



# BASIS CRSP REGIONAL SEMINAR

29 October 1999, Dessie, Ethiopia

## BACKGROUND

BASIS CRSP (Broadening Access and Strengthening Input Market Systems Collaborative Research Support Program) promotes economic growth and agricultural development through collaborative research and training on ways to improve access to and efficiency of land, water, labor, and financial markets. Strategies proposed in Africa, Russia and the Newly Independent States, and Latin America help increase income, purchasing power, and food availability while promoting sustainable resource management. Through jointly developed and collaborative programs of research and training on land, water, labor, and financial markets and their interactions, BASIS CRSP helps strengthen both US and host-country research capacity. BASIS CRSP aids governments, donor agencies, the private sector, and NGOs design, evaluate, and propose policies that enable factor markets to mediate broadly based, integrated, and environmentally sustainable rural economic growth in response to fundamental policy problems.

Since 1997, the BASIS CRSP work in the Greater Horn of Africa has focused on financial market constraints to, and employment benefits from, crossborder trade in the region. It has also focused on household and market constraints to food and income security in poverty-prone areas of Ethiopia.

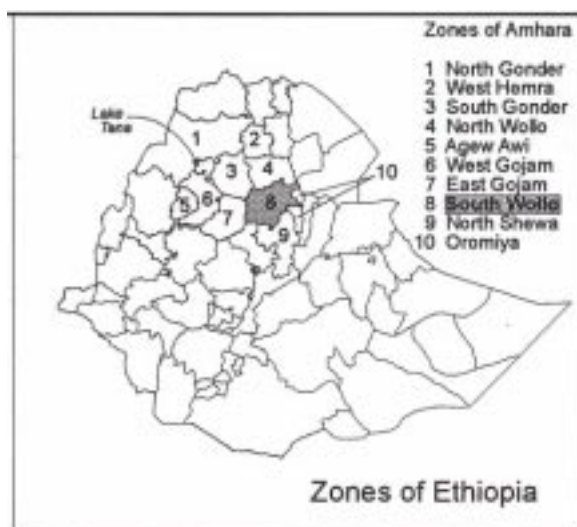
An ongoing BASIS CRSP project in the Greater Horn is *From Household to Region: Factor Market Constraints to Income and Food Security in a Highly Diverse Environment, South Wollo, Ethiopia*. On 29 October 1999, a day-long policy seminar was held on findings from the market and community assessment studies of this project. Participants were researchers, policymakers and local stakeholders in the South Wollo area. With the first phase of research completed, this was an opportunity to share the results of the market and community assessment studies, invite responses from policymakers, and gather advice on how to make the project relevant to current development plans for the South Wollo zone and Amhara region.



Participants of the 29 October BASIS CRSP workshop in Dessie, Ethiopia

## THE SEMINAR

Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher, Director of the Institute of Development Research at Addis Ababa University, a BASIS CRSP partner in the region, explained why the project site was advantageous for research. It is at the center of the problems around food security due to frequent droughts, and it is ecologically diverse along a highland to lowland transect. The South Wollo zone is the focus of BASIS work, but due to a recent change in boundaries a small portion of the study area is now part of the Oromiya zone. The project has three primary research components: a survey of market centers and functions, community assessments, and a household and intrahousehold survey. The latter study will be undertaken in the future; results from the former two studies were presented at the seminar.



Source: UN-WFP, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1999. (As taken from: Shin, Michael. 1999. *Using a Geographical Information System within the BASIS Research Program in Ethiopia.*)

## **Survey of Market Centers and Functions**

The first presentation concerned the market study. The activity examined the function of food markets and their influence on food security. An inventory was done on services, infrastructure, institutions, flows between centers, and other settlement-level data. An assessment was made regarding the role these markets have in providing opportunities for farmers, acting as service centers for inputs and providing employment. The following variables were emphasized: spatial access to market centers and infrastructure, economic functions of market centers, highland-lowland linkages, and regional ecology. Fieldwork began with a survey of market centers, market functions, interactions between market centers, and interactions between market centers and their hinterland. To rank their importance in the region, the data differentiated market centers by their scale and functions. Relevant research questions were: How does food security and income growth correspond to physical proximity to market centers and infrastructure? How do informal exchanges of products, land, labor, and assets across different ecological zones in South Wollo enhance food security? What functions do market towns play in mediating exchange relations and in facilitating access to factor markets for rural producers? What are the types of linkages between primary, secondary, and tertiary market centers?

Findings show that income levels are higher the closer one is to towns and the role of market centers can be crucial to rural development. Yet in order to have impact these centers need strong relations with rural areas. The study identified the market centers, the existing functions, what needs strengthening, and the linkages with rural areas. Conclusions from this inventory include that most market centers are no more than service centers without productive linkages with rural areas. With landholdings very small in the region and frequent rain failures, it might be beneficial for the market centers to diversify to aid rural growth in general ways, including rural-based enterprises and small industries, and not merely through agriculture.

## **Community-based Assessments of Food Security and Market Access**

The second presentation concerned the community assessments. Research methods combined survey, ethnographic, and rapid rural appraisals, involving key informants and groups interviews. Local opinions were sought on the ways by which limited access to land, credit, and employment constrain production and income strategies. Relevant research questions were: What types of community-level coping mechanisms exist to address food insecurity? In what ways do extra-household (community) exchanges of assets, labor, land, and other factors help mitigate risk among households? How do these vary by season and year (drought versus non-drought)? How have recent experiences with food insecurity affected community organizations and their risk management strategies? What formal/informal institutions help mobilize capital and labor for producers? What types of formal and informal arrangements regulate access to agricultural land and other resources, and how have they been impacted by recent government reforms?

A total of 21 kebeles were used for the assessment. Criteria for choosing a sample community included distance from market center, agroecological diversity, and degree to which the community was prone to drought. About half the sample communities were more than 10km from a market center. Twelve of the communities were highly drought prone and 9 were moderate to less drought prone. Landholdings in the zones are very small (less than 1 hectare in most cases), progressively reaching sizes no longer able to support a household. Droughts, small landholdings, underemployment and thin markets in land, labor and capital are creating serious food insecurity. Possible interventions and policies were addressed; these include long-term

leaseholds and multi-year land transactions, expanding food-for-work projects, skills training and other income earning opportunities, and reducing the loss of rural resources due to drought through more prompt relief assistance, interventions in livestock and grain markets, provision of animal feed, and expanding access to credit.



Informal discussions added greater dimension to the workshop

## Zonal reports

Representatives from the South Wollo and Oromiya zones gave overviews on the food security programs in the zones. The objectives of the programs are to increase household-level income, agricultural production, employment opportunities, and human and institutional capacity.

Because of drought, environmental degradation, and an absence of non-farm opportunities, most woredas in the zones are food insecure and as much as one-third of the population is vulnerable to a food shortage. Action plans to address these problems are underway. FAO is funding some of the work in the woredas, but increased funding remains a critical need. The programs recognize that there are several areas that need to be addressed in order to contribute to food security, such as improving household-level production, livestock practices, agricultural irrigation, potable water supplies, and household harvesting practices. Health is also a concern, since poor health in individuals retards agricultural development. With funding scarce, any intervention strategy must establish priorities. In general, the goal is to promote economic diversity and develop human resources.

Seminar participants discussed ideas for future BASIS CRSP work in the region. Successful intervention strategies and policy action in the region will require continued interaction among researchers, donors, policymakers, local stakeholders, and individuals in the affected communities. Perhaps the most important intervention is to continue to try to enhance community awareness and participation.

## Conclusion

Dr. Gebre-Egziabher closed the seminar with a pledge to continue the work at the household level to benefit the people in the zones. For more details on the research activities and results, see

<<http://www.wisc.edu/lrc/basis.html>> Among the outputs are final reports on the market centers and functions survey and on the community assessments. The BASIS CRSP Greater Horn of Africa project also is establishing a cost-effective GIS system for the South Wollo project. (See the report prepared by Michael Shin: *Using a Geographical Information System within the BASIS Research Program in Ethiopia.*)

**PARTICIPANTS**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher	Institute of Development Research, Addis Ababa University
Yigremew Adal	Institute of Development Research, Addis Ababa University
Yared Amare	Institute of Development Research, Addis Ababa University
Workineh Negatu	Institute of Development Research, Addis Ababa University
Peter Little	University of Kentucky/Institute for Development Anthropology, BASIS CRSP Research Program Leader
Tirfesa Denad	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Department, Oromiya Zone
Driba Tura	Department of Planning and Economic Development, Oromiya Zone
Refera Walkeba	Department of Agriculture, Oromiya Zone
Hussien Adem	South Wollo Administrative Office
Tesfaye Gugsu	Department of Planning and Economic Development, South Wollo Zone
Este Genet Bonat	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Department, South Wollo Zone
Assfer Kebede	Department of Agriculture, South Wollo Zone
Yosef Tsegaye	Food Security Programme Coordinator, South Wollo Zone
Tadele G. Selassie	USAID/Ethiopia
Laketch Mikael	USAID/Ethiopia
Charlotte Johnson-Welch	International Center for Research on Women, BASIS CRSP researcher
Kurt Brown	Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison, BASIS CRSP communications manager