

ETHIOPIA

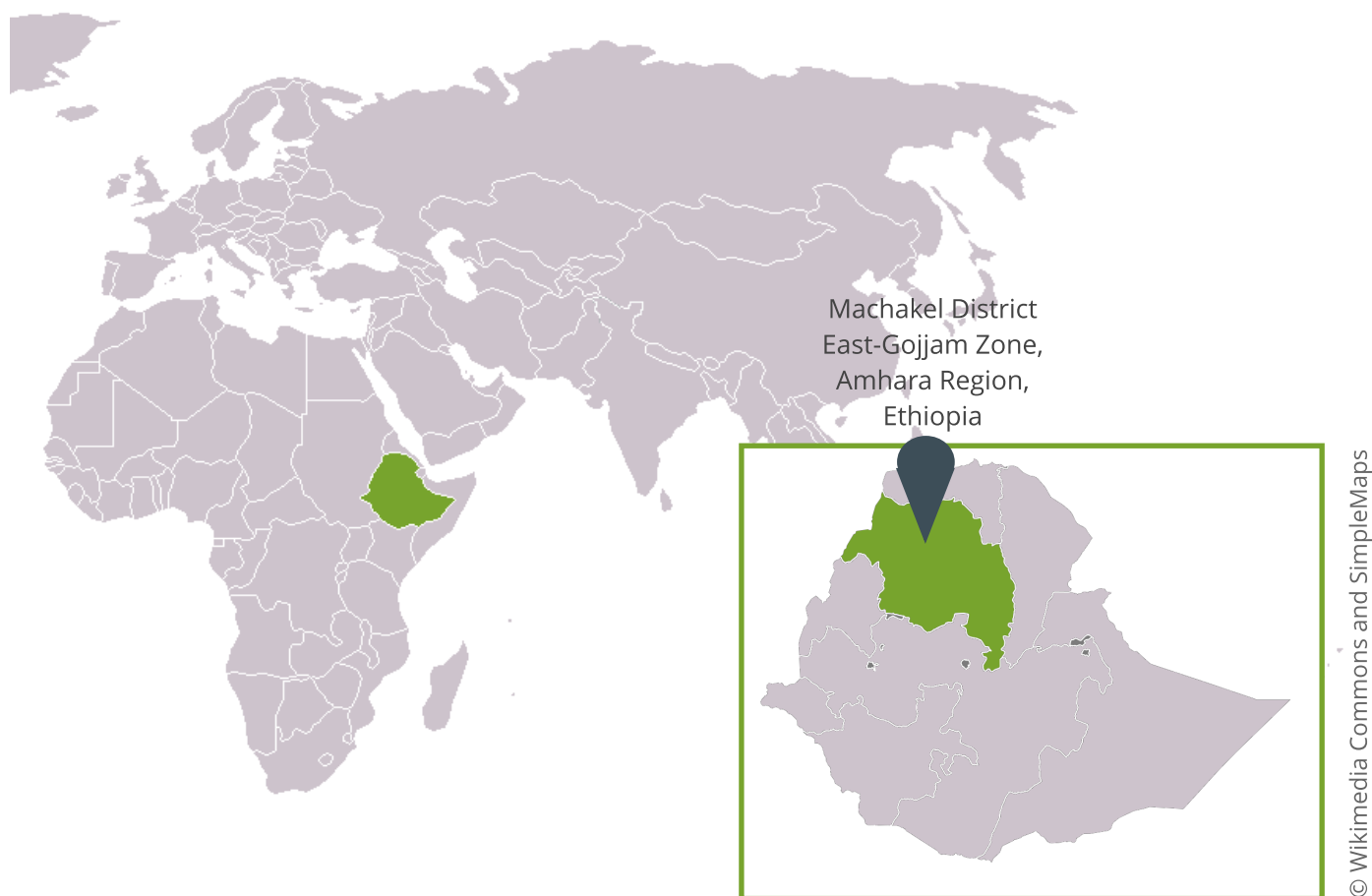
AMHARA REGION

NOVEMBER 2017



THE PROJECT

Making communities stewards of their forests is the only way we know to protect and restore forests in the long term. The region of Amhara in Ethiopia is under severe threat from land degradation and soil erosion as a result of widespread deforestation: it is now highly fragmented with extensive gullies that also directly threaten agricultural land and settlements as fertile soil is being washed away. Forests are seen as a resource for timber and fuel wood. Biodiversity is disappearing and exotic trees dominate the landscape. With local partners like The Hunger Project who specialize in community engagement, WeForest is restoring in the Machakel District through a bottom-up approach: the rural communities are trained with the skills they need to restore and protect their forests in the long term.



IMPACT FOR PEOPLE, PLANET AND CLIMATE

The data collected is based on various audits we perform during the year:

- Forestry audits: once a year monitoring of survival rates, biomass growth, species diversity and composition on 10 plots, annual control of all home-based nurseries
- Socio Economic audit: once a year grading progress measurements, every 3 years outcome assessment and every 5 year impact evaluation
- Financial audit: annually by a third party



LANDSCAPE TRANSFORMATION

Trees financed¹: 1 146 810

Hectares directly restored: 121 ha

Hectares identified for restoration: 500 ha

Methodologies used:

Framework planting: a technique to planting that involves planting species in ways that promote the natural succession of the forest.

Agroforestry: the integration of trees on farms and in the agricultural landscape in ways that sustain productive, profitable and healthy land use systems.

Protecting soils from erosion: 20 550 grass splits were planted along the edges of the gullies next to the trees. They protect the soil from further erosion and help restore it.

Installing infrastructure: Physical soil and water conservation structures, known as check dams, were installed in nine communal planting sites by community members themselves with support and training from the District Agricultural Office and The Hunger Project (THP).



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

26 100 beneficiaries in total

50 employees from the local community

329 lead farmers applying and promoting sustainable land management strategies

4 villages engaged: Laydamot, Ebmulit Teras Dar, Amari Webesh and Debre Kelemu, and another 5 prospective villages identified for future inclusion

949 community members trained in planting and post planting care (881 men, 68 women) since May 2017

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

PLANTING STRATEGY FOR NEXT PLANTING SEASON

- **Monitoring plots established**

In order to measure the progress and impact of the project activities over time, 21 permanent monitoring plots (20m x 20m) were established on communal lands. WeForest' staff provided training to THP on how to establish monitoring plots, map the planting area, collect baseline information both on communal lands and farmer's plots, and how to record vegetation for example.

Trees were planted in the rainy season (July-August), and first survival rate counts in the monitoring plots in November 2017 resulted in 89% of survival rate. Another count after the dry season is needed.

- **Remediation plan agreed on with The Hunger Project**

As a follow up of WeForest and THP team field visit in Ethiopia and a meeting in The Netherlands, a remediation plan was prepared to correct 2017 project activities and assess the feasibility of the design 2018 project activities. On the remediation plan and follow-up meetings different technical issues needed attention were mentioned and discussed such as site selection, planting space, species type and composition, by-law formulation, and livelihood issues. Clear replanting strategy for 2016/2017, by-laws and proper site selection and activity plan for 2017/2018 was agreed upon latest by end of Oct 2017. THP was actively working for the last 43 months to correct the mistakes and achieve a better results for 2018 planting season. Based on the remediation plan and follow-up meetings, several major activities were defined and underway achieved such as new site identification, nursery activities, species selection, community mobilization, by-law formulation, and old plantation sites maintenance and follow-up activities (such as weeding, hoeing and grass harvest).



Gullies in Amhara revealing soil erosion.



Tree nursery in Amhara, tree seedlings are covered with hay for protection.

MAKING DECISIONS TOGETHER WITH THE COMMUNITY

- **Flexibility is key when working with the communities**

For 2016/2017 planting year, the community asked us to restore a large number of gullies: this meant that our actual planting density was much higher than planned. Working with communities who have little experience and knowledge in forestry or environmental protection causes such challenges and requires us to adapt and stay flexible in order to keep motivation levels high. The communities have already selected the local forests for the 2018 restoration for which 23 preliminary sites have been chosen, covering a total of 500 hectares. WeForest, THP and the local task forces with community representative are currently reviewing the areas and feasibility for restoration and social fencing.

- **Green school clubs**

The team established green school clubs in four primary schools (Amare Yewubish, Lay Damot, Tahsas Dar and Debre Kelemu primary schools). In each school, 10 members were identified for training in managing natural resources and how to engage others, students and teachers included, in the greening activities in their villages. During the training, the 40 members (32 students and eight school teachers) were taken to visit the project nursery and one of the project's model farmers.

- **Meeting with members of the community and local government representatives**

In October, a joint meeting with community members, district level government experts and village development agents took place to jointly define criteria and identify planting sites for our 2018 restoration. It was decided that the sites should be a minimum of 10 hectares and by the end of the meeting, five new villages were proposed for inclusion in the project. The meeting also focused on strengthening the existing village task forces responsible for many of the project activities and identifying new task forces for the new villages. Moving away from the traditional annual cropping system towards integrated and more resilient tree-based landscape was also agreed. There was great enthusiasm from



Community meetings with villagers from the Kubel site, which has been selected as a potential new area for 2018 planting season.

STRENGTHENING INCOME SECURITY

- **Promoting sources of additional income**

In addition, the project is empowering people through a variety of livelihood activities including agroforestry. Farm income mostly consist of annual crops, with few trees integrated into the landscape. 329 lead farmers were selected to set-up an agroforestry system at their homesteads, planting valuable trees such as avocado (*Percia americana*) and apple (*Malus domestica*) trees. These farms will serve as demo-plots for the neighboring farmers, demonstrating the value and income potential of trees.

PROJECT CHRONOLOGY

- 2016 WeForest and The Hunger Project started a joint project combine strengths of grass-root community mobilisation and forestry
- First nurseries set up for planting
- 2017 WeForest field assessment and feasibility assessment
- Remediation plan for planting season 2017/2018

BENEFICIARY STORY: YERENOUS, TREE NURSERY WORKER

Yerenous is 18 years old and for the past year she has been working at the "Love Nature" tree nursery supported by Brabantia that is part of the Amhara project. She said of her experience: "It is great work because I learn a lot. And because I can make a difference for so many people. We grow so many trees here. I have also visited some of the areas where they have been planted. They seem to be doing well. It feels like I have one million babies."



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"Love Nature" tree nursery supported by Brabantia in November 2017. Seeds are in seedbeds and awaiting the next planting season.



Young trees on the hillside in Amhara.

FOOTNOTES

1 Includes 800 000 trees financed in 2016 and 546 000 trees financed in 2017 (still ongoing).

WeForest is an international non-profit that specializes in mobilizing companies to restore the World's forests and embark their stakeholders into a long-term journey towards environmental sustainability.

In order to achieve the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement, we must peak our global emissions by 2020 and achieve carbon neutrality by the second half of this century. While reducing carbon emissions is critical, research suggests that even if carbon dioxide emissions came to a sudden halt, the carbon dioxide already in the Earth's atmosphere could continue to warm our planet for hundreds of years. The challenge is to reduce future carbon emissions and actively remove the excess carbon from our atmosphere.

Forests are known as the best technology for that: they are an amazing carbon sink.

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THANK YOU