

ZEIT  SPRACHEN

BETTER SOIL – IMPROVED NUTRITION

Reclaiming the forest in Ethiopia

Reforestation, education, cooperation. Ethiopia is fighting for climate and resource protection. Together with *Menschen für Menschen*, the country is reclaiming the forest.

ADVANCED

The wound in the earth, here in Wore Illu, central Ethiopia, is approximately 100 metres long, up to 20 metres wide and seven metres deep. Erosion has taken away more and more soil from the people in this area, creating ditches. Farmer Abol Ali would rather care for grains and beans, but nothing grows here any more, partly due to the loss of the forest. There used to be a eucalyptus forest higher up, but the wood from the trees was used to build houses. Without trees, the land is unstable, and the wound gets deeper and wider each year in the rainy season.

Until 1900, four out of every ten square metres of Ethiopia were covered by forest. Then, the population increased significantly, and land was needed for food and firewood. So, 90 per cent of the forest was taken away in a short time. Now, Ethiopia is taking care of these wounds, together with partners like the organization *Menschen für Menschen*. Through reforestation projects new trees are being planted in places where the forest once stood.

“Currently, we are working on the reforestation of approximately 500 hectares of forest. We are also stabilizing erosion ditches over a total length of 33 kilometres,” says Wossenyelewem Mengistu, project manager in Wore Illu. Reforestation initiatives, conducted in collaboration with local farming communities, serve a dual purpose: protecting nature and improving the living conditions of the people. The roots of these newly planted trees

stabilize the soil, effectively prevent- ing erosion. The soil remains intact, vegetables and cereals thrive. As a result, families enjoy better nutrition and higher income. Birds and insects return to the forest, thanks to the shelter and food provided by the trees. This has a positive impact on the global climate, as each newly planted tree acts as a reservoir for CO₂.

Together with the farmers, *Menschen für Menschen* wants to increase agricultural productivity. That is why it is important to educate farmers and cooperate with the local population in all reforestation projects. The project terms clearly state who is responsible.

Reforestation initiatives plant indig- enous and exotic tree species. Through special agreements between the com- munities and the farmers, it is established that no trees are immediately cut down again. The farmers take care of the trees and, in return, receive seeds for their fields. They can use grass from the forests as cattle feed. They also get tree species that grow faster, for example eucalyptus. They can grow these at home for firewood and construction. The use of new, specialized stoves also helps save wood.

Effective collaboration with the local community has inspired other families to join the reforestation efforts. Large forest areas have already been stabilized in this way. Wire baskets filled with stones are strategically placed within the ditches, collecting loose soil after heavy rains. Over time, the wounds in the soil begin to heal.



Wossenyelewem Mengistu,
project manager in Wore Illu

erosion

- Schäden am Boden, die durch Wasser und Wasserbewegungen entstehen

soil

- Erde

ditch

- Graben

grain(s)

- Getreide

loss

- Verlust

rainy season

- Regenzeit

population

- Bevölkerung

reforestation

- Wiederaufforstung

to plant

- pflanzen

to conduct

- durchführen

purpose

- Zweck

to prevent

- hier: schützen vor

nutrition

- Ernährung

shelter

- Unterschlupf

to provide

- hier: bieten

increased

- hier: größere (-r/-s)

agricultural

- landwirtschaftlich

to educate

- hier: ausbilden

to state

- hier: (schriftlich) nennen

responsible

- verantwortlich

indigenous

- hier: heimisch

species

- hier: Sorte

community

- hier: örtliche Bevölkerung

to cut down

- abholzen

seed(s)

- Saatgut

stove

- Ofen



Before: erosion ditches



Wire baskets filled with stones are strategically placed within the ditches.



After: final result

1. True or false?

1. Due to erosion, large areas are no longer suitable for agriculture.
2. Most of the forest in Ethiopia was cut down by 1900.
3. Reforestation also uses indigenous tree species.
4. Farmers receive firewood rations for their stoves in return for taking care of the trees.
5. Wire baskets filled with stones were placed after major rainfall in order to collect water.

2. Verbs and adjectives

absorb – increased – indigenous – planted – provides – reforest

Extreme deforestation has greatly reduced Ethiopia's forest areas. Now, the government is planning projects to _____ large areas. Initiatives plant exotic and _____ tree species. The newly _____ trees are also intended to _____ CO₂. Better soils also lead to _____ agricultural productivity. Plants stabilize the soil. The ditches, which would otherwise become deeper during the rainy season, are also stabilized. Fast-growing eucalyptus trees _____ firewood that the people in the village can use for cooking.

Answer key: _____

1. True: 1, 3
False: 2, 4, 5

2. 1. reforest
2. indigenous
3. planted
4. absorb
5. increased
6. provide

3. Select the correct answer

1. By 1900, what percentage of Ethiopia’s land area was still covered by forests?
 - A. 20%
 - B. 40%
 - C. 90%

2. What is the purpose of using modern stoves?
 - A. Reducing CO₂ emissions
 - B. Preparing healthier meals
 - C. An economical use of wood

3. Which benefit of the project is not mentioned?
 - A. Benefits for the climate around the world
 - B. Benefits for animals in agriculture
 - C. Benefits for tourism in the country

4. Match the corresponding translations

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Getreidesaatgut | A. to heal |
| 2. größere Artenvielfalt | B. to plant indigenous tree species |
| 3. einheimische Baumsorten pflanzen | C. cattle feed |
| 4. Viehfutter | D. harvests double |
| 5. gesund werden | E. increased biodiversity |
| 6. Ernten verdoppeln sich | F. grain seeds |

Answer key: _____

3. 1. B 2. C 3. C
4. 1. F 2. E 3. B
4. C 5. A 6. D
5. 1. Grains and beans
2. The project terms clearly state responsibilities. The principle is that local communities contribute with their knowledge and skills.
3. (model answer)
Wire baskets filled with stones collect soft soil that would otherwise be washed away by heavy rain. This stabilizes the soil.

5. Write a short answer

1. What does Abol Ali normally grow?

2. How does the project handle responsibilities?

3. What is the purpose of the technical constructions?



Abol Ali's village **Aba Grisia** has been severely affected by erosion.



Farmer **Abol Ali**, together with another villager from Aba Grisia