

Gewocha, Ethiopia

Community-led restoration of native remnant forest in Amhara



Mid-year update 2024

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Project status

Over 1500 hectares under restoration

More than 1.9 million trees protected & growing



Jabi Tehnan in Ethiopia's West Gojjam is rich in geographical features – caves, mountains, rock formations, waterfalls – and is home to a wealth of biodiversity, including endemic plants and large mammals such as baboons, lions and spotted hyenas.

However, like the rest of Amhara, it has seen the brunt of Ethiopia's deforestation. The widespread conversion of forest for agriculture has caused a decline in soil fertility and the formation of the gullies that characterize this landscape – wide, bare ditches or valleys resulting from soil erosion.

Amhara's remaining forests – including

Gewocha – offer a much needed lifeline in the form of food, shelter and income. Our project with The Hunger Project is re-establishing the structure, species diversity and density of the forest, which covers more than 7900 hectares, as well as rehabilitating over 1100 hectares of degraded communal lands. We also support community resilience by introducing agroforestry over more than 900 hectares of smallholder farmland with nearly 8000 families.

In April 2023, armed conflict erupted between the local militia and the government, creating a volatile and unpredictable situation. The team is able to travel to the communities to continue the project's livelihood support and



One of the project's livelihood goals is to boost family income through irrigation-based vegetable production. For 58-year-old **Bitew A.**, a father of seven, this has been life-changing. For years, he struggled to make his third of a hectare productive enough to feed his family and generate income.

to carry on the restoration of the degraded communal lands, but with continuing tensions that are hard to predict, the team was unable to undertake the larger scale planting inside the native Gewocha Forest itself. As a result, the majority of planting has been focused on agroforestry and communal lands. The native forest planting will resume whenever it is safe to do so, but we are not expecting significant improvements in the short term.

The safety of our team and the communities remains a top priority as we adapt to the shifting realities on the ground.

Thanks to the fact that his land is irrigable, Bitew was one of ten farmers to receive a water pump from WeForest and The Hunger Project. With a reliable water supply and diligent care of his crops, Bitew's hard work paid off. He earned 335,000 ETB—nearly US\$6000—from selling his tomatoes, potatoes, onions and maize.

“Now I’m the one helping my relatives with seeds and farming supplies; I’ve gone from borrower to lender!” Bitew proudly shares. “I’m deeply grateful to WeForest and THP for the support that has been a turning point in my life.”



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

You can find an overview of all communications assets and guidance on how to communicate about your partnership with WeForest [here](#).



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