



Firehiwot Tesfaye. Permagarden training in Hawassa, Ethiopia.

CASCADING THE PERMAGARDEN METHOD IN ETHIOPIA

TOPS ANRM Case Study Series

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In February 2016, [The Technical and Operational Performance Support \(TOPS\) Program](#) facilitated a Permagarden Training of Trainers (ToT) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This training was part of the knowledge strengthening activities conducted by the Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (ANRM) component of the program. The event was cohosted by The Ethiopia Home Garden Network which is coordinated by the [USAID Ethiopia funded Agriculture Knowledge Learning Documentation and Policy \(AKLDP\) project](#). The ToT prepared participants to lead three-day permagarden trainings for farmers and gardeners by teaching the permagarden method and lessons in adult learning.

The permagarden method combines permaculture and bio-intensive agriculture to create a highly productive home garden using a small amount of land. It utilizes sustainable agriculture practices specifically designed for the development context in order to increase production into the dry and lean seasons. The method shows how farmers around the world with only a small amount of land can produce food throughout the year by learning the natural principles behind good gardening and matching those principles to basic practices.

Knowledge Sharing Through the Ethiopia Home Garden Network

The Ethiopia Home Garden Network consists of over 100 individuals from different organizations, government offices and donors who meet quarterly to share knowledge about home gardens in Ethiopia. The purpose of co-hosting the ToT with the Ethiopia Home Garden Network was to foster network linkages to cascade the training to other stakeholders, strengthening knowledge about the permagarden nationally and allowing the method to reach numerous smallholder farmers through multiple organizations and donors over time. By working with the Network, TOPS hopes adoption will occur more organically—i.e., driven by demand, leading to higher quality gardens—instead of program-driven, where adoption targets are set and must be met in a short, fixed period of time.

Twenty-eight individuals from the Network and USAID Food for Peace programs participated in the permagarden ToT. In the three months since, the permagarden training has cascaded to over 85 individuals by eight trainers that attended the permagarden ToT, with an additional four trainings currently scheduled. All of the training logistics, facilitation and expenses are covered by ToT participants and organizations, demonstrating a real commitment to sharing and learning.

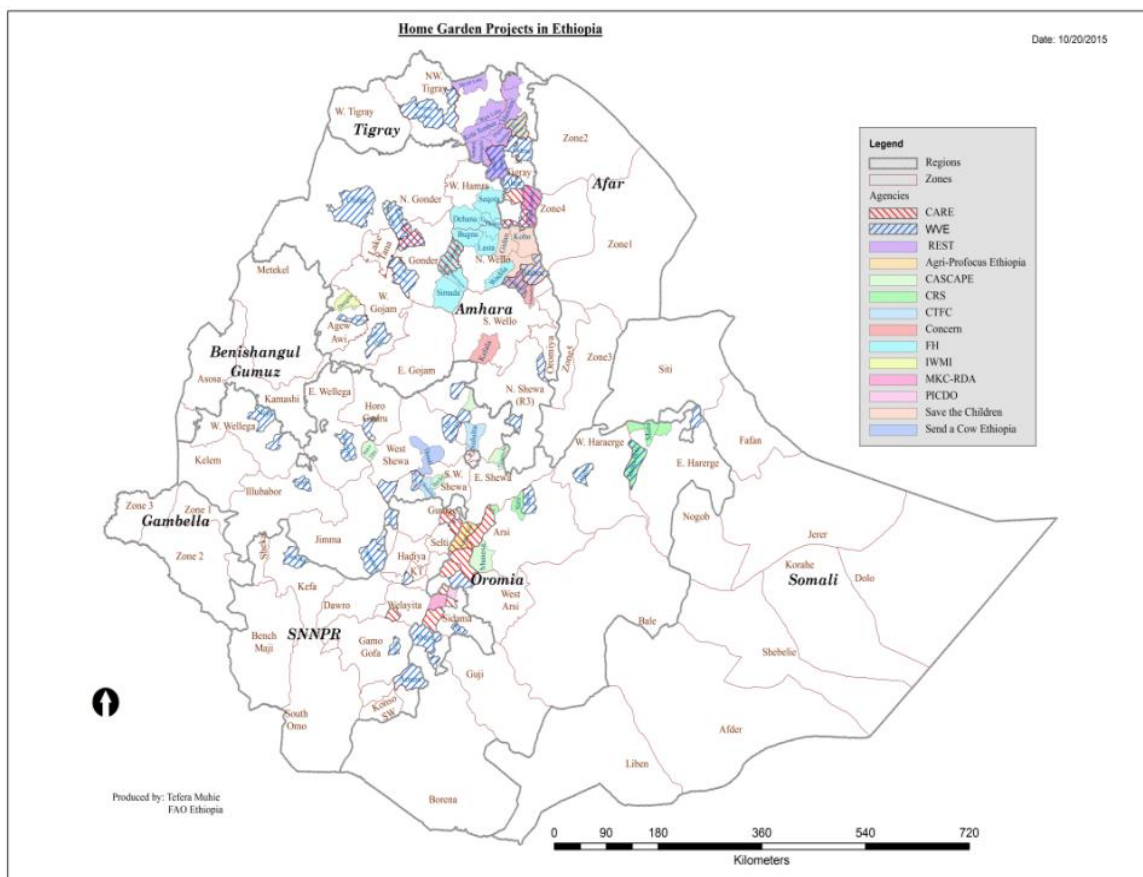


Figure 1: Ethiopia Home Garden Network Map

In October 2015, the Home Garden Network conducted a mapping exercise (see Figure 1) to identify where partners were implementing home garden projects. The Network's vast coverage represents its enormous potential to spread best practices in agriculture and natural resource management, including the permagarden method, throughout Ethiopia.

Lessons from Collaboration with a National Network

The TOPS Program has worked to create and facilitate learning events with the Home Garden Network since its inception in July 2014. This interaction has highlighted the following key lessons about the potential of in-country networks:

- **Reach is greater with a network**—a network's reach is far beyond any one organization or project. This allows for adoption to begin throughout multiple regions.
- **There is an opportunity to strengthen capacity outside a typical project model**— capacity strengthening initiatives can continue beyond the life of the intervening project.
- **Knowledge is identified and shared across organizations on a regular basis**—sharing is not determined by a scheduled mid-term or final evaluation.
- **Information can be collated through a central point for wider learning**—there is an opportunity for an initiative, project or organization to continually receive feedback and improve training materials and activities as more individuals and organizations cascade the method.

You can find out more information about the permagarden method in the [TOPS Permagarden Toolkit](#). If you are interested in having a permagarden ToT in your country or want more information about starting a national network, please contact the TOPS ANRM team. If you are interested in finding a permagarden trainer in Ethiopia, please contact the Home Garden Network Coordinator (see below).

Program Information

The TOPS Program is the USAID/Food for Peace-funded learning and knowledge management initiative, bringing the highest quality information, knowledge, and promising practices in food assistance programming to implementers and donors around the world to ensure more communities and households benefit from the U.S. Government's investments to fight global hunger.

Led by Save the Children, The TOPS Program is a consortium program drawing on the expertise of its partners: CORE Group (knowledge management), Food for the Hungry (social and behavioral change), Mercy Corps (agriculture and natural resource management), and TANGO International (monitoring and evaluation). Save the Children brings its experience and expertise in commodity management, gender, and nutrition and food technology, as well as the management of this 7-year (2010–2017) US\$30 million award.

The AKLDP is a five-year project of USAID Ethiopia which provides collaborative learning and coordination support across the Feed the Future portfolio, leading to improved agriculture, livestock and pastoral policy and programming. The project covers Ethiopia's three main agro-ecological zones – high and low rainfall highland mixed farming, and lowland pastoral. The project started in January 2014 and is implemented by the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University. The AKLDP also provides collaborative learning support on climate change adaptation, nutrition and gender-equity.

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