

# Gewocha Forest Ethiopia

Mid-Year Update 2023



## Project status

Year 2  
out of 10

1207 ha restored  
out of 10 000 ha

880k trees growing  
out of 12.6 million



**2023 started with an important milestone: the completion of the Gewocha Forest vegetation survey.** This essential step in any Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) project defines the characteristics of the forest to be restored, its composition, species diversity and regeneration status. As well as providing crucial input to inform decision-making and management of the subsequent restoration, it also provides a starting baseline by which the project's success can be measured.

Read on to find out more about how WeForest and The Hunger Project carried out this important inventory, as well as how the second planting season is going.



## Vegetation Survey

184 sample plots were distributed over 7898.5 hectares (around 30 square miles) at intervals of 1 km or 0.5 km depending on the forest density and the location of the plot within the forest boundary. Methods and techniques carried out in accordance with WeForest's established inventory protocol include navigating to and recording locations using GPS, laying out the plots as shown (below), and of course taking accurate measurements.



This man (above) is measuring the DBH, or diameter at breast height, of the tree. As the standard for measuring tree height, DBH is measured at around 4.5 feet from the ground. Other measurements – such as soil sampling, the abundance of different species and their natural regeneration potential – were also taken.



Carrying out the inventory wasn't always easy in some of the more densely vegetated parts of the forest (right) – but you'll be glad to know the team all made it safely back to the office! There, the collected data will be analyzed and a report prepared. This will inform the preparation of the project's management plan, determine which FLR interventions will be carried out where – such as where planting is needed, or where Assisted Natural Regeneration can be encouraged – and identify project targets.



## Second planting season

It's planting time again! The action started at the beginning of July, and will continue until mid-August. This year, 605 ha of communal forest and 32 ha of degraded open grazing areas and gullies will be planted with close to 1 million seedlings: we'll know the exact figure at the end. A whopping 2560 households are participating! The project nursery has raised 11 native and 3 exotic species for the communal forest degraded areas, and seedlings for agroforestry – *Percia americana* (avocado), *Coffee arabica*, *Mangifera indica* (mango), and *Musa* sp. (banana) – are bought from government and youth group nurseries.





## Agroforestry Programme

To date, the Gewocha Forest project is supporting 1682 families to adopt agroforestry practices, growing cash crops like *Rhamnus prinoides*, *Coffee arabica* and fruit seedlings to boost their household incomes and food security.

Habtamu A., a 35 year-old father of two, came back to his hometown of Finoteselam after working in Sudan and struggled to make a living as a masonry worker. With high-value fruit tree and vegetable seedlings and training from the Gewocha Forest project, he instead established this well-planned 0.25 ha agroforestry plot, which is already boosting his income with the equivalent of US \$100 every week. He's planted fruit trees like banana, avocado and mango every five metres with coffee at two metre intervals between them, so the fruit trees provide essential shade to the coffee plants. "In the last six months I was able to secure my family's vegetable consumption and sell the rest, earning about US\$1120 from the first harvest alone," he says.



## 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 [What We Do](#) webpage for more information.



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

[Here](#) you'll find information about how to communicate about the project and your partnership with WeForest.