



SUCCESS STORY - 12

Long-term Training Motivates Experienced Staff Stay on the Job

USAID/AMAREW human capacity building strategy encompasses long-term degree training of researchers and development workers to enhance their knowledge and skill to lead a coordinated, visionary and effective research-extension endeavors



Photo: AMAREW Project

These are development workers who earlier had the typical mid-career feeling of stagnation due to lack of self-development opportunities in the remote places they were assigned to work. With the support of AMAREW, 31 such workers are pursuing their higher degree studies as these ones studying in Mekelle University who were visited by a team of AMAREW staff in August, 2005.

U.S. Agency for International Development
www.usaid.gov

Amhara Micro-enterprise development, Agricultural Research, Extension, and Watershed Management (AMAREW) Project
www.oired.vt.edu/amarew/

Frequent staff turnover in search of city jobs or better-paid employment opportunities is one of the developmental bottlenecks in the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS). This is particularly exacerbated within the Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development (BoARD) and the Amhara Regional Agricultural Research Institute (ARARI), major partners of the Amhara Micro-enterprise, Agricultural Research, Extension and Watershed management (AMAREW) Project. Both ARARI and BoARD naturally place their Research-Extension (R-E) workers in remote and sometimes difficult to access locations. Working for these institutions in remotely situated woredas is becoming increasingly unattractive. Retaining staff in remote areas such as Sekota and East Belessa that have limited or no service provision has been and continues to be difficult.

As a result, none of such remotely situated woredas have anywhere near adequate number of professionals with the necessary education, experience and even motivation to lead a coordinated, visionary and effective research-extension program.

In the absence of any motivating incentive, tolerance levels and empathy for rural life is minimal and experienced staff continually depart from such assignments. With the intention of rectifying the situation and enhancing the competence of development workers, the AMAREW Project has included a long-term degree-training program as part and parcel of its capacity building effort for ARARI and BoARD. In this program, best performing R-E workers with good academic records were encouraged with technical and financial Project assistance to work towards a higher degree. Consequently, the AMAREW Project sponsored 23 BS and 8 MS aspiring development workers recruited from six remotely situated woredas and research centers. The trainees were placed in local universities such as Mekelle and Alemaya.

The hypothesis was correct in that the intervention, beyond serving as an incentive for experienced staff to remain on duty, has improved their ability to do more effective work in their respective areas of responsibility or to prepare them for new assignments. None of the trainees has quit their job. The intention and hope of both ARARI and BoARD is that all the trainees will stay satisfied on the job for extended period of time.