Treeapp: Plant a tree for free, every day

"Our mission at Treeapp is to plant one million trees every single day"

Jules Buker, Co-founder, Treeapp

Introduction

In April 2021, one year after its launch, Treeapp released its first impact report. The founders of the London-based mobile tree-planting app had good reason to be pleased with the milestones they had achieved in just one year: over 400,000 trees planted (equating to over 2,000 sq. km of reforestation), a rapidly growing user community, and flourishing partnerships with more than 100 eco-conscious brands. They were just as proud that the planting projects they sponsored had helped many independent farmers and indigenous groups around the world. But they also knew that this was just the beginning of the journey. The impact report highlighted the fact that, around the world, the equivalent of around 260,000 sq. km of forests are cut down every year. Treeapp's mission is to plant one million trees every day to help reverse the effects of climate change. Achieving this would require scaling up massively and rapidly to have a meaningful impact on global emissions of carbon dioxide – and numerous challenges lay in store.

Tackling climate change through reforestation

Forest ecosystems account for around 45% of all the carbon stored on land[1]. Replanting existing forests (reforestation) and growing new ones (afforestation) are means to capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it, a process known as carbon sequestration. Researchers estimate that forest regeneration and tree planting on a global scale could sequester up to 100 gigatonnes of carbon from the atmosphere by the time the new plantations reach maturity[2]. This is equivalent to about 10 years of carbon dioxide emissions at current emissions rates, or between 6% and 16% of total emissions due to human activity since the advent of the Industrial Revolution (estimated at around 600 gigatons[3]).

A 2019 study by Bastin *et al.* mapped global potential tree coverage to show that that there is room for an extra 0.9 billion hectares of canopy cover, and that this could store 205 gigatonnes of carbon in areas that would naturally support woodlands and forests.[4] Highlighting the opportunity of climate-change mitigation through global tree restoration, the study concluded that it "remains among the most effective strategies for climate change mitigation" – but also emphasised the urgent need for action.[5]

In addition to capturing and storing carbon dioxide, conserving forests and planting trees can provide other environmental and social benefits. Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF)[6] estimates