

## Story of Change – Techane Hailu and his family, Ethiopia



Photo: Thomas Omondi

### **At a glance**

Most Ethiopians live in rural areas, where levels of hunger and malnutrition are high. Droughts and food emergencies are frequent. Fathers have to leave their families to go to cities in order to find work and earn money for their family.

### **SCIAF partner in Ethiopia**

REST (Relief Society of Tigray)

### **Solution**

- Beehives and beekeeping training
- Water harvesting
- Soil and water conservation skills
- Mosquito nets

### **Outcome**

Many families that used to eat only one meal a day are now able to eat 2-3 times a day, and the community also has water. Beekeeping provides honey to eat and extra to sell, giving families an income to buy essentials, like soap.

### **Introduction**

Techane Hailu lives within his family in Tigray, not far from the region's capital Mekele. The rocky, harsh landscape in Tigray makes it difficult to grow food. In the past few years, the rainy seasons have not brought enough rain and people living in Tigray have suffered many droughts. The global food crisis has also meant that food prices have gone up. Families struggle to have a sustainable source of both food and income.

### **How SCIAF has helped**

SCIAF's partner, REST, together with the community, has constructed structures to harvest rain water, and have also provided skills in water and soil conservation, so that families can get the most of the water when it does come.

Techane Hailu also received a beehive and beekeeping training, which provides a nutritious source of food as well enough extra honey to sell at market. It is important to be able to have a sustainable income in order to buy essentials like soap, oil and materials for school and to become self-sufficient and not reliant on hand-outs.

### **Quote**

*"After I got the training from REST, I took the beehive. I sell the honey which provides me with an income... I also use the income to buy oil, soap and industrial materials."*

## **Full transcript of interview with Techane Hailu**

### **What is life like in the community?**

Before the project we depended on selling firewood, and daily labour and rainfed agriculture. Later, after the project, many things have been done, water harvesting structures have been put in place, and we have learnt soil and water conservation techniques.

### **Did your family have to migrate before?**

I went to central Ethiopia to work, but I came back before the project started.

### **What difference has the beehive made to your family?**

After I got the training from REST, I took the beehive. I sell the honey which provides me with an income – I need to pay people to help me harvest my fruit and vegetable crops. I also use the income to buy oil, soap and industrial materials.

### **How many times a year do you harvest the honey?**

Twice, once in October and once in January. I can fill a 40kg tub each time with the honey. I take a smaller tub to market to sell, and we eat some of it with bread and also mix it with water to make a drink. There are around 10,000 bees in the beehives.

### **Have you ever been stung?**

(laughs). Yes! All the animals have been stung too; we lost 5 chickens to beestings. But it is still worth it to have the beehive.

### **What do you do when you are stung?**

You just leave the sting to heal and you take the thorn out.

### **How do you collect the honey?**

I spray the hive with water and smoke in order to make the bees docile.

### **Do you feel you can better provide for your family now that you have the beehive?**

Yes, there is now a big improvement. We used to have a muddy roof and now we have corrugated iron and we'll be getting electricity. We could buy corrugated iron and now the rain doesn't come in to our house. Our health has improved because of the food and because of God. Before we had problems with malaria and waterborne diseases. We also got a mosquito net as part of the project. I suffered from malaria before. We needed the project. We are now self-sufficient.

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

I expect my children to be educated. If our children are educated, they are independent, and me and my wife will live peacefully. When I compare with the past, we can now manage ourselves properly. We can water our farm and we can try to mitigate against the droughts.