ETHIOPIA AMHARA

A COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH TO RESTORE DEGRADED LANDS

May 2017 Report

WeForest
Making Earth Cooler

HECTARES FINANCED

1,320

TREES FINANCED

835,000

BENEFICIARIES

26,100

A total of 835,000 seedlings are being prepared in the nurseries thanks to the support of donors and sponsors

THE PROJECT

Ethiopia has suffered widespread clearance of forest as a result of agriculture, charcoal production and fuelwood and timber harvesting, causing extensive soil erosion and the formation of gullies. Ethiopia loses around two billion tons of fertile soil annually as a result of land degradation and forest loss. WeForest partners with the Hunger Project and, through a bottom-up approach, works to increase food security, empower local communities, combat environmental threats and restore community land, river banks and farmlands in Ethiopia's Amhara region. The rainy season starts in one month and trees will be planted in agroforestry systems on farm and grazing lands as well as in communal lands and gullies. Through this, the project will improve the wellbeing and resilience of the whole landscape by increasing biomass and land productivity. Villagers are empowered to engage in sustainable business activities like apiculture and cooking-stove production to increase incomes and reduce pressure on remnant forests.

KEY DETAILS:

Location: Machakel, East-Gojjam zone, Amhara region

GPS: 10°19'75"N to 10°41'00"N, 37°16'46"E to 37°45'42"E

Restoration approach: Framework planting[1] and agroforestry

Partners: The Hunger Project

[1] Framework planting is a technique that involves planting species in ways that promote the natural succession of the forest

PLANTING UPDATE

KEY PLANTING FACTS

- 835,000 seedlings produced and under management for planting in the rainy season
- 767 ha in 57 plantation sites identified for planting
- Number of species: 15
- Main tree species: *Olea europea, Acacia abyssinica, Fahiderbia albida, Cordia africana, Rhamnus prinoides, Millettia ferruginea* and *Albezia gummifera*

During this reporting period, the area identified for restoration grew to 767 hectares (ha) across three villages; Laydamot, Ebmulit Tesas Dar and Amari Webesh. Following the recommendations and participation of district and village level task-forces and community consultation, we identified and mapped 52 planting sites this reporting period. The plantation sites include open communal lands, fragmented community forests, farmlands and gullies. Further plantation site identification and mapping will be carried out in a fourth village, Debre Kelemu, to expand this project and its impacts even further.

NOVEMBER - APRIL 2017;

- 35,000 seedlings new seedlings in the nursery
- Discussion and mapping of new restoration areas
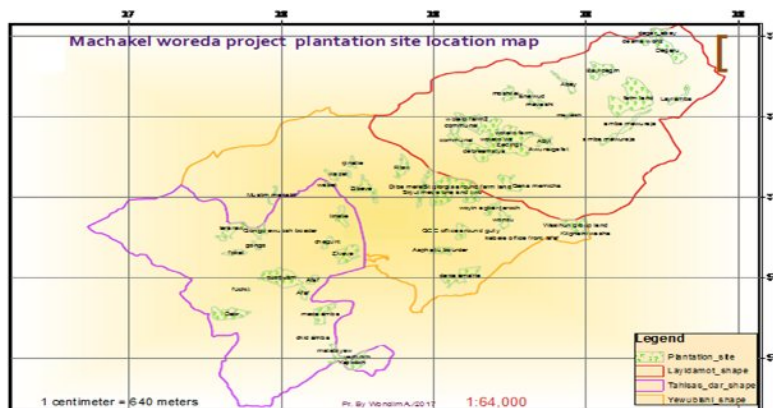- 52 new planting sites identified in three villages

Figure 1. Map to show the plantation sites

Figure 2. Gullies scatter the degraded landscape

Around 835,000 seedlings are growing at the project's three nurseries; Kidus Yohanes nursery, FTC (Farmer Training Center) nursery and Gusquam nursery. All three nursery sites are managed by the project in collaboration with local communities and district natural resource office. The seedlings will be planted during the coming rainy season in the summer period (June - August). 15,000 of these are economically valuable trees, like fruit trees, to be planted on 329 homesteads. These include *Persia americana* (Avocado), *Malus domestica* (Apple) and *Coffea arabica* (coffee). Improved and fast growing varieties of fruit trees are selected to improve cross pollination and produce more, high quality fruits. Native tree species are being prepared for planting in gullies to stabilize the soil and prevent further erosion. Trees for fodder production, such as *Chamaecytisus proliferus*, will be planted on community grazing lands, farmlands and gullies.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC UPDATE

KEY SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTS

- Villages engaged: Laydamot, Ebmulit Tesas Dar, Amari Webesh and Debre kelemu
- 26,100 beneficiaries
- 50 employees

During this reporting period, two training sessions took places covering 1) nursery management and good nursery practices and 2) agroforestry based farming systems and approaches. The first training tackled how to establish a local nursery and grow healthy seedlings. Attendees were trained in seed collection, seed cleaning, storing, seed sowing and germination, watering, transplanting and pruning. The second training session focused on different farming systems and integration of agroforestry practices. By planting multipurpose trees, farmers are empowered to improve food security and protect the environment. The training was particularly focused on home-garden and tree planting on farmlands. The topics covered included alley cropping, live-fence and border planting. 54 community members participated, 17 of which were women. The project has also created job for 50 people: 44 tree nursery workers, three nursery managers and three forestry experts.

NOVEMBER - APRIL 2017:

- 54 community members trained in nursery management and agroforestry systems
- Government and local institution partnership established

During this reporting period, a district level task-force was established with 11 members, representing all stakeholders: community representatives, the District Administration, Bureau of Agriculture, Environment Protection and Land Administration, Bureau of Micro & Small Enterprise Promotion, Bureau of Cooperatives Promotion and Bureau of Finance and Economic Cooperation. The task-force meets on a quarterly basis and is responsible for the overall facilitation of the project implementation and progress evaluation. Committees at village level were also established, with 11 members in each village task force. Chosen by the communities, members include the Kebele (village) administrators, respective development agents of the government offices, local elders and community leaders, nursery managers and THP Epicenter Community Committee representatives. These committees meet on a monthly basis and are responsible for the local community mobilization and community participation in the project implementation processes and sustainability. Both types of committees will ensure that the project is tailored according to the needs of the communities and owned by them. This will ensure the long term success of the project.

Figure 3. Meeting with village administration and natural resources experts on project activities and planning

Figure 4. Discussion with community members to identify and designate plantation sites for 2017

ENGAGING ALL STAKEHOLDERS

An inception and joint review workshop (Figure 5) took place on March 7 to discuss project planning and activities with stakeholders. 120 participants attended from different government sector offices at regional, district and village levels and local NGO's in the district. Community members also attended. The Machakel Administrative head, Mr. Abebayehu Chanie, presented on the environmental issues facing Machakel woreda, like the changing climate and decline of land productivity, and thanked Weforest and The Hunger Project on behalf of the community for establishing the project. WeForest project manager, Dr. Aklilu Negussie, gave a speech to highlight the negative impacts of climate change and the value of restoring health to the ecosystem for people and planet alike through this project. Community members, district, and regional representatives were able to give their feedback on the project. During the workshop, they committed to being a part of the project through every stage of the process.

SESA - THE NATIONAL PRIORITY TREE SPECIES

The flora of Ethiopia is diverse. There is around 6500-7000 species of plants, of which about 12-19% are endemic. *Albezia gummifera* is a threatened ingenious tree species in Ethiopia locally known as Sesa. It is a large deciduous tree that grows up to 15 m and forms a flat top crown. The species can grow up to 2500 m above sea level. It is one of the few national priority tree species which requires genetic conservation and protection from extinction. In the project area, only a few, scattered *Albezia gummifera* trees are found in fragmented communal and church forests. It provides a variety of different forest products, such as timber, firewood, fodder, bee forage, shade, nitrogen fixation, soil conservation, medicine and more. It is highly valued as a shade tree for cash crops, e.g. in coffee plantations and as bee forage for good honey production. The project aims to plant 14,340 of these trees in different land use types, mainly farmlands and communal forests.

Figure 5. *Nursery site visit by workshop participants at Kidus Yohanes*

Figure 6. *Albizia gummifera* tree

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THANK YOU