

Desa'a Forest, Ethiopia

Mid-Year Update 2022

Continuing conflict in Tigray is still affecting some of our activities. The first six months of 2022 was challenging in terms of access to cash and fuel, which hinders community mobilization and the follow-up of activities. Despite the challenges, the team was able to reach all the project sites, including our new site in Gebrekidan kebele. At the time of writing, intensive planting was ongoing in the buffer zone, with light gap-filling being done in the denser forest areas. Watch our latest planting video [here](#).



No one sits at home in the summer season! More than 75% of the participants in our tree planting programme are women, as men are busy in their fields securing the next grain harvest for their families.



After a short demonstration, everyone can start planting. It's important to know how big the pit should be, and how we plant seedlings without damaging the roots.



One man in particular likes to show you're never too old to get involved with restoration! This is Gebrekorkos H., 75 years old, who's taking part in the watering at the 2022 planting site near Felegeweni.



Even the animals get involved! These donkeys are carrying water for the seedlings planted in 2021, also at Felegeweni.



And this one is going to carry this byproduct of restoration – pruned branches – to families for their own use or to sell for extra income. Pruning is part of good restoration management and helps trees to grow and become healthier.



Our soil and water conservation structures are an essential part of planting. Here the Felegeweyni community are getting together to build a water harvesting pond (left), which will hopefully be as much of a success as the one already built near Hawile (right).



Aloe camperi is the best and most natural way to strengthen these stone bunds and trenches in the dry Desa'a landscape. Its roots help bind together the water and soil conservation structures, and at the same time a valuable crop is being grown.



These pits contain *Olea europaea* subsp. *cuspidata* – African wild olive trees – planted near Kalamín village. The water harvesting structures are essential in areas that have limited and erratic rainfall, as they provide the necessary moisture for healthy seedling growth. These are already big enough to be pruned for faster growth.



Honey has a high value in Tigray, and beekeeping in the forest zone can provide a good source of income for families. Here, new beekeepers are taking part in a three-day training. They learn theoretical and practical sessions on bee biology, beekeeping systems, beeswax collection, transferring bee colonies from traditional to improved beehives, and bee colony rearing.



Our nurseries have already started seedling production for planting in 2023. All the native tree seedlings – like these *Juniperus procera* being collected from a mature specimen – will be nurtured for more than one year in our nurseries to make sure that they will survive and grow well after planting in the field. Seed collection from different indigenous species is done by community members and forest guards.



How do we know our restored forests are growing and making an impact?

Every hectare under restoration is mapped with GPS points to generate polygons (areas on a map) that are assigned to sponsors. Permanent monitoring plots are established in our sites and our forestry and science teams conduct surveys to monitor progress of biomass growth, tree density, survival rate and species diversity, among other indicators. Where social impacts are also critical, we measure socio-economic indicators such as the number of individuals or families directly benefiting, people trained, and income generated from forest-friendly livelihood activities.

Please visit our [Why and How](#) webpage for more information.



You'll receive an annual update in March. Meanwhile, stay up-to-date with our interactive [Desa'a map](#), and check out the [photos](#) on Flickr.