



Wisdom at the source of the Blue Nile

A Brief Progress Report on the Kolela Solar Village and Integrated Development Project

By

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1. Introduction

The Kollela Solar Village Project was first conceived as a collaborative venture between Bahir Dar University, Sustainable Energy Pathways (SEP) and Cornell University, USA, in order to build a model Solar Village and Kolela was selected with the understanding that, as one of the command areas of the Koga irrigation Project, and dynamic individual initiatives and efforts of peasant families in using Bered River (በረድ ወንዝ) for mini irrigation purposes and their overall commitment to work and hardworking habit, whatever products of technology or new systems of work were initiated by Bahir Dar University, the community could be able to continue in a sustainable manner.

Kollela Kebele, found in Mecha woreda, is located in North Easterly direction, about 8 kms far from Merawi consisting 5 *Gotes* (ጎጥ) which are Debir Mender, Gafera, Ialo, Abizarta and Addis Alem which are involved for the 2006 E.C Bahir Dar University community service (Fig 1). Kolela kebele has 909 households out of which 132 households are headed by women with a total population of about 4405. The economic main stay of the kebele is predominantly mixed agriculture.

Bahir Dar University is engaged in a multifaceted integrated development intervention in its community service programs and Kolela kebele is one of these sites. The University has so far tried to rehabilitate and make Andinet Kolela School a conducive place last year to learn by allocating 155,000 birr for repairing classes rooms and for beautifying the school. New desks and individual chairs were also given to the School. Training was given to teachers as part of a capacity-building in student-centered teaching, evaluation, communication and English teaching methodology in 2005 E.C.

The University has now designed an integrated plan for the village as a whole for the 2006 E.C budget year the components of which are water and energy supply, School improvement and infrastructure and livelihood improvement and social mobilization. Preparations are under way to install a solar panel to supply water to the school and some members of the community as the spring development and construction work is completed. Activities that are designed to improve the household livelihood and health conditions of the Kolela community are already started by the

different professionals of the University who, having preliminary discussions and consultations with the members of the Kollela kebele leadership committee and some members of the Kebele on 1/06/2006 E.C at Merawi, conducted an intensive discussion with the people of Kolela on 2/06/2006 E.C at Kollela Michael Church where people were given the opportunity to select and group the people into areas they can be most productive after elaborated explanations and presentations of the professionals.

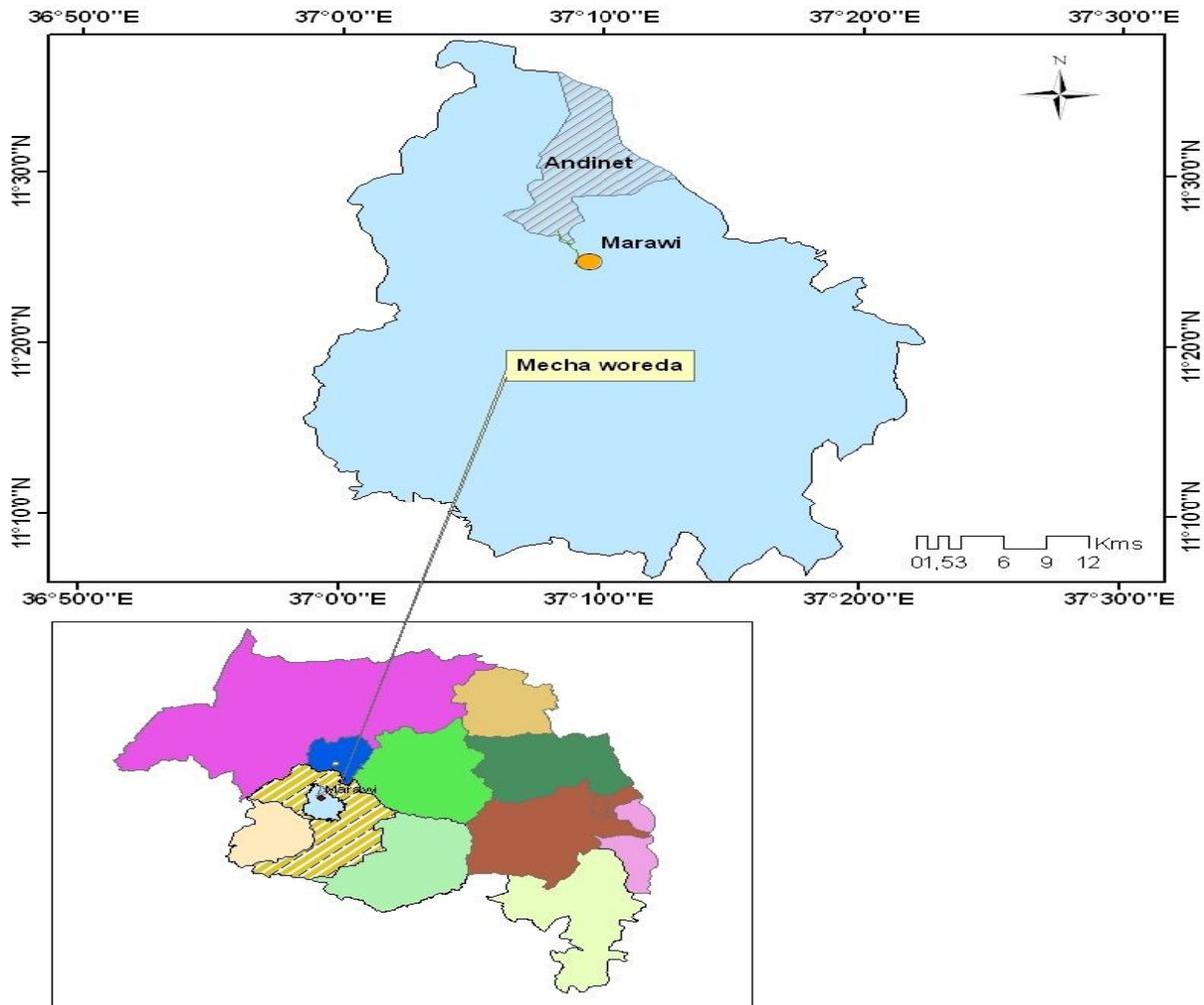


Figure 1 Location of Kullela Andnet Solar Village

Accordingly, people were openly named and into the different livelihood groups based on the criteria set-----hard working, interested and if already in the business of the livelihood selected.

Accordingly, representatives were selected, training and work began immediately. Another activity that seemed to attract the professionals and the people at large was the design of a model house by Ato Yared, civil engineer. This could have benefited a lot from the group of architects from the Yibab Campus that visited Kolela on 27/05/ 2006 E.C. The group consisted seven professionals who are listed below.

1. Ato Eyayu Genet-----eyayugenet@yahoo.com
2. David Heron-----gahreheroneyahoo.com
3. Getu Melese-----getu88@gmail.com
4. Girum Mamushet-----girum.mamushet@yahoo.com
5. Mekdes Mezgebu (for the second time)-----Archmak@gmail.com
6. Nurhusein Addis, (Chair Person of the Architectural department)-----Nurr_1431@yahoo.com
7. Veronika Zrnikova-----znic ko@gmail.com

The group members stressed the importance of communicating with others working in the project including professionals from the social science faculty. Concerning the model house, they raised questions like what should be the number of the household, area coverage, etc.

2. Activities in detail (2006)

2.1. Visits and study observations of Kollala kebele.

As part of the preparation before intervention and to see what was on the ground, gather information and evaluate the overall situation, different professional groups and individuals have visited the village including the Presidents of the University, Dr. Bayile Damtie, president of Bahir Dar university, Dr Tesfaye Shiferaw, Vice president for research and community service, Dr. Getachew Fisseha, Director for community service, and have made valuable and critical observations which serve as inputs. From 2/02/2006 E.C. on wards, however, different professionals

have worked continuously every weekend at the site. Dr. Tassew Tadios and his group, Ato Abiy Wogayehu and others, were busy in getting the solar panel seat constructed and installed while the water and energy professionals particularly Ato Minyichil Gitaw, water engineer from College of agriculture, and Ato Abebe Kidus (from the engineering faculty) supported by Ato Worku Sete from Bahir Dar Zuria Woreda Water department, and Ato Asnake Tefera from Mecha woreda water office, have intensively worked on the design, quantity surveying and cost estimation of the spring water development based on which work is now aggressively and rapidly being carried out to win back the confidence and trust of people of the Kebele, particularly the Abizarta **ጎጥ**. On the spring development and associated technical works, Ato Minyichil Gitaw has already released a report and further developments will be addressed by him in time.

Another larger group led by the community service director, Dr. Getachew Fisseha, consisting Ato Admasu from Technology faculty (Director for technology transfer of BDU), Ato Fantahun, agricultural economist, Ato Minyichil, Ato Abebe Kidus, Ato Tarekegn, Ato Worku Sete and Ato Asnake Tefera visited the Kolela Project site on 16/02/2006 E.C. What came out from this visit was some understanding of how and where the reservoir should be placed, what type of reservoir should it be, how far should it be from the spring, etc. were discussed and importantly, socio-economic data was gathered by Ato Fantahun from the people which was later released in a form of a short report.

The recent visit to the project site was made by the group from the faculty of Medicine led by Ato Worku Awoke, who had earlier gathered information on the sanitary conditions of the kebele particularly related to latrines which consisted Ato Ato Dereje Birhanu and Zelalem Alamirew. The group was also joined by Ato Getaneh, Manager of the kebele, Tiruwork, health extension agent worker, myself and a representative from Amarit.

Almost all the household heads of the kebele, about 909, were expected to turn up, but only about 50 people appeared and discussions on health problems started with explanations and elaborations by the professionals. The causes of diseases were identified and that mostly they were due to poor sanitary conditions particularly inappropriate human wastage disposal. The amount of wastage released was calculated and convincingly shown how it affects health of the people by entering

food, water and through other mechanisms in what followed as የሀፍረት ጉዞ in which an agreement was reached to have latrines built up to yekatit 30/06/2006 and those present were to promote the idea monitor the work. The progress will be evaluated and given media coverage.

2.2. Spring Development work

Following the release of the budget for the spring development, as already mentioned by Ato Minyichil in his report, the necessary materials have been bought and taken to the project site the recent being the huge pioneer tanker (World Fiber Glass), 20,000m³ capacity safely and carefully taken to the site on Yekatit 13/06/2006 in the wee hours of the morning where over 50 people from the nearest ጎጥ participated in taking the tanker from the car down to the ground and then to the school.

The release of the budget was immediately followed by the establishment of a committee chaired by the administrator of the Kolela kebele, Ato Dessie Abe, two others from the community, one from Andinet School, the director, and my self representing the University/project. Based on the advice of the bank professionals (Merrawi), it was agreed to use check system to be signed by Ato Dessie and myself. The check, it was agreed, was to be taken care of by self for security and my signature was chosen as a secured one since it could not be copied easily in

The whole of the month of Tir 2006 made Ato Minyichil, myself and some of the committee members, extraordinarily busy and at times we were forced to take risky venture even walking on foot searching for appropriate and the right type of materials like for example looking for boulder and other similar materials at Jemma and wotet Abay rivers before they were bought and loaded. Ato Minyichil and myself monitored when the same materials loaded.

3. Detail of the activities, budget and list of staff involved in 2006 E.C

Kollela Rural Model Solar Village: Ato Tarekegn Alemu (Principal Coordinator), W/o Zena Ewnetu (Co-coordinator for Livelihood improvement and Ato Minichyl Gitaw (Co-coordinator for water development)

No	Activities	Budget Released	Coordinators	Status
	Land use plan & Soil and Water	7040	Lewye Tsegaye	Started

	Conservation			
2	Livestock (feed technology)	6400	Yeshanbel Mekuriyaw (Dr)	Started
3	Beekeeping	7556	Tessema Aynalem	Started
4	Fruit & vegetable	56228.5	Melkamu Alemayehu (Dr)	Started
5	Gender (income generation)	7238	Zena Ewntu	Started
6	Experience sharing	2250	Ashebir/kindye	Started
7	Energy	47100	Kassa Wudineh	Started
8	Health	9300	Worku Awoke	Started
9	Water Supply	433915.8	Minichel Gitaw	Started
10	Maths & English Training	7230	Tarekegn Alemu,	Completed
11	Irrigation water management	9025	Minichel Gitaw	Started
	Total	661292.3		

Kollela Model Solar Village Community Service Intervention Participants (List and No of Staff involved)

II	Kollela Solar Village	College
1	Land use plan & Soil and Water Conservation	
	Lewye Tsegaye	CA ESs
	Kindye Ebabu	CA ESs
	Asheber Alemie	CA ESs
	Getachew Fisseha (Dr)	CA ESs
2	Livestock (feed technology)	
	Yeshanbel Mekuriyaw (Dr)	CA ESs
3	Beekeeping	
	Tessema Aynalem	CA ESs
4	Fruit & vegetable Improvement	
	Melkamu Alemayehu (Dr)	CA ESs
	Kiflemariam Yehwala2	CA ESs
5	Gender (income generation & Empowerments of Women)	
	Zena Ewntu	CA ESs
	Fentahun Tesafa	CA ESs
6	Experience sharing	
	Ashebir/kindye	CA ESs
7	Energy	
	Kassa Wudineh	Engineering
8	Health	
	Worku Awoke	Medical College
9	Water Supply	
	Minichel Gitaw	CA ESs
	Abebe Kidus	
10	Maths & English Training	
	Tarekegn Alemu,	
	Berre Getie	Science College
	Abdu Mohammed	Humanity
	Daniel Mekonen	Science College
	Bekele Birhane (Dr)	Humanity

11	Irrigation water management	
	Minichel Gitaw	CA ESs
	Abebe Kidus	Engineering
	Mesenebet Yibeltal 23	Engineering