

## Water project allows community to take root – (Ethiopia)

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*–Ahmed Datto Lalli*



When the rainy season arrived in the Ethiopia’s Afar Desert region, rain water would overflow the banks of the Wama River, flooding the area and, even worse, limiting the impact of this life-giving water. The lack of available water forced residents to be pastoralists, roaming the region with their herds of camels, cattle, goats, and sheep in search of water sources. Without stable community structures, many people had limited access to health care and education, further impacting this community already challenged by drought and poverty

Today, says Ahmed Datto Lalli, a community spokesperson, life in the Wama River valley has greatly changed. With support from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF)–Ethiopia, and through gifts from ELCA World Hunger Appeal, this community now benefits from a river diversion project: a concrete structure that directs and controls some of the river water. Now, water is channeled more efficiently and can be accessed through much of the year from crop irrigation canals. Over 600 households now have greater access to the water needed to build sustainable livelihoods.

The LWF Wama River diversion project has transformed this community. The LWF trained community leaders in more effective agricultural practices, gender equity awareness, natural resource conservation, and more balanced farming strategies. With more permanent homes and structures, this once roaming community has taken root and is building its own capacity for a stronger future.

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