

## Twin-Regions from the perspective of Benin

Watch video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QceJ5WNuCa&t=21s>

Twin- Regions is a Cross-Cutting Action of the ["4 per 1000" Initiative](#)

### Introduction

Hello, I am Natacha Agbo from Benin in West Africa. I'm an agronomist and I've been working for five years to help farmers adopt good production practices that respect the environment. Presently I am working for an NGO named "African Innovation Services", in short [AFRIS](#). AFRIS is specializing in large-scale dissemination of good practices and youth employment. We collaborate with the "4 per 1000" initiative and run its electronic platform.

### Climate crisis

The people of Benin are feeling the effects of climate change. The number of extreme weather events is increasing every year. This impacts our food security, which is already suffering from land and soils degradation. Due to poverty, our producers are unable to invest in regenerative agriculture and are forced to grow cash crops like cotton, which have devastating effects on our environment. Food insecurity, loss of biodiversity, and migration are just some of the consequences. Poverty also limits our ability to engage in climate action - despite Africa's enormous potential to sequester carbon.

#### Potential of an AU EU solidarity

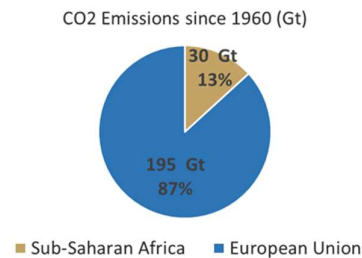
Please keep in mind that Sub-Saharan Africa is about 7 times larger than the European Union. Moreover, the return on investment in carbon sequestration in soils is much higher in Africa, since nutrient use efficiency is three times higher than in Europe. The opposite is true when looking at economic capacity. The current GDP of the European Union is about 8 times greater than the one of sub-Saharan Africa.

It seems that we have a situation for a perfect match. Europe's potential to sequester carbon is limited due to lack of land and low potential to increase biomass production. Africa's potential is limited because of poverty. Together, we can overcome our limitations and sequester enormous amounts of carbon in soil. Investing in Africa would allow Europe to reduce its carbon debt at a much lower cost. In turn, Africa would benefit from investments in regenerative agriculture and could simultaneously achieve food security, eradicate poverty and stop migration. As a result both, Europe and Africa would benefit from ecological and economic recovery and could solve a number of pressing issues. This would allow us to liberate resources that we are presently wasting in mitigation efforts.



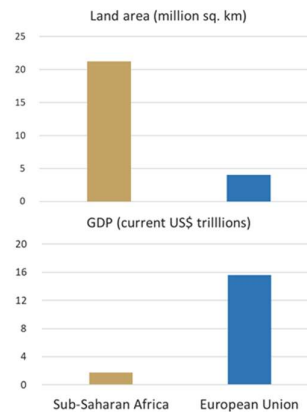
## Emission and Sequestration

Carbon Debt



<https://data.worldbank.org/>

Carbon Sequestration Potential



## Twin-Regions

The climate crisis is accelerating and we must act quickly and decisively to avoid a catastrophe. To get things rolling, "4 per 1000" promotes the concept of Twin-Regions. A Twin-Region is a pair of complementary places. Here is a visionary example.

Sinendé is a town in Benin with 90,000 inhabitants. Alfter is located in Germany and has 24,000 inhabitants. Alfter is financially well off, but because of its small size of 3,400 hectares, it has no chance of sequestering their carbon dioxide emissions that amount to 300,000 tons each year. Sinendé is 70 times larger and has the potential to sequester 500,000 tons of CO2 each year. Unfortunately, poverty prevents them from realizing the potential. However, with combined efforts, the Twin-Region would have a realistic chance of becoming carbon neutral in a few years and paying off their historic carbon debt in the foreseeable future.

This is challenging, but possible. Citizens in Alfter must reduce emissions and support carbon sequestration in Sinendé. Citizens in Sinendé must invest in regenerative agriculture to improve soil health for increasing carbon sequestration and food production.



## Twin-Regions

Global solidarity to unlock the potential for regeneration

Sinendé (Benin)

Alfter (Germany)

	Sinendé	Alfter
Population	90.000	24.000
Emissions per person (CO2 t/yr)	0,4	12,5
Total emissions (CO2 t/yr)	36.000	<b>300.000</b>
Area (ha)	<b>230.000</b>	3.400
Estimated carbon capture potential (CO2 t/yr)	<b>500.000</b>	7.500
GDP per capita (USD)	1.300	<b>45.000</b>

<https://data.worldbank.org/>

## Role of youth, farmers' organizations and NGOs

On both sides of a twin region, young people will be the drivers of change. They are the ones who will develop a vision of the world in 2050 and set the agenda for today's action. Farmer associations and NGOs are the enablers. They will mobilize and organize youth, train and support them to deliver a range of demand driven and result oriented transformational services; services to raise awareness, plan with citizens, provide advise on reducing carbon emissions and regenerative land use practices, ensure actors are paid for ecosystem services, monitor carbon and cash flows, evaluate progress, assess impacts, and celebrate progress. Service providers are paid upon delivery.

We have shown that this is possible. In 2017, with support from the Special Initiative [One World - no Hunger](#) of the German government and authorities in Benin, we engaged 400 Beninese college graduates and out-of-school youth in 173 municipalities to organize and train 311 farmers groups reaching over 50,000 producers. They achieved spectacular yield increases in maize, rice and soybeans, improved market linkages and collected valuable data for the scientific community. Through their involvement, the young professionals gained experience, laying the foundation for their future development. 3 years later, the vast majority of the young people are still earning a living in the same communities.

If we want to save our planet, we have to act now and we have to work together. Policy must acknowledge the responsibility of the rich and provide the legal framework to enable solidarity. It is a question of political will and courage for real change. We, the young people, farmers' organizations and NGOs in sub-Saharan Africa are ready.