

# Photographic documentation of land restoration in Gergera watershed, Tigray, Ethiopia

Success stories and impacts

Community-based Adaptation & Climate-smart Practices:  
Storytelling Through Photography

Niguse Hagazi, Mulugeta Mokria, Kiros Hadgu, Gebrehiwot Hailemariam, Yemane Gebru,  
Aklilu Negussie and Eyob Getahun

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 2023





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Hagazi N, Mokia M, Hadgu K, Hailemariam G, Gebru Y, Negussie A and Getahun E. 2023. *Photographic documentation of land restoration in Gergera watershed, Tigray, Ethiopia*. Bogor, Indonesia: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and Nairobi: World Agroforestry (ICRAF).

Photos by: Teshome Ghebrekidan, Yemane Gebru, Niguse Hagazi and Gebrehiwot Hailemariam.

CIFOR  
Jl. CIFOR, Situ Gede, Bogor Barat 16115, Indonesia  
E [cifor@cgiar.org](mailto:cifor@cgiar.org)

ICRAF  
United Nations Avenue, Gigiri, PO Box 30677, Nairobi, 00100, Kenya  
E [worldagroforestry@cgiar.org](mailto:worldagroforestry@cgiar.org)

CIFOR-ICRAF  
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# List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

AFR100	The African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative
ANR	Assisted Natural Regeneration
BOA	Bureau of Agriculture
BoANR	Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources
CBO	Community-based Organization
CIFOR	The Center for International Forestry Research
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSA	Climate-smart Agriculture
FMNR	Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration
FTC	Farmers' Training College
GIZ	The German Agency for International Cooperation
HQ	Headquarters
ICRAF	World Agroforestry
IIED	The International Institute for Environment and Development
IWD	Integrated Watershed Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	The Norwegian Refugee Council
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PASDIP	Participatory Small-scale Irrigation Development Program
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Program
REST	Relief Society of Tigray
RRC	Rural Resource Centre
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
TIK	Technical Information Kit
UCC	University College Cork
WRI	World Resources Institute
WV	World Vision

# Introduction

## Background and context

Gegera watershed is located in Tabia (*the smallest administrative unit within a given district*) Hayelom, Atsbi Wonberta district of Tigray Region. It is situated in northern Ethiopia. The area is prone to drought with erratic, unevenly distributed rainfall and heavy runoff, and is surrounded by hills and mountains that drain their overflow into it. During the rainy season, floods flow down to tree-less farms and grazing lands in full force and wash away the easily erodible soil under the very eyes of helpless farmers. For years, farmers did not know how to stop the brutal and fierce floods from gobbling up the main source of their livelihood – their precious land. More and more agricultural land was disappearing, being swallowed up by ever-widening gullies and severe erosion that originated from the upper parts of the catchment.

Previously, major parts of the watershed had either been utilised for agriculture using traditional systems or as grazing land. There were some remnants of indigenous trees located at the upper and inlet parts of the watershed around the church compound. However, the area was unable to support agriculture and wood production activities due to the increasing food and energy demand, especially where farmlands and grazing areas had become tree-less and bare. The degradation problems of the watershed has been a serious threat, not only to farming communities living in the area, but also to the downstream populations. People continued to implement traditional farming practices, and were indiscriminately cutting down trees for fuelwood, thus further aggravating the problem. Owing to all these challenges, in the mid-1990s, the watershed became one of the most severely degraded areas in Tigray region. During this time, communities living in the area were desperate, and appealed to the government to resettle them in other productive areas in the country where they could rebuild their lives and livelihoods. Fortunately, the Irish Aid-supported rehabilitation program was initiated in the Tigray region during this period.

## Irish Aid-supported rehabilitation program

A rehabilitation program supported by Irish Aid was launched in the Gegera watershed area in 1998. It implemented an integrated watershed development (IWD) intervention approach. This was the first rehabilitation program which introduced the IWD approach. It was later implemented nation-wide. Following this integrated and inclusive methodology, various rehabilitation and conservation intervention activities were implemented, and positive impacts were evident within a short period of time. As they began appreciating the changes witnessed as a result of the project, the people's demand for resettlement faded. Instead, they began focusing on how to rebuild their livelihoods.

The Irish Aid-supported program has resulted in many significant and positive economic, social and ecological changes in the Gergera watershed. However, despite the massive efforts made by Irish Aid from 1998 to 2000, and later by the regional government through the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), the challenges persisted. In addition to the unsustainable natural resource management (NRM) indicator, some sections of the river continued to be destroyed by floods, resulting in the destruction of potential farmlands. As a result, improvements related to groundwater recharge, access to agricultural inputs, crop productivity, improved animal husbandry, honey production, grazing management, and capacity building of local communities and extension officers were included.

### Irish Aid-supported ICRAF-led Community-based Adaptation & Climate-smart Program

The World Agroforestry (ICRAF) partnered with Irish Aid to capitalize on the success of previous activities by the Irish government-supported program and the Ethiopian government through other initiatives such as PSNP. The partnership mainly involved the introduction of new and innovative technologies, practices and interventions, all aimed at transforming the lives and landscapes of the Gergera watershed and downstream communities in a sustainable manner. The first phase of the project entitled *“Enhancing Integrated Watershed Management with Climate-smart Agriculture and NRM Practices in Gergera Watershed”* was launched in August 2014 and ended by mid-2018. The second phase dubbed, *“Developing an Innovation and Learning Platform for Enhanced Economic Opportunities and Resilience in the Gergera Watershed: Action Research Programme”* was later launched and ended in October 2022. The University College Cork (UCC) from Ireland played a key role in the second phase of the project, and was mainly involved in generating evidence by conducting studies in the areas of nutrition, women economic empowerment, plus value chain and market assessment of some specific agricultural commodities.

The ICRAF-led project started with a pre-baseline assessment which aimed to understand the context and socio-economic conditions of the watershed. For example, during the pre-assessment activity, it was confirmed that 36 ha of farmland had been lost and was now part of a big gully or had become smaller gullies, and the hillsides/exclosures as well as farmlands and grazing areas were severely degraded. Moreover, despite its huge potential to serve as a water catchment area for residents as well as the downstream communities, about 150 farmers had lost all or some part of their farmland due to massive flooding and the creation of gullies, and the community was forced to heavily rely on year-round food aid. From the pre-baseline assessment, the ICRAF team realized that these multiple bottlenecks in NRM development endeavours required in-depth understanding of the root causes of degradation.

Thus, ICRAF together with its local partners, including the communities, conducted a series of consultations and field assessments to understand the key constraining factors as well as identify and prioritize the demands of the watershed communities to ensure short-, medium- and long-term benefits and services while keeping the watershed healthy. To ensure that the interventions were holistic and inclusive, vision maps were developed by various community members, extension officers and decision makers. During the vision mapping, the homogenous groups discussed and came up with their own visions (what they wanted to see in the area in the short-, medium- and long-term) and translated their vision into a map which included a list of possible interventions. This approach was crucial in setting up the intervention building blocks, which comprised:

- Rehabilitation of gullies for better ecosystem services and alternative livelihood options with a joint vision of “converting gullies from threats to opportunities”.
- *Value-addition and development of hillsides/area closures with a vision of “degraded hillsides/exclosures availing alternative livelihood options for rural, landless and unemployed youth, while providing ecosystem services sustainably”.*
- *Improving farming and grazing systems with a vision of “creating evergreen agriculture by introducing improved agroforestry practices, thus transforming tree-less and bare farmlands and grazing areas”.*
- *Strengthening rural institutions – youth-based agribusiness training and services with a vision of “bringing quality planting materials, agricultural, forestry and agroforestry inputs and services closer to farmers and farming communities of the watershed area and beyond”.*
- *Capacity building of all actors with special emphasis on local communities, extension officers and decision makers. The aim was to fill their skill and knowledge gaps so that successful interventions would continue to be scaled up and replicated with proper guidance and efficiency during the project implementation period and after its phasing out.*

### Summary of successes and impacts

The Irish Aid-supported rehabilitation program ran from 1998 to 2000. The second phase of the Irish Aid-financed, ICRAF-led project resulted in significant impact and contributed to reversing land degradation, improving food security and creating job opportunities, while enhancing the resilience of ecosystems and livelihoods in the Gergera watershed. Specifically, the major successes achieved since August 2014 to the end of 2020 comprised the introduction of innovative, cost-effective, sustainable and integrated climate-smart and best-fit technologies, practices and approaches, and the ability to generate evidence important for making informed decisions in the watershed area and beyond. The major and summarised positive contribution of the project was expressed in terms of:

- Ensuring community-based adaptation for improved livelihoods, resilience and ecosystem services.
- Ensuring women’s economic empowerment and promoting their resilience to climate-induced shocks and risks.
- Creating green job opportunities for rural landless and unemployed youth.
- Restoring and rehabilitating degraded hillsides and creating new productive land by introducing new and improved rehabilitation techniques such as conservation-based bench-terracing.
- Reclaiming gullies/riverbanks and converting them from threats to opportunities.
- Protecting productive farmland from the risks of flooding, soil erosion and gully formation.
- Restoring and enriching degraded grasslands with splits of improved and nutritious grass species.
- Increasing vegetation cover, and promoting diversity and density of different plant species.
- Improving water retention capacity and constructing cost-effective rainwater harvesting systems to create year-round availability and access to water for irrigation, livestock and home consumption.
- Integrating high-value and multipurpose trees and shrub species to ensure productivity, profitability and resilience of farmlands and grazing areas.

## Photographic Storytelling of the Gergera Watershed

The success stories and impacts observed at the Gergera watershed are depicted in the following five sections through photographic storytelling. The sections presented include:

- **Section I:** *Low cost, innovative, climate-smart restoration and value addition practices in degraded hillsides and exclosures*
- **Section II:** *Converting gullies from threats to opportunities for better ecosystem services and alternative livelihood options*
- **Section III:** *Integrating multipurpose and high-value trees and fodder grasses into farmlands and grazing areas to increase land production and productivity, while creating resilient farmlands and grazing areas*
- **Section IV:** *Strengthening rural institutions to create quality planting materials, agriculture, forestry and agroforestry inputs and bringing services closer to farmers and farming communities*
- **Section V:** *Capacity development, knowledge management, evidence generation and documentation*



# Section

# 1



**Low cost, innovative, climate-smart restoration & value addition practices in degraded hillsides & exclosures**





**Key success story here is**

The demonstration of the possibility of maintaining indigenous species and conserving biodiversity during the process of bench terrace construction while increasing the production and productivity of hillsides and exclosures. This contributed to enhancing the livelihood options for youth and women who were involved in enrichment planting.

Partial view of hillsides and exclosure areas where enrichment planting with multipurpose trees and high biomass-producing and nutrition fodder grasses, while maintaining indigenous trees/shrubs within and between constructed conservation-based bench terraces.



**Key success story here is**

The demonstration of the possibility of maintaining indigenous species and conserving biodiversity during the process of bench terrace construction while increasing the production and productivity of hillsides and exclosures. This contributed to enhancing the livelihood options for youth and women who were involved in enrichment planting.

Partial view of hillsides and exclosure areas where enrichment planting with multipurpose trees and high biomass-producing and nutrition fodder grasses, while maintaining indigenous trees/shrubs within and between constructed conservation-based bench terraces.



### Here, the key achievement is

The ability to mainstream the Assisted Natural Regeneration/ Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (ANR/FMNR) in the project area, Tigray region and beyond. It is cost effective, affordable and a tool that can be used to restore degraded landscapes while harvesting some wood and non-wood forest and tree products.

Rural youth add compost to planted trees along the bench terraces (upper) and partial views of bench terraces where indigenous vegetation is maintained and some of the bushy shrub acacia and other species are supported with proper management through thinning and pruning. The earlier planted Eucalyptus in the hillsides and exclosures are also maintained, but well pruned to avoid competition with planted high-value trees, shrubs and grasses.

Partial view of community participation during construction of bench terraces (upper) and restored hillside/exclosure supported with conservation-based bench terrace practices (lower)



Partial view of high biomass and nutritious fodder grasses grown on constructed conservation-based bench terraces ready for harvesting using the cut-and-carry system by youth and women, while making the hillsides/exclosures ever-green, preventing erosion and improving downstream percolation.

**Key success story here is**

the ability to create livelihood opportunities for rural landless and unemployed youth and women, while keeping the environment healthy and ensuring the ecosystem services of the hillsides and exclosures are sustained.



Partial view of piloted low-cost and innovative rainwater harvesting reservoirs at the top of a mountainous hillside to irrigate high-value trees and grasses during the dry season. The reservoir has a capacity of 72 m<sup>3</sup> or 72,000 litres. Whenever there is a small flat space at the top of a given mountainous hillside/exclosure, it is possible to dig a reservoir, build a corrugated iron roof shelter, and direct rainwater to the reservoir.

Water availability is key for effective and sustainable development of degraded hillsides and exclosures, and thus the importance of looking for an alternative option to water harvesting to supplement irrigation using gravity systems. The key success of piloting this innovative and low-cost practice at Gergera watershed was an eye-opener for development practitioners and researchers. They were able to compare this with other options such as pumping water to the top or along hillsides/exclosure from nearby rivers and water reservoirs for supplemental irrigation.

# Section

# 2



**Converting gullies from threats to opportunities for better ecosystem services & alternative livelihood options**



Partial view of experts, local decision makers and community representatives discussing how to minimize the effects of massive flooding and reclaim gullies at the Gergera watershed. For example, 36 ha of farmland was lost and about 150 farmers lost all or part of their land. They were thus forced to rely on year-round food aid.

Partial view of an inclusive and active participation of communities (both through contribution of free labour and the Productive Safety Net Program – PSNP) and the government office of agriculture and natural resources in the reclamation process (construction of gabion-based retention walls and reshaping of deep and wide gullies)

**The key success here is** the ability to influence government to utilize free community labour and PSNP resources for such gully reclamation activities. Otherwise, it would not be possible to reclaim such a deep (goes up to 25 m deep) and wide (6-120 m width) using project resources. Normally, as a policy, free labour used to be allowed in communal areas mainly in degraded hillsides and upper catchments of watersheds. Thus, the community's contribution of free labour and PSNP resources proved effective in integrated watershed development, sustainable land management and livelihood improvement activities. This was adopted by many other neighbouring areas.



March 2016



June 2016



September 2016

Temporal changes of gully reclamation process (construction, planting & harvesting) in five months' time



This pilot watershed has changed the mindset of many farmers, farming communities, decision makers, development practitioners as well as researchers. Gullies are no longer considered threats. They can be opportunities if carefully reclaimed and maintained with a proper design and participation of all relevant actors enforced by proper ownership and user rights.

Partial views of gabion-based retention walls and check dams supported by enrichment planting. These aim to turn gullies into productive lands and maximize benefits and services by integrating high biomass-yielding and nutritious fodder grasses, plus multipurpose trees. Such reclamation works have demonstrated that gullies in the Gergera watershed are not threats, but opportunities for the landless and unemployed youth and women. They can be used to generate income.



Partial views of organized groups of youth and women harvesting grasses for own use and sale, and conducting some enrichment planting activities with high-value species like bamboo, and other tree species for biomass energy and construction purposes. Through this, they are able to diversify their income-generating schemes from the reclaimed and rehabilitated gullies. Both the Gergera watershed and downstream communities agreed that the gullies are no longer threats, but can be considered opportunities if properly reclaimed, regularly maintained and owned by individuals or groups of community members.



Partial view of a series of gabion-based check dams constructed along the gully at Gergera watershed. The dams were able to reduce flooding and trap the soil while creating year-round access to water for livestock and people within six months.

# Section 3



**Integrating multipurpose & high-value trees & fodder grasses into farmlands & grazing areas to increase production & productivity while creating resilient farmlands & grazing areas**





Farming communities creating planting pits and receiving quality Avocado seedlings produced by youth and women groups established as an RRC business model at Gergera watershed (see section IV on RRCs).



Farming communities tend to high-value trees/ fruits planted in their farmlands to prevent incidences of grazing and occasional frost using local knowledge and materials.





**The key success here is** mainly related to the ability to change the mindsets of the farming communities to integrate trees into their farmlands and communal grazing areas through various capacity building and awareness-raising training workshops and events.

Partial view of Avocado trees growing on rainfed (upper) and irrigable (lower) farmlands together with cereals and vegetables at Gergera watershed.



Partial views of high biomass-producing and nutrition fodder grasses, plus multipurpose trees mainly growing along farm borders, both in rainfed and irrigable areas at Gergera watershed. By doing so, farming communities are able to diversify their livelihood options, e.g., cattle fattening since feeds are available throughout the year. In the medium- and long-term, farmers can also produce some timber/poles for firewood and construction purposes. All these contribute to increasing production and productivity per unit area and in creating resilient farming communities.



Agroforestry – Homestead with multiple fruit trees and fodder grasses at the Gergera watershed



Woodlots established at the farmers' training centre (FTC) as learning and demonstration plots using high biomass-producing and fast-growing tree species for firewood, fodder and related purposes



Water scarcity is a critical constraining factor for women economic empowerment. Thus, low-cost water harvesting systems were demonstrated and piloted in Gergera watershed for a wider scaling up and adoption. Here are partial views of low-cost water harvesting techniques during the construction process. Road water harvesting (upper) piloted to supplement rainfed agriculture and reduce runoff and flooding. Roof water harvesting (lower) piloted among women-headed households to empower them and promote home garden agroforestry with special emphasis on high-value & quality fruit seedlings and cash crops in their homesteads to diversify their income-generating and livelihood options.



# Section

# 4



**Strengthening rural institutions to create quality planting materials, agricultural inputs & services, and bringing them closer to farmers & farming communities**



First RRC inauguration ceremony at Gergera watershed with HE Mr Aidan O'Hara, the Irish Ambassador to Ethiopia. Also present were high-ranking regional and local officials, plus experts



As part of strengthening rural institutions, a rural resource centre (RRC) was established by privatizing a public nursery with the aim of producing quality planting materials and inputs, and bringing services closer to farmers, whilst creating green job opportunities for rural youth and women at the Gergera watershed.

The RRC business model was the first of its kind, and was used by the government to demonstrate how to make public/government nurseries more effective. They served as alternative sources of income-generating activities for the ever-growing rural youth and women empowerment schemes.



RRC members make a presentation during the inauguration day to visitors (donors, farmers, experts, government representatives & officials, as well as NGOs)



RRC members receive theoretical & practical training on how to graft Avocado seedlings



RRC members produced grafted Avocado and other food/fruit, fodder, fertilizer, timber or firewood tree seedlings. These are ready for sale and distribution



Different varieties of fodder grasses for own use & selling either through seeds, splits, cut-and-carry or all options



As part of the alternative livelihood & income-generating options within the small plots of the land owned by the RRC group, members diversified their business opportunities by producing high quality biomass and nutrition fodders grasses, both for sale and own use, for cattle fattening and dairy production. RRC members grow vegetables and other cash crops like coffee and Gesho (Rhamnus prinoides) for sale and own use. They also earn income by charging visitors an entry fee and through provision of training & services to farmers and nursery workers

Group of farmers trained at the RRC site on how to use grass splits as planting materials



Women RRC members cultivating onion seed



Friyat Cooperative: Agricultural & forestry inputs & technology suppliers



The RRC group established a display and selling centre/room in a nearby town. Through this small shop, in addition to selling quality seedlings, members also avail and supply agricultural inputs like quality vegetable seeds, farm equipment and materials to farmers, both through sale and rental. The aim is to make inputs and services accessible to farmers and to generate additional revenue for their business.

# Section 5



**Gergera Watershed as a showcase for successful community-based adaptation and decision-making. The program hosted various exchange & experience-sharing visits & learning events, and coordinated documentation & dissemination of evidence & lessons**





Visit by HE Mr Aidan O'Hara (the Irish Ambassador to Ethiopia) accompanied by representatives from Irish Aid, the Australian Embassy in Ethiopia, Tigrayan regional officials, representatives of research & higher learning institutes, representatives from various NGOs like GIZ, REST, Farm Africa, St Mary Technical College, local and district administrators, experts, & local communities, 2016.



Visit by the President of Ireland, HE Michael D Higgins accompanied by the President of Tigray region (HE Abay Woldu), Ireland's Ambassador to Ethiopia (HE Aidan O'Hara), Minister of Finance & Development, the Director General of Irish Aid, & other high-level officials of Ireland & Ethiopian governments, local administrators & communities, 2015.





Government of Ireland  
Rialtas na hÉireann

World Agroforestry Centre

**Mrs. MARY ROBINSON**  
Welcome to Gergera Farmer's  
Rural Resource Centre  
6 July, 2016



Visit by Mary Robinson (a special UN envoy for Climate Change and Ex-president of Ireland) accompanied by HE Aidan O'Hara (Ireland's Ambassador to Ethiopia) and Cathy Watson of ICRAF HQ. Other representatives were drawn from international NGOs including GOAL, Concern Worldwide & Tigray's region officials, local administrators, watershed communities & the project team from ICRAF Ethiopia, July 2016.



Visit by national workshop participants from all parts of Ethiopia organized by Mekelle University to learn and share experiences on community-based adaptation and climate-smart practices at Gergera watershed, Sept. 2016.

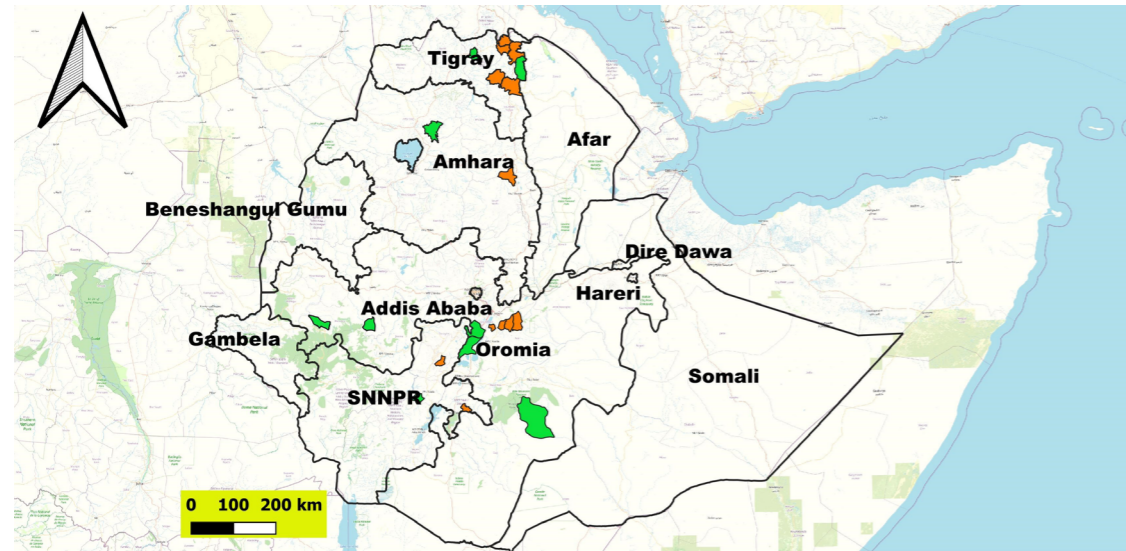
Visit by African Restoration Initiative (AFR100) workshop participants from 19 nationalities to share lessons & experiences at the Gergera watershed, Oct. 2016



Visit by representatives of different NGOs and CBOs working in Ethiopia, together with regional parliamentary representatives to learn and share about community-based adaptation & climate-smart practices at Gergera watershed.

Visit by faith leaders from Tigray and Afar regions to learn and share experiences on community-based adaptation and climate-smart practices at Gergera watershed, May 2017.





**Ledgend**

<b>RRC Locations (Woredas)</b>	Lailay Maychew	Ganta Afeshum
	Ofa	Enderta
<b>RRCs in GROUP ONE</b>	Dugda/Meki	Dodota
	Dolomena	Degua Temben
	West Belesa	Saesie Tsaedaemba
	Metu Zuria	Jeju
	Gechi	Hulla
	Atsbi Wenberta (Gergera Watershed)	Gulomekeda
	Adami Tulu Jido Kombolcha	Eth_Regions

The RRC established at Gergera watershed has become a showcase and has influenced the region and many other areas in Ethiopia to establish nurseries using the business model introduced by ICRAF. The map shows the RRC distribution in Ethiopia either through establishment of new ones or privatization of public nurseries by handing them over to jobless youth and women. The RRCs in Group One were established by ICRAF in collaboration with relevant government offices, while those in Group Two were established by other ICRAF partner NGOs through ICRAF's guidance and technical support



As part of using students as agents of change to influence tree planting, a Memorial Tree Arboretum for indigenous trees was established at Damayno Primary School located in the Gergera watershed. Once seedlings are planted by visitors including officials, scholars and special guests in the school compound, a student will be assigned a seedling to manage and care for it. Each plant has a tag stating the name of the guest who planted the seedling.



A visit by Dr Persson (Co-chair of the Global Restoration Forum & Ex-Prime Minister of Sweden), Dr Chris Reij (Senior Fellow at WRI-Washington) and Prof Kindeya Gebrehiwot (President of Mekelle University), Jan. 2016.



Capacity building, documentation, knowledge management, policy and/or decision influence

The Irish Aid-funded community-based adaptation and climate-smart practices project was implemented over a 6-year period in Gergera watershed. It was an action research program designed to develop an innovation and learning platform for enhanced economic opportunities and resilience. The project has built the capacity of local communities and stakeholders, shared its learnings, and documented its knowledge and lessons. The result has been significant and positive impacts in generating evidence and improving the livelihoods of local communities and ecosystems services. Below are some of the key studies and documentation produced.

1. A book on Climate-Smart Agriculture: Enhancing Resilient Agricultural Systems, Landscapes and Livelihoods in Ethiopia and Beyond published by ICRAF with chapters from Lessons and learnings of the Gergera watershed
2. A Review on the Scale of Landscape Restoration: Evidence and Lessons from Tigray, Ethiopia to Guide Planning, Implementation and M&E of Restoration Projects
3. Evidence-driven and Comprehensive Training Manual for RRCs: Making Quality Germplasm, Inputs, & Bringing Services Closer to Farmers and Creating Green Job Opportunities for Rural Youth and Women
4. A Brief Guideline on Integrated and Sustainable Management of Degraded Areas and Enclosures
5. Climate-smart Agroforestry in Ethiopia: Technical Information Kit with Special Emphasis on *Faidherbia albida* using the FMNR Method
6. Tree Biomass Carbon Stock Estimation Models for Agroforestry Trees
7. Growth Responses of Agroforestry Trees under Different Management Practices
8. Gergera Watershed Lessons-based Review Paper on CSA, Agroforestry & Forestry Practices
9. A Study Report on Gergera Watershed Development & its Effectiveness
10. Modelling of Future Scenarios for Sustainable and Resilient Livelihoods
11. Assessment Report on Value Chain Studies and Value Chain Analysis
12. Assessment Report on the Status of Women's Economic, Food and Nutritional Status and Linkages to Economic Empowerment
13. Synthesis Report on Best Lessons and Experiences Related to Value Chain, Household Income and Rural Jobs for Economically Empowering Women
14. Tree Cover, Land Use and Biomass Carbon Changes on Time Series Basis
15. Analysis of the Level of Women's Economic Empowerment in the Watershed including Opportunities for Women in Market-Oriented Production and Ex-Post Assessment of Watershed Development
16. Effect of Moisture Conservation & Composting on Survival & Growth Rates of Agroforestry Trees
17. Adaptation Trials of Various Accessions of Fruit, Fodder Grasses and Fertiliser Trees
18. Gergera watershed rehabilitation successes and lessons (Eight-minute video presented during the 11th International Conference on Community-Based Adaptation in Uganda organized by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and Irish Aid)
19. Various policy briefs, book chapters, news and blogs
20. MSc and PhD study theses and articles
21. Reports on biannual, annual and project impact assessment

The Gergera watershed initiative has been a learning hub for local, national and international communities, and will continue to serve its purpose for years and decades. The following are some of the major experience-sharing and exchange visits hosted by Gergera watershed communities between 2015 and 2019. The visitors comprised decision makers, donors, media, research & academia, farmers, CBOs, religious leaders, development practitioners and NGOs.

1. Article published in The Guardian titled "No one leaves any more: Ethiopia's restored drylands offer new hope" (<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/aug/03/ethiopia-restored-drylands-migration-eroded-deforested>)
2. Article published in The Guardian titled "Landscape restoration in Ethiopia brings watershed to life" discussing the Gergera watershed & Abreha We Atsbeha as cases (<https://www.foreststreesagroforestry.org/news-article/landscape-restoration-in-ethiopia-brings-watershed-to-life/>)
3. Was used as part of the evidence for the World Future Council's 2017 Future Policy Award to Tigray for its restoration policy and achievements, held in China
4. Successful visit in Gergera watershed by the President of Ireland, HE Michael D Higgins, former President of Tigray region, HE Abay Woldu, the Irish Ambassador to Ethiopia, Aidan O'Hara and his successor, the Minister of Finance & Development and other high-level officials of the Irish and Ethiopian governments
5. Visit by the African Restoration Initiative team (AFR100) from 19 nationalities in October 2016 to share experiences from the Gergera watershed
6. Visit by the Regreening Africa Program Steering Committee from eight African countries, including delegates from the EU and Australian embassies in Ethiopia in November 2018
7. Visit by the co-chair of the Global Restoration Forum and former prime minister of Sweden, Dr Persson and his wife, accompanied by Dr Chris Reij, Senior Fellow at World Resources Institute and Prof Kindeya Gebrehiwot, President of Mekelle University on 18 January 2016
8. Visits by various NGOs (NRC & NCA in 2019; CRS & WV in 2018, One Acre Fund in 2017)
9. Visit by Mary Robinson (special UN Climate Change Envoy and former President of Ireland) accompanied by HE Mr Aidan O'Hara, the Irish Ambassador to Ethiopia, Cathy Watson of ICRAF HQ, international NGOs including GOAL, Concern Worldwide & Tigray regional officials, watershed communities and local administrators, plus the ICRAF Ethiopia project team on 6 July 2016
10. Visit by Ethiopian Minister, & State Ministers of Agriculture, ICRAF senior leadership including the Director General, Dr Tony Simons & other officials from Tigray BoANRs in May 2017 <https://www.foreststreesagroforestry.org/news-article/landscape-restoration-in-ethiopia-brings-watershed-to-life/>)
11. Visit by religious leaders from Afar and Tigray, SLM program II and PASDIP II program teams, experts, and department heads of 36 district from Tigray including BOA
12. Transmission and coverage through mainstream media, both television and radio, broadcasting during different visits and events
13. The Gergera watershed has become a learning hub for agroforestry and integrated watershed development, and for the establishment of the National Watershed and Agroforestry Multi-stakeholders' platform which has been functional and is used as a driving force or tool for the scaling up of good agroforestry and watershed practices across the country. (<https://www.worldagroforestry.org/blog/2021/06/28/cascading-national-watershed-and-agroforestry-multi-stakeholder-platform-regions>)
14. Based on the lessons and learning from the RRC established in Gergera watershed which is the first of its kind piloted by ICRAF through the Irish Aid-supported project, about 20 RRCs have been established across the country. These have made a significant contribution to the National Green Legacy Initiative through the continuous production and supply of quality planting materials. <https://worldagroforestry.org/blog/2022/09/15/beyond-green-legacy-initiative-ethiopia>







#### CIFOR-ICRAF

The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and World Agroforestry (ICRAF) envision a more equitable world where trees in all landscapes, from drylands to the humid tropics, enhance the environment and well-being for all. CIFOR and ICRAF are CGIAR Research Centers.

