

Feature: Justdiggit

Wereldhave has been supporting Justdiggit for the past three years. The NGO, based in Amsterdam, works with local communities in east Africa to restore damaged or degraded farmland.

Justdiggit's work mirrors the Company's own commitment to "greening" its buildings – and creating a healthier environment. Wereldhave supports the NGO's Raindance program, which tackles desertification.

Land degradation is a particular problem in east Africa – decades of drought and overexploitation in many areas have produced a shortage of fertile land.

To restore the land, Justdiggit uses two main techniques. The first, known as rainwater harvesting, involves digging the topsoil to allow rainwater to penetrate the surface, then constructing earth barriers – or bunds – to prevent run-off. It is a technique that Justdiggit is currently using with Maasai farmers in Kenya to help restore grazing lands for cattle.

The second technique is called farmer-managed natural regeneration. It involves regrowing trees from stumps. Currently, Justdiggit is using this technique in Tanzania. Its project – in the central Dodoma region – is aimed at regenerating no fewer than eight million trees.

Justdiggit's projects bring multiple advantages: restoring the land means increased crop yields in countries where there is widespread poverty in rural areas. It also supports biodiversity and takes carbon out of the air – vegetation, in effect, traps and stores carbon.

Recently, the UN declared the 2020s the decade of ecosystem restoration – globally, about 25% of the world's land has been degraded¹. That is not only bad for climate change, but also for farmers trying to make a living from agriculture. Justdiggit's work – with Wereldhave's support – is helping thousands of farmers in one of the worst affected parts of the world.

“In Africa, land degradation is especially severe. With nature-based solutions, we can, in effect, kick-start the earth again, and begin to mitigate some of the effects of climate change.”

Marjolein Albers, Managing Director, Justdiggit

