Minilik Aragaw
Hailom Azeze
Simeneh G/Hana
Tsfaye Mekonnen
Nebiyu Mulugeta
Yihalem Tadesse
Tadesse W/Semayat

Sub-programme coordination units

**Debre Markos
East Gojjam**

Programme coordinator

Habtmu Sahilu

Accountant/acting programme coordinator

Abebe Ferede

Irrigation and water expert

Zenebe Ayele

Acting secretary cashier

Erkunesch Admsu

Secretary cashiers

Haimanot Etsubdink
Atsede Geremew

Messenger and cleaners

Banchiwale Alemayehu
Mekdes Bekele

Driver mechanics

Demelash Abebe
Birhanu Admasu
Mesfin Bogale
Tilahun Menkir
Sirak Nigussie
Tilaye Yadetie
Belachew Zeleke

**Dessie
South Wollo**

Programme coordinator

Endalkachew Zewdie

Accountant/acting programme coordinator

Gashaw Eshetu

Irrigation and water expert

Aragaw Addis

Secretary cashier

Eskedar Bekele

General service

Liben Beshir

Cleaner and messenger

Meaza Admassu

Driver mechanics

Desalegn Abohay
Matews Begashaw
Gashaw Erkyihun
Girma Kassaye
Yohanes Kibret
Awol Mohammed
Mekasha Nigatu
Belay Tesfaye
Belete W/Senbet
Meles Wondimagegne

Long-term consultants

The following long-term consultants, employed by the ORGUT-Scanagri Consortium, provided technical advice and support to the programme during SARDP I–III.

Programme management advisers

Diederik Koning
Göte Lidvall
Håkan Sjöholm

Deputy programme management adviser

Haddis Mulugeta

Agriculture and natural resource management advisers

Yitayew Abebe
Dr Negussie Alemayehu
Dr Habtu Assefa
Dr Endale Bekele
Anthea Dickie
Börje Folkesson
Ingemar Jarlebring
Tantigegn Kebede
Hector McKilligan
Dr Yitbarek Semeane
Mark Spoelstra
Richard Weiner
Shelemew W/Mariam

Capacity building advisers

Seid Ali
Adera Bekele
Assefa Gezahegn
Workwoha Mekonnen
Assefa Workie

Contract administration advisers

Kunkanammana S Kulasinge
Torgny Pettersson

Environmental adviser

Anders Höjlund

Gender advisers

Kalkidan Bekele
Tadelech Debele
Workwoha Mekonnen
Nigist Shiferaw
Wubit Shiferaw

HIV/AIDS advisers

Tesfa Demelew
Ayenew Messele
Dr Sale Workineh

Infrastructure and social service development advisers

Abraham Abebe
Ahmed Adem
Berhan Ayalew
Dessalegn Bezabih
Ahmed Salih

Land administration advisers

Lennart Bäckström
Thomas Dubois
Lars Palm

Marketing and enterprise development advisers

Gerard Blondet
Legesse Tashu
Habtam Tsegaye
Mulatu Zerihun

On-farm research advisers

Dr Habtu Assefa
Dr Endale Bekele
Dr Punjabrao A Chadokar
Dr Belay Semane
Dr Yitbarek Semeane

Participatory monitoring and evaluation advisers

Abebaw Getachew
Michael Bellers Madsen
Roy Thompson

Road technicians

Zerihun Belayneh
Zerihun Maru
Ali Nurye
Befekadu Yirdaw
Nebiat Hiskias
Tsegaw Tadesse

Seed advisers

Rutger Persson
Dr Getnet Alemahu
Gudissa Shaka

Socioeconomic adviser

Fekadu Mogus

Water and irrigation technicians

Zerihun Belayneh
Andualem Haddis
Demeke Hailu
Debebe Lijalem
Abebe W/Amanuel

Woreda programme management advisers

Adera Bekele
Atnafu Demisse
Mekonen Feyissa
Assefa Gessesse
Assefa Workie

Woreda training centre

Hans von Schoultz
Assefa Gezahegn

Short-term consultants

The following short-term consultants worked for the programme during SARDP III.

Performance assessment

Robert Bäckström
Per Giertz
Mikaela Kruskopf
Tor Lundström
Maria Tadesse
Haddis Mulugeta
Daniel Sköld

Cooperatives

Afewerk Yohannes
Robin Walraven

Curriculum development, BoEPLAU

Sven-Gunnar Larsson

Economic diversification, PCU

Zelalem Anteneh
Getaneh Gobeze
Dr Peter Langmead

Enterprise development

Aldo de Kartzow
Fantahun Meles
Jan Runnqvist

Environmental impact assessment, BoEPLAU

Dr Bernt Rydgren

Family planning

Gashaw Afaw
Dr Adanech K/Mariam

Financial management, PCU

Tommy Andersson

Gender

Sosana Demise
Meron Genene
Dorothy Hamada

HIV/AIDS

Tine Breitholt
Wakgari Deressa
Dr Getenet Mitike
Andy O'Connell

Impact assessment, PCU

Dr Assefa Admassie
Steve Gossage

Land laws, BoEPLAU

Bengt Andersson
Lennart Frej

Legal adviser, BoEPLAU

Molla Mengistu
Abebe Mulato

Management information system expert, ACSI

Anthony Maina

Marketing

Kristina Flodman
Tadesse G/Giorgis
Dr Peter Langmead
Tesfaye Tigabu

Monitoring & evaluation, PCU

Ali Dastgeer
Steve Gossage

Monitoring database development

Asnakew Assefa

Planning transmitter station, AMMA

Sven Olof Heed

Property valuation, BoEPLAU

Göran Lif

Revenue collection, BoFED

Dr James Warner

Rural-urban development planning, BPWUD

Klas Klasson

Rural-urban linkages

Solomon Wolde

Strategic planning, BoEPLAU

Prof Hans Mattson

System development expert, BoEPLAU

Frans Nylin

Training expert, AMMA

KG Westerberg

Training, surveying and mapping, BoEPLAU

Daniel Abebe
Thomas Dubois

Valuation expert, BoEPLAU

Demelash Gizachew

Backstopping support

Home office

The office at ORGUT Consulting AB in Stockholm provided administrative as well as technical support

Home office coordinators

Susanne von Walter
Maria Tadesse
Jorge Maluenda
Malin Paulsson

Finance, accounting and procurement

Elisabeth Valldor
Irene Ryyänen
Jindra Bresell
Maria Andersson

National Liaison Office

The ORGUT-Scanagri Consortium maintained a liaison office in Addis Ababa, housed with Haddis Consult, providing administrative and logistic support to its consultants working for the programme

Technical and administrative backstopping

Haddis Mulugeta

Liaison Officer

Bessufekad Bekele

Accounting

Hidra Ali

Publications and films

Many reports and publications were produced during SARDP, by technical advisers and consultants. A selection of the most important ones is listed below. After the programme ended, SARDP's library was transferred to the library of the Bureau of Finance and Economic Development, where these documents now can be found.

Technical reports

Agriculture and environment

- A proposed veterinary privatisation programme for the Amhara Region. 2002
- Report on technical advice on environmental protecting in the Amhara National Regional State. 2005
- Strategic environmental assessment of SARDP III. 2003

Economic diversification

- Assessment and preparation of draft modality for future use of the EDF Loan. 2010
- Business plan for the Regional Micro and Small Enterprise Development Agency. 2002
- Economic diversification component: Assessment and recommendations. 2008
- Private sector development. Mission report. 2003
- Proposal for the economic diversification component of SARDP III. Main summary Report. 2005
- Regional Micro and Small Enterprise Development Agency. Mission report. 2002

Gender

- Interventions for gender equality and mainstreaming in SARDP II. 2003
- Interventions for gender equality and mainstreaming in SARDP II. Mission report. 2003
- Research on harmful traditional practices and violence against women in South Wollo and East Gojjam of the Amhara Region. 2009
- Secondary school girls' dormitories – A pilot intervention. 2006

Government and finance

- BOFED's role in Ethiopia's fiscal decentralization. 2003
- Estimating the revenue potential for the Amhara National Regional State. 2005
- Proposal for the good governance component of SARDP III. Main summary report. 2005

Infrastructure

- Rural urban linkages. 2004

Land administration

- Documenting the Amhara land administration reform experience and drawing lessons for the Tigray certification. 2007
- The establishment of an institute in land administration at Bahir Dar University. 2006
- Evaluation of the pilot land administration scheme in Amhara National Regional State. 2003
- Future framework of land-related laws in Amhara National Regional State. 2005

- Future land related legislation for ANRS. 2007
- Implementation of information system for land administration. 2004
- Integration of the data capturing process and the registration in ISLA. 2007
- Land surveying and production chain. 2007
- Release report for ISLA. Version 1.1.0. 2006
- Release report for ISLA, Version 1.2.0. 2006
- Release report for ISLA. Versions 1.3.0 and 1.3.1. 2007
- Release report for ISLA. Version 1.4.0. 2008
- Release report for ISLA, Version 1.5.0. 2010
- Report by the technical adviser for development and implementation of a land administration system in the Amhara National Regional State. 2005
- Report on technical advice on land administration system in the Amhara National Regional State. 2005
- Specification for information systems for land administration system (ISLAS). 2003
- Valuation practice development within land administration. 2005

Monitoring and evaluation

- Monitoring and evaluation initial report. 2002
- Monitoring and evaluation report. 2002
- Monitoring and evaluation report. 2003

Results based monitoring and evaluation manual, 2010

Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme impact assessment. 2008

Technical assistance performance and capacity building assessment. 2002

Userfriendly database operational manual, 2010

Other

Bahir Dar University curriculum. 2006

Proposal for an exit strategy for SARDP III. 2003

Working papers

The working papers evolved over time. They were completed and published on CD ROMs in 2010.

Agriculture and natural resources management

Building local capacity in sheep improvement

Dairy improvement and management in SARDP

Developing a sustainable seed system in SARDP

Farmer research and extension group (FREG) in SARDP

Framework for self-help groups

Grazing land management under smallholder mixed farming system

Kebele level participatory land use planning system

Model farmers training centre system

Promoting beekeeping as a source of livelihood

Promotion of food crops production in SARDP supported *woredas*

SARDP's approach to soil fertility management through compost

Scaling-up and dissemination strategy

Smallholder irrigation promotion for high cash value crop production

Smallholder poultry production system

Sustainable nursery management strategies

Capacity building

Community empowerment: A SARDP strategy for poverty reduction

Information, communication and documentation systems at *woreda* level

Local justice and traditional conflict management systems

Economic diversification

Establishment of a market intelligence unit (MIU)

Management of a voucher system

Mechanism to address issues of micro and small enterprises (MSEs)

Mechanism for accessing credit and capacity of local financial intermediaries (LFIs)

System for the identification of needs and strategic interventions for economic diversification

Value chain analysis for sheep meat

Gender

Gender mainstreaming

Gender networking and advocacy guideline

Girls' dormitories

The importance of traditional birth attendants

Utilizing women's skills in small enterprises

Women's forum: A system for gender mainstreaming

HIV/AIDS

A mechanism to address population issue at *woreda* level

Best practice on HIV/AIDS prevention and control: Community conversation - A technical guideline

District level HIV/AIDS mainstreaming

HIV/AIDS prevention and control strategy

Systems for providing better access to social services for PLWHA and affected families

Infrastructure development

Operation and maintenance of small scale irrigation schmes

Rural roads maintenance management

Water supply: Sanitation and operation, maintenance of electromechanical units

Woreda programme management

Assessment of community participation and ownership in programme *woredas*

Results based management

Woreda's financial resources and their revenue generating capacity

Woreda programme management in SARDP: Experiences and recommendations

Lessons

These are based on the *Working papers* listed above.

Beekeeping
Community empowerment
Conflict management
Dairy improvement
Documentation centres
Gender mainstreaming strategy
Microfinance guideline
Nursery management
Sheep improvement
Smallholder irrigation
Smallholder poultry
Soil fertility improvement through compost
Women's forum
Woreda financial resources
Woreda revenue generation

General publications

Land registration and certification: Experiences from the Amhara National Regional State, 2010
Window of SARDP, 2009
SARDP Pool-up digital poster (bilingual), 2009
SARDP at this moment: Community driven development bulletin, 2009
SARDP on the ground: Spatial distribution map of physical interventions (special issue), 2008
SARDP at the glance bulletin (bilingual special issue), 2008
SARDP from 1977 to date, 2007
Success story of SARDP newsletter (monthly, English)
SARDP magazine (bilingual special issue), 2006
SARDP agenda (bilingual special issue), 2006
SARDP brochure (I and II bilingual), 2004 and 2005
Special issue on participatory development planning process (bilingual), 2005
SARDP: Community driven development newsletter (special issue, English), 2004

Documentary films

The sprouting seed, 2009
Glimmer of hope, 2007
LEAP: Local Empowerment Accelerating Programme, 2007
The farmer on the ladder, 2006
The fight against poverty, 2005

About this book

The Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme aimed to improve food security and reduce rural poverty in Amhara, in northern Ethiopia. This book presents some of the programme's most successful interventions, and offer numerous lessons and insights that can be applied by other development initiatives:

- **Support for land tenure security** – introducing a land administration system, and providing landholders with certificates to their land to encourage them to invest in it.
- **Improving agricultural productivity and natural resources management** – introducing new crops, livestock breeds, farming techniques and small scale irrigation together with innovative approaches.
- **Economic diversification** – supporting the development of non-farm enterprises and creating new sources of income for local people.
- **Developing infrastructure and social services**, such as roads, bridges, drinking water supply schemes, irrigation systems, schools, health posts and centres.
- **Promoting gender equality and mainstreaming HIV/AIDS** into programme activities
- **Decentralization and capacity building** – enabling local governments and communities to make decisions that concern them, and ensuring that government staff and local people have the skills and resources they need to promote development.

The Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme ran from 1997 to 2010. It served East Gojjam and South Wollo Zones in the Amhara National Regional State. It was implemented with the Regional government, with funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and technical and management support from ORGUT Consulting AB.

This book is intended for government institutions, development agencies, non-governmental organizations and others interested in rural development in Ethiopia and elsewhere in Africa.

ISBN 978-99944-851-0-9

ORGUT



Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme, Amhara, Ethiopia