The Story of
Emebet Aschalew

Emebet Aschalew is one of the women gender champions from Timret Union. She has been married for 5 years and lives with her husband Yilma and their 2 children in a traditional hut.

After 2 years of marriage she wanted to go to an Arab country to work as a maid. However, this was unacceptable for Yilma and since she kept on insisting (till recently) it used to be the major reason for disagreements among them. Another reason for disagreement was Emebet’s habit of spending extended time on funerals, weddings, etc...

The couple was not used to discuss and make joint decisions as only Yilma determined what crop to cultivate and what assets to sell and keep.

During the workshop, Emebet shared the lessons and drawings with her husband. One of the lessons he learnt from her is the benefit of listening to and understanding one another. We saw that Yilma took a very good care of the youngest child while Emebet talked to the project team.

What life looks like after participating in the Participatory Action Learning for Sustainability (PALS) Workshop?

With one of the tools (Happy Family Tree) Emebet was able to identify some of her spending which she herself found extravagant after reflecting on it. One of these was expenditure on coffee (ceremonies) which she used to make three times a day. She decided to cut the frequency of the coffee ceremonies from three to one time a day. She also monitors and controls her expenses better on clothes and gifts for social activities.

The couple is engaging more in deciding together on how to use the productive resources of the household and how to spend the money they earn from it. Yilma decided to drink less beer. They exchange ideas and he said “I respect her right and she respects mine”.

It was after such a discussion that they dug a water well in their compound which she uses to water vegetables and the coffee tree in the backyard. Using her savings from reducing unnecessary expenses, she bought four improved breed hens at ETB 55 each. She plans to sell the eggs and to use a portion for her kids’ meals. From the returns, she plans to save and buy sheep. Emebet confirmed they need continued follow-up, dialogue and support from GYEM project to sustain the changes and until they ‘manage to stand with two feet’.