



## BEFORE & AFTER - 06

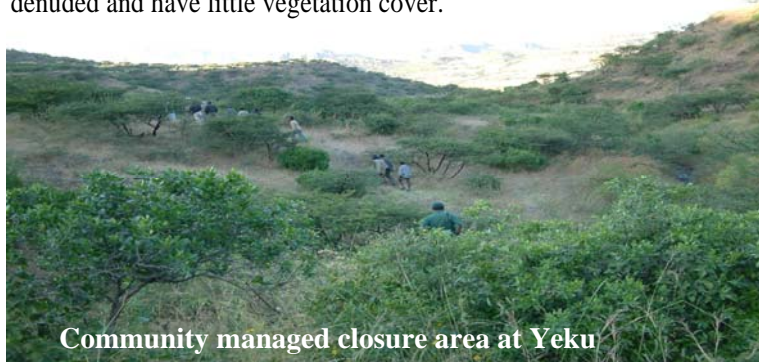
### Hillside Closure Speeds up Environmental Rehabilitation

Extensive physical and biological conservation works have been carried out in Yeku and Lenche Dima watersheds through food for work as well as free community labor mobilization. The physical conservation works include extensive hillside terracing, check dams using stone/gabion/sand bag, stone and soil bunds, eyebrow and micro-basins, trenches, sediment storage dams, and rock-fill dams. Biological conservation works mainly focused on area closure. Planting *Sesbania*, *Leucena*, and *Pigeon pea* on bunds on farmlands has been successful. Forage production has enabled farmers to make additional money from the sale of forage seeds to the woreda office of agriculture and NGOs. At the present time over 120 hectares of land is under closed area management in Yeku & Lenche Dima, AMAREW's two pilot watersheds. The closure at Yeku is now serving as an exemplary demonstration site for the Sekota Woreda. Farmers' days are often observed at Yeku to demonstrate the economic and environmental positive impacts of closed area management to farmers, administration representatives, development agents, government officials, and NGOs.



Photo: AMAREW Project

**BEFORE:** Natural resources degradation is a common problem in the ANRS in general and the AMAREW pilot watersheds are no exception. Water erosion, which is a serious problem in the pilot watersheds, is mainly caused by the heavy run-off from the surrounding degraded hillsides. The pilot watersheds are also seasonally drought prone and afforestation programs have shown very low survival rate of tree seedlings. The fields are almost completely denuded and have little vegetation cover.



Community managed closure area at Yeku

Photo: AMAREW Project

**AFTER:** The most encouraging and sustainable results we obtained are from natural resources conservation under community owned closed area management system where self-help user groups have been organized to manage degraded hillsides. Under this system, an area to be closed and managed was identified by the entire watershed community with the facilitation role of the Community Watershed Management Organization (CWMO). Farmers have started to observe that natural regeneration in the closure sites has allowed new emerging shrubs & grass species, which were not visible in the past. The extensive physical conservation works constructed by the communities in the closed areas have essentially curtailed the excessive run-off from the surrounding hillsides, resulting in increased infiltration and improved ground water recharge. The Yeku stream flow has now been extended up to four months. User groups get an additional annual income of 400 birr/member by selling grass alone.