



Our Voice

Director's Note

Dear PHE-Ethiopia Consortium Supporters,

Welcome to our first-ever newsletter about integrating population, health and environment (PHE) issues in Ethiopia and around the world! As a consortium which recognizes the interconnectedness between people and their environment, we are pleased to provide you with the latest organizational updates, informational case-studies, and new resources on PHE interventions and programs.

PHE-Ethiopia Consortium has been as busy as ever this year! After our 3rd General Assembly Meeting on February 4/2010, we re-registered with the Charities and Societies Proclamation No 621/2009. On February, 9, 2010, we changed our name from CIPHE to PHE – Ethiopia (Population Health and Environment – Ethiopia) as an Ethiopian Residents and Foreign Charities Consortium with registration number 1496.

From January 28 -30 in Mekelle, Ethiopia, the consortium held a research workshop where 6 universities, 10 development practitioner organizations, and 13 government officials attended to discuss how research institutes can engage themselves in PHE-related demand-driven research. We also held a field visit to the Millennium Village at Koraro to see the integrated approach and to Arbeha We-atsbeha, where the integrated intervention is bringing tangible results within the community's livelihood. It was agreed to have the second meeting at Jima University some time in the coming August 2010.

On March 1, 2010, PHE-Ethiopia Consortium, attended the International Policy Symposium on the Connection between Population Dynamics, Reproductive Health and Rights and Climate Change in London, represented by its Executive Director. I presented on the importance of the Population Health Environment integration approach as an adaptation strategy for Ethiopia and other developing countries, as a follow up to the Copenhagen negotiations (read more on page 2). Also on March 1, 2010, Cassie Gardener came to volunteer with PHE-Ethiopia Consortium, for two months, from the Sierra Club environmental organization in the U.S. During her time with PHE-Ethiopia, she helped to redesign our website, create new materials, and visit the MELCA Mahiber Bale Zone and LEM-Ethiopia Gedeo Zone project sites to produce case study reports (read more on pages 3-4).. We will continue to raise awareness of these critical issues during our Mother Earth Day Celebration to take place on April 22nd, 2010, in partnership with Civil Society Climate Change Network, Forum for Environment, Horn of Africa, Climate Change Forum Ethiopia, Climate and Health Working Group, UNEP, and Ethiopian National Youth Coalition on Climate Change.

Then from March 20th-26th, 18 representatives of PHE-Ethiopia Consortium, partner and member organizations came together at Woliso Negash Lodge for a PHE Policy Communications Workshop, facilitated by the Population Reference Bureau's (PRB) and PHE Ethiopia Consortium, which is sponsored by PRB and USAID Washington. During the workshop, participants gained knowledge and skills about how to communicate their projects to different decision-makers for awareness-raising, funding and policy purposes. Also at Woliso Negash Lodge, a two day journalist workshop was held from March 26-27, 2010 on the concept and essence of the Population Health Environment integration approach, where 25 different governments, regional and private newspapers and radio stations attended. Both workshops at Woliso Negash Lodge included field visits to Oromo Development Association (ODA) PHE site at Wonchi Woreda surrounding Wonchi Crater Lake.

As a consortium, we encourage your contribution to make our website, brochures, and this newsletter more valuable and supportive to your efforts. Please don't hesitate to contact us at phe-ethiopia@gmail.com. Thank you for your work in harmonizing the relationship between people and nature, in Ethiopia and throughout the world. We look forward to collaborating with you!

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In the News >>>>>>>

PHE participated in Copenhagen Climate Negotiations

As a member of the Population Climate Change Alliance (PCCA) that comprises NGOs working on the linkage around the world, PHE-Ethiopia Consortium was actively involved with a number of side events at the recent Copenhagen Climate Summit, to discuss the role of population policies and family planning in the adaptation programmes of countries affected by climate change.

The adverse effects of climate change have already set in, and it is clear that developing countries are particularly affected as population growth exacerbates families' vulnerability. Green house gas emissions are projected to be higher by 2020 than in 1990 leading to temperature rise of almost 4% by 2100, which may have a catastrophic effect including crop failure, sea level rise, malaria, and shortage of water.

Therefore according to recommendations made at the population-climate change side events at Copenhagen, it will be mandatory to proceed with a two track struggle. On the international front, we must enhance negotiators' capacity and update with IPCC's current recommendations. We also must fight for inclusion of soil carbon storage practices, to be considered in REDD and CDM mechanism so that the country would enhance its position of benefiting from carbon trading.

On the local front, including in Ethiopia, we must ensure climate change is mainstreamed into national and local development plans (PASDEP). We must also raise community awareness to mitigate and adapt to impacts of climate change using local knowledge and practices, for example using these strategies:



Negash's presentation at side events in Copenhagen

- Agro-forestry practices (Highland fruits and deep rooted biological conservation methods including Apple Vetiver, Enset, Bamboo), which can be used for adaptation (food and feed and income generation), mitigation (carbon sequestration in the soil) and soil and water conservation
- Improved tillage practices (Conservation Tillage), which reduces exposure of soil to erosion and provide mitigation services
- Community mobilization-organize petition, public speeches and other events, which can put pressure for the attainment of FAB deal in Mexico next year
- Strengthen alliance with regional and international NGO networks.

In total, in all the above activities the Ethiopian civil society network and PHE-Ethiopia Consortium, addressed developing countries values and the negotiation issues basing science. ■

Intl' Policy Symposium: Population Dynamics, Reproductive Health & Rights & Climate Change

Two months after the Copenhagen climate summit, its achievements are being appraised. Whilst the lack of strongly binding agreements and commitments to tackling emissions was disappointing, there was some success in highlighting the links between population and climate change, and bringing the question of population growth onto the agenda.

The Population and Sustainability Network (PSN), British Medical Association, Commat (Commonwealth Medical Trust), and Partners in Population and Development, in collaboration with a number of co-sponsors, including Population Action International organized a

major symposium on March 1, 2010, in London to further explore the links. Speakers and participants came from both the developed world, and from the less developed southern countries which face the biggest and most urgent challenges of climate change. The meeting included a mix of policy-makers, program implementers, and researchers. The participant list included ministers from three African countries (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania), and three from the UK. Having six senior policymakers at the seminar created an extraordinary opportunity to link research and programs with policy options and challenges. It fostered discussions of responsibilities of developed



Practical experience from the Global South panel at International Symposium on Population, Reproductive Health & Climate Change

vs. developing countries, national leadership and responsibility vs. development assistance and evidence based programming vs. challenges of scale up. Materials from the meeting, including presentations, are available on the conference

website:
www.matechangesymposium.org.

For more information about PHE-Ethiopia Consortium's participation in international climate change negotiations, please email pheethiopia@gmail.com. ■

PHE SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE FIELD

by Cassie Gardener

Melca Mahiber's PHE Project in Hore Soba, Dinsho Woreda, Bale Zone

The little-known Bale Mountains in southeast Ethiopia are national and global treasures of biodiversity, teeming with dozens of endemic mammal, bird, and plant species. Ethiopia's most important region for migrating birds, the rivers and streams in the Bale watershed flow to more than 12 million people in southern Ethiopia and western Somalia. Bale Mountains National Park hosts Mountain Nyalas, bushbecks, giant molerats, and half of the world's population of its rarest canid, the Ethiopian wolf, which has dwindled to a mere 250 individuals due to human interaction.

As in many parts of the country, rural communities around the park face grave livelihood and health challenges, and their unsustainable use of land to eke out a living is threatening its conservation efforts. Due to diminishing agricultural land and an average total fertility rate of 6.2 children per mother, people are increasingly forced to cut trees for fuel and timber to feed and house their families. Since 2005, Movement for Ecological and Community Action (MELCA), a member organization of the PHE-Ethiopia Consortium, has been working to protect biodiversity and culture in the Bale region through research, advocacy, and their award-winning youth environmental education program called SEGNI, or "Social Empowerment through Group and Nature Interaction." In March 2008, with funding from Engender Health and the Packard Foundation, MELCA launched an integrated population, health and environment (PHE) project that provides culturally sensitive training at the community, school, and government levels.



Endemic Ethiopian Wolf at Bale Mountain National Park

After just one year, MELCA achieved unprecedented results in increasing awareness and usage of family planning methods, adopting health and sanitation measures, and regenerating forests and land with nurseries and tree-planting, all to improve people's livelihoods. In addition to awareness-raising to more than 10,000 people, they more than doubled family planning users and distributed over 60,000 tree seedlings to the community. Although the project is in an early stage, it appears capable of being scaled up with a little investment through coordinating and additional trainings and capacity-building to the Woreda's HEW and DA staff to be better able to meet community needs and follow-up.

For more information, please contact MELCA at melca@ethionet.et, or view their website at www.melca-ethiopia.org.

Oromia Development Association (ODA)'s PHE Project in Wonchi Woreda, Oromia Zone

Wonchi Woreda is a popular tourist destination a two hours drive from Addis Ababa, renowned for its beautiful Crater Lake and 15th century Monastery. The hilly highland area (3,000 meters above sea level) features natural forests, mineral waters and hot springs, however high population density has led to environmental degradation, threatening the surrounding rural community's health and livelihoods.

PHE-Ethiopia Consortium's member organization, Oromia Development Association (ODA) is a membership-based Ethiopian Resident charity organization, which has worked in the Oromia Region area since January 2005 on education, health, agriculture, and rural potable water supply. The PHE approach fits well with their programs, since they specialize in training youth on income generation, and voluntary community health workers in long-term contraceptive service provision. They help train volunteers to work in close collaboration with Health Extension Workers to deliver information on maternal and child health and HIV/AIDS, which is critical to reach the 280 clients in a hilly landscape. Since January 2005, ODA's efforts have successfully raised the contraceptive prevalence rate from 11% to 40%, and intention to use family planning from 29% to 81%.



Wonchi Crater Lake

In May 2009, ODA began to integrate conservation and livelihood activities with their existing reproductive health efforts, through community education, agro-forestry to decrease the spread of agricultural activity, and afforestation, or planting indigenous seedlings and vetiver grass that have commercial and economical value to the community. They also trained 40 model farmers on apple seedling management, and established an 84-member mostly male youth group of "environmental educators," who also engage in family planning and reproductive health education. Although the project is in its initial stage, community members are very convinced and motivated to utilize the PHE approach in environmental income generating activities. Youth volunteer leaders said "we want to plant 10 million different indigenous trees this winter, to make the area green. We know the link to family planning, because of population pressure on the environment, so we understand that we have to teach the community about reproductive health and HIV/AIDS at the same time."

For more information, please contact ODA at oda-cbrh@ethionet.et, or view their website at www.oda.org.et.

Lem Ethiopia's PHE Project in Wenago Woreda, Gedeo Zone

Gedeo Zone of the Southern Region of Ethiopia is best known for its coffee Arabica, beautiful culture and scenery, and indigenous agroforestry system that maintains the livelihoods of more than 3,000 people per square kilometer in some places. It is the most densely populated rural area in all of Ethiopia, and the second most densely populated rural area in Africa, facing vast poverty, health and population growth challenges. Due to high population pressure (average family size of 8 and rapid population growth of 2.9%), low agricultural productivity due to poor varieties, river and springs pollution due to green coffee husk damping, and low contraceptive prevalence rate of 20%, the historical indigenous Gedeo Agroforestry System and the people's livelihoods that depend on it are under threat.



Children at Wenago Woreda, Gedeo

As a result, more than 800 households now share enhanced knowledge and skills on natural resource management, health and hygiene through the 80 model farmers and extension workers. In addition, experience and knowledge has been shared with more than 150 representatives from 80 national and international institutions, to ensure their support of the project's sustainability. Finally, advocacy efforts have begun to register the Gedeo Agroforestry system as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Lem Ethiopia believes that this indigenous system is contributing as a carbon sink function for climate change mitigation, though more research is needed.

Since 1992, the Environment and Development Society of Ethiopia (LEM Ethiopia) has worked throughout Ethiopia to establish and strengthen environmental education and promote appropriate technologies for improving people's livelihoods. Since 2009, Lem Ethiopia has implemented a population, health and environment (PHE) integrated development project in the most densely populated Woreda of Gedeo Zone Wenago Woreda, scaling up best practices from prior PHE interventions to build on local community knowledge and pay special attention to marginalized groups including women and unemployed youth. Some of their efforts have included training model farmers on organic green coffee pulp compost, training poor women on income generation such as bee-keeping and poultry raising, disseminating fruit tree seedlings, supplying fuel-saving stove models, and working with Health Extension workers to increase the number of family planning users.

For more information, please contact Lem Ethiopia at ledse@ethionet.et, or view their website at <http://www.lemethiopia.org.et>.

New Resources

PHE-Ethiopia Consortium is pleased to announce that as of the National Mother Earth Day, April 22nd 2010, we have new resources available to our partners and member organizations!

- **Updated Website:** PHE-Ethiopia Consortium's website, www.phe-ethiopia.org, was established in February 2009, which includes articles, manuals and policies, and national data related to PHE, as well as links to the websites of government organizations, research centers, and partner/member organizations. With the support of the Global Health Fellows Program, we have revised our website to be more user-friendly and interactive, offering the best available knowledge and practices on PHE programs in Ethiopia and internationally. The intended audience is practitioners, program managers, health, conservation and development professionals, academics, decision-makers, the media, and members of the public who are interested in projects and policies that integrate community development activities with a focus on environment and health interventions.

- **Tri-annual Newsletter:** PHE-Ethiopia Consortium has launched a new tri-annual newsletter about integrating population, health and environment (PHE) issues in Ethiopia and around the world. We will provide the latest organizational updates, informational case-studies, capacity-building tools, and new resources on PHE interventions and programs. Please email pheethiopia@gmail.com if you are interested in submitting articles or stories for our next Newsletter!

- **PHE-Ethiopia Organizational Brochure:** PHE-Ethiopia Consortium's new organizational brochure includes information on the vision, mission, goals, structure, and background of the Consortium. Please email pheethiopia@gmail.com if you are interested in requesting hard-copy brochures for dissemination to your organization, or view our website at www.pheethiopia.org to download a copy.

- **Integrated PHE Development Approach in Ethiopia Brochure:** PHE-Ethiopia Consortium's new brochure on the integrated PHE development approach in Ethiopia includes information on Ethiopia's challenges, examples of added-value PHE interventions, and the most current PHE projects currently implemented by member organizations.

You can download these materials from our website www.phe-ethiopia.org, or if you are interested in requesting hard-copy brochures for dissemination to your organization please contact us via our email phe-ethiopia@gmail.com

www.phe-ethiopia.org