# REGREENING AFRICA NEWSLETTER

## JUNE-NOVEMBER 2022

Official Newsletter of the Regreening Africa Project

**Regreening Africa**

Funded by European Union · CIFOR · World Agroforestry · World Vision · CRS CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES · care · Oxfam International · SAHEL ECO

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# INTRODUCTION

Regreening Africa is an ambitious five-and-a-half-year programme (2017-2023) that aims to directly reverse land degradation in eight sub-Saharan African countries by integrating trees into agricultural systems, while simultaneously improving the livelihoods, food security, and climate change resilience of smallholder farmers. In Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, and Somalia, the programme aims to encourage regreening among 500,000 households on one million hectares of land, thereby catalysing a much larger effort to regreen tens of millions of hectares of degraded land across the continent. World Vision, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), CARE, Oxfam, and Sahel Eco are members of the non-governmental organisation consortium led by World Agroforestry (ICRAF). This issue of the newsletter aims to showcase some of the highlights from the Regreening Africa Programme.

Five and a half years into the project, it is time to celebrate the accomplishments, reflect on the lessons learnt, and look ahead to the next phase of restoring African landscapes. The project's reflection got off to a great start with the Rwanda workshop from 29th November to 3rd December, where key stakeholders and implementers gathered to discuss restoration practises and compare restoration efforts. Regreening Africa demonstrated at the Global Landscape Forum (GLF) climate conference and the European Development Days that large-scale land restoration in sub-Saharan Africa is possible. It was also an opportunity to consolidate the Kenya restoration movement and solicit agreement and commitments from restoration actors at the Kenya National Scaling Conference 2022.

The inclusive and evidence-based approaches to scaling land restoration engagement workshops, held at national level in seven countries, brought together restoration stakeholders and partners, ranging from government officials to community farmers, to showcase the program's achievements, evidence, and ongoing efforts. In addition, the project released a series of "Insights Briefs." The briefs examine topics such as growing movements in the context of landscape restoration, gender, youth, and faith inclusion, the crucial role of pastoralism in reforesting Africa as well as leveraging novel partnership. Through the cross-country thematic learning series, peer learnings provided an invaluable opportunity to question and learn from one another's evidence and experiences. The Regreening Africa app was included in the "Designing Peace" exhibition at the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum in New York City for its contribution to land restoration and therefore peace.

Join us as we share  the lessons we have learnt, the achievements, the opportunities that we can tap into, and the next steps for promoting land restoration in Africa.

The Regreening Africa Programme team in Rwanda for the close out workshop. Photo: Regreening Africa/Marion Aluoch

# Regreening Africa close out meeting: Perspectives from the field

After a phenomenally successful five-year run, the key stakeholders and implementers of the Regreening Africa programme gathered in Rwanda for the project's reflection and way forward. The five-day Regreening Africa end of project workshop ran from 29th November to 3rd December 2022. The first two days of the workshop were devoted to visiting farming communities to discuss restoration practices and implementation and to provide implementing organisations with opportunities to compare restoration efforts.

The first field visit was to Gahurura cell in the Rukomo Sector of Nyagatare District. The purpose of the visit was to observe how the farmers had incorporated trees into their crop production. The tree nurseries in the region were set up and run by cooperatives. This was a requirement by World Vision to ensure high seed production and quality seedling.

Annually, the cooperatives produce up to 70,000 seedlings, with *Grevillea robusta* being the most popular tree species in the region due to its tolerance and resistance to termites. Grevillea robusta was planted along farm boundaries for demarcation, as a windbreak, and to prevent soil erosion. The leaves of the trees when they fall to the ground, were used as fertiliser, while the tree's dry branches are used by households as firewood.

Increased maize yields represented an immediate benefit of the agroforestry efforts. As the Nyagatare District is situated in a predominantly hilly region of Rwanda, it frequently experiences strong winds. These strong winds would initially breakdown the maize stalks. Since the trees began acting as wind breaks, this has ceased, resulting in increased maize yields. Both the collection and sale of firewood from Grevillea branches and the sale of fruits have substantially increased household income.

Local and national government policies regarding land use and livestock management were extremely beneficial to the programme. Important among these policies was the 50/50 ownership of land between spouses in a household. This allowed women to actively participate in the management and restoration of their land. Similarly, government mandated cattle enclosures and zero grazing prevented animal intrusion on farms and made manure collection easier.

In terms of seedling variety and quality, the region still lagged behind. The nurseries had very minimal fruit trees. Securing high-quality seeds of indigenous and exotic trees locally was a difficult task. At the time of the visit, through capacity building, the farmers had mastered seedling production through nurseries and grafting as well as crop management techniques. It was determined that moving forward, there was a need to increase sensitisation in order to include farmers from other regions.



*Lead farmers in Rwanda display their products at the Rural Resource Centre in Nyagashanga Cell. Photo: Regreening Africa/Patrick Worms*

The engagement of farmers was also a successful strategy used. The farmers were motivated to participate through dialogue and adequate training, not coercion. This method of engagement and training allowed the farmers to take up the restoration practices. The farmers taking ownership of the project was also a crucial final step in ensuring the project's sustainability after the close of the project.

The second field visit was to Nyagashanga Cell, Karangazi Sector in Nyagatare District. This was a Rural Resource Centre (RRC) built on land donated by the Rwandan government and managed by the cooperatives. The government also provided a subsidy covering 50% of construction costs while the cooperative and the project contributed the remaining 50%. The RRC was established to empower farmers on water harvesting, tree planting and cultivation, beekeeping and the sale of tree seedlings.

Regreening Africa supported in the construction and establishment of the RRC. This was accomplished by utilising existing social capital to expand the project's reach. World Vision Rwanda had previously carried out a programme in the region, allowing Regreening Africa to build upon those networks. In addition, the project made us of locally sourced construction materials (bricks, briquettes) which fostered community buy-in of the project.



*Interactions between the community, farmers, and Regreening Africa team at the rural resource centre. Photo: Regreening Africa/Marion Aluoch*

World Vision Rwanda and Regreening Africa, fully appreciating the importance of stakeholder engagement, immediately engaged and involved the local leadership in the project.

The project has not been without challenges. Acquisition of indigenous seedlings and maintenance of high seed quality proved challenging. The rural community's reliance on firewood as its primary fuel source also proved problematic. World Vision Rwanda has been distributing energy-efficient cooking stoves that use less firewood as an incentive to encourage tree planting.

Regreening Africa is finalising its first phase, but the interventions will still continue. To sustain the project at its present standards, the cooperatives intends to reach out to more members who are not yet involved in restoration. Similarly, World Vision Rwanda always lets the administrations at the local level to lead on the project implementation to ensure project continuity. World Vision Rwanda also collaborates closely with cooperatives to provide internships at the Rural Resource Centre.

*A cross-country dialogue panel of country implementing partners discussing the practises that have worked, where they have worked, and lessons learnt. Photo: Regreening Africa/Marion Aluoch*

# Reflections from an ambitious land restoration programme in sub-Saharan Africa

*"This project started with the belief, commitment and simple vision that we need trees on farms." Benard Crabbe – EU,DG INTPA*

The Regreening Africa Programme gathered with all partners in Rwanda from the 29th of November to the 3rd of December 2022 for the project close out workshop, which highlighted achievements, lessons learnt, and opportunities for future collaboration within and across countries as well as with the Great Green Wall Initiative.

In her reflections, Pauline Okumu, the National Director of World Vision Rwanda observed that land restoration was key to food security, nutrition and economic development. She also committed World Vision Rwanda to scaling the practices implemented under the Regreening Africa Programme. She also stated that the programme was unique as it prompted them to do things differently, as there are no one-size-fits-all solutions to the challenges of land degradation.

Athanase Mukuralinda, the CIFOR-ICRAF country representative for Rwanda, emphasised the significance of evaluating the economic cost of land degradation and demonstrating the economic benefit of land restoration to policymakers. This was especially crucial in Rwanda, where the government took a keen interest in ongoing restoration projects. The Rwandan government entered into performance contracts with small holder farmers to support them (in kind/cash), and in exchange, the farmers were required to demonstrate economic progress during the period of restoration. The economic progress over time was accomplished through the development of value chains.

Pascal Zahonero, the European Union Delegate to Rwanda, noted that there was still work to be done in order to achieve standard quality and sustainable development, such as the enhancement of biodiversity and the incorporation of economic development into land restoration. "Some of the objectives were achieved but more needs to be done to fully achieve others." This means that we need to continue to work on a variety of other projects to ensure that these objectives are met." Additionally, he stated that Rwanda requires all projects to demonstrate how the invested funds will contribute to economic growth.

Bernard Crabbe, from the the head of the Environment Mainstreaming and Circular Economy Sector at the DG INTPA European Commission, explained that the project began with "the belief, commitment, and a simple vision that we need trees on farms." The most rewarding aspect of this journey has been meeting and working with diverse individuals who share this vision, despite the implementation challenges. In addition, he stated that the success of the programme is a result of strong partnerships and efficient coordination, which led to measurable outcomes achieved by various partners working with communities and farmers.

Ravi Prabhu, the Director Innovation, Investment & Impact at CIFOR-ICRAF stated in a video recording that the programme was extremely ambitious, but has produced astounding results. These results were achieved through a willingness to learn and explore, as well as by forming strong partnerships.



*Bernard Crabbe, the head of the Environment Mainstreaming and Circular Economy Sector at the European Commission, sharing his insights on the project. Photo: Regreening Africa/Marion Aluoch*



*World Vision Senegal Zone Manager Marie-Louise elaborating a point during the evidence wall session. Photo: Regreening Africa/Marion Aluoch*

The informative session with Regreening Africa partners focused on key project elements and insights and enabled implementing organisations to share their experiences through an interactive and engaging process and jointly reflect on the methods used to achieve impact, the key interventions that led to impact, opportunities, lessons learned, and next steps.

Cross-country practise dialogue panel of country implementing partners discussed the practises that have worked, where they have worked, and what has been attempted and learnt. Niger has worked with women's groups to empower them economically by establishing small businesses, as well as assisting them in marketing their products at the local agricultural fair, where they receive feedback on how to improve them.

In Ethiopia, exclosures are the primary method for restoring degraded hillsides and rangelands. In the enclosures, FMNR, Assisted Natural Regeneration, and tree planting are also practised. The issue of conflict between herders and farmers was resolved in World Vision Senegal by bringing all parties involved together and collaborating with them to map out agreed pastoral routes. This has increased the effectiveness of law enforcement, resulting in fewer resource conflicts.

In Mali, the scaling strategy entailed collaborating with women who had received training in agroforestry entrepreneurship. Men now embrace agroforestry after observing the success of women's work in the field. Sensitizing Puntland's population to the importance of land restoration aided in reducing land degradation. As a result, the communities encouraged their fellow pastoralists to settle in the hills and leave the rangelands for restoration.

World Vision Ghana used the lead farmer strategy to ensure the project's sustainability. The strategy consists of an equal number of male and female farmers, as well as a local leader chosen as a lead farmer to ensure that they have a reputable individual to enforce by-laws.

It was also an epic moment when we honoured our implementing partners for their exemplary work and milestones as they scaled landscape restoration across their respective countries in Senegal, Kenya, Ghana, Mali, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Niger, Puntland, and Somaliland.



*Souleymane Doumbia, project manager for Regreening Africa in Mali, presents during the evidence wall session. Photo: Regreening Africa/Marion Aluoch*

Regreening Africa's impact on the ground will be the most lasting legacy it has built over the last five years. The primary determinant for success throughout the programme was the inclusion of diverse stakeholders. Early and comprehensive stakeholder engagements stimulated community ownership of the project. The programme also leveraged on technology to assess the impact of its interventions and the scalability of the project. The development of the [Regreening Africa app](#) represented the project's greatest technological achievement. Farmers now have the ability to monitor, report, and evaluate restoration project progress thanks to the app.

To sum up all the achievements, Dennis Garrity, board of chair at the Global EverGreening Alliance reminded us that "this is just the end of a beginning. There will be more restoration engagement in the future," and one thing is certain: "we have proven that large-scale restoration is possible and effective."



*The Regreening Africa team, with partners at the close out workshop in Rwanda. Photo: Regreening Africa/Marion Aluoch*

# What they said:

"
I hope the Regreening Africa program is the end of a beginning and not the end of the story. There is a significant need to work on large-scale land restoration for livelihoods, job creation, climate change resilience and biodiversity.

**Bernard Crabbé, European Commission**
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"
We need to continue building our scaling efforts on generating evidence of the impact of land restoration on people's livelihoods, especially in terms of productivity, income, resilience to climate change as well as food and nutrition security.

**Olaf Westermann, Catholic Relief Services**
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"
Regreening practices go beyond tree planting and green vegetation. Soil health also plays an integral part in restoration.

**Edward Akunyagra, World Vision Ghana**
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"
It is rewarding to see the good use of land and practices adopted. With the current knowledge, expansion is inevitable and possible to neighbouring areas.

**Mieke Bourne, Regreening Africa**
"

"
Good leadership and government commitment and support are key for success in restoration as well as development.

**Malefia Tadele, CRS Ethiopia**
"

"
The more partnership, the more impact we make…NGOs have a wider footprint and when we bring in partners like scientists, we deepen the impact.

**Davis Wamawungo, World Vision Australia**
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"
Sustainable regreening of degraded landscapes is possible if the right partner are identified, capacity built and supported.

**Brian Wambua, World Vision Kenya**
"

# Land Restoration in Africa delivers for people and climate

Over the course of five years, the Regreening Africa project has demonstrated that restoring degraded land contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity enhancement, and equitable improvement of local communities' livelihoods.

This was clearly demonstrated at the Global Landscape Forum (GLF) Climate hybrid side event on November 11, 2022, as part of the COP 27 programme in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. The session attended by 1,983 people across the globe including Germany and India, explored how land restoration delivers for people and climate.



*Regreening Africa programme manager Mieke Bourne highlights the programme's success.*

Regreening Africa showed how large-scale land restoration in sub-Saharan Africa is possible. Mieke Bourne, the programme manager, demonstrated the significance of land restoration for climate change adaptation and mitigation in Africa and outlined the five essential elements that have contributed to the success of the programme.

"Through our various restoration interventions, we have identified five key ingredients for success: matching practises to current and future contexts; working through local structures and processes; addressing restoration drivers and incentives; integrating science and evidence to magnify impact; and strengthening partnerships and inclusion," she said.

She also stated that these must be integrated in order to scale up and further improve restoration efforts, as there is a lot of focus on restoration.

Integrating science, research, evidence, and monitoring in the global and local restoration agendas speeds up the impact on the ground. Tor Vågen, Head of Spatial Data Science and Applied Learning Lab (SPACIAL), demonstrated how research can provide robust, yet simple monitoring tools and techniques as key indicators of soil and land health and livelihood to track implementation on the ground.

"The citizen science of things is where the Regreening Africa app comes in. There's a strong community engagement component where that is concerned, and we use the app to crowdsource information and scale data collection."
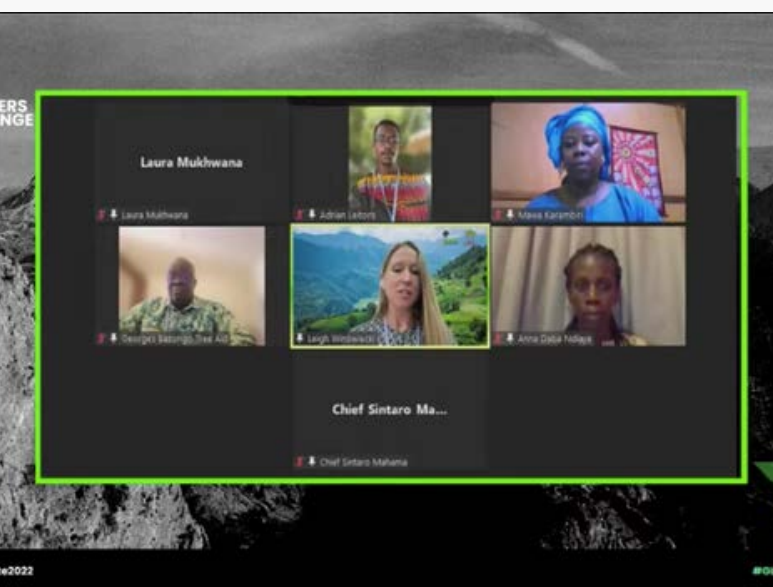
The Land Degradation Surveillance Framework collects information on land health indicators and provides a framework for predictive modelling for mapping and systematic sampling," said Tor.

A panel discussion comprised of researchers, implementors, youth, policymakers, and donors put the discussion into context. It was evident that integrating research into development is essential to ensure that data is meaningful, timely, and effectively communicated so that interventions can be tailored to meet the needs of farmers.

"Research is driven by demand, and emphasis should be placed on how we communicate these findings," said Dr. Leigh Winowieck, Global Reserach Leader, Soil and Land Health.

According to Adrian Leitoro, a restoration steward and co-founder of Nature and People as One (NaPo), engaging the youth in restoration is important as "we depend on the ecosystem for all the resources we get. The restoration agenda must be prioritised so that our future is not jeopardised."

Value chains that improve livelihoods equitably are an important motivator for landscape restoration.

Tree Aid's approach as discussed by Georges Bazongo, Director of Programmes, has been a business-focused approach in which they engage communities in the production, processing, and marketing of products for sustainable livelihood.

According to Mawa Karambiri, policy and technical engagement specialist at CIFOR-ICRAF, enabling policy is a significant incentive for land restoration, particularly in terms of tenure and land rights. In Niger, for example, the assisted natural regeneration presidential decree has given farmers access to the restored ecosystem while also providing legal instruments for land security.

The role of traditional authorities and local governance is pivotal as chiefs are custodians of the land within the communities, hence they ensure natural resources are well managed.

"Chiefs are the custodians of land within communities, and any implementation that impacts the land requires their approval and participation, as they understand the dynamics involved in managing the land." Chief Sintaro of  Sakoya traditional area of Mion District in Ghana, explains.

According to Bernard Crabbe, Head of the Environment Mainstreaming and circular economy sector at the European Commission, the lessons highlighted by Regreening Africa are an opportunity to scale them to other initiatives.

"Taking care of land is key to navigating the challenges we are facing today. Regreening Africa offers a number of key ingredients for success to achieve the great vision of the Great Green Wall and the AFR100," he said.

# The Kenya National Scaling Conference 2022: Consolidating a restoration movement

The resounding message of the Kenya National Scaling Conference 2022 was to consolidate the Kenya restoration movement. The conference highlighted the restoration movement created in Kenya, assessed the progress made towards achieving the agreed-upon action plans from the 2021 conference, and solicited agreements and commitments from actors in the restoration space. This was a follow-up to the 2021 scaling conference, which successfully catalysed landscape restoration action and supported a national restoration movement.

The two-day conference, held on November 24 and 25, 2022, focused on Landscape Restoration (FLR) Integration at the County Level and the Restoration Movement's Next Steps. The first day of the conference focused on Kenyan government initiatives to integrate FLR at the county level, particularly the National Campaign for Achieving and Maintaining Over 30% Tree Cover by 2032 - a Special Presidential Program presented by Mr Alfred Gichu (Head, Directorate of Forest Conservation; National REDD+ Coordinator and Focal Point, Ministry of Environment and Forestry) and the Forest and Landscape Restoration Implementation Plan (FOLAREP).

Several examples of how various countries are integrating FLR were also presented. Mr. Brian Muthoka, Senior Programme Officer, Water, Forestry and Natural Resource Management Committee, moderated the panel discussion that featured various county directors who discussed landscape restoration ambitions, integration in County Integrated Development Plan (CIDPs), and the challenges and opportunities for further scaling and impact.

The second day of the conference focused on the Kenyan restoration movement's commitments, opportunities, and contributions. Action groups that are at the core of the restoration movement, as well as other organisations, demonstrated their commitments and future plans for the group. It was also an opportunity for the Regreening Africa Programme and the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR 100) to share lessons learned and opportunities for the future.

A panel discussion with representatives from various restoration organisations reflected on the available opportunities to advance the restoration movement. The conference was then brought to a close by Dr. Christopher Wanga, on behalf of the Principal Secretary, State Department of Livestock, Hon. Harry Kimutai, who urged participants to recognise the significant restoration opportunities offered by agricultural landscapes or croplands and rangelands in order to meet Kenya's restoration targets.

In the run-up to the main conference, a series of four pre-conference thematic webinars were also held to provide a space for further discussion of the themes and to build momentum for the conference. The Finance Options for Restoration webinar showcased and explored various financing options available to youth, women, and faith actors to support their restoration initiatives. The webinar on accelerating restoration action through youth and women highlighted lessons learned from the participation of youth, children, and women. This included showcasing models or approaches for involving youth, children, and women in restoration efforts. The Power of Faith-Based Approaches to Landscape Restoration in Kenya provided a platform for several faith actors to showcase their restoration initiatives, motivation to participate in restoration, challenges encountered, lessons learned, opportunities, and needed support. The pre-conference webinar on restoring Kenya's rangeland: the way forward presented the results of a discussion on key issues and challenges identified to influence rangeland restoration and conservation in Kenya.

*Participants at the inclusive and evidence based approaches engagement workshop in Rwanda. Photo: Regreening Africa/Kelvin Trautman*

# Inclusive and evidence-based approaches to scaling land restoration engagement workshops

A wide range of restoration stakeholders and partners, ranging from Government officials to community farmers, were brought together to showcase evidence, achievements, and ongoing efforts of the Regreening Africa program. The national stakeholder workshop, themed "Inclusive and Evidence-Based Approaches to Accelerating Land Restoration, hosted by the Regreening Africa project in the eight implementing countries provided a platform to plan for the future programming of the project to ensure that restoration efforts are not only sustained, but scaled up in the coming decade.

The workshops aimed:
- To showcase the evidence and achievements of the European Union (EU) funded Regreening Africa Project in the implementing countries.
- To consider the current state of science, practice and policy for land restoration that can be coalesced to accelerate land restoration.
- To identify existing and future programmes, strategies, policies and resources that can be taken forward to sustain and expand restoration efforts to contribute to and meet local, national and international commitments to sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem restoration.
- To explore future European Union (EU) programming at the regional and national level, including the Great Green Wall initiative, and the Global EverGreening Alliance's Restore program, among others.

Senegal reflected on its great achievements in restoring degraded landscapes over the past five years, with a focus on Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR), tree planting, nursery establishment, policy engagement, youth and gender inclusion, and community awareness, and reaffirmed its commitment to land restoration and achieving the vision of a prosperous Senegal.

In Rwanda, stakeholders developed a land restoration action plan that will successfully contribute to local, national, and international commitments to sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem restoration. Ethiopia was in a celebratory mood as they highlighted two significant successful implementation approaches. This includes FMNR, a highly effective and well-scaled regreening strategy at the farmer level, and exclosures, which resulted in improved vegetation cover, increased species diversity, job creation for women and youth, and benefits to farmers through the sale of grass, honey production, and access to fodder. In addition, They strategized future opportunities to sustain and enhance the project success in the country.

Building on the successful restoration experience of the project, Ghana is catalysing change to scale landscape restoration across the region through the Northern Ghana Landscape Restoration Initiative. In Niger, it was time to assess and analyse the project's five years of implementation, as well as to reflect on the opportunities for restoration.  In Kenya, it was a vision for scaling land restoration into a restoration movement, whereas in Mali, it was an assessment of significant accomplishments along value chains.

These engagements were co-designed by the SHARED (Stakeholder Approach to Risk Informed and Evidence-based Decision-making) component, which brings together a wide range of stakeholders and partners across local and regional levels to review and discuss the implications of the evidence and experience acquired over the five years of the Regreening Africa project.



*A participant making a presentation during the engagement workshop in Niger.*
*Photo: Regreening Africa/Koffi Gilberte*



*A presentation on the evidence wall at the Ethiopia engagement workshop.*
*Photo: ILRI/Apollo Habtamu*

# Regreening Africa's Insight series offers valuable analysis on land restoration in 8 sub-Saharan African countries

Over the last five years, the Regreening Africa Programme has used contextual land and soil restoration techniques to foster restoration in eight Sub-Saharan African countries. What is the ultimate goal? to reverse land degradation among 500,000 households, and across 1 million hectares in eight countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. By incorporating trees into croplands, communal lands and pastoral areas, regreening efforts make it possible to reclaim Africa's degraded landscapes.

As a large-scale, multi-country, multi-stakeholder restoration initiative, Regreening Africa provides a opportunity to develop actionable lessons on local, national, and global restoration initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa. Based on these insights, Regreening Africa has published a series of Insights Briefs emphasising the importance of partnerships and inclusivity in restoration efforts. These briefs are based on insights and emerging issues observed in Kenya, Senegal, Rwanda, Ghana, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, and Somalia over the past five years, as well as lessons learned from its cross-country webinars.

The briefs look at topics like youth agency in regreening Africa, gender inclusion in land restoration, engaging faith-based organisations in land restoration, building a restoration movement, leveraging partnerships, and the essential role of pastoralism in regreening Africa.

The project's insight reports undeniably demonstrate the power of working collaboratively to achieve land restoration objectives.



*Staff and community members in Rwanda evaluating a map.*
*Photo: Regreening Africa/Kelvin Trautman*

# Landscape restoration by Regreening Africa: 5 critical lessons from a massive research in development effort

In September 2022, the Regreening Africa team and their community of stakeholders - donors, implementation partners, government representatives, associate researchers, farmers, business owners, and influencers - gathered virtually for a roundtable titled "unlocking large-scale land restoration practises, approaches, and benefits in Sub-Saharan Africa" to reflect on the lessons and insights learnt over the past five years. Three themes guided the discussions: Scaling out context-based practices, the Regreening Africa science-practice-policy partnership, and Economic and policy incentives.

So, what have we learnt?

Large scale restoration is possible with strong partnerships when governments and other stakeholders are aligned behind a common restoration vision. Take the Ethiopian effort, in which a team led by Catholic Relief Services and World Vision is restoring 110,000 hectares with the help of communities, local experts, and the government. This has already resulted in increased vegetation cover and biodiversity across tens of thousands of hectares. While each of the eight Regreening Africa countries is unique, most exhibit a similar hopeful dynamic.



*Mrs. Shewaye from Ethiopia has a fruit garden in her homestead as source of income and diversified household diet. Photo: CRS Ethiopia*



*A lead farmer in Ghana demonstrating how FMNR is carried out. Photo: Regreening Africa/Kelvin Trautman*

*A farmer in Mali watering tree seedlings at a nursery. Photo: Oxfam Mali*

Matching practices and approaches to local context and working through local structures and processes. Regreening practises must be tailored to specific local contexts and implementation must be integrated into local processes and structures. In Senegal, for example, World Vision is relying heavily on government support while leveraging agroforestry practises such as Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) to restore 160 000 hectares.

Integrating science, research, evidence, and monitoring to the global and local restoration agenda accelerates impact on the ground. Regreening Africa utilises assisted citizen science using the Regreening app and combined it with the Land Degradation Surveillance Framework (LDSF), a suite of scientific tools that provides unparalleled insights into the continent's soil and land health status, to monitor development and impacts in near real-time, thereby tracking interventions and their impact.

Value chains with equitable economic benefits and policies that support an enabling environment are critical incentives. Value chains that provide equal economic rewards, as well as regulations that foster an enabling environment, are essential incentives. Farmers, pastoralists, and communities will invest considerable resources such as labour and finance in land restoration initiatives if they view the benefits outweighing the costs. That means more agricultural output and more tree products to sell, and it all hinges on the knowledge that these trees are theirs to use. Economic benefits and land and tree use rights are the most popular incentives deployed by Regreening Africa.

# Cross country thematic learning series

As part of the SHARED (Stakeholder Approach to Risk Informed and Evidence-based Decision-making) cross country thematic learning series, Regreening Africa held a series of these events based on country priority topics. The virtual learnings are as result of a survey that was conducted in August 2021 to help identify key cross-country learning topics emerging from the 2021 Joint Reflective and Learning Mission (JRLM) discussions. Multiple themes that are most interesting and critical to Regreening Africa's work, areas for further learning and sharing were requested and prioritized as outlined below:

- Empowering and mainstreaming youth in land restoration.
- Gender Transformative Approaches: Empowering and mainstreaming women in land restoration.
- Enhancing and Expanding Tree-based Value Chains to Incentivize Land Restoration.
- Faith Based Approaches to Land Restoration.
- Grazing Approaches for Land Restoration and Revenue.

The cross-country learning events are designed for Regreening Africa colleagues to learn from each other and guest speakers on priority topics. The purpose was to share experiences, successes and lessons that can inform future efforts.



*Farmers in Ghana using the Regreening Africa app.*
*Photo: Regreening Africa/Kelvin Trautman*

*From Left to Right: Patrick Worms, Mieke Bourne, Bernard Crabbe and Birguy Lamizana at the European Development Days. Photo: EDD 2022*
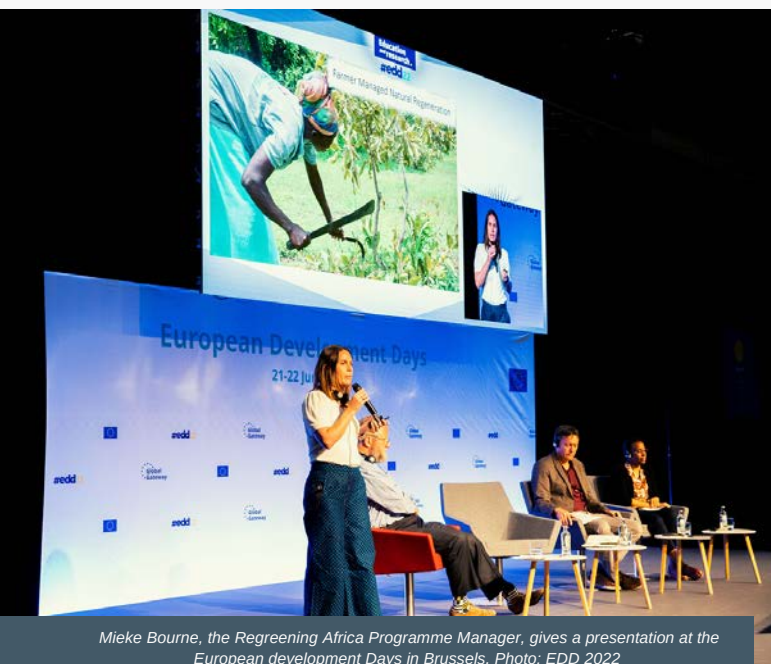
# Regreening Africa and the Great Green Wall's contribution at the European Development Days (EDD) 2022

The 15th edition of European Development Days, which took place on June 21-22 under the theme "Global Gateway: building sustainable partnerships for a connected world", highlighted progress made in combating climate change. The Regreening Africa Programme was privileged to offer evidence and lessons from the land restoration partnership to support the Great Green Wall (GGW).

The session highlighted Regreening Africa's unique partnership approach and integration of research, practise, and policy to support land restoration. This innovative setting has proven effective combating land degradation, bolstering climate change resilience and agroforestry value chains, and addressing poverty and food insecurity in the Sahel. It promotes cooperation and cross-sectoral action, delivering integrated and digital solutions to some of the region's most pressing problems.

According to Mieke Bourne, the Regreening Africa Programme Manager, regreening methods are crucial to the success of adopting country-specific approaches because they function differently in each country.

"There is no single silver bullet in terms of practices; practices must be localised to meet the needs of the locals who live off the land," she said while highlighting lessons learned and best practices such as soil and water conservation, Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR), and exclosures.
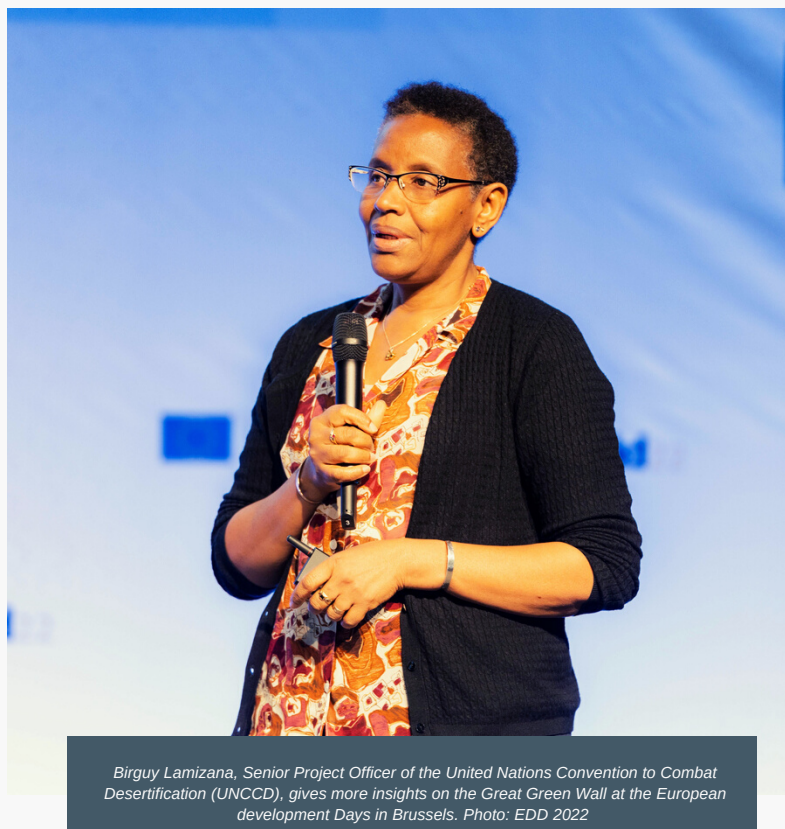

*Mieke Bourne, the Regreening Africa Programme Manager, gives a presentation at the European development Days in Brussels. Photo: EDD 2022*

She also stated that Regreening Programme has recognised the significance of land health and the use of science in the restoration of degraded land, hence the incorporation of the [Land Degradation Surveillance Framework](#) (LDSF). Using LDSF and earth observation, Regreening Africa is developing precise maps of land health and dynamics. Assisted citizen science is now a part of this process. "We do this with the help of the [Regreening Africa App](#) which is useful to the community and local extension officers to capture activities on the ground'. she said.

She also emphasised the need to make data available to smallholder farmers.

According to Birguy Lamizana, Senior Project Officer of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the lessons from the GGW were the challenges that had to be overcome in order for the project to be successful. These challenges included a lack of governance, monitoring and reporting, funding, and technical support.

"The GGW continues to address some of the world's most critical issues, such as climate change, famine, violence, and migration. As a result, the GGW Accelerator was developed as a guide to assist all GGW initiative participants in planning, monitoring, and evaluating the result of their activities.


*Birguy Lamizana, Senior Project Officer of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), gives more insights on the Great Green Wall at the European development Days in Brussels. Photo: EDD 2022*

The GGW Accelerator plays a vital role in the Sahel by increasing the resilience of rural communities, smallholder farmers, and agribusinesses in GGW intervention areas to the effects of environmental degradation and climate change.

Partnerships and participation of all types, including youth and women, are critical to the success of projects like the GGW. President von der Leyen applauded the GGW's work in the Sahel region, where up to 15% of the project has been completed, and emphasised the importance of local actors in guiding local production and resilience. She was also pleased with the progress made by GGW as millions of hectares of desert land have been reclaimed and food production from Senegal to Ethiopia increased.



*Bernard Crabbe, the head of the Environment Mainstreaming and Circular Economy Sector at the European Commission, shares insights at the European Development Days in Brussels. Photo: EDD 2022*

According to Bernard Crabbe, the head of the Environment Mainstreaming and Circular Economy Sector at the European Commission, investment in projects like

Regreening Africa addresses food security, livelihoods, and climate change resilience in local contexts. He asserts that for this to be possible, locals must be empowered to govern their land. Additionally, he emphasised the importance of incentivizing farmers and working on governance to improve land management; failure to could result in the non-implementation of restoration measures.



*Patrick Worms, Senior Scientist Advisor, CIFOR-ICRAF, moderated the session's panel discussion. Photo: EDD 2022*

Among the session's key takeaways was the importance of utilising specific approaches to engage local stakeholders. When local communities address land management in their local context, restoration is successful, and farmer-to-farmer learning provides a platform for farmers to encourage, inform, and learn from one another.

*The Regreening Africa app exhibition at the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum.*
*Photo: Matt Flynn, Smithsonian Institution*

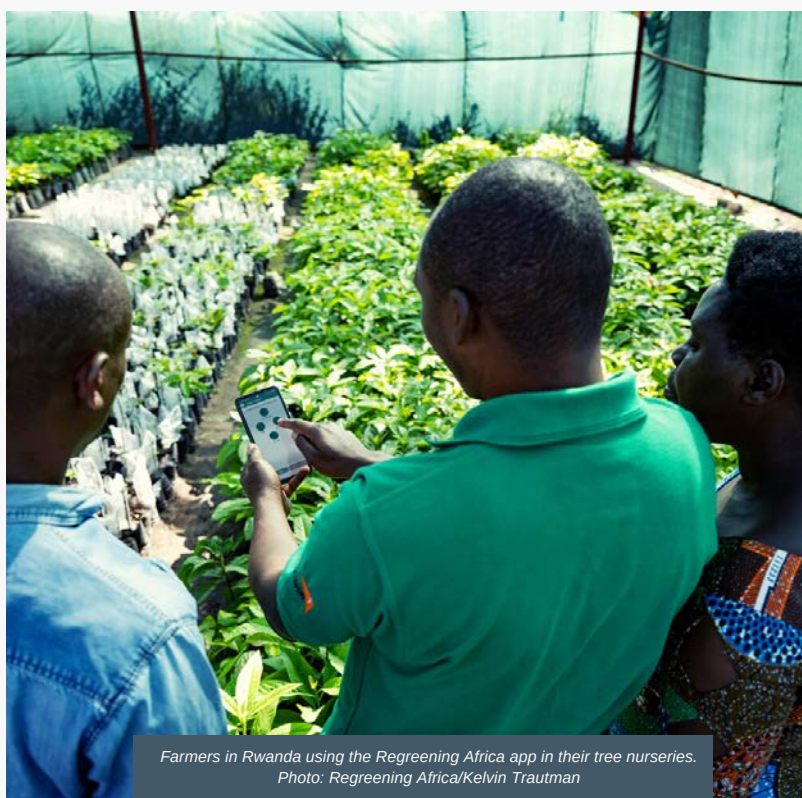# Regreening Africa App featured in the Smithsonian's Designing Peace Exhibition

The [Regreening Africa App](#) was featured at the [Cooper Hewitt's Designing Peace](#) Smithsonian Exhibition in September 2022 because it links scientific evidence and the knowledge of local farmers and other stakeholders in  restoration work ensuring that interventions are adequately informed and easy to monitor, and farmers are involved in the development process. The exhibition took place in New York from June 10, 2022, to September 20, 2022. The exhibition examined how design contributes to the development of peace and resilience.

Sub-Saharan Africa's reliance on land for livelihoods has grown, but nearly half of the land is degraded, particularly in the drylands. As a result, the land is unable to meet livelihood needs such as food and nutritional security, as well as livestock support, which are critical for pastoralist communities in the drylands, while also continuing to provide a variety of other essential ecosystem services. At the same time, land degradation is increasing competition for dwindling resources, which frequently leads to conflict and migration.

The Regreening Africa App was created to provide local stakeholders (including farmers) with information on how to carry out land restoration activities. For example, one of the key practices promoted by the Regreening Africa project, known as Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) builds on farmers' local knowledge while supplementing it with scientific methods where necessary. Lead farmers and extension agents use the App to map out where they are carrying out the practice, as well as the specific management aspects they are carrying out on the trees and land, and then record and post that information on a central database managed by the research organization.

The app's data and knowledge are instantly available to other users, and various outputs from data synthesis, such as linking the data to information on critical soil and land health indicators, are then shared with farmers, assisting in the optimization of the design and tracking of land restoration options. Other data collected by the app include the number and type of trees planted, the rate of tree survival over time, the location of tree nurseries and the tree species they stock, and training with farmer groups, all of which are critical to the success of land restoration.

A major challenge today is the gap between large global agendas on land degradation and restoration and robust evidence accumulated over years around initiatives owned and driven by local stakeholders. Local stakeholder engagement is a critical, but often overlooked, piece of the puzzle in developing effective land restoration efforts that can contribute to sustainable livelihoods and stability. The app connects farmer-led land restoration efforts to larger global initiatives, providing evidence that can positively inform these efforts while also assessing their effectiveness on the ground. Data, evidence, and advanced analytics can be combined with stakeholder engagement and citizen-science data collection using the app.



*Farmers in Rwanda using the Regreening Africa app in their tree nurseries.*
*Photo: Regreening Africa/Kelvin Trautman*

# PUBLICATIONS



Unleashing the agency of the youth in regreening Africa



Prioritising gender inclusion and agency in land restoration



Engaging faith-based organisations in land restoration across Africa: Insights and opportunities



Building a restoration movement: Insights from Kenya



Leveraging novel partnerships for land restoration in Africa



Managing grasslands for planet and profits: The essential role of pastoralism

Regreening Africa Senegal country overview brief



Regreening Africa Rwanda country overview brief



Regreening Africa Ethiopia country overview brief



Regreening Africa Mali country overview brief
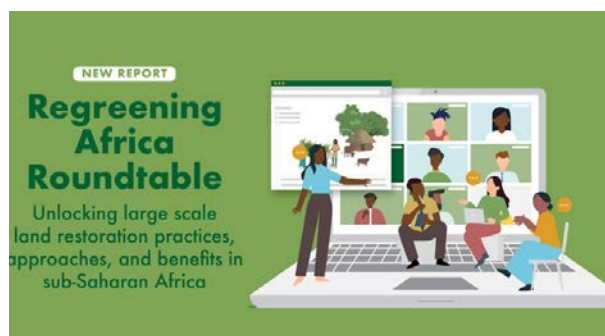


Regreening Africa Ghana country overview brief



Regreening Africa Niger country overview brief



Regreening Africa Kenya country overview brief



Regreening Africa Roundtable report

Regreening Africa