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study



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# Integrated food security and livelihoods approach Building capacity of vulnerable people in Tigray/Ethiopia

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## Background

Ethiopia has one of the world's poorest economies. Socio-economic development indicators for the country are significantly lower in comparison with the average in sub-Saharan Africa. Food insecurity continues to be a threat to the country with a current population estimated at 80 million. Each year, on average, approximately five million people have problems in securing sufficient food and require assistance.

Situated in northern Ethiopia, the Tigray region is one of the country's nine regional states bordering Eritrea to the north and Sudan to the west. The Tigray region is organized into six administrative zones, comprised of 46 rural *Woredas* (districts) and 660 *Tabias* (sub-kebeles). Enderta *Woreda* is one of the 46 *Woredas* in the Tigray region. The district has a population of approximately 124,547 people, of which 62,224 (49 per cent) are male and 63,382 (51 per cent) are female. The average family size in the *Woreda* is 6 and the average family land holding is 0.5 hectares.

The Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS), in cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the Swedish Red Cross (SRC), is currently implementing an integrated food security development project in the Tigray region. Specifically, the project is focusing on the sub-districts of Enderta: Dedba, Dergajen and Shibta *Tabias*.

The project was initiated in January 2009 and will continue until 2012. A total budget of 2,352,592.00 CHF (>16 million birr) is allocated for the whole project period starting from 2009 to 2012.

### Project goals and specific objectives:

The Tigray food security project has the goal of improving the food security situation of 2,259 vulnerable households (10,500 people) in Dedba, Dergajen and Shibta sub-districts of Enderta Woreda in a sustainable manner. The major focus of the project is to improve alternative agricultural production and reduce vulnerability.

### The specific objectives include:



Farmers with fruit seedlings

- To improve the income of 2,259 vulnerable households in Dedba, Dergajen and Shibta through provision of crossbreed cows, cattle fattening, beehives and poultry.
- To improve the health status of 10,000 people in the three sub-districts through disease prevention and control. Integration of HIV and AIDS prevention into all operational project areas as a cross-cutting development issue.
- To enhance food security through protection of natural resources as well as fruit and vegetable production.
- To improve the capacity of the ERCS Tigray branch to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate longer-term food security projects.

### Methods and tools employed:

The methods and tools used are community participatory and partnership approach with key stakeholders such as the communities, line departments at all levels, CBOs (unions, credit and saving associations) and local authorities.

### Achievements:

The project has been able to improve the livelihoods of the targeted communities through training on income generating schemes, health and sanitation, which includes Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST). Major project activities include: familiarization workshops; 82 beneficiaries trained in dairy farming; 578 beneficiaries trained in cattle fattening; 500 beneficiaries trained in modern beekeeping; 174 beneficiaries trained in goat or sheep fattening; 146 beneficiaries trained in fruit gardening and nursery development; water development; health and sanitation; and income generating activity (IGA) training.

### Capacity-building through awareness and education:

The ability and capacity building of beneficiaries have been developed through various trainings, including IGA, health and sanitation; familiarization workshops, through participatory approach starting from the project design up to the monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, a revolving fund package has been linked to activities, which directly plays an important role in the improvement of livelihoods of poor farmers in a sustainable manner. The project has introduced peer group education, training of trainers (ToTs) to students, and through the formation of small group discussions.

### **Income generating activity training:**

One thousand three hundred selected beneficiaries, development agents, and representatives of some cooperatives have participated in the trainings. IGA trainings include issues related to dairy cow, beehive sheep, goat and cattle fattening activities and management. The objective in providing IGA trainings is to raise awareness on the importance of each activity as a source of income and their proper management.

In addition to the IGA trainings, different technical trainings have been given to respective beneficiaries; major components include housing management, feed management, disease type and controlling methods, etc.

Once the beneficiaries have been trained on respective food security project interventions, they receive the required amount of money to purchase live-stock and meet additional needs. The ERCS Tigray branch, together with local authorities, also distributed modern beehives.



**Farmers attending a training on cattle fattening and marketing**

### **Nursery development:**

The local authorities have provided a site, approximately two hectares of land, for nursery purposes. Accordingly, some of the activities implemented are land clearing, land preparation, soil compost, manure, bed preparation, potting, purchasing industrial materials for fencing, and purchasing nursery tools and planting of different seedlings. More than 100,000 seedlings were produced and distributed to beneficiaries – 57,612 are fruit seedlings/mango avocado...fruits that contribute to the beneficiaries' nutritional needs.

### **Participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation trainings:**

PHAST trainings have been provided to Target community members with the objective of empowering communities by giving them with the tools and knowledge and to bring about behavioral changes on personal health care and environmental cleanliness

### **Community-based health first aid training (CBHFA) and HIV and AIDS home-based care and peer education training:**

CBHFA and HIV and AIDS home-based care and peer education training have been provided to beneficiaries with the objective of reducing human suffering and preventing the prevalence of HIV and AIDS. A total of 145 individuals have been trained on CBHFA out of which 42 are health extension workers, three *Woreda* health experts and two *Tabia* health supervisors. Thirty home-based care and peer education and 70 peer educators have also taken on ToTs.



**Farmers on CBHFA training**

## Capacity-building through experience sharing and exchange:



Farmers receiving cash loan for cattle fattening programme

The purpose of this activity is to enable similar communities to exchange different experiences while engaging in various IGA activities to improve the food security situation of their respective communities. Thus, key stakeholders have participated in dissemination of knowledge and experience as well as documentation of good practices and field visits. Accordingly, IGA projects that were visited include the Adimeskel milk co-operative union of Adigrat; silk worm production model farm (Adigrat); Sasun Saving and Credit Union (Adigrat); Dbla farmers training center (Adigrat); Fattening cooperatives of youth (Adigrat); Mytsedo beehive production (Wukro); and Messobo cooperative of cobble stone.

Local authorities/government, community representatives, youth, women and farmer's associations are other actors involved in supporting the implementation of the project and ensuring its sustainability.

### Target groups reached:

The total population of the three-targeted *Tabias* (Dedba, Dergajen and Shibta) is approximately 28,742 or 5,226 households. Among them, 2,259 vulnerable households were selected to be the beneficiaries of the project. Shibta has the highest number of households (1,093) targeted for the project. The number of target households in Dedba and Dergajen, is 276 and 890, respectively. The number of households targeted for the year 2012 is 905 or 5430 people.

### Planning/monitoring/evaluation/assessment:

Overall project planning is carried out with the participation of the community. The ERCS, the Tigray branch and local government have been involved in the monitoring of the project. The IFRC, SRC, ERCS and Tigray branch will be conducting evaluations on an annual basis.

According to various stakeholders, even though it is too early to assess the impacts of the project, there are indications that most of the beneficiaries have started to gain the fruits of the project and are meeting their needs.

## Beneficiary story /real story:

Amina, a resident of Dergaajen tabia, is head of the family and has two sons and three daughters. She is a beneficiary of the ERCS's household package that started in 2009. She received a loan of 2,940 Ethiopian Birr (154 Swiss Francs/124 Euros) of which 2,800 Ethiopian Birr (146 Swiss Francs/118 Euros) is a principal, while the rest 140 Ethiopian Birr (7 Swiss Francs/6 Euros) is interest.

Amina says she participated in a training facilitated by the ERCS on techniques of cattle fattening, feeding, and livestock marketing. "The training gave me knowledge and skills on how to manage livestock on my small holdings different from my traditional way of doing it. I found the training very useful. I have also received technical support from the *Tabia* agricultural experts" says Amina.

I was one of the poorest women in my Tabia. My annual earning was about 6000 Birr before the project came to support me. Amina said her current annual income has increased to 12,000 Ethiopian Birr (629 Swiss Francs/509 Euros) as a result of the household package. According to Amina, today, her living conditions are better because she can now afford to send her school-aged children to school, she has a good income to feed her family and her children have no nutrition deficiency problems. Amina thanks the program very much for its support.



Amina feeding her ox

### Lessons learnt

- In kind support is more successful than distribution of seed money
- Engaging women in the management of IGA is more successful
- Involving government bodies at each level develops the sense of ownership of the project, encourages commitment, creates transparency, and ensures sustainability
- Livelihood diversification approach decreases the risk of food insecurity and poverty resulted from shortage of land and/or landlessness

### Challenges

- Complexity in beneficiaries targeting/conflict of interests due to limited resources
- Tendency of using loans/liquid money for unintended purpose
- Staff turn over



For further information,  
please contact:

**Ethiopia Red Cross Society**  
Kefay Baye: Head, disaster Management Department  
Postal address: P.O BOX 195. Addis ababba. Ethiopia  
Email: [kefaybaye22@gmail.com](mailto:kefaybaye22@gmail.com) web site: <http://www.redcrosseth.org>  
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
P.O. Box 372. CH-1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland  
Email: [secretariat@ifrc.org](mailto:secretariat@ifrc.org) Web site: [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)

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