# THE ROMBO PROJECT

## MEDIAVISION

*DONOR REPORT*

**REPORTING PERIOD:**
**FEBRUARY 2023 - JULY 2023**

JUSTDIGGIT

# INTRO

Dear Melissa Faraday,

We are happy to share the next progress report of the Rombo Project for the period January – July 2023 with you. Here, you will find the latest updates from the field, our future plans for this restoration project, and of course the dedicated impact we've realised in this area thanks to the support of MediaVision!

Our Treecovery program in Central Tanzania keeps on growing. Apart from the 481 villages that are already part of our program, we are currently adding another 15 villages. Together with LEAD Foundation, our Tanzanian partner, we have trained over 200,000 farming households to bring back trees to their farm, which resulted in over 14 million trees being regenerated!

Our programs in other areas are growing as well. The water bunds in Arusha are showing a good response. The little rainwater they received was successfully retained and is now promoting the growth of grass! Similar interventions are being implemented in southern Kenya, in the South Rift and around Amboseli National Park. Both areas are heavily degraded but form a vital habitat for wildlife, whilst being of great importance to the communities that use these areas to graze their livestock. Together with our implementing partners, we have drafted a long-term vision for these areas, which will help to transform them into healthy ecosystems again.

We are thankful for the support of our partners, who enable us to do what we love: working together with local communities to give nature the boost it needs to restore itself and make the future look green again!

**This photo was taken in the Arusha area, not in the Rombo area



# GENERAL JUSTDIGGIT INTRODUCTION

Justdiggit is on a mission to regreen Africa together with local farmers, pastoralists, partner organisations, and an ever-growing global regreening movement. To bring back nature and restore degraded land, one of our core activities is the implementation of large-scale regreening programs in Sub-Saharan Africa. We work with a broad portfolio of proven, scalable, and easy-to-apply landscape restoration techniques, such as rainwater harvesting and farmer-managed natural regeneration. These techniques are scaled in traditional and non-traditional ways. That's because we believe in the power of nature and communication and the possibilities of data and technology to regreen land on a large scale. We work with grassroots and community-based organisations on the ground that are embedded within the landscape and who share our vision of sustainable ecosystem restoration. Together, we set up a long-term vision for ecosystem restoration in these project areas. We're here for the long run, after all: our goal is to be engaged in a landscape for at least 20 years!

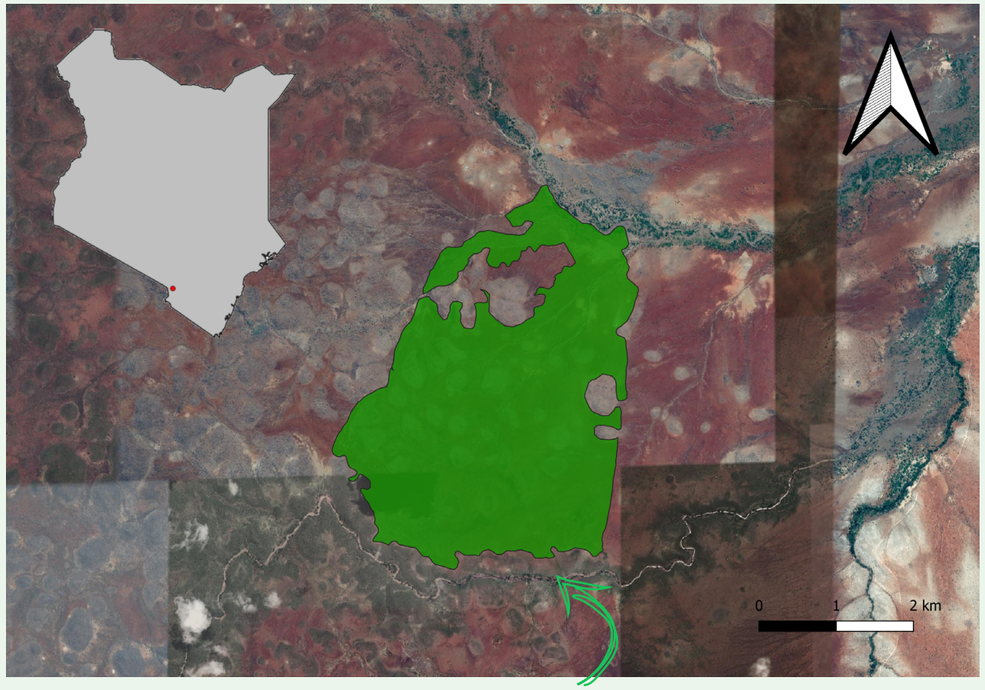



FIGURE 1: MAP OF ROMBO LOCATION IN SOUTHERN KENYA

# IMPACT OF THE ROMBO PROJECT

The restoration project in Rombo Group Ranch in southwest Kenya – where your donation has been used – has really started to pick up pace in the last six months. Together with our amazing partner, Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust (MWCT), and a dream team of diggers, rangers, fundi's (artisans), and other members of the community we've managed to hit our target for the amount of land that is being regreened. We now have **1,154** hectares under restoration in Rombo. Within this project area, we've dug a total of **57,100** water bunds, out of which **23,400** bunds were constructed in January and February 2023!

**Dedicated impact of MediaVision**
Of course, these great results so far wouldn't have been possible without the help of MediaVision. Thanks to your support, we've been able to make a real positive impact on the living environment of many people and animals. We can't thank you enough for helping to regreen and cool down our planet!

This is the impact we've realised so far with your donation:

**97** hectares under regreening
**4,812** bunds dug
**144** people positively impacted
~~3,898,00~~ litres of water retained
3,898,000



**This photo was taken in the Arusha area, not in the Rombo area

# RECAP

Land degradation in the Chyulu Landscape occurs in a vicious cycle, as is often the case. Natural vegetation is gradually disappearing and is unable to regenerate due to overgrazing, unsustainable grazing management, and prolonged drought. High-quality perennial vegetation disappears, leaving only low-quality annual vegetation. During the dry season, these die off, leaving the landscape bare until the first rains arrive. Because of the lack of vegetation cover, the soil hardens and becomes less permeable, significantly reducing infiltration during the next rainy season. More runoff occurs, frequently resulting in massive erosion and further land degradation, leaving less rainwater in the soil and allowing for even less vegetation growth during the following growing season.

Together with our partner Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust (MWCT) and local communities, we restore these degraded areas by implementing simple and easy-to-apply nature-based solutions, raising awareness, and promoting more sustainable land management practices. Water bunds are being dug in these degraded areas for soil and water conservation, which reduces surface runoff by holding the water during the rains. The planted grass seeds help bring back vegetation, making more natural pastures available for the livestock. Restoration projects such as this one in Rombo have brought hope to the people affected by the devastating drought.

The project started in the second half of 2022. Since the digging started, over 48,000 water bunds have been dug in an area covering about 1,154 hectares of bare rangeland. The water bunds help in promoting soil and water conservation, which helps bring back vegetation, making more natural pastures available to the community, and creating a microclimate that in the long-term will alleviate the prolonged droughts faced by the communities. One rain shower was received during this reporting period and follow-up rains were needed but did not occur. We are hoping for better rains towards the end of the year when the next rainy season is expected!

FIGURE 2 & 3: ROMBO BUNDS AND STONE LINES DURING BUND DIGGING IN JAN 2023

# PROJECT PROGRESS UPDATE

## 1. COMPLETION OF REMAINING BUNDS

The digging of bunds was successfully concluded in February 2023, resulting in the construction of a total of 23,400 bunds. This achievement not only met the project's initial target of 57,000 bunds but also exceeded it by an additional 100 bunds. Simultaneously, the process of seeding the bunds was carried out. Drone photos showed germination and growth of vegetation after one rain rainfall event. Throughout the rainy season from March to April 2023, the region only experienced one rainfall episode. Drought conditions have continued to be a significant challenge and a threat to the local communities situated within the project site. As a result, this situation has increased grazing pressure in the bund sites.

*Figure 4: Grass sprouted and grew inside the bunds after April 2023 rains*

## 2. RANGER PROTECTION

The Rombo bund site continues to generate direct income by providing employment to eight community members. These individuals have taken on the role of rangers, working closely with both the community and the grazing committee to ensure the safeguarding of the rehabilitated areas. A grazing committee is a committee consisting of 130 respected community members who are trained to teach their fellow pastoralists more about the importance of grazing management.

A single instance of rain shower was received at the bund sites, resulting in an increase in vegetation cover. However, this also led to heightened grazing pressure in the area. To address this, a well-coordinated effort has been underway, involving informal meetings between the herders and the rangers. To enhance protection and awareness, a ranger's post has been established within the bund site. As a result, the rangers conduct daily foot patrols, actively safeguarding and educating the herders and communities. This protective and informative presence will persist throughout the entirety of the project's duration.



# PROJECT PROGRESS UPDATE

*Figure 5: Rombo Rangers post inside the bund site*

## 3. MONITORING

In the regions characterised by arid and semi-arid conditions, the extended rainy season spans from March to May. Yet, the degree and overall amount of rainfall can significantly vary across our diverse landscapes. Given this variability in precipitation during the months of March, April, and May in these regions, it is crucial to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the rainfall's impact within our designated project sites.

Our interventions, when combined with the distinct rainfall patterns, hold the potential to positively influence vegetation attributes such as cover and height, as well as facilitate the introduction of diverse grass and shrub species. However, external dynamics, such as the grazing pressure exerted by livestock, can influence the overall vegetation cover. For this reason, it's important that we gain a clear comprehension of grazing pressure levels across the landscape, particularly within our project sites.

By leveraging the data on vegetation cover gathered during on-site assessments and with the help of a consultant, we have formulated an effective grazing management tool. This tool will serve to clarify and regulate grazing pressure, involving sample testing within the laboratory to facilitate in-depth analysis and the subsequent development of a user-friendly grazing management tool.

# PROJECT PROGRESS UPDATE

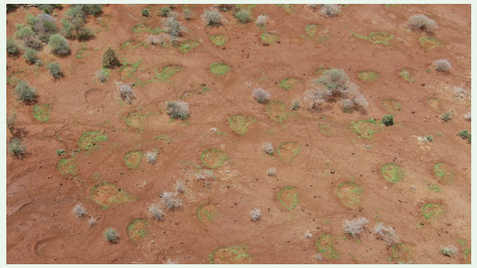


*Figure 14 & 15: Left: Rombo digging in anticipation of the Mar-April 2023 rains; and Right: A photo of the site in May 2023 after the rains.*

To foster ongoing community buy-in and support, continuous meetings will be held with the grazing committees and community members to ensure the project's sustainability. We have developed a  comprehensive grazing tool with the help of a consultant.  This tool will be used by the grazing committees, who will receive training on its proper implementation to ensure the grazing areas remain productive in the long run. The pictures below were taken during one of the meetings with the grazing committees.

*Figures 8 & 9: Rombo bunds drone pictures in May 2023 after just one rain shower*

### *Digger Testimonial*

**Neema Nekanisa, a 34-year-old woman, took part in Rombo bunds project phases 1&2.**

*"I saw the benefits of the bunds project because it came at a difficult time during the long drought and allowed me to buy food for my family." In addition, I have seen the benefits of conservation, particularly through restoration and conservancies."*

# NEXT STEPS

The following activities will take place in the next phase of the project:

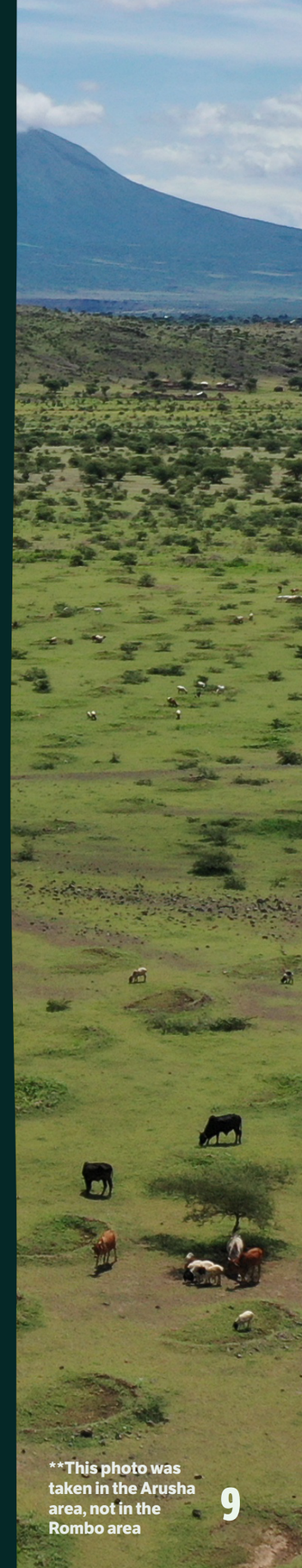
**1. Grazing committee meetings**
Meetings and capacity building for grazing committees are planned for the following quarter. These aim to increase the support from herders and ensure sustainable utilisation of the restored resources.

**2. Community meetings (informal meetings between rangers & herders)**
There will be a quarterly community gathering to raise awareness of restoration and inform the community of the project's progress.

**3. Site visits**
There will be scheduled site visits to evaluate the project's progress and meet with the site rangers to discuss issues, spot gaps and potential areas for improvement, and gather feedback from the community.

**4. Monitoring and Evaluation**
Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted by our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) team and the MWCT team.

*Thank you for your continuous support!*



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