



Wro. Meseret Hana, the only female artisan in Arbaminch Zuria Woreda



Wro. Meseret Hana, May 2019,
Photo Yohannes Melaku

Wro. Meseret Hana, the only female artisan in the woreda is 21 years of age, married and mother of 3 months baby boy (May 2019). She was trained as an artisan in 2006 EFY (2013/14). Meseret has been working in the woreda since 2007 EFY (2014/15). She completed grade 10 in 2006 EFY. Meseret lives in Genta Bonke kebele, one of the kebeles in Arbaminch Zuria woreda. The smiling face she showed during the interview and the way she was responding to all questions raised by the interviewer gives an indication that she really loves the work she does and that working as an artisan is not only her source of income but also her source of happiness.

Question: How you were selected for the artisan training?

Meseret: "I was selected and trained as an artisan in Arbaminch Zuria woreda in 2006 EFY (2013/14). The woreda gave chance to Genta Bonke kebele to nominate and send 4 youth from the kebele (3 males and 1 female) to compete and be trained as an artisan. I applied and I was selected by the kebele administration together with 3 males and our names and supportive documents were sent to the Woreda Water Office. Water Office registered and interviewed us. In the interview, I was asked some construction related questions and construction materials and passed the

interview test. Although, I do not have any prior training and experience in construction, I had good interest in construction related activities when I was attending high school in Arbaminch town and was looking different construction works and materials. This gave me an interest to be involved in construction and also to succeed in the interview test."

Question: What were the areas and duration of the training?

Meseret: "I took the training from March 2015 to April 2015 (2007 EFY) together with 14 males for 45 days including Saturdays. The training was given both in theory and in practice. The theoretical trainings included occurrence of hand dug wells and springs, how to select spring and hand dug wells site, types of construction materials, how to work together with community, and recording and reporting progress of construction. The practical training, we took was mainly in the construction of spring with collection chamber and we constructed one spring with collection chamber fully. In addition, we were given some theoretical training in hand dug well construction and also were shown a completed hand dug well but we did not dig and construct a completed hand dug well."

Question: How are you working, individually or organized in to an enterprise? If in an enterprise, how it was the organized?

Wro. Meseret: "While we were taking the construction training, the woreda youth and sport office organized us into water supply construction enterprise. The name of our enterprise is Andenet Water Supply Construction Enterprise and we are licensed. Since the establishment of the enterprise, I was the treasurer, but very recently, due to my maternity leave, I was replaced by a man. Initially all the 15 artisans trained together in 2007 EFY were members of enterprise but this year we are only 9. The reasons for the absence of the 6 members are that some preferred to work privately in construction of houses, one decided to manage his father grain mill and some decided to be involved in petty trade."

Question: What types and number of WASH facilities you constructed to date?

Wro. Meseret: "In 2007EFY (2014/15) as the training was conducted after the planned sites have been awarded to other trained enterprises/artisans, we were not able to be involved in any construction other than the training. In 2008EFY (2015/16) as the number of planned water schemes in the woreda were small, we were not awarded any contract. In 2009EFY (2016/17) we constructed only 1 spring. In 2010EFY (2017/18) we took contract from the community for the construction of 6 springs and completed all of them successfully. In 2011EFY (2018/19) up to now we completed 4 springs and are nearly to sign more contracts with the WASHCOs representing the community. We can say that our enterprise started to be fully involved in the work in 2010EFY (2017/18). By the way our role during the construction is not limited to building the components but also, we check the quality of the construction materials

supplied by communities, we record the daily construction progress together with WASHCOs and counter sign for the correctness of the record. We were not trained and are not involved in the construction of institutional latrines."



Genta Bonke spring public tap

Question: What financial benefits you get yearly on average?

Meseret: "We got better job opportunity last year and I got Birr 3,600 working for few months. I got relatively lesser payment than other colleagues as I was pregnant and my involvement was limited only to some sites out of the 6 springs. As I was also in maternity for the past three months, I was not able to be involved in the construction and even for the remaining months I need to look for my baby. I am sure that I will be fully involved next year and hope to get more financial benefit."

Question: What challenges you faced as artisan (technically, socially, culturally, etc.)?

Meseret: "As far as we are involved in any work, challenge is natural. Some of the challenges I faced individually and we faced as an enterprise collectively are summarized as follows:

- Involvement in laborious works such as carrying stone and other construction materials when there is limitation in community contribution.
- Travelling long distances in a difficult terrain due to inaccessibility of number of the sites.
- Delay in the construction of some schemes due to delay in supply and procurement of construction materials by WASHCOs.
- Limitation in number of sites as compared to the capacity of the enterprise. This discourages members and forces to change their work and be involved in other activities.
- Unwillingness of members to deposit some money for the enterprise future use. As a treasurer of the enterprise I have a fear that if money is required for various purposes such as upgrading of license, there is not enough money in the enterprise account."

Question: What is your future plan?

Wro. Meseret: "My main future plan is to continue working as an artisan as I like the profession too much. But as the construction of water schemes is seasonal usually from January to June, I will also continue to work in the construction of private houses at different levels from daily laborer to assistant mason. As now I am married and my husband is a weaver, I will assist him in preparing some weaving materials and sell his products in the nearby market so that we can have more financial capacity to lead a better life."

"Being a female artisan, seeing reduced burden of women in fetching water through my intervention pays me more than the money I earn from the work".



Spring at Genta Bonke kebele

The scheme constructed by artisan's enterprise licensed in water supply construction and where the interview was conducted is named **Done spring** located in Genta Bonke kebele. The scheme has a capping structure and four faucets public tap located 40 meters far from the spring capping structure. As the yield of the spring is high, collection chamber is not constructed. The scheme construction was completed in 2010 EFY. The construction cost of the scheme was Birr 48,981 of which Birr 41,418 is the CMP grant and from it Birr 13,000 is the labour cost paid to the enterprise and the balance is the construction materials and tools cost. The community labour and materials contribution are estimated to Birr 7,500 (15.3% of the total project cost). The scheme serves 85 households.

"As working as an artisan is my happiness, I do not have any intention to quit from the profession and all other business I planned will be handled as far as they are not affecting my work as an artisan".

Question: Anything what you want to say about the profession?

Wro. Meseret: "Firstly, as I did not face discrimination or major challenge because of my sex, I call up my sisters to join the profession. Secondly, the woreda has to create more jobs to the enterprises so that we can get more money to lead better life, otherwise, the number of members will be decreasing in search of alternative jobs and enterprises may diminish/disappear".