



**FRONTIERS  
OF CHANGE**

GLF CLIMATE HYBRID CONFERENCE | #GLFClimate



# YOUTH AT THE FRONTIERS OF CHANGE

RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT ECOSYSTEM  
RESTORATION AS A SOLUTION FOR CLIMATE  
CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY LOSS

**11-12  
NOVEMBER  
2022**



On behalf of:



On behalf of:



# WHITE PAPER



## Session concept

Communication and raising awareness are important aspects of successful Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) implementation. Spreading experiences and motivating people to action are crucial in scaling up existing FLR efforts as a nature-based solution (NbS) to environmental challenges. GIZ's project on the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (DEER)<sup>1</sup> and GIZ's global project Forests4Future (F4F)<sup>2</sup> have joined forces to implement this session and highlight the significant impact communication practices can have.

This session aims to raise awareness in the climate community about ecosystem restoration in general and FLR in particular, as an NbS contributing to mitigation and adaptation in fighting against climate change and benefitting biodiversity conservation. Thus, it will shed light on approaches and experiences on FLR communication and raising awareness at a local, as well as global level, specifically focusing on mobilizing youth.

In collaboration with GIZ's global project F4F, the Dutch international non-governmental organization (INGO) JustdiggIt has started an FLR communication and awareness-raising campaign accompanying F4F's FLR implementation in Ethiopia, Togo and Madagascar. Their communication approach

includes posters, murals, billboards, radio programmes, SMS services and movie road shows. The session will showcase practical experiences from the ongoing local communication campaign in Ethiopia.

On global level, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration aims to connect and empower the actions of many to catalyse a global movement of organizations and individuals in #GenerationRestoration. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration's strategy calls on artists, storytellers, musicians and connectors to join the global movement in order to shift societal mindsets from plundering the planet to encouraging restoration-friendly consumption. The session will highlight how the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration's core team, task forces and its partners are tackling this cultural challenge by using the power of digital tools and social media, celebrating leadership in ecosystem restoration, and particularly focusing on youth organizations as key actors.

United in the objective, both approaches aim to overcome the limited awareness of the significant negative effects that ecosystem degradation is having on the livelihoods of billions of people, the costs of this degradation and the profound societal benefits that would accrue with major social and financial investment in ecosystem restoration across societies globally.

### Infobox 1: DEER

The global project **DEER**, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV), aims to set the German contribution to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration an international level, ranging from direct support at implementation level, to the political decision-making level in progressing and promoting the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, its strategy, its objectives and its values.

### Infobox 2: F4F

The global project on FLR and good governance in the forest sector, **F4F**, advises the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) on issues related to FLR and the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Government and Trade (FLEGT). Serving the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), the project supports FLR in Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Togo and partners with Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Laos and Vietnam on FLEGT.

**School FLR Plantation Campaign, Arba Minch, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region, Ethiopia. © Feseha G/Silasie (Arbaminch university communication officer)**

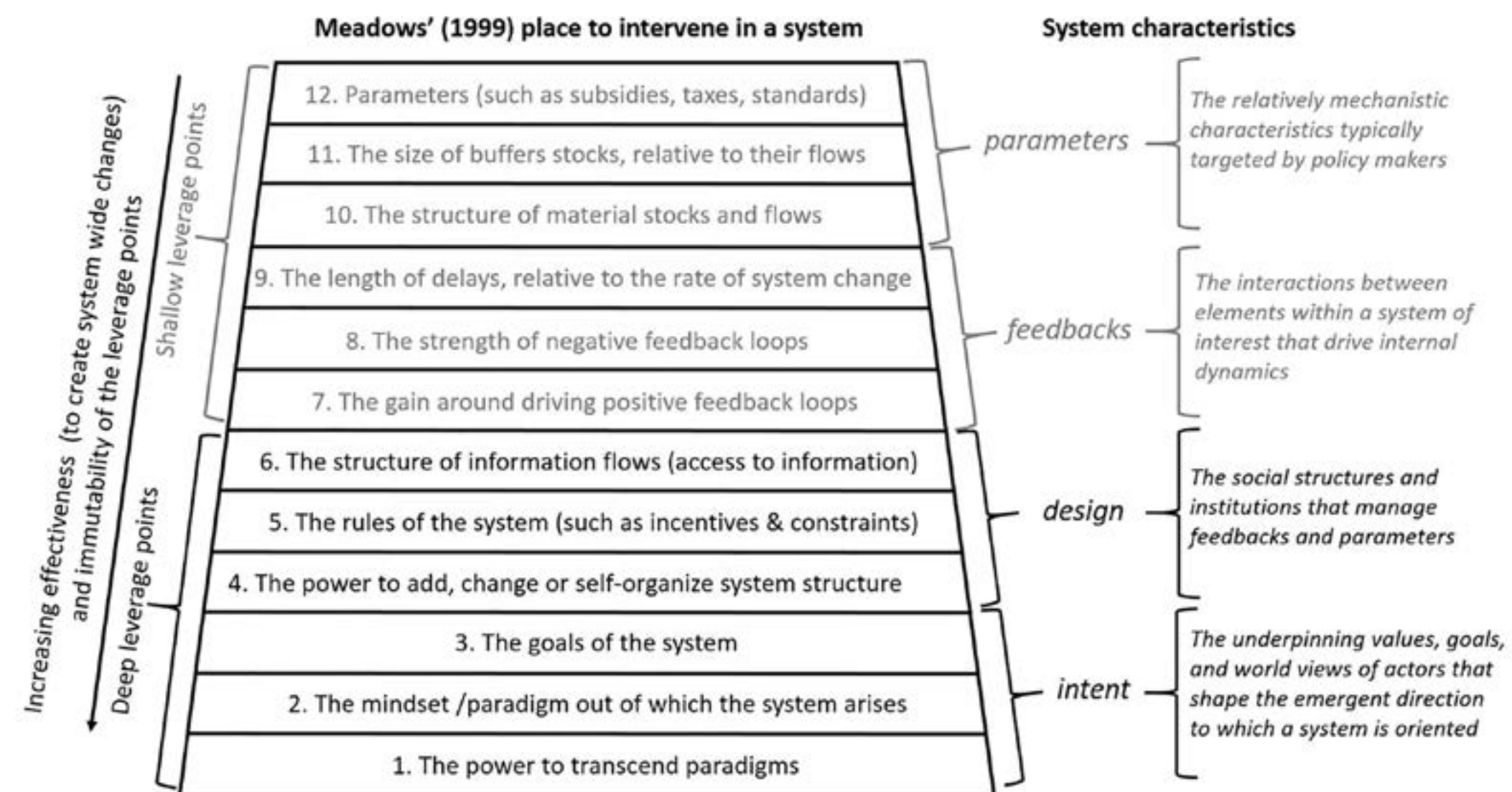




## Theoretical basis

There are many ways to make the world more sustainable, and to stop and reverse the loss of biodiversity and ecosystems. They do not all show equal promise. It seems reasonable to start at a point where the potential impact is the greatest. However, such leverage points are neither easy to identify nor easy to access in numerous complex and interacting systems. While different types of parameters (points 10–12 in Figure 2), – relatively mechanical characteristics – may be easier to identify, their leverage effect is rather small in the long run. If the area for ecosystem restoration, for instance, is increased (point 12 in Figure 2), while all other elements and interactions, such as the flow of information or the goal of the system, remain the same, little change will occur in the long run. Therefore, it appears logical to intervene in the highly leveraging entry points at the bottom of the pyramid which are clustered into system design and intent (points 1–6 in Figure 2).

Natural systems, such as ecosystems, tend to have promising leverage effects in general. When seeing the amplified negative effects of erosion caused by deforestation, farmers will try to intervene in order to keep the ecosystem and livelihood system in place. They try to stop the positive feedback loop (point 7 in Figure 2), for example, by planting or regrowing trees. However, this process requires a solid flow of information allowing farmers to assess livelihood choices. In fact, lack of information is one of the most common reasons for the malfunctioning of a system



**Figure 2. Meadows' (1999) place to intervene in a system**  
Source: Abson DJ et al (2017), **Leverage points for sustainability transformation.**

(i.e., failing to achieve the desired outcome). Therefore, adding a new information flow (point 6 in Figure 2) can produce significant change at a relatively low cost. However, points 1–3 form the design, feedbacks and parameters of a system determining the form of the system (points 4–12 in Figure 2). A transformative change can be triggered when the goals of a system (point 3 in Figure 2), are changed. These goals in turn result from the system's underlying general mindset or paradigm (point 2 in Figure 2). This set of deep beliefs is difficult to change.

How can we best advance ecosystem protection and restoration?

By loudly and repeatedly pointing out the weaknesses of the current system, the costs of degradation and its negative impacts on livelihoods, and by convincing and engaging people beyond their social bubbles to shift their views towards enhanced ecosystem restoration. Against this background, the importance of diverse communication campaigns as a means to convince and engage a broad range of people is even more evident. These should target people who have an active role in representing and protecting the ecosystem, inform potential partners, donors and influencers on their role in preserving the environment with simple and subtle activities, and convince communities that ecosystem restoration is the way forward.



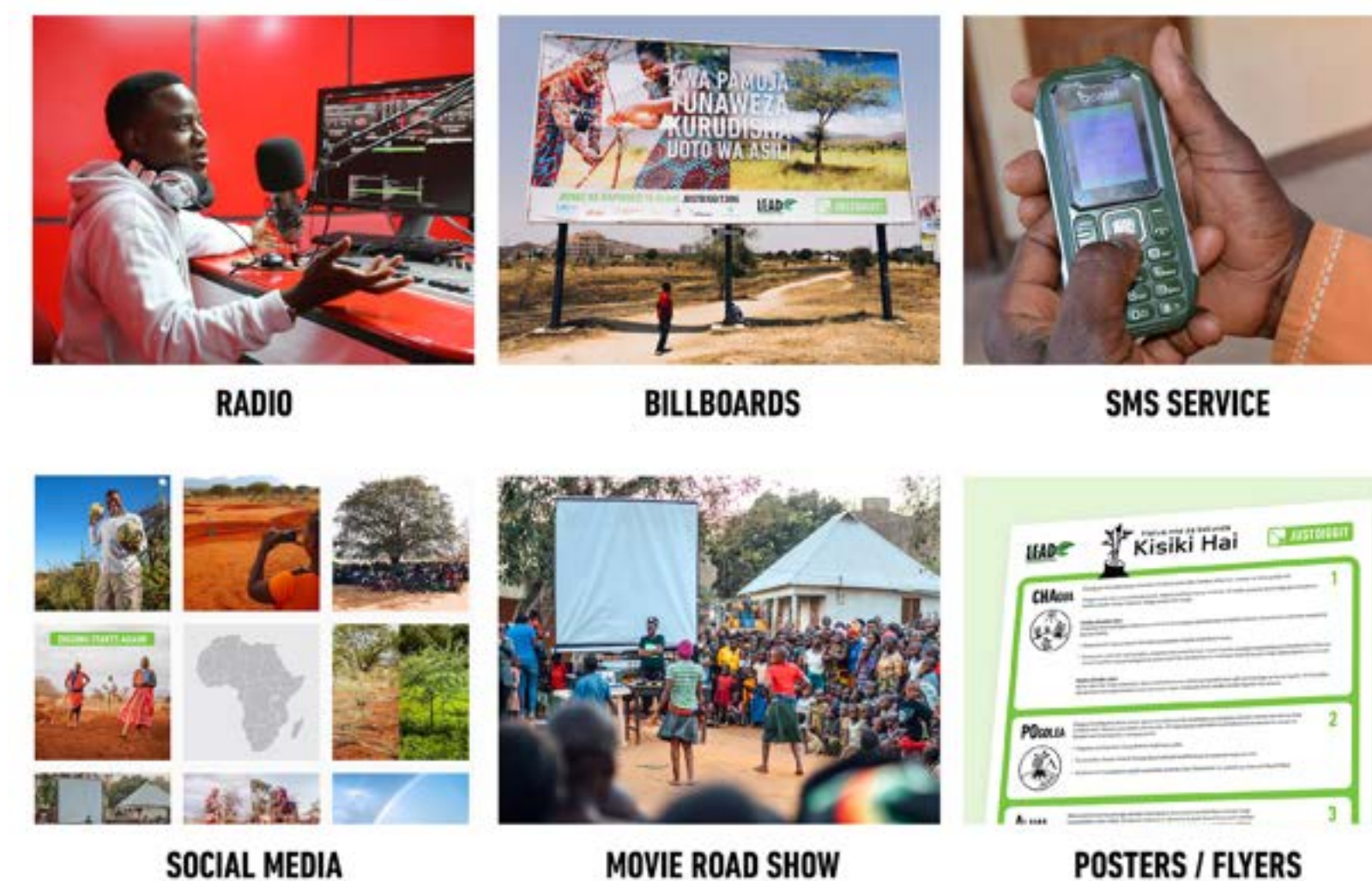
## Justdiggit & the Regreen App

Justdiggit is a Dutch INGO that aims to restore degraded ecosystems by developing, initiating and co-funding restoration programs in sub-Saharan Africa. They are a technical partner of AFR100 and of the Global Evergreening Alliance, and a partner of the World Economic Forums' IT.org. They are also a communication partner of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and UN Environment. The use of multi-media, communication and mobile technology is central to Justdiggit's approach to scaling impact and speeding up landscape restoration initiatives.

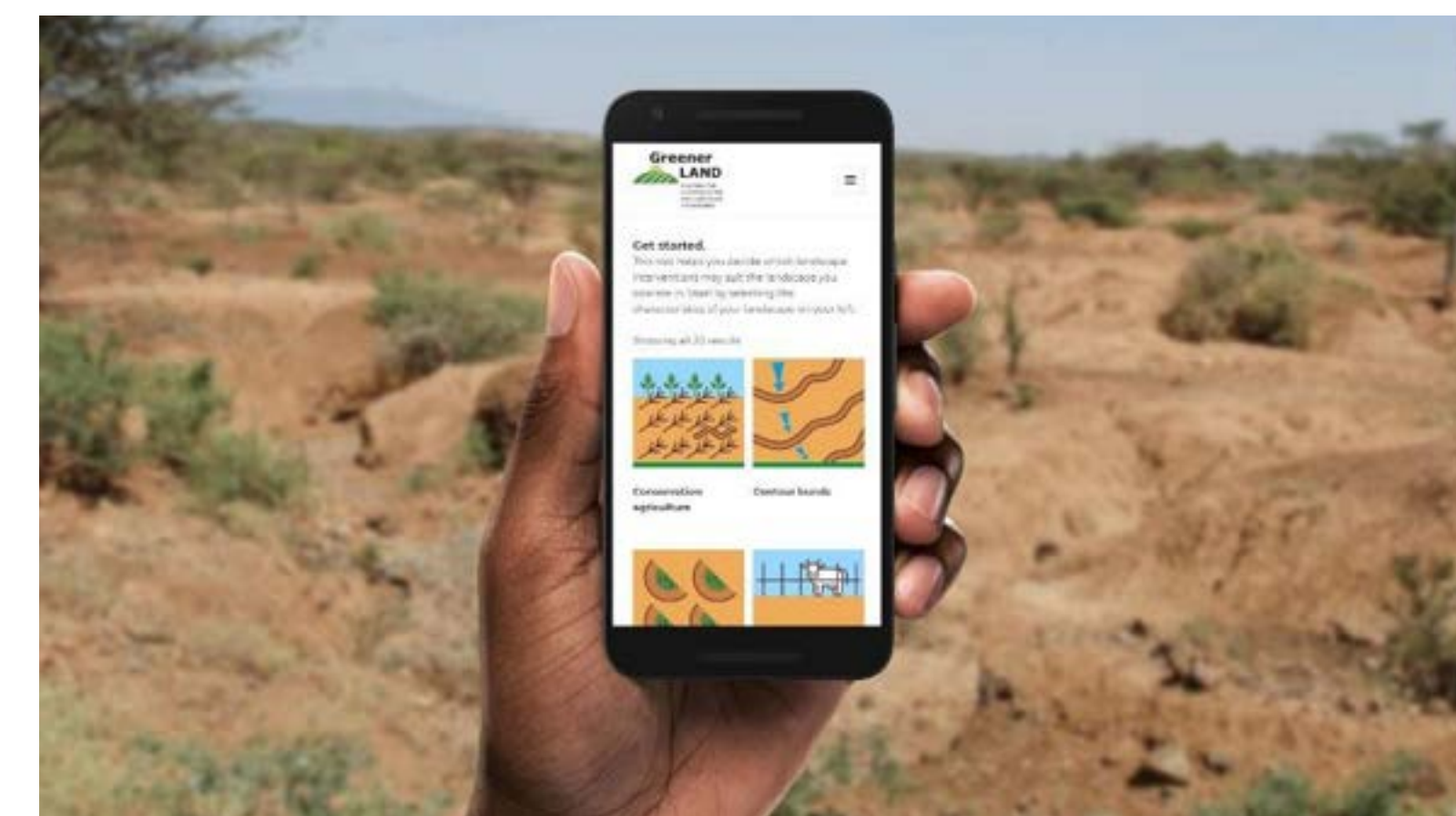
In support of the AFR100 initiative, Justdiggit aims to regreen Africa within the next decade, by inspiring and empowering as many people as possible to join. By combining landscape restoration techniques with the power of media and technology knowledge of regreening practices can be scaled up significantly at minimal cost (the 'SCALE' approach). With this approach, Justdiggit aims to inspire, unite and empower entire generations, growing a landscape restoration movement. For the last

decade, the INGO has been working on raising awareness, introducing, and implementing effective landscape restoration techniques, and building partnerships with four national and international media houses. In the projects across Kenya and Tanzania, Justdiggit works closely with communities and local partners to restore dry land. Proven regreening techniques include rainwater harvesting (digging bunds), tree restoration (**Kisiki Hai / FMNR**), and developing **grass seed banks**. All projects are owned and implemented by communities that live off the land.

Justdiggit is constantly developing its toolset to reach and mobilize more farmers. They also support other organizations with this toolset to boost impact. They are now moving to the next stage: disruptive regreening, moving beyond programs. They will share this knowledge, using (mobile) technology to inspire, educate and empower farmers to restore their own land using simple techniques, without the need for a physical presence on the ground. For this, Justdiggit is currently developing a Mobile Regreening Platform, the Regreen App, providing farmers with tips and tricks on how to regreen their own land.



Examples of communication interventions, ©Justdiggit



Mobile Application, ©Justdiggit



## Case Study: Justdiggit in Ethiopia

Justdiggit collaborates with GIZ's global project F4F. They accompany F4F's FLR implementation in Madagascar, Togo and Ethiopia in order to scale up and escalate activities aligned to the goals of the AFR100 initiative. Through a field visit to the F4F project in Ethiopia, Justdiggit identified a significant gap in the community in understanding how deforestation directly impacts climate, food production and the lives of local communities. In response, they are powering a communication approach in Ethiopia on bridging the gap from negative action and its consequences to how positive actions result in long lasting benefits for the community. They aim to highlight the importance of FLR activities in rebuilding and sustaining a healthy ecosystem. Justdiggit will showcase how FLR generates an alternative income, creates a favorable climate and is an investment for the future.

To do this, Justdiggit has begun to utilize traditional knowledge and the attachment between the local community and nature that has been slowly disappearing because of population growth, increasing in agricultural production and the need for income generation. Its communication approach aims to tap into the ancient knowledge that has been passed down through generations, within the target communities, through the "Kao" (Indigenous Elders) in the Gamo culture. "Kaos" play a significant role

in influencing whether local communities adopt an action. The belief is that the Indigenous Elders can play a bigger role in FLR activities and use their prominence in the community as communication partners. Behind every communication, there needs to be a point of trust and connection to the community. Justdiggit believes that Indigenous Elders can play the role of forest advocates in some of the communication tools applied in this project. The aim is to change the mindset of the local communities to acceptance of the F4F project as their own project in the sense of "replanting and protecting forests is my investment opportunity for me and my children's future".

These Elders will be featured in a film that will be shared with communities through a Movie Road Show. However, the cinematic documentary will be only one element of the tour as the INGO will use the opportunity to allow local trainers to demonstrate interventions and address questions. Options to explore include integrating the FLR/value chain training with household testimonials. Other communication approaches include: radio programmes to educate and build awareness, billboards designed to promote the protection of trees, climate training, starting a journalists-for-forests-group that will expedite knowledge exposure and create a credible list of contacts with the media, and building the local capacity of students to raise awareness of solutions to the environmental challenges, motivate the next generation to take action.



Photo of "Kao", Indigenous Elder in Gamo culture, Arba Minch, Ethiopia, ©Justdiggit



## Focus: UN Decade Youth Task Force

The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (led by the UN Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN) aims to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems around the world by 2030. It connects and empowers the actions of billions of people to catalyse a strong and broad-based global movement of organizations and individuals in #GenerationRestoration. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration calls for a shift in societal mindsets from plundering the planet to restoration-friendly consumption. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration aims to function as a hub for various restoration actors to connect, share knowledge and ultimately improve and scale up their restoration efforts.

In this, the involvement of youth in The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is critically important in order to guarantee the sustainability of restoration initiatives beyond 2030 and to promote intergenerational equity. Within the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration organizational structure, there are five task forces, forming focus groups striving to unite for action. Of those, the UN Decade Youth Task Force (YTF)<sup>3</sup> will be joining this session to contribute another perspective, emphasizing the role that youth play in the global movement.

Experiences like the “Fridays for Future” movement illustrate the enormous impact youth activities can have. Youth have the potential to unite and fight for their

case at a global level. the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration’s Secretariat have acknowledged this power and called for the YTF to be established to explicitly provide room to enable youth activities to connect and join forces with other actors within the Decade’s organizational structure. Focusing on their approach in raising awareness, the YTF will showcase the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration’s communication strategy and highlight the Task Force’s agenda.

### Infobox 3: YTF

The YTF along with the Youth Focus Group, convened by the Major Group for Children and Youth, serve as the mandated and self-organized youth mechanism to facilitate participation of youth and youth organizations in the work of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The Youth Focus Group, which is universally structured, allows for young people across several constituencies, movements and young individuals to engage with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.



from **UN Decade Brand Guide**, page 7 ©UN Decade Secretariat

## Objective, Resources and Links

The session will combine showcasing tools on FLR communication with a panel discussion on future challenges in raising awareness.

- How can we value the benefits of restoration for our fight against, and adaptation to,

climate change at the political level, while communicating and implementing restoration at local and global level?

- How can we efficiently get this message out to the people?
- How can we avoid “preaching to the converted” and effectively overcome boundaries of “social” and “filter bubbles”?



Farmers in Dodoma, Tanzania, using the mobile application, ©Justdiggitt

- Country web page F4F Ethiopia: [Forests4Future: Protecting forest landscapes through reforestation \(giz.de\)](#)
- [Justdiggitt | Cooling Down The Planet | Global Warming Charity](#)
- Using the power of music to inspire communities & nations (Kijanisha): <https://justdiggitt.org/news/tanzanian-artists-booming-on-youtube-with-regreen-hit/>
- Cop26: How can positive storytelling be used to fight climate change: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEibrzC7ogs>
- Justdiggitt stories: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clAR4agoLew&t=35s>
- Donella Meadows Leverage Points: [Leverage cover \(donellameadows.org\)](#) and [Thinking in Systems \(wtf.tw\)](#)
- [UN Decade on Restoration](#)
- [Youth Task Force | UN Decade on Restoration](#)
- [Youth Paper \\_UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration report](#)





#GLFClimate

## GLOBAL LANDSCAPES FORUM

The Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) is the world's largest knowledge-led platform on integrated land use, dedicated to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Climate Agreement. The Forum takes a holistic approach to create sustainable landscapes that are productive, prosperous, equitable and resilient and considers five cohesive themes of food and livelihoods, landscape restoration, rights, finance and measuring progress. It is led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), in collaboration with its co-founders UNEP and the World Bank and Charter Members.

**Charter Members:** CIAT, CIFOR-ICRAF, CIRAD, Climate Focus, Conservation International, Crop Trust, Ecoagriculture Partners, The European Forest Institute, Evergreen Agriculture, FAO, FSC, GEF, GIZ, ICIMOD, IFOAM – Organics International, The International Livestock Research Institute, INBAR, IPMG, IUFRO, Rainforest Alliance, Rare, Rights and Resources Initiative, SAN, TMG-Think Tank for Sustainability, UNCCD, UNEP, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation part of Wageningen Research, World Farmer Organization, World Bank Group, World Resources Institute, WWF International, Youth in Landscapes Initiative (YIL)

### Funding partners

