

Climate Smart Initiative

Story of Change: Sileshi

Demba Gofa woreda, SNNPR, Ethiopia

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
Seven

Sileshi and one of his hens
Photograph by Alemitu Golda

Who is Sileshi?

He is 30 years old, heading a household of four (him, his wife and their two girls). He moved to Shage watershed, Gurade kebele, Demba Gofa woreda in 2005. He has been a PSNP beneficiary for the last four years and owns one quarter of a hectare. Through CSI Sileshi was involved in Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA)¹ and is diversifying his livelihood into poultry production.

What are the climate and environmental problems that Sileshi is facing?

During the long dry months Sileshi cannot produce sufficient food for his family or enough livestock feed and forage. Increasingly, he is facing problematic shifts in agricultural seasons – delays in rainfall mean the first agricultural season is delayed, with its crops damaged just before harvest time by seasonal rains.

Summary:

Even though Sileshi has been undertaking share-cropping, small-scale trading and PSNP–Public Works, he was still struggling to support his family in the face of climate change and local market food price increases. Sileshi was determined to be able to feed his family through diversifying his livelihood. The opportunity came when CSI came to his watershed – during the CSI–HABP business development training he saw the potential of poultry production for him as a small landholder farmer. While it is too early to see the impacts of this poultry production on his household's resilience in the face of climate shocks, he is confident and has great plans for expanding his business in the future and inspiring others in his kebele.

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 increasing challenges of feeding his family

Despite his efforts, Sileshi tells of the difficulties he faces: 'I am a PSNP-PW beneficiary for the last four years, yet I am one of the food-insecure households. To get sufficient food and income, I do share-cropping, small-scale trade and participate in the PSNP-PW. However, due to frequent shifts in the agricultural season and recurrent drought, agricultural production has been declining. On top of that, the rising food prices in the local market are making my family life more challenging.' But Sileshi is determined that he will feed his family.

Identifying climate change shocks, and the need to diversify livelihoods

In November 2013, CSI came to Sileshi's kebele. He remembers: 'CVCA was launched and there were about 30 households, including me, participating. Through the CVCA exercise we analysed climate change-related issues and shocks that affect the community.' The community identified potential activities that could address the climate shocks and enhance households' adaptation capacity. Poultry, beekeeping and shoat-fattening were among the climate-smart income-generating activities identified.

Taking up training leads to new income-generating opportunities

Sileshi's energy and pioneering spirit was noted: the Development Agents (DAs) and the Kebele Food Security Task Force selected him for the beekeeping enterprise group, with the group's members choosing him as their host farmer. Then came an interesting development. In 2014, the CSI focal person and woreda HABP experts provided five days of business development training to all host farmers in the climate-smart enterprise learning cluster groups in the watershed. Sileshi explains: 'I was impressed by the poultry production component equally with that of apiculture.

At the training session, we practiced risk-aware business plan preparation for all enterprise types, but I found the poultry component more interesting mainly because of its economic return.'

Pioneering a poultry production enterprise

Inspired, Sileshi sought further training from the woreda livestock expert: 'After acquiring significant insight into poultry production and its benefit, I decided to try it with my own money. Hence, I purchased two egg-laying exodus hens for 120.00 ETB ... One day later the hens started laying eggs. But my plan is not to sell eggs, it is rather to collect eggs from the exodus hens and get the low-cost local breed hens to hatch them.' This is an enterprising low-cost solution: exodus hens will lay but not hatch their eggs, and incubators are very expensive.

Planning for the future with confidence

Sileshi is full of plans: 'My dream is to establish a profitable poultry production business with low external investment cost and use family labour. My short-term plan is to have about 100 egg-laying hens after a year, whereas my long-term plan is to expand the poultry production alongside other activities to ensure my household food and income security and livelihood resilience ...

My ambition is to be an example for others in this kebele. I am also confident that in your next visit you will see the benefits from my poultry businesses.'



Sileshi with hen and eggs
Photograph by Alemitu Golda

