

News from the field

The latest from WeForest's project sites



Desa'a communities show their gratitude for WeForest's project

When WeForest restores landscapes, we work very closely with the local communities on a long-term basis – and forge some strong and binding relationships.

WeForest's Ethiopia Director, Aklilu Negussi Mekuria, was in for a big surprise recently. At the project site in Desa'a, he and the WeForest staff were busy with this season's planting, along with many members of the surrounding communities. Afterwards, the governors of Golgol Naele village invited them to have what they thought would be lunch at a farmer's house - only to find that a big celebration had been planned!

The district governor, economic sector coordinator, village elders, religious leaders, governors and community representatives were there, and the hosts had slaughtered a goat and prepared local drinks. After a slap-up meal, the community presented their own harvested honey to Aklilu to show their appreciation, respect and commitment for the Desa'a project, which aims to regenerate this ancient, badly degraded afro-montane forest and provide its communities with forest-friendly livelihoods.



“We're convinced that trees are the best weapons against climate change”

Nature association Natuurpunt

Oost-Brabant has published an interview with WeForest's Ethiopia Director, Aklilu Negussi Mekuria.

In the [article](#), which is in Dutch, Aklilu Talks about the great strides Ethiopia has taken in the last three decades, including in the management and protection of its natural resources. He reminisces about when Ethiopia planted 350 million trees in one day, an initiative of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in 2019. WeForest participated in both the Amhara and Tigray regions, planting more than 9240 native *Olea europaea* and *Juniperus procera* trees in half a day.

He talks at length about the three WeForest projects that are ongoing in Ethiopia, and explains why WeForest is convinced that the restoration of natural systems and improving the living conditions of local communities should go hand in hand. “We give local communities a feeling of ownership and want to create the mindset that the community does not have to be the cause of the degradation of the natural ecosystem, but rather that they can be the motor that drives its restoration,” he says.



WeForest hits the headlines

WeForest made the local news in Ethiopia last week, when a team from Tigray Television came to film the project site in Desa'a.

The main message in the broadcast was the need to replicate WeForest's best practices in forest landscape restoration (FLR) in this region and scale them up across the entire country. The [video](#) is in Tigrinya, the local language of the region, which is spoken by about 4.3 million people in Ethiopia.