

Voices from the field

In 2018, the Sasakawa Africa Association will continue working to empower Africa's smallholder farmers. Through crop productivity enhancement, improved postharvest and agro-processing training and establishing access to markets, SAA will work to strengthen the agriculture value-chain.

In 2017 the Chair of SAA, Hon Professor Ruth Oniang'o, was awarded the Africa Food Prize. Her vast knowledge and experience of nutrition and farming practices shines through in all our programmes. We will continue to support women and keep the smallholder farmer at the centre of everything we do. Learning from the past, we will work together for a better future.

The Sasakawa Africa Association in Ethiopia: Empowering women in agriculture through training

28-year-old-single mother of three, Yiftusira Ashenef, is a host farmer of a 0.1 acre Community Demonstration Plot (CDP) in Wikma village of Gol Wikma Kebele, Enarj Enawga Woreda, East Gojam Zone, Amhara region of Ethiopia. She received training at a farmer training center (FTC) organized for 30 members of farmer groups. Five of the participants were women. She first received training in agronomic practices like soil management, line planting, spacing, weeding, and post-harvest handling, as well as training on group dynamics, duties and responsibilities. She stood out as a model farmer among all the participants.

In Ethiopia, the Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) organized the Community Demonstration Plot-Women Assisted Demonstration (CDP-WAD) in the village by selecting, tasting, and duplicating the latest wheat variety of seed named "Kingbird". This was released by the Ethiopian Institute for Agricultural Research (EIAR), with the aim of increasing production and productivity. The group received seed and fertilizer. The problem of a lack of crop variety had been acutely felt in the village, who were struggling to increase their productivity in growing wheat, the area's agricultural mainstay, along with Teff – another staple crop. Once SAA conducted the demonstration and testing, the host farmers took over and expanded their plot, multiplying their seeds.

Since Yiftusira's training, farmers from her village and the surrounding region flock to her site to either buy her seeds or exchange them for other crops. Yiftusira generally receives twice the volume of Teff to her Kingbird wheat in these traes, such is its quality.

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Yiftusira Ashenef, a model farmer, pictured on her Community Demonstration Plot, having received training from the Sasakawa Africa Association in Ethiopia.

Yiftusira said: *"The wheat seed we used to buy in the market contained tare (*Lolium temulentum*), which would affect the growth and the quality of the crop. I have the best variety now, and I work meticulously in my plot so that no hybrid will get in the way. I don't even want to receive the seed for free from now on. Having seen the results, I will gladly pay for it."*

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