

## Background

The Guraghe Zone exhibits high rates of poverty and severe environmental degradation. The majority of households rely on traditional crop-based subsistence agricultural practices for their livelihoods, and many face food insecurity even during years of above average harvests. Family sizes are large, resulting in high population pressure and unbalanced growth. Locals have customarily viewed large family sizes as important for maintaining a secure livelihood in old age.

Consequently, farm plot sizes have decreased and traditional agricultural practices, such as fallowing, have been abandoned causing land to become severely degraded. In addition, the Zone has one of the highest rates of out-migration in the country with people leaving in search of new economic opportunities.

There are also health challenges in the Guraghe Zone, such as a lack of access to modern contraceptives, unsafe abortion, and sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS, as well as, diarrheal and other problems related to poor sanitation and lack of clean potable water.

Since 2008, the Guraghe People's Self-help Development Organization (GPSDO) has been implementing a PHE project in the Guraghe Zone with the support of David and Lucile Packard Foundation that integrates environmental conservation and livelihoods activities within GPSDO's existing reproductive health and community-based family planning program.

This project connects GPSDO voluntary community health workers with government health and agricultural extension officers to deliver integrated messages and services. The GPSDO community health workers also work with local schools to raise awareness on PHE issues among students, their families, and the broader community using a variety of mechanisms.

GPSDO has also supported the establishment of self-help organizations, including women's groups, youth groups, and farmers' cooperatives, as well as PHE school clubs, to raise awareness of PHE issues and undertake livelihood and conservation activities.

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An evaluation of the GPSDO PHE pilot project conducted in 2012 by PHEEC and Jimma University found that the GPSDO PHE project had resulted in positive changes to family planning behaviors and attitudes, as well as improved coordination between local development actors and the increased use of energy saving stoves when compared to non-project sites in Guraghe zone([http://phe-thiopia.org/pdf/GPSDO\\_Research.pdf](http://phe-thiopia.org/pdf/GPSDO_Research.pdf)).

Based on the findings of the 2012 evaluation, PHEEC is supporting GPSDO to consolidate and sustain these achievements through a one-year project entitled “ Strengthening and Sustaining Self-Help Organizations to Enhance Livelihoods and Population, Health and Environmental Outcomes in the Muhir-Aklil woreda of the Guraghe Zone “ that is funded by the Australian Embassy's Direct Aid Program.

## Project Location

This project is located in in the Muhir-Aklil woreda of the Guraghe Zone, which has a population of 87,756 according to the 2007 census. The Guraghe Zone is located in the northern tip of the Southern Nations and Nationalities People's Region of Ethiopia. It is densely populated with an average of 281 persons per km2 – 50% higher than the national average – with some woredas as high as 441 persons per km2. It is also part of the upper catchment of the Gibe II Hydroelectric Dam.



Image source: Wikipedia

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## Goal

The overall goal of the project is to enhance economic development, livelihood and PHE outcomes for households and communities in the Muhir-Aklil woreda of the Guraghe Zone by strengthening the capacity of community self-help organizations, PHE Schools clubs, and multi-sectoral taskforces.

## Objectives

The specific objectives of the project are:

- To capacitate farmer cooperatives and women's groups to undertake economic development and livelihood improvement activities.
- To support the conservation of the local environment through community-led and school club-led environmental rehabilitation actions.
- To strengthen and sustain the ability of multi-sectoral taskforces to integrate PHE activities and coordinate local actors at both a woreda and zonal level.
- To increase the awareness of PHE issues, including family planning, reproductive health and their linkages with sound environmental management, and the uptake of related services in the target communities.
- To monitor and evaluate the results of project activities.

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## Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the project are:

- Increased number of households whose livelihood has improved in the target woreda.
- Increased area of land under conservation in the target woreda.
- Decreased use of wood as a fuel source
- Increased capacity of the two multi-sectoral PHE taskforces to integrate PHE activities and coordinate local actors at the woreda and zonal level.
- Increased empowerment of women through increased access to financial resources and capacity building in the target woreda.
- Increased awareness of PHE issues in the target woreda.

## Project Beneficiaries

This project aims to strengthen the existing Self help Group, PHE schools clubs and multi sectoral taskforces. Six farmers self help groups with the total of 400 members, three Women Groups with 221 total member and 9 PHE school clubs with total of 236 members. Generally the project will benefit 897 direct beneficiary and 10,000 indirect beneficiaries.

## Outputs of the project

- Six Farmer Cooperatives and 3 Women's Groups provided with training, technical assistance, resources and seed funding to undertake economic development and livelihood improvement activities.
- 16 hectares of land under rehabilitation by community-led environmental rehabilitation activities.
- One woreda level multi-sectoral taskforce provided with training, resources and technical assistance to integrate and coordinate PHE activities in the target woreda.
- One zonal level multi-sectoral taskforce established and provided with training, resources and technical assistance to integrate and coordinate PHE activities at the zonal level.
- Nine PHE School Clubs provided with information, education and communication materials and resources.

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## Strategies and Guiding Principles

To accomplish the above goal and objectives, PHE Ethiopia Consortium will coordinate and facilitate activities in close collaboration with GPSDO and local partners. The project implementation will be based on the following strategies and guiding principles:

- Transparent and participatory approach that benefits the grass root communities
- Joint partnership, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation
- Providing sustained capacity building support for members and partner organizations
- Strengthening partnerships among existing members, consortia, collaborating universities and government offices
- Strengthen the use of Multi-sectoral tools and manuals and M and E system of the Consortium and member organizations so that they can generate data that shows evidence of success and use data for decision making.

## Contact Details

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## Project Brief

**Strengthening and Sustaining Self-Help Organizations to Enhance Livelihoods and Population, Health and Environmental Outcomes in the Muhir-Aklil woreda of the Guraghe Zone.'**

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This project is implemented with financial contribution from Australian Embassy's Direct Aid Program and implemented by Guraghe People Self help Development Organization (GPSDO) and Population, Health & Environment Ethiopia Consortium (PHE EC)

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