



Amhara Ethiopia

Mid-year report 2020

A community-based approach to restore degraded lands

Ethiopia's Amhara region is under severe threat from land degradation and soil erosion as a result of widespread deforestation.

Most forests, communal lands and farmlands are highly fragmented, with extensive gullies through which fertile soil is being washed away.

The local community is at the heart of our forest restoration project in Machakel, which is being run in collaboration with The Hunger Project. Indigenous trees are planted on community land, gullies, river banks and farmland, while fruit trees are planted on farms.

Rural communities are trained with the skills they need to care for their forests and farmlands in the long term. Attitudes towards protecting natural resources are changing, as people are now seeing concrete benefits from the restoration work in neighbouring villages in the project's early years.

Our goals for the Amhara project:

2020 goals:

Protect and restore

200 ha:

120 ha forest restoration

80 ha agroforestry

By 2021:

Total area to be restored:

1149 ha

1,958,000 trees

Restoration techniques:

Framework planting and agroforestry



What's new in Amhara?

Recent highlights from the field

During 2020, we had planned to restore 120 ha of degraded communal lands in 11 villages in the Machakel district. In fact, we actually mapped no fewer than 146.92 ha in 18 communal sites from 10 villages during this time. 52 permanent monitoring plots have been established, and so far **13,650 trees on 15.75 ha** have been planted on communal lands.

The two WeForest funded tree nurseries produced **306,209 seedlings** – 244,503 native and 61,706 exotic species. 174,234 are *Rhamnus prinoides* seedlings, a native shrub used to make local beer.

22,791 additional multipurpose tree seedlings will be purchased from local youth association nursery sites to be planted in 2020's restoration sites and as agroforestry, including avocado, apple and coffee.



Some restored sites from 2017, like Genamemecha, have shown remarkable improvement. Gullies have rehabilitated, soil erosion has reduced, grass cover has improved, and springs are forming, becoming water sources for local people.

January

February

March

April

May

June

Community mobilisation and site selection

Mapping of selected communal lands

Seedling production

Gullies identified

Households selected for agroforestry practices

Check dams constructed where necessary

Cut-off drain and other soil and water management practices employed

Key

Tree planting and ANR on communal and farmlands

Livelihood activities

Soil and water conservation activities

21 nursery workers, seven of them women, from the two nurseries and four village facilitators were **trained on nursery management** activities. Also, village-based workshops were organized on natural resource conservation and participatory forest management, as well as zero grazing pasture land management.

A total of 1,087 households, 93 of them women-headed, were selected to engage in the project's agroforestry package. On their homesteads, they'll plant high-value fruit trees and cash crops.

The **COVID-2019** pandemic has brought challenges. The declared state of emergency limits mobility and prohibits meetings and workshops, and the project team is doing its best to take all the necessary prevention procedures -- wearing masks and keeping recommended social distancing. Planting activities are also respecting social distancing rules.



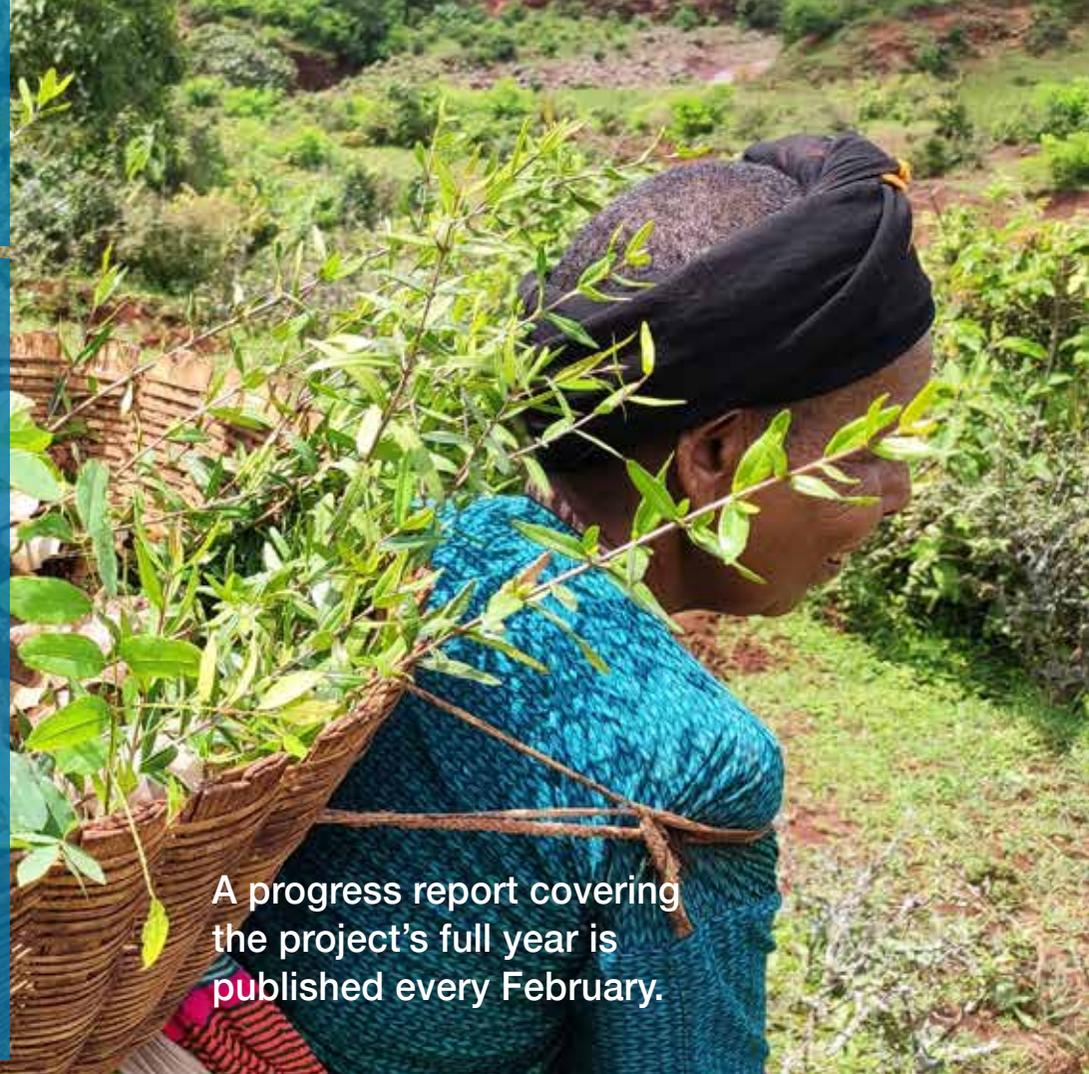
Yehune F., who supports his mother and two siblings, is finding that his 0.125 ha of agroforestry is more rewarding than the 1 ha he has for maize. Every 2 months he harvests 200 kg of *Rhamnus prinoides* for local beer production.



What's next?

- 1,087 farmers will be trained in agroforestry in September.
- Selected seeds species will be collected or purchased from seed centres in the same month.
- December 2020 will see a Project Review Workshop, inviting all relevant stakeholders (Office of Agriculture, village administration, community representatives).
- 15 planting sites will be fenced in December 2020.
- Nursery management and seedling production for 2021 will begin. Bed preparation, seed collection and composting will take place so the nurseries are ready to produce seedlings.
- The community will identify possible restoration sites and villages in December 2020.

Stay up-to-date with our interactive [Amhara map](#).



A progress report covering the project's full year is published every February.

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

Hectares and sites under restoration are mapped with GPS points to generate polygons or sites 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 beneficiaries, people trained, and income generated from forest-friendly livelihood activities.

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

Check out our great new photos from the project on [Flickr](#)!