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Plant power for the future

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'TreeSisters provides a space for belonging and genuine sisterhood.'

How do you start a revolution on behalf of Nature? That was a question that sat front and central with me long before I started women-led reforestation charity TreeSisters, which has planted more than seven million trees globally and is aiming for 10 million before the end of March this year.

TreeSisters arose out of a collision with a tree that literally stopped me going over an edge when I was skidding on ice. The metaphor of trees stopping humanity going over an edge was not lost on me.

In fact, planting trees suddenly seemed like the single most logical action that the world could take, given that atmospheric carbon dioxide is now far beyond safe levels and is also tree food. If every single one of us made tree planting core to our lives, we could reforest this planet faster than anyone ever imagined. It's just a choice away.

Social change

TreeSisters was created as a social change and tropical reforestation organisation that focuses as much on inspiring local restoration projects as it does upon large-scale reforestation efforts throughout the tropics.

We provide a community through which women can meet in person to support and nurture both their bodies and their leadership, and online to experience the empowerment of a global network.

With our unique feminine leadership focus, the purpose has stayed the same since the charity was launched in 2012: to help make it as normal to give back to Nature as it currently is to take Nature for granted.

Why women? Women and nature share a common history: what has been done to one has been done to the other. It's now time for that to end. Women rising on behalf of nature is the same as women rising on behalf of themselves and our children, as an extension of our love.

Belonging

Research tells us that women are more disproportionately impacted by climate change than men. We know that women's natural hormonal response to stress is to collaborate rather than dominate, which is a vastly important tendency in a climate-changing world of uncertainty.

TreeSisters provides a space for belonging and genuine sisterhood that can be particularly lacking for women in the west, who are often dislocated from family.

Our most far-reaching campaign is 'Grow Your Own Forest', where donations are converted into numbers of trees planted. As this accrues every month, our supporters can watch their forests grow across 10 ecosystems covering Amazonia, Brazil, Cameroon, Kenya, Mozambique, Madagascar, India, Nepal and West Papua.

Our world is fast approaching 500ppm of atmospheric carbon dioxide, whereas the safe level was considered 350ppm. Despite increasing recognition that wide-scale reforestation uses Nature's own mechanisms to lock down carbon and stabilise climate, rates of deforestation are increasing, so excess CO₂ is now acidifying our oceans, leaving 80 percent of coral dead or dying.

It's a race against time, feedback loops and our own complacency, that we need to win. It's a race I believe we can win, if we collectively take global reforestation into our own hands and start giving back, as much as we all can, right now, to robe our world in the forests Earth needs to cool herself down.

Source: <https://theecologist.org/2020/apr/14/plant-power-future>