



PARTICIPATORY SCENARIO PLANING AND PREPARING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

The USAID funded SPIR Program, led by World Vision in a consortium with CARE and ORDA, is intended to help households in the PSNP4 program achieve food security for their households through a combination of savings, diversifying their sources of income through income generating activities, and skills training that can help them graduate from food assistance. SPIR supports 526,444 direct project participants in the Amhara, Oromia and SNNPR regions of Ethiopia. The DRR and CCA activities implemented through SPIR teaches PSNP4 HHs the climate adaptive practices that will help them increase their productivity and food security. This complementarity is core to the success of the collaboration between the GoE and the USAID funded SPIR Program.

Climate change and recurring drought are an important challenge for Ethiopia, especially in the Hararghe zone where water is scarce. In 2017, the region faced the worst drought in over 30 years, compounded by several previous years of insufficient rainfall and poor harvests. In an area where 95 percent of the farmers depend on rainfed agriculture, climate change is a devastating obstacle to escaping the poverty trap. Ahmed Mohammed says, "Climate is the base of all of our livelihood activities. We need to have information and decide what to do based on the information about the weather in order to be successful. CARE SPIR program has trained 312 community members in Chiro and Gemechis Woredas of West Hararghe to take leadership on responding to climate change through trainings in Early Warning Systems and Disaster Risk reduction in 74 kebeles.

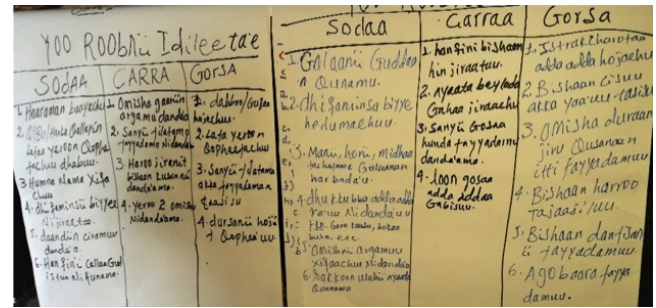
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A key strategy for responding to climate change is using weather information to predict how the agricultural season will play out and planning accordingly. This is consistently a challenge for farmers in Ethiopia. While farmers may be able to access weather information over the radio or television, it is rarely specific enough to help them. Predictions at a regional level do not provide the level of detail a farmer needs to make good choices for the coming season. And while local elders have many traditional methods of predicting rainfall—many younger farmers do not understand or trust these methods.

Locals use the direction of wind, the position of the stars, direction of coffee flower, and animal behavior to predict upcoming weather. A common belief is that if cows curl their tails under and run across the plains, this means a good rainy season is coming.

PSP committee will recommend investing in drought-resistant seeds. If there is a risk of flooding at the end of the season, they recommend planning early-maturing crops. In Kenya and Niger, PSP has shown to have a \$4 return for every \$1 invested.

PSP provides an important way for communities to organize their response to climate change— in terms of identifying risks, opportunities and advisories. While individual farmers may have access to climate information—either traditional or modern, they are unlikely to be able to influence government response or invest in community infrastructure alone.



Taking individual actions at the farm level is helpful, but getting a broader response can be even more powerful. For example, getting local government to agree to source drought-resistant seeds for an area facing predictions of low rainfall may be more effective and wider-spread than each farmer trying to buy those individually.

A critical component of PSP in involving women in the process. Women face different risks and have a different level of exposure to climate shocks. Getting women involved in the process highlights these risks and helps the whole community decide what to prioritize. Having women on the committee also makes it easier to share information with other women in the community, since the women will have different networks and access to information than men do.

Participatory Scenario Planning

Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP) involves bringing traditional weather predictions and community members together with meteorological services and forecasts from the regional government to identify the most likely scenarios for the coming season and to plan accordingly. Communities identify not only the most likely risks, but also the ones that will have the most significant impacts on the community. They then transform these risks into recommended actions for farmers. For example, if there is a risk of drought, the

Gender Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis

Women in Arberekete, in West Hararghe, Ethiopia were able to convince the PSP committee that drought was the most important risk. The women showed that they have even more risk during a drought than men. Women often have petty trading businesses that provide the income to feed the family and send children to school. When crops fail, there is nothing to supplement the woman's income, so she becomes the sole provider for her family. Since providing meals is culturally her responsibility, this puts great pressure on her income, while fewer families have money to spare to buy from her. At the same time, men will migrate looking for work, and the woman is then left at home to shoulder all of the responsibilities alone. Without having this conversation, the community might have made different decisions about what plans to make this year.

Every farmer in Arberekete village has suffered crop failures before—especially in maize and sorghum, their staple crops. In 2018, Arberekete village's PSP process highlighted drought, flood, weeds, and the rust fungus as the key risks for the agricultural season. All but two local elders using traditional methods and the regional meteorological services agreed that in their area the rains were likely to start off strong, but then tail off early—resulting in a shorter than usual growing season. Using this information, local leaders and agricultural services decided to encourage early planting, promote chickpea as a short term crop, and source

fast-maturing varieties of other crops. Farmers who planted chickpeas were able to harvest and make a lot of money selling the crop, as well as having some to eat.

Semira Takele says,

“We didn’t used to pay attention to weather forecasts at all, either the traditional methods or the modern ones. Now we understand the value of climate information and know how to plan based on the information people share with us. We know that drought might be coming, so we can select the right crops and vegetables to grow so that we can still eat this year.”

Integration With Other Purposes

The PSP process is also influencing the public works component of the PSNP4. Arberekete used what they learned from PSP and the GCVCA process to focus this year’s projects on a pond to capture rainwater and water harvesting infrastructure. Local families are donating the land for the pond because they see how much of a risk drought is and understand how they can prolong the growing season. The community is also investing in anti-erosion activities to preserve soil and retain more moisture to help plants grow. Within two years of starting the anti-erosion activities, the community has seen the local aquifer refill enough to build pumps for potable water in the community.

Challenges

There are still knowledge gaps in communities, and not everyone understands how to use climate information. A particular challenge is building the connection between meteorological services and communities.

Being able to plan to use fast-maturing varieties is important, but it can be hard to source good seeds. When everyone is planning for a short rainy season, the 3 agricultural research centers in the area have a hard time keeping up with demand for the Jiru and Adele sorghum varieties that are most popular.

Another challenge is creating space for women to meaningfully engage in the process. While women’s engagement in income generating activities is relatively long-standing, getting involved in climate information is new for women. The conversations tend to be very male dominated, and women are often shy to speak up in these spaces. A recent review of project data shows that women’s participation in climate change activities is only 12%, compared to 70% in value chain activities. SPIR needs to continue its focus on integrating gender and women’s empowerment across all areas of the project so that women can participate in and benefit from PSP.

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