

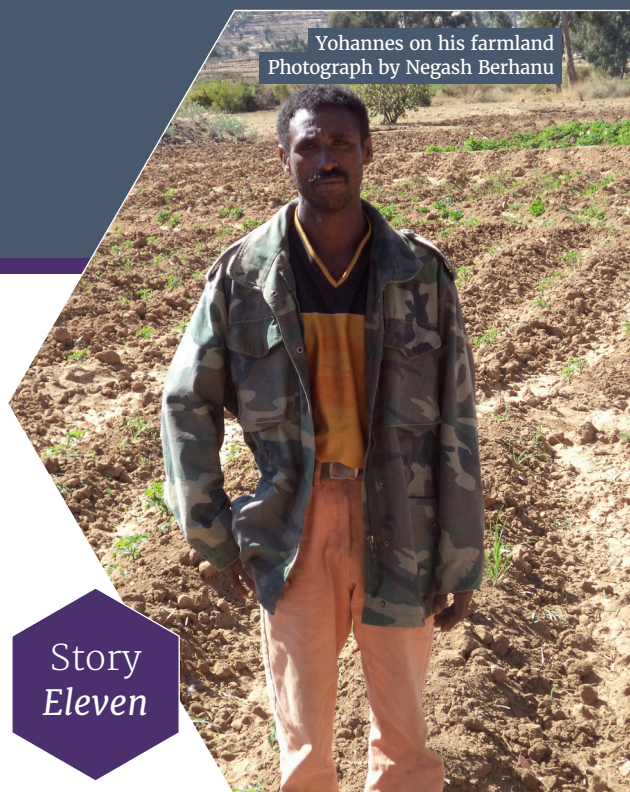
Climate Smart Initiative Story of Change: Yohannes

Gulomekeda woreda, Tigray, Ethiopia

Yohannes on his farmland
Photograph by Negash Berhanu

The Climate Smart Initiative (CSI) was launched in July 2013, as an adjunct to the existing Government of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and Household Asset Building Programme (HABP); two of the key mechanisms of the Government to tackle food security issues and related rural livelihoods strengthening.

CSI was designed to pilot approaches that consider climate change within this larger, established context, working within existing Government approaches and cycles. This Story of Change provides an example of how CSI has affected an individual or a household.



Story
Eleven

Who is Yohannes?

He is head of a household of nine family members (five male and four female) in Begenat watershed, Maitsaeda kebele, Gulomekeda woreda, Tigray. He is a PSNP and HABP beneficiary. He participated in the Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA)¹ process in late 2013.

What are the climate and environmental problems facing Yohannes?

He is facing recurring drought, reduced and more erratic rainfall, hailstorms, frost, deforestation and land degradation. The impacts of flooding and soil erosion have decreased land suitable for cultivation.

Summary:

The participatory approach of CVCA discussions enabled Yohannes and the community to improve their understanding of climate change, including locally occurring recurrent shocks, and how they themselves are contributing to climate change. From a position of being depressed at finding it difficult to feed his family in the face of recurrent shocks, he realised that he must take action. Yohannes is now aware of ways to adapt to the hazards, taking action at home by introducing backyard irrigation, and on his farmland, jointly purchasing a motorised irrigation pump.

¹ The Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (CVCA) is a tool developed by CARE to analyse the implications of climate change for lives and livelihoods. CSI has carried out two rounds of CVCA within the programme, adapting and amending from one round to the next, and then extracting learning from these processes to produce suggestions for "climate smarting" the annual PSNP planning process.

CSI has been implemented by a consortium of organisations, led by CARE Ethiopia, and including Cornell University, Dadimos, FARM Africa, IDS, IICD, Itad Ltd, Jimma University, MMA Consulting, Mercy Corps, ORDA, REST, and SNV. In late 2015, CSI is closing down; leaving a legacy of learning and insights about "climate smart" and what it means, from the household reality to the highest level of policy making.



Facing up to the difficulty of feeding his family

Yohannes openly shares the stresses he was facing: 'I was depressed and stressed trying to feed my large family [nine], where I had nobody to show me the way to deal with recurrent shocks.' As a beneficiary of PSNP and HABP he was invited to participate in the CVCA's community discussions. He eagerly took up this opportunity and soon realised that there was more he could do to help his family.

Learning about climate change, its causes and its impacts

Yohannes recounts the new knowledge he gained from his participation: 'During CVCA discussions it was clearly pointed out how drought is recurring over a historical timeline, frost and other hazards as well ... I have learnt that deforestation, degradation and erratic rainfall were caused due to mismanagement of natural resources by us.' The fact that climate change is human-induced acted as a motivator for him to bring about change: 'I have learnt from CVCA discussions that our actions are contributing/exaggerating climate change ... I have also learnt that unless we act swiftly we will not cope with the forecasted climate change I heard about from the facilitators.'



Yohannes with his new well
Photograph by Negash Berhanu

Responding to climate hazards – the need to take action

Yohannes realised that 'business as usual' was not an option if he wanted to feed his family across the year: 'I need to find means to cope with these hazards because unless I do act in advance, by myself, I realise I may fall down and not be able to cope with problems.' During the CVCA process, ways to deal with these increasing hazards were highlighted: 'Of the identified solutions, improving access to irrigation, reforestation and area closure, and to follow a cut and carry system when we rear/fatten, were some of the solutions.'



Yohannes using the water from his well
Photograph by Negash Berhanu

After careful thought, Yohannes identified the action he needed to take. He introduced backyard irrigation for his garden by digging a shallow well and buying a motor pump jointly with his neighbour. He is now more hopeful that he will be able to feed his family in the future.

