Project visit July 2023

Return to Tigray, to friends, hope, desperation - and stunning views, after 1 year of COVID and 2 years of war and blockage.
Gulemakeda, Tigray
Most plantations, here Rib Medebay valley, are growing well.
Along the road to Fasi town, this forest was cleared for military camp.
Around the camp some trees were cut, but they re-grow with the rainy season starting.
Gulemakeda, Tigray
Discussion at Mezabir nursery about the requirements to re-start the activities.
Shelter construction for fruit tree seedlings after having been destroyed.
Strong growing trees on the Debre Damo mountain. Some were damaged while people and animals were hiding in the forest.
Our focal person Mr. Bahlbi points to the area near the river where fruit trees grow thanks to strong forests on Debre Damo mountain.
2-year-old fruit trees in front, 5-year-old ones on the left, and in the back how the riverbed looked before. Forests provide vitamins!
Delicious, nutritious, vitamin-rich mango growing on a 4-year-old tree.
Harvest of ‘our’ Mango, the farmers hope to transport them to Mekelle, the only town with some jobs, visitors and active markets.
The good news: our team is safe! The mother trees and bananas survived.
The big mother trees are full of fruits and in good condition for providing grafting sticks.
The not so good news: significant destruction, all material stolen.
The free area in the fruit tree orchard is used by the team to grow maize for food security.
Adwa, Tigray

Bete Yohannes diversion
Bete Yohannes river diversion is in use.
Enough water in the channel and in the river.
Irrigation group member explains the use of channels and irrigation during 2 occupations.
Adwa, Tigray
Very nice forests on formerly bare mountains between Gendehta and Mariam Shewito.
This forest behind this farmhouse changes everything for the family: water nearby, more crop from the field, vegetables, bees, ...
Laileymaichow, Tigray

Dura nursery
Nature has taken over, thanks to continues guarding by foreman (above: 2019).
Buildings are in place, but all material stolen or damaged.
This 2-year-old acacia abyssinica shall remain as a symbol for new beginnings!
Laileymaichow, Tigray
Riverbed: reclaimed, reduced runoff (erosion stopped), increased water table
Gully: no more erosion, no more loss of fertile land (above: 2019)
Agroforestry: productive fields, no more conflicts for who causes erosion.
Forest: rocky area reclaimed, protects the river, supports water tables and irrigation.
Laileymaichow, Tigray

Maykera nursery
Destroyed because of snipers in the area prevented people to guard.
Snipers lead to animal entering the nursery area, eat any new plants as well as the fence.
2-year-old plantation destroyed because of snipers in the area: animals can enter, humans cannot (so no guarding).
Back side of the 2-year-old plantation: outside of the reach of snipers some survival.
Big potential for irrigation, here the example of existing fruit tree tree irrigation.
Impressions after 2 years of war and blockage in Tigray
Results of the war

Destroyed military vehicles

Destroyed health center

Defense position roadblocks (to be removed from these inter-region roads by the federal government - who built it in the first place)
Result of the war: Gulemakeda government

Shot at by tank and everything stolen.
IDP (internally displaced people) camp near Bete Yohannes.
First time to drive the car in in 1.5 years: the tires have become weak. No new tires available, had to be brought from Mekele.
Windshield wiper doesn’t work because there are no spare parts available.
Lunch in Debre Damo: local bread and honey – no other food available in rural areas.

Result of the war and blockage
Federal government still does not maintain roads, children fill the holes with mud.
Result of the war and 2 times occupation

He lost all sheep, goat, cows, oxen, chicken, and donkey except one. Beehives destroyed.
Irrigation was possible, but without any inputs, and soldiers took half of the harvest.

Result of the war and 2 times occupation
The situation in Tigray in a nutshell

- Construction suspended
- Shops are closed
- Young adults killing time with pool soccer (before children only)
- Cleaning motorcycles as the only income
- Homeless

Insufficient food, no jobs, no business, but people are eager to work hard.
«During the war, I protected my trees. And with your help, I hope to plant more!»

«Thank you for changing the Debre Damo mountain to forest, and for fruit trees.»