



**AGRICULTURE**

**Seeds of change**

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**I FIRST BECAME** interested in agroforestry as an undergraduate student at Wondo Genet College of Forestry. Agroforestry replenishes the fertility and water-holding capacity of the soil and is all about putting the right tree in the right place for the right purpose. Are we planting the trees for food, water or fuel? Is the focus protecting the soil or capturing carbon dioxide? Are we looking for a positive effect on a particular crop?

When farmers grow ensete, a staple crop in Ethiopia, cordia africana trees are used. They provide shade and increase soil fertility by pumping nutrients from under the ground to the soil's surface. They also provide wood for lumber, furniture and fuel. We mainly source the tree seeds from natural forests,



*Agroforestry is about putting the right tree at the right place for the right purpose*

sacred church forests and trees grown on farmland in Ethiopia. But there are some exceptions — some tree seeds sourced from their country of origin result in better performing trees.

Over the past six years, I have been working with researchers and practitioners on PATSPO (Provision of Adequate Tree Seed Portfolios), a project by ICRAF and the Norwegian Government to transform the availability and accessibility of quality tree seed. The traditional tree seed system in Ethiopia was focused on just a few species and the origin of the tree seed was unknown. We didn't have any information about resilience to unknown environmental changes or adaptability to different areas. Our work is about identifying the necessary tree species, determining where seeds can be sourced, collecting high-quality seeds and then making sufficient quantities accessible to tree growers.

Over the last decade, awareness of the importance of tree-planting and greening activities has increased in Ethiopia. The government and the people have recognised the connection between trees, food security and protecting the environment.

**BREAKING GROUND**

*Three pioneering agricultural projects in Ethiopia*



**Nuru Ethiopia**  
Arba Minch

Nuru Ethiopia supports vulnerable inhabitants of rural areas through farmer-led enterprises. The goal is to get thousands of families out of extreme poverty by 2030 by moving from subsistence to a farmer-owned and farmer-led cooperative agribusinesses. [nuruinternational.org](http://nuruinternational.org)



**Ripple Effect Ethiopia**  
Addis Ababa

With more than three decades' experience in transforming the lives of hundreds of thousands of rural families, Ripple Effect provides training in agroecological climate-friendly farming methods to create greater food security and improve income. [rippleeffect.org](http://rippleeffect.org)



**World Food Programme**  
Northern Ethiopia

This initiative supports families by helping them to manage risks to harvests. The support involves weather insurance for their crops, access to credit, help saving money and environmental rehabilitation projects. WFP also provides school meals and support smallholder farmers in adapting to a changing climate. [wfp.org](http://wfp.org)