

### PSP: a tool to help households prepare for weather shocks

Chekole Halfom lives with his family in the Alamata Woreda of Tigray. A small-scale farmer with 0.125 ha of land, he lost his entire sorghum crop during the drought of 2015. This caught him by surprise and he was forced to sell livestock to buy food. Chekole's story is all too common in rural Ethiopia. Without access to timely weather information, small scale farmers are unable to plan and adapt to the effects of climate change, from severe drought to delayed rain, and even heavy rain and flooding, which can significantly affect their harvests and livelihoods. Households need to make appropriate livelihood decisions both in the short and long-term to become resilient in the face of climate uncertainty. Short-term decisions need to be based on reasonably accurate predictions of the upcoming growing season. Unfortunately, accurate weather predictions have not been available at the community level.

The Livelihoods for Resilience Activity has introduced the Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP) tool to help solve that problem. [PSP](#) is a multi-stakeholder approach in which communities, the meteorological service, traditional forecasters, local government stakeholders, and local

*My name is Adinew Duguno from Chuku Woreda of the Sidama Zone. I am married and have one child. Our livelihoods is largely dependent on agricultural activities on 0.25 ha of land. The land is degraded because of soil erosion, drought, and erratic rainfall. My neighbors and I did not know much about climate change and its harmful effects. We began discussions on climate change and related topics after we established a VESA with the support of Livelihoods for Resilience.*



Adinew at his sweet potato farm © CARE Ethiopia 2019

*During last year's Kreamt Season (June to September 2018), my VESA received and discussed seasonal weather forecast and advisories. We agreed that rainfall patterns would be normal in most areas of the Sidama Zone. Heavy rainfall and early onset of the rains were predicted to occur in some places.*

*Accordingly, I planted sweet potato which is a short maturing crop, and harvested five quintal. Because of the training and information we received through the VESA we can now plan individually and as a community to minimize the negative impacts of climate change. We do soil and water conservation at the community and individual levels. We share our experiences about drought tolerant, and early maturing crops and others.*

researchers work together towards a collective interpretation of seasonal weather forecasts, including a consideration of associated uncertainty. Consensus is reached on locally relevant predications that is used by farmers for decision making and planning. PSP forums are convened several times a year after a seasonal forecast is made available by meteorological services.

These forums allow community members to contribute their local knowledge of the forecast in their area sharing their views on the current status of food security, vegetation cover, and crop growth. Government sector services also contribute technical expertise on the implications of different forecast scenarios. This sharing of knowledge among communities, technical experts, and NGOs enable all stakeholders to better plan activities based on likely opportunities, risks and outcomes in agriculture, disaster risk reduction, adaptation, and resilience. Through participation in the PSP forums meteorological services also gain new relevance and value through enhanced communication with stakeholders and communities.

The PSP forums prepare a set of recommendations of practical actions that can easily be communicated to Village Economic and Social Association (VESA) members. The project frontline staff share climate advisories to [VESAs](#) so that members can jointly analyze and discuss the effects of climate change on their livelihoods. The VESA members make informed decisions about short term locally relevant risk management strategies during every season which is part of the process to enhance their anticipatory capacity.

