

## Story of Change – Glmikael family, Ethiopia



Photo: Thomas Omondi

### **At a glance**

Most Ethiopians live in rural areas, where levels of hunger and malnutrition are very high. Droughts and food emergencies are frequent.

### **SCIAF partner in Ethiopia**

ADCS (Adigrat Diocesan Catholic Secretariat)

### **Solution**

- Rain water reservoir tank
- Concrete irrigation canals
- Agricultural training
- Seedlings – orange and avocado
- Business skills

### **Outcome**

Many families that used to eat only one meal a day are now able to eat 2-3 times a day. Crops are better irrigated and families now grow a wider variety of crops. There is more food to eat, and extra to sell, meaning families have an income for clothes, food and other necessities.

### **Introduction**

The Glmikael family are close neighbours of the Gebreselassie family (featured on this year's WEE BOX). Berhan, in the centre of this photograph (above) goes to school with Tirhas, who is the middle daughter of the Gebreselassie family.

Families, like the Glmikael family, struggle to have a sustainable source of both food and income and many are used to eating only once a day.

### **How SCIAF has helped**

SCIAF's partner, ADCS, together with the community, have constructed rain water reservoirs, so that when the rains do come, the water is stored. Concrete irrigation canals take the water from the tank to the fields, so that it is directed to where it is needed. Previous traditional ditches lost a lot of the precious water and it didn't reach the crops.

Agricultural skills have taught the Glmikeals and their neighbours better farming techniques. They now know what to plant and when, how much space to leave between seedlings, and they grow a wider variety of crops, including fruits like avocados and oranges - which they both eat and sell at market, providing much-needed income.

They have also learnt business skills, so they can negotiate a better price for their fruit and vegetables, and so that they are selling them for the right market price. ADCS have also created a local market, not far from where the Glmikeal family live, which means all the families in the community, can easily sell their produce.

### **Quotes**

*“Before, there was a shortage of rain. But now because of the canal, thanks to ADCS life is better. Since we have been involved, we can plant vegetables and harvest them. We have an income; we can buy clothes and coffee. Life is better.”*

*“In my field I grow peppers, potatoes, tomatoes and onions. After I harvest the crops, I take them to the market and sell them. When we get the money, we identify the gaps in our household. If food is the problem, we buy food. If clothes are the problem, we buy clothes. With the help of the children, we grow the crops and we can buy coffee and sugar.”*

### **Full transcript of interview with Glmikael family**

#### **Can you describe life in your community?**

Before, there was a shortage of rain. But now because of the canal, thanks to ADCS life is better. Since we have been involved, we can plant vegetables and harvest them. We have an income; we can buy clothes and coffee. Life is better. We had a drought before, it was too sunny and you couldn't be anywhere apart from in the shade or in the house, you couldn't do anything.

#### **What was life like before the irrigation project?**

Before we became involved in the project, my husband was working in Addis to earn money and paid the minimum wage, 10 BIRR a day. When my husband went to Addis it was very difficult, a very bad time, we were not able to grow crops. Because of the water, life is better now.

#### **How have you benefitted from the project?**

In my field we grow peppers, potatoes, tomatoes and onions. After we harvest the crops, we take them to the market and sell them. When we get the money, we identify the gaps in our household. If food is the problem, we buy food. If clothes are the problem, we buy clothes. With the help of the children, we grow the crops and we can buy coffee and sugar.

#### **Did you receive any agricultural training?**

Yes, we learnt how to manage seedlings at the nursery; we learnt how much space you need between seedlings, and which crops to grow for the market. I have better crops now because of the spacing, it is much better than before.

**What variety of food do you have?**

Maize, barley, wheat, tomatoes, potatoes. Oranges and avocados are still growing.

**What is your hope for the future?**

For the future we hope to educate our children, we hope to live in the town and we hope to get electricity.