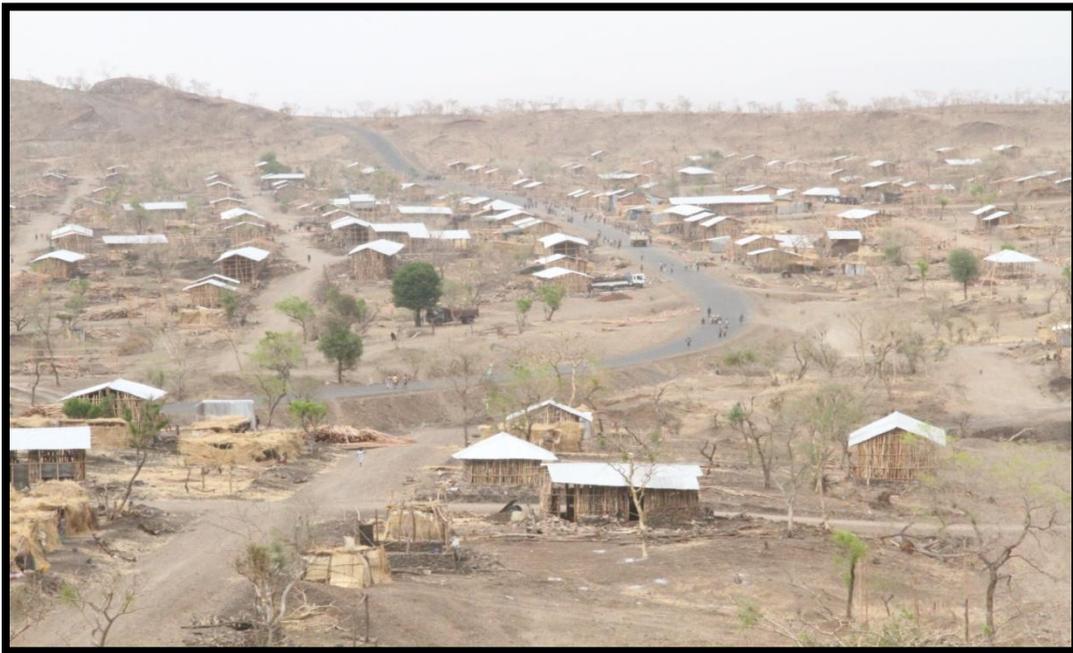


Warm Welcoming Reception of Korarit-Wolkaiyt Woreda

By Ashenafi Demeke, May 2013

Unlike prior governments of Ethiopia the power of the ruling government emanates from the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples. Hence, any government political, social and economical activity is exercised as long as it is to the benefit of the general Ethiopian people.

In a bid to bring the economic development of this nation to the level of middle income economies the government has set a five years growth and transformation plan. Accordingly, to realize the plan mega projects are now being carried out in different strategic economic sectors. And, one among these is the sugar development sector.



The newly emerging town - Korarit

Based on a profound study and proving the huge potential of our country to the sector, the government has planned to build ten new sugar factories at various regional states while conducting

expansion work at the existing ones. As a sugar development project calls for the construction of large dams & long distance canals; the building of both residential and non residential houses & service giving institutions which are very many in number ; the cultivation of vast sugarcane plantation field and etc , these huge task has befallen on the shoulders of Sugar Corporation.

As sugar development projects demand large sugarcane plantation field, it unavoidably brings about displacement of the people living at the command areas. And, it is at such juncture that the government is expected to prove its populist essence and conduct resettlement programs out of the will of the people to be displaced with effecting proper compensation fees and making ready irrigable tilling land and grazing land to the displaced. Hence, Sugar Corporation as a government institution & working hand-in-glove with concerned regional administrative organs is carrying out the resettlement of those living at the projects' command areas creating access to various social services and infrastructures.



Health Center Constructed at Korarit

As most of those communities living around the corporation's projects had been leading their lives devoid of social service giving institutions & various infrastructures, Sugar Corporation has been filling the gap. And, one among these is Korarit of

Wolkaiyt Woreda which is located at Hummerra Zone of Tigray Regional State.

Wolkaiyt Sugar Development Project is a typical example where a resettlement program of communities living at the project's command area is being carried out with full consent of those to be displaced. The program is being handled with the proper compensation fee to each and every household and building at Korarit various social service giving institutions and infrastructures And, therefore, Korarit of Wolkaiyt Woreda which had been left unpopulated except one household with sad story till few months before is now changing into a sort of town.

Sugar Corporation has built one high school , two secondary schools and an elementary school, a health station, a farmers training school, a kebele administration office and twelve water wells at Korarit which help the settlers in bringing with the services at their hand-stretch distances. And, the new residents of Korarit who had had sad stories to tell due to luck of social services in their prior villages are now telling everyone that they are feeling like a singing bird as the resettlement program will end their lives which were full of ups and downs.



Mirutse Gebre Michael

One of the beneficiaries is a priest by profession named Mirutse Gebre Michael. Mirutse says " prior to our arrival here we have discussed with government officials about the project & its immediate and long run benefits; and we were also told that every social service institutions will be available at our new village ; and when we at last come to Korarit we proved that all is there constructed as promised ". Mirutse further went on

saying "the school we had at our earlier village - Kallemma was with the level of elementary one and my children used to rent a house at a town called My-Gaba to proceed with their high school learning which was cumbersome economically". He is now happy that every social service is at his door steps unlike before.



Letay Gidey

Letay Gidey is the other woman who had settled at Korarit and said "I have secured the proper compensation fee from Sugar Corporation and built my home here; our earlier lives were miserable; we had no access to health stations, schools, potable water, etc; but here at Korarit every facility was ready before our arrival, we are grateful to the corporation!".



Fantahun Mekonen

Unlike others Fantahun Mekonen's family had been living at Korarit alone for the last twelve years. Approached to share his observation about the change taking place at Korarit Fantahun says " I lived here for 12 years ; I have a farm land, cattle and bee-hives here at Korarit " and he suddenly ,frowning his eyebrows starts to struggle his tears back from falling down his cheeks and went on saying " No other household was around while I was leading my happy life with my late wife by the name Ethiopia; But, luck had not been with me that six years back my wife was seriously sick due to a disease known as Kalazar around hot climate areas like Wolkaiyt and Hummera and she was also pregnant with our third child " . Fantahun further says " Then I took her seriously ill body to a town known as Adi-Remetse on foot which had taken about seven hours; I had no other option for there was no transport facility here by then; then taking a transport from Adi-Remetse I took her to Hummera Hospital though she took her last breath there just after giving birth; She was the most unfortunate one as me and my kids will no more face the same challenge ; thanks to Sugar Corporation that every social service has come to our door steps ; here after my children who had been living with the parents of my late wife since then will come and live with me and they will for the first time enroll to the school constructed here by the corporation; Thanks to God! All the miserable experiences are gone!" To Fantahun and his family, unlike others, it is the social services and infrastructures themselves which have come to his village - Korarit!

Sugar Corporation has not only provide social service giving institutions and infrastructures to those who have joined the resettlement program but also created job opportunities to 204 unemployed youths recruited among those kebeles relocated from their prior localities due to the project and thirty two of them are females. These youth have undergone a 38 days practical training program on various professions such as building, painting, plastering, metal works, sanitary, etc. before they are recruited by the project itself and also other institutions which are executing the various jobs of the project. And, to train these youth Birr 940,514 is allocated out of the total Sugar Corporation covers 865.514 Birr while Wolkaiyt Woreda Administration Office has contributed Birr 75,000.

Masho Dessie

Masho Dessie is a trainee who has got married last year and has only month's old baby. Asked about the opportunity created to the youth at Wolkaiyt and the training program she says "I got a practical training on painting which I believe has made me capable of doing the job with full skill; it is a very great opportunity to youths like me as such opportunities had never been there to our parents here at Wolkaiyt". According to Masho it is with the help of her husband and her parent in taking care of her new born child that she was able to attend the training program and graduate at the profession of her choice-painting. Masho further added "I quit school at 7th grade, now I have a plan to continue my schooling at the night shift program while I am working at the project, I wish all other females of my age get the same opportunity".

The other trainee is Asbey Gedey who had no who

my own; I am really grateful to Sugar Corporation for doing everything including the accommodation facilities and the pocket money during our stay here at the project; as I had been jobless, I am very delighted about the job opportunity I have got at the project”.



Asbey Gedey

According to the Project General Manager Amenay Mesfin close to 7,474 citizens have got job opportunities just at this early stage of the project and the factory upon its completion and reaching its maximum production capacity is expected to create job opportunities to 80 - 100 thousand citizens directly and indirectly. Amenay further added "Wolkaiyt Woreda has got great opportunity to investment due to the inception of the project; even at this early stage of the project both local and foreign investors are requesting for a license to build hotels with four star level, fuel stations, livestock farming and others”.



Amenay Mesfin

Ato Haillie Gebre Medhin, Deputy General Manager of the Public Organization Division at the project says that the office has a plan to train around 130 youth in the second round in agriculture related professions such as animal husbandry, fishery, cooking and irrigation development skills. Haillie further pointed out that those who are resettled at Korrarit have started constructing their houses on their own even before they have received the compensation fee for they believe that they are the primary beneficiary of the project. According to the deputy general manager of the division each household has got a farm land that ranges from 0.75 to 1.75 hectares based on their former ownership while there is enough grazing land around.

In line with social issues the project office is executing the seed and commercial cane plantation as well as the construction of dam and canal, residential and non-residential houses and the factory construction job almost according to the plan set for the budget year. Abreham Mulu , Deputy General Manager of Agriculture Division of the project office on his part pointed out that the project has cultivated seed cane at 512 hectares of land at two places namely Kalliema of Wolkaiyt Woreda and Raya of Southern Tigray Zone each with 300 and 212 hectares of land

respectively. Mulu further disclosed that the project office has planned to cultivate both commercial and seed cane at 3000 hectares of land by the coming winter seasons among which 800 hectares will be covered with seed cane so as to be able cultivate 8000 hectares of commercial cane by the year 2006 and 2007 E.C. To curb the problem of the water pump irrigation system interruption caused at Kalliema seed cane plantation activity due to electric failure, the project office has worked with the concerning regional as well as federal offices the wood made polls are made to be substituted with concrete electric polls through which the electric power line comes to the project from Shirie Town.



Engineer Araya Girmay

On the other hand, as the construction of both the Zarriema-May-Day Dam and the 70 Kilo Meters long main canal is crucial to the projects sugarcane plantation development, Sur Construction P. Ltd. Company is working twenty four hours so as to complete the job within thirty months as per contractual agreement with Sugar Corporation. General Manager of Zarriema-May-Day Dam Construction Project Engineer Araya Girmay pointed out that the level of performance of the construction has reached 10.5 % till mid of April. He further went on saying "the construction of the

main canal is going on side by side with the dam construction job; we are working vigorously to conclude the diversion conduit construction till mid of the coming month of September”.

Therefore, Sugar Corporation, while running the Wolkaiyt Sugar Development Project as part of the GTP, has given due attention to the interest of the people living both in and around the project's command area. And, the people at Wolkaiyt Woreda have not only started benefitting from the project even at its early stage but have also great hope at its front! Wolkaiyt has not only been introduced with various social service giving institutions and infrastructures but has started attracting investors! It is to flourish as an industrial zone soon! There! Korrarit of Wolkaiyt Woreda has also continued with its warm welcoming reception of its guests! AS EVERYTHING HAS ITS OWN TIME TO COUNT!!!