



Ethiopia's PHE *Spotlight*

**Integrated Practical Success Stories and
Challenges from the Field**

Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resources Association



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Overview of Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resources Association

The Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resources Association (EWNRA) was the first local Ethiopian NGO to focus on the conservation of Ethiopia's wetlands. It was founded in 1999, when researchers from Addis Ababa University and Huddersfield University (UK) identified the need to create awareness on wetlands and build the capacity of wetland and conservation professionals through education and research. EWNRA widened its mission in 2001, to include implementation of integrated and participatory development and environment projects at watershed and landscape levels. EWNRA works to strengthen communities and improve the environment through linking research, indigenous knowledge and natural resource management strategies with the active participation of stakeholders from all levels. EWNRA focuses its activities in the Illu Aba Bora zone in the Metu woreda of Oromia. EWNRA originally served an area of 532 hectares with 210 households and has expanded its work to now serve six watersheds covering an area of 31,000 hectares and benefiting 8,000 households in Metu woreda. It recently also started working in the Amhara region in the Fogera area. EWNRA has multiple partners and donors that contribute to its achievements in Metu including: SIDA/SLUF, the Development Fund (Norwegian NGO), UNDP/Small Grant Program, Nile Basin Initiatives/Micro Grants Program, BALANCED Project, Japan Embassy, British Embassy and WaterAid Ethiopia.

In 2005, EWNRA expanded its work even further to include family planning and reproductive health activities as part of an integrated Population, Health, and Environment (PHE) approach. One of the major drivers of environmental degradation in the EWNRA focus areas, as well as Ethiopia at large, is population pressure. EWNRA initially piloted providing reproductive health education and family planning options at the community level in the Metu area, where EWNRA was already implementing livelihood and environmental activities. The reproductive health work has now been expanded to the Fogera area.

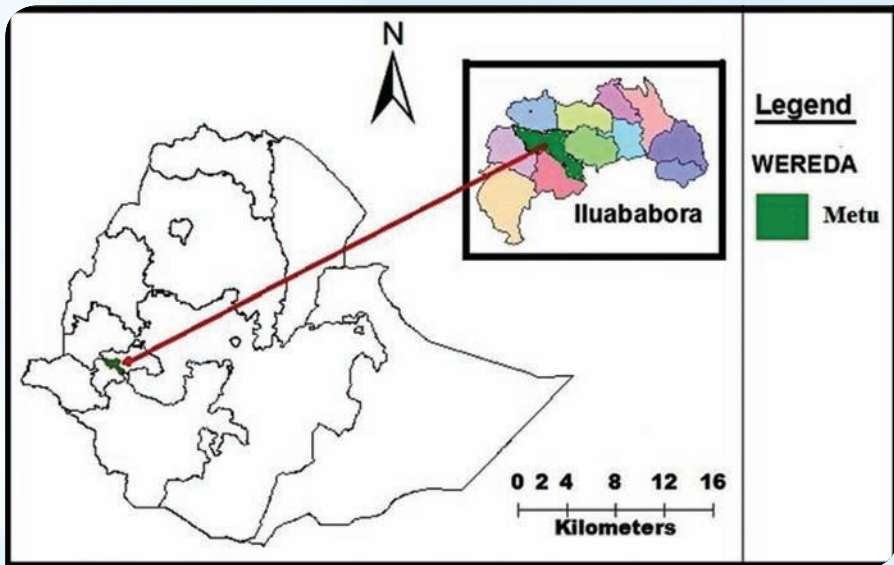
What is a wetland?

Wetlands are defined by the Ramsar Convention as, “areas of marsh, fen, peat land or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters.”

Introduction to Metu Woreda

Overview of Metu Woreda

EWNRA's projects in the Ilu Aba Bora zone are located in the Metu woreda, which is 600 kilometers southwest of Addis Ababa. The total population of the district is approximately 67,000 people living in 13,500 households, of which 12% are female headed. The woreda has twenty-nine kebeles (smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia). Wetlands cover approximately 3% of the woreda's land mass. EWNRA has implemented its PHE project in 36 micro-watersheds in 10 kebeles. These activities are implemented in close collaboration with the local government including the micro-watershed committees.



What is PHE?

Population, Health and Environment (PHE) is a holistic, participatory development approach whereby issues of environment, health and population are addressed in an integrated manner for improved livelihoods and sustainable well-being of people and ecosystems.

Population - Family Planning (birth spacing, limiting births, emergency contraception, Adolescent sexual and reproductive health, etc)

Health - HIV/AIDS, ARI Prevention, water and sanitation, malaria prevention, primary health care, child survival, etc

Environment - Environmental conservation, Natural Resource Management

Why PHE for Metu?

In the last two Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) Oromia Region had the highest unmet need for family planning of the 11 regions in Ethiopia. Unmet need in Oromia declined from 41.4% in the 2005 DHS to 29.9% in the 2011 DHS. In 2005, Oromia had the highest fertility rate in the country, at 6.2, but in the 2011 DHS, the total fertility rate dropped to 5.6, second to the Somali region (7.1) in TFR. This rapidly growing population requires food, shelter and other basic necessities. Residents are predominantly farmers, and to meet their needs, families are converting forests and wetlands to farmland to grow more food to eat and to sell. This land conversion as well as exploitation of other local resources has become a threat to sustainable development in the district. To address the root causes of both the high unmet need for family planning as well as environmental degradation, EWNRA started integrating family planning awareness creation into its natural resource management and community development projects in 2005 in collaboration with the Metu Woreda Health Office. In 2009, EWNRA expanded this work to include community-based distribution of family planning methods such as condoms and pills.

The EWNRA PHE Model in Metu

Population, Reproductive Health and Family Planning

Recognizing the challenges the Metu community is facing as a result of population pressure and in order to contribute to achieving the Growth & Transformation Plan (GTP) targets (Ethiopia's five year poverty reduction plan, 2011-2015) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), EWNRA has developed an innovative system to bring contraceptives into rural villages to compliment the government's health extension program and reach the most remote areas. With support from the USAID funded BALANCED project, EWNRA trained 102 adults and 36 youth as peer educators. They received their training from nine adult and 12 youth peer educator trainers that were selected from the Metu woreda health and agriculture offices and from EWNRA's Metu project office. The peer educators educate their neighbors about family planning and the connections between population, health and environment. For those who are interested in using family planning, the peer educators refer them to the Health Extension Workers for counseling and to receive the method of their choice.



In addition, four youth clubs were formed within the kebeles. These clubs now have a total of 80 members, of which 46% are female. These clubs write and perform dramas for the community that tell stories and share information about PHE integration, family planning, health, sanitation, HIV/AIDS and the

environment.

Metu Woreda Health Office Head, Sr. Selam Hassen, can see

the benefits of the PHE approach for families in the woreda and has become a strong believer in the approach. EWNRA works in close partnership with the Metu Health Office, especially on family planning/reproductive health and water and sanitation. The health office reports that there are 7,853 family planning users in the woreda and that family planning use is growing rapidly. Contraceptive prevalence in the woreda reached 77% in 2010. Every day two to five women come for permanent family planning services. The rate of waterborne diseases has been reduced by 50% as a result of water infrastructure development coupled with education on sanitation and use of latrines.



The services that EWNRA provides compliment the government health system in the woreda which has 54 health posts and 4 clinics supported by 111 health staff. There are 58 Health Extension Workers (HEWs) who offer a package of 16 health services in collaboration with Development Agents, who focus on agriculture, livestock and natural resource management. The packages include topics such as: family planning, maternal and child health, nutrition and sanitation.

The Health Extension Workers provide free contraceptives to the community. However, for some individuals it can be a long walk to the health post and they may want additional privacy. To address these concerns, 35 village kiosk shop owners were trained to be PHE Providers. These providers sell condoms, oral contraceptives and emergency contraceptives purchased from DKT in their kiosks at affordable prices. This option has become especially popular with youth. All three of these groups, the peer educators, youth PHE Clubs and PHE providers, work closely with the kebele Health Extension Workers (HEW) and Development Agents (DA) who is responsible for implementing agricultural and environmental activities. The kiosks have become a popular

source of family planning methods. For example, from June 2010 to November 2011, 3,600 condoms, 756 emergency pills, and 756 oral contraceptive pills were sold by the PHE providers in the rural kebeles. The introduction of the peer educators, youth clubs and PHE providers has already made a difference in Metu. In 2008, before the project started, the contraceptive prevalence rate was 34%. By 2010, that number had increased to 77%.

Male involvement in discussions of family planning has played a crucial role in these advancements in contraceptive prevalence. During a field visit, one community member asked EWNRA to make sure that condoms stay available in his village. He said, “Some of our wives cannot take pills or injections because they have high blood pressure. In these cases, we, the husbands, can support our wives by using condoms.”

The use of family planning method in the project area has contributed either to space, limit or delay births in a household as well as use of permanent contraceptive method, which will ultimately reduce the pressure exerted on farmland and other resources to produce more production in order to sustain large family size and increases the resilience of households, mainly the younger productive age group.

My name is Alima Mehammed. I don't exactly know my age- maybe I am 75. I have lived here in Tulube kebele, Metu woreda since I was a child. I live with my six children. Their father had 17 children from two wives, though four have already passed away. He lives close by with his other wife. We divorced because the children were fighting over land and other resources. I cultivate 0.25 hectares. The older sons constantly fight with their father over land. One day, my older sons asked their father for money for school and extra land for cultivation because I had no money for school fees and we only had a little food left at home and I was so worried. When their father refused, they beat him and he almost died. We live by sharecropping with other farmers and contribute all of our labor until it's time to harvest. Having many children without enough land to support the family brings conflict and damage. If I knew about family planning when I was younger, I would have chosen to have few children. In my time, there was no family planning education. Young men and women today are lucky because they can limit their children and learn about family planning through the counseling and education they get from health workers.

Integrated wetland-watershed management

EWNRA engages the community in biophysical soil and water conservation activities to restore degraded land and conserve natural resources including wetlands. These activities include the construction of 6,500 kilometers of different types of terraces to prevent soil erosion as well as cutoff drains and water ways which discharge the excess water into the rivers. These structures cover an area of 31,000 hectares of land, of which 11,000 hectares were treated with vetiver grass. The grass is planted on the terraces to help prevent soil erosion. The number of farmers planting vetiver grass grew from 210 in 2005 to 8,000 in 2010, indicating that the farmers are quickly seeing the benefits that soil and water conservation bring to their lands and livelihoods.

Raising and planting indigenous forest tree seedlings is another intervention being used to conserve and restore the ecosystems in the area. To date, more than 1.6 million seedlings have been planted on 200 hectares of land with a survival rate of 80%. Contour planting of vetiver traps soil particles, which builds up sloped land and prevents soil from being lost and filling up wetlands. In addition to this, 1,648 households prepared 5,768 M3 compost from green plants, wastes and manure and used it for replenishing 960 hectares of farm land, including the homestead vegetable plots.



EWNRA conducted an assessment from 2007 to 2010 to see just how beneficial these conservation measures could be for farmers. The results showed that agricultural yields for maize increased from 20% to 50% in the study areas depending on the conservation measures and inputs utilized. Families are now food secure for nine months out of the

year instead of five and increased their daily income from Birr 5 -10 to 19 - 25 (US \$1= Birr 17). In addition, the loss of soil from cultivated land was reduced by 75% and siltation, which was threatening the wetlands and the grazing land at the bottom of the valley decreased. These changes have led to the rehabilitation of the wetland in the Tulube kebele, which in turn benefits the local community with water and grass for their livestock's. The actuality of rehabilitated wetland has urged the local people to adapt controlled grazing over the wetland through the implementation of their bylaws. The cut-and-carry system is used to rejuvenate the whole catchment systems. This wetland and catchment regeneration has supported the regulation of the hydrological climate of the area. In this regard, community based and sustainably managed wetlands serve as a carbon sink and are regarded as one of the viable ways of adapting & mitigating climate change.

Natural resource management has also been incorporated into the bylaws of Iddir, a traditional community based organization which provides support to members when there is a death in the family or other needs. There is high compliance with the Iddir bylaws because of social pressures and in order to maintain their membership in the Iddir. EWNRA worked with kebeles to incorporate conservation measures into Iddir, and farmers are now introducing soil and water conservation measures on their plots to ensure they are following the bylaw. The micro-watershed committee and the kebele and woreda administrations also ensure that households are in compliance with the bylaw.

Ato Habtamu Mengistu, Metu Woreda Deputy Agriculture Office Head has been working in collaboration with EWNRA since 2005 on conservation activities. Since then, a total length of 1,524 kilometers of vertiver grass has been planted. As a result of high demand from farmers for the grass, the Agriculture Office and EWNRA are working together to help farmers to establish their own nurseries.



EWNRA's work with the Agriculture Office and its 78 Development Agents is also done in coordination with the work with the Health Office's 58 HEWs. They are

also collaborating with the wetland catchment committees along with a veterinary expert and school representatives. Ato Mengistu believes that EWNRA's contributions to the development activities of the woreda have been immeasurable. In totality, the collaborative efforts in coordinated manner among these institutions is bringing a sustainable livelihood to build communities resilience in the area.

Livelihood diversification and income improvement

One reason for the high rate of conversion of forests and wetlands to cultivated land is that many people in the Metu area are dependent on agriculture as their only source of income. To help diversify and raise the incomes of households in Metu, EWNRA has been training male and female household heads in off-farm activities, such as vegetable gardening in homesteads, fruit production, agro-forestry and bee-keeping. EWNRA has also been supporting micro-credit and savings services.

Ato Membreku Tadese, is a 28 year old farmer with a twelfth grade education who has been married to **Woizero Belaynesh Kassaye** since 1999. W/ro Belaynesh is a 26 year old housewife with a ninth grade education. They have two children- a four year old boy and an eight year old girl. Both husband and the wife generate income through farming and raising livestock and are EWNRA model farmers. They own 2.5 hectares of land where they cultivate coffee, maize, sorghum, teff, and sugar-cane. They have two calves, three heifers, two oxen and a bull. They grow plants like beetroot, onions and garlic, carrots, cabbages and pepper in their gardens for both consumption and for sale.



Even though their main source of income is from crop and livestock production, they also have traditional and modern

beehives. When they were first married, they started off with a mud house with grass roofing. As they earned more income from their off-farm activities, they shifted to corrugated iron roofing. They plan to open a 'tej bet' (tej is a local honey wine) to generate more money. Like most of their fellow community members, they planted vetiver grass which increased their crop yield and improved the soil quality by increasing its fertility, protecting it against erosion, and improving water percolation which in turn increased the underground water supply.

Belaynesh and her husband have been using contraceptives and Belaynesh recently switched from taking pills to injections. She supports her fellow community members on matters of FP. "Since some of the women in my neighborhood are illiterate, I help them by notifying them of their schedules. Some abusive husbands beat their wives if they even mention contraception, so they keep the cards issued by the HEW and the health centers with me. Men want more children for different reasons. For some it is a matter of having extra hands to alleviate some of the burden of farm life, for others it is tradition or religious belief, or simply pride. It is exhausting to care for many children all at once. The challenges that come from having many children are clear to the younger generations; newlyweds and women pregnant with their first babies are more in favor of small family sizes than older couples."

According to an EWNRA report, at least 20% of the households in Metu woreda are doing homestead vegetable gardening as a result of the vegetable seeds EWNRA distributed. Many families have also planted various fruit trees. These households have been able to earn extra income and provide a balanced diet for their families.

Bee-keeping is another way families are diversifying their livelihoods in the project sites. More than 2,500 female and male headed households have modern and transitional bee-hives for producing honey.

To curb the shortage of fuel wood, EWNRA has distributed energy saving stoves, which have been adopted by around 2,000 women for their households. EWNRA field staff report that charcoal production has decreased by 95% based



▲ *Bee keeping site of Women Group used as income generating activity*

These lights are helping families in a variety of ways- children are now able to study at night and some families are earning a small income by charging others to use their solar panel to charge their mobile phones and renting the panels to other families who are hosting special events.



◀ *Household producing ginger for market purpose*

Fifteen women's groups with a total of 720 members have established savings and credit schemes. EWNRA initially provided them with Birr 500-1,000 per group member as seed money. In order to manage their financial resources, the women's groups have developed and adopted by-laws and manage their personal as well as their organizations' finances. Every week, members save from 2 to 10 Birr according to their ability and willingness. The groups now

on the number of donkey loads that are brought into town. In addition, EWNRA has started a pilot project to provide a solar panel and portable home light for 54 farmers with financial support from Sida/SLUF and the Development Fund - Norway.

have a total of Birr 600,000 in capital, which includes credit from a local micro-finance institution. One group has also established joint bee-hives for honey production to earn additional income.



◀ *Saving and credit group of women*

Clean water supply and sanitation services

With the objective of minimizing health problems associated with water borne diseases and accompanying health expenses, EWNRA provided access to safe drinking water springs for 4,500 households, 350 of which are female headed, through the construction of nearly 90 shallow hand pumps and five springs. Now that they are able to access safe water close to their homes, the families are able to save time, labor and money. Each water point is managed by a Water & Sanitation Committee made up of seven community members, of whom three or four must be women.



◀ *Community members benefiting from the constructed hand pump*

Lessons learned

- Developing a community based bylaw through the Iddirs to promote watershed management ensures program sustainability and empowers community ownership and leadership which in turn improves community responsibility and accountability and provides them with many benefits.
- Fostering a strong understanding between HEW, DAs, School, local decision makers, communities and EWNRA on the connections between population growth and natural resource conservation as well as a strong working relationship creates an enabling environment for working together to address development issues through integrated approaches.
- Communication with the community about PHE is most effective when it is simple and takes advantage of existing community events such as funeral ceremonies, traditional coffee ceremonies, agricultural group work, and women's groups' savings and credit meetings which are facilitated by adult and youth peer educators. Water points where women gather to fetch water also provide opportunities to share information and discuss important issues.
- The active participation of local institutions and women in wetland management issues leads to better results faster. EWNRA has engaged the full and active participation of local institutions such as Iddir, The integrated approach is a more cost effective way to achieve development goals and provides multiple benefits and added value. This is possible because one person can communicate multiple messages to the community.
- The majority of farmers in the Metu woreda have at least a basic education which facilitates the transfer of improved agricultural practices and appropriate technology.
- Integration is especially beneficial for women because it addresses the interconnected challenges they face in managing a household. For example, it improves maternal and child health through the provision of family planning and clean water, increases household income through off-farm activities and increases opportunities for girls' education by reducing the amount of work in the household.

Challenges

- Despite the active involvement of core stakeholders and local leaders in the PHE integration program, external donors' support to the integrated PHE approach remains sectoral which hampers the pace of the expansion because of resource limitations.
- EWNRA receives frequent requests from local government and neighboring kebeles to expand the PHE program to their areas; however, funds are not available from either the government or EWNRA to fund this expansion.
- EWNRA's PHE integration field experiences and practices have to date not been well documented, which hampers easy information flow among stakeholders.
- People at all levels are just starting to understand the benefits of the PHE approach, so it has not yet been mainstreamed into the policies and practices of the government and other partners.

Interview with Ato Afework Hailu

PHE Spotlight: Would you please introduce yourself (your name, position, family, education)?

Ato Afework Hailu: My name is Afework Hailu Gebrewold and I am the Executive Director of Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resources Association. I am married and a father of a daughter and a son. In 1985, I graduated from Alemaya College of Agriculture, Addis Ababa University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture with a major in Plant Sciences. Then, I studied Natural Resources Management at the University of New England, New South Wales State, in Australia and graduated with a Master of Science degree.



PHE Spotlight: When was EWNRA established and what were its objectives at establishment?

Ato Afework Hailu: EWNRA was established at the end of a three and half year wetland research project that was implemented with a consortium of universities from Ethiopia and abroad with provision of backstopping support by the IUCN Eastern Africa Regional Office. Addis Ababa University and Huddersfield University from the UK were the main institutions executed the research project. The European Union funded the project. When the project ended, we began to look for other opportunities for protecting the wetlands of Ethiopia. Together with dedicated professionals we decided to establish a local NGO that could focus on and advance wetland issues with ten founding members, four of whom were female. EWNRA was formally established in October 2000 and registered as an NGO with the Ministry of Justice. The first activity of the organization was to disseminate the findings of the research project. It was re-registered in 2009 as per the Federal Societies and Charities Proclamation No. 621/2009 (registration number 0198) as an Ethiopian Resident Charity organization.

The prime objective for which EWNRA was established, is to raise awareness

and understanding about wetlands, wetland associated natural resources and other natural resources in the country. But later, as we learned more as an organization and in consultation with communities, we diversified our scope of operation both in coverage and thematic areas of engagement.

PHE Spotlight: Can you tell us briefly about EWNRA?

Ato Afewerk Hailu: EWNRA is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization, without religious or political affiliation, striving to achieve the dual goals of environmental sustainability and development. EWNRA is the first local Ethiopian NGO formed specifically to address wetland issues in the country. Currently, EWNRA is actively operating in three regional states, 7 zones and 10 woredas. In addition to its initial area of operation in the Illu Aba Bora zone in the Oromia regional state, we have extended our projects to the Amhara and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) region. EWNRA's initial programmatic focus was to address wetland problems in an isolated manner and hence all of our work was sectoral in nature. But later, as we learned through successes and failures, we recognized that wetlands are not isolated self-functioning ecological entities, but rather they are part of an integrated functioning ecological system comprising of forests, wildlife, farmlands, soil, people and people's institutions, and socio-economic and cultural factors. So, EWNRA has expanded its wetland conservation and management programs to include more integrated and participatory approaches that link natural resource management with socio-economic development.

PHE Spotlight: What, in your opinion, are EWNRA's major achievements or successes since establishment?

Ato Afewerk Hailu: Over the last decade, EWNRA has implemented more than 20 projects of varying sizes that address local communities' needs, environmental sustainability and that contributed to the nation's development. Through those projects EWNRA has directly benefited more than 154,000 local people and their valuable ecosystems.

EWNRA's results are achieved through our approach which recognizes the role of community participation in decision making and gives emphasis to gender equality and transparency. Some of our main achievements visible on the ground in Metu Woreda, Illu Aba Bora Zone where we implemented the PHE Project include:

- Better understanding of wetland issues in the country has contributed to the Environmental Protection Authority's drafting of a national wetland protection proclamation and its preparations to ratify the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands;

- Degraded wetlands and watersheds/catchments have been rehabilitated and their capacity to provide services has been enhanced through active participation of the local community – in this case the restoration of Wichi Wetland is a perfect example from Metu Woreda, Illu Ababa Bora Zone;
- Farm land productivity is improving with 35% yield increases per unit area from 2007 to 2009 on farm lands that have constructed soil and water conservation structures and are using Vetiver and compost. The improved yield using natural interventions has convinced farmers to use compost rather than relying only on chemical fertilizers.
- Community members who are growing vegetable with support from EWNRA intervention are earning additional income in the range of Birr 2000.00 up to a maximum of Birr 14,000.00 per annum. Five farmers in Adele Bisse kebele reported that with money earned from growing hot peppers from seed provided by EWNRA, they were able to set up a grinding mill;
- Communities are also benefiting from growing fruit and vegetable seedlings and seeds to earn income and improve their nutritional quality. This has improved the income, health and energy of community members for work, particularly the poor and female headed families, which reduced their dependence on forests;
- Fuel wood collection from forests is decreased significantly as it is reported by women community members as a result of introduced fuel saving stoves at a household level. Families who received the stoves report that they now spend part of two or three days a week collecting firewood as opposed to the seven days they spent in fire wood collection before the fire wood saving stoves were introduced. This has reduced the workload on female members of the family, especially school aged girls;
- Community members are increasingly using family planning and have more knowledge about reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, which is improving their lives and at the same time reducing population pressure;
- The use of Vetiver grass for watershed management has made great contributions to soil and water conservation and farmland productivity, and EWNRA's work is used as a model for other NGOs who have scaled up vetiver use across the country;
- EWNRA has demonstrated the links between population growth, the environment, livelihood and community health issues and practical actions that can be taken to address these issues in an integrated manner.

PHE Spotlight: How did EWNRA begin to implement PHE?

Ato Afewerk Hailu: In 2005, we were working in an integrated approach with other sector but FP activity were not notegrated in our activity. In 2009, EWNRA started providing family planning services into ongoing projects through a seed grant from the USAID funded BALANCED (Building Actors and Leaders in Advancing Community Excellence in Development) Project. The BALANCED project helped EWNRA to integrate the provision of community-based family planning methods into its existing activities, create community PHE volunteers, and incorporate PHE experiences into EWNRA's efforts. EWNRA staff including, Ato Shewaye Deribe, EWNRA Programme Officer, Ato Tilahun Semu, EWNRA Ilu Aba Bora Field Office Coordinator and the PHE Officer W/t Cahltu Dereje have played a vital role in the implementation of the PHE approach at the field level. Their strong commitment and devotion have led to the exemplary results the project has brought to Metu.

PHE Spotlight: Do you plan to scale up the PHE approach?

Ato Afewerk Hailu: EWNRA is committed to scale up the PHE approach through all its projects using the promising results obtained in the field. We are trying to expand to the woreda neighboring Metu and to the northern part of Ethiopia. To achieve this, we are establishing multi-stakeholders partnerships. With support obtained from Barr Foundation through the PHE Ethiopia Consortium, EWNRA has started to scale up the PHE approach in the Amhara region.

PHE Spotlight: What are the differences between the PHE development approach and the approach used in other projects you implement?

Ato Afewerk Hailu: The major difference between PHE projects and other projects that are implemented by EWNRA is that the PHE projects include Family Planning components. The majority of projects being implemented by EWNRA focus on environment, livelihood, health issues and family planning education. They lack the provision of family planning methods through community volunteers, which we feel is important to be included in all development projects, and we are working to scale up family planning provision within EWNRA's projects.

PHE Spotlight: Are there any differences you have seen between the PHE integrated approach and the conventional way of working in your sector?

Ato Afewerk Hailu: The integrated approach of PHE is more advantageous for the user community in that it provides them with access to diversified services in an integrated manner. The PHE integrated approach integrates various activities and addresses the challenges communities face in a coordinated manner. With the sectoral approach, you address one issue at a time and it is restricted to either environment or health or population issues. With the PHE approach, you are

able to address the interdependent challenges that the community and households are dealing with and you provide a package of solutions that can address those problems. We see the benefits of the integrated approach in our work.

These activities are integrated at household and micro-watershed levels and improve the health, food security, income and availability of natural resources of the community. When you provide these services in an integrated manner you can observe the impact starting from the household level with regard to family health, nutrition improvement, reduced burden on women and girls, better income, better annual agricultural production, increased water flow and biodiversity in the surrounding areas, willingness of couples to use family planning and hope for further betterment for their family. With conventional approaches, if you just provide family planning services the rest of the problems of the household still remain unsolved. For instance, working only on family planning fails to address food, safe water, fuel and income related issues at the family level. Thus sectoral approaches address just one part of the problem, but other pressing problems such as waterborne health problems and deficiency diseases of children and lack of income puts the family in the agony of poverty and poor health, which further impoverishes them.

PHE Spotlight: Describe your partnership with the Government at all levels?

Ato Afewerk Hailu: EWNRA works in line with government policies and regulations relevant to its programs, be it at the federal, regional, zonal, woreda or kebele level. Our efforts are contributing towards the government's Growth and Transformation Plan targets and the Millennium Development Goals.

At the federal level, the Environmental Protection Authority, Ministry of Water and Energy, Ministry of Agriculture, Wildlife Conservation and Development Authority, Ministry of Justice, Charities and Societies Agency and Ministry of Health are the primary stakeholders for the effective implementation of EWNRA's programs. At the regional level in Oromia, Amhara and SNNPR, EWNRA's major stakeholders are the Bureau of Agricultural Development, Bureau of Water Resources, Bureau of Women's Affairs and Bureau of Health. The Organization's relationship with these bureaus has been cordial and over years has been getting stronger. The Woreda and Kebele Administrations, Woreda Agriculture Development Offices, Woreda Rural Water Supply Offices, Women's Affairs and Health Offices are much closer to EWNRA's work than any other level of government. EWNRA has received generous support from the Metu woreda in recognition of EWNRA's commitment to fully contribute to the development agenda of the country. The first substantial support we received came from the Metu Woreda Agricultural Office, which provided a vehicle they received from another project that ended. The vehicle was used by the EWNRA IlluAba Bora Field Office for a year and half at the time when

EWNRA has no vehicle in the field. The Metu Woreda Agriculture Office also gave EWNRA a 1,000 meter square plot of land on which to build its own office in Metu town. EWNRA received an ownership certificate from Metu Township Municipality and built an office with five rooms, one training hall, a store, small library and a three guest rooms. The woreda also provided chairs to furnish the training hall.

PHE Spotlight: What are your organization’s major challenges in implementing the PHE approach?

Ato Afewerk Hailu: Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resources Association has adopted PHE as a development approach over the last two years and over those years there were challenges that we encountered. One of the challenges is to get resources for the integration of PHE in all our development projects. Most donors are funding sector specific projects and follow their own areas of interest and policy. As long as there is little understanding among the donors community this challenge will continue in the future as well.

PHE Spotlight: Describe your relationship with PHE Ethiopia Consortium?

Ato Afewerk Hailu: Ethio Wetlands and Natural Resources Association has been an active member of the PHE Ethiopia Consortium since its inception. EWNRA and the PHE Ethiopia Consortium are closely working on the implementation of the PHE demonstration project implemented in Metu woreda, Oromia region funded by the BALANCED Project. As the Consortium has a vested interest in promoting PHE projects, it has done a lot to popularize the progress made by the project in Metu. Recently EWNRA started implementing a second PHE demonstration project in Fogera woreda with funding secured from the Barr Foundation that was channelled through the Consortium. We hope that this will lead into a better collaboration to scale up the PHE project in the area. I am the Chair Person for the Consortium’s General Assembly and that by itself tells a lot about how EWNRA and PHE Ethiopia Consortium are linked to each other.

PHE Spotlight: Do you have any suggestions to improve the PHE approach in the future?

Ato Afewerk Hailu: As an approach, it is instrumental to protect the environment and benefit people. It is not and should not be considered as solely focusing on family planning, ecosystem preservation and health issues. There are several other interventions that help the effectiveness of this approach. Some of these are: understanding the value of integrating livelihood issues, the socio economic and cultural dynamics in a given community, and the policy situation. ■

Ethiopia: PHE Sites

