



A women's campaign to help reforest the Earth within 10 years

**Campaign overview and request for support.**

**TreeSisters** (TS) is a new campaign exploring the role that women and trees can play in restoring ecological balance on this planet. <http://www.treesisters.org/news/18/81/A-feminine-response-to-climate-change> It is a call for feminine leadership, and a social experiment that aims to inspire women to help bring about a more appropriate response to climate change.

**Our primary goal** is to increase global reforestation (specifically tropical reforestation, through existing partnerships in the field <http://www.treesisters.org/news/28/81/Our-tree-partners-in-the-field-and-the-spread-of-TreeSisters>) by making it normal for everyone in the developed world to start giving back to the planet every month by giving money to plant or protect trees. <http://www.treesisters.org/the-plan>

**Our purpose** is to discover how to harness the unique creativity, energy and abilities of women around the world to achieve this goal.

**Our vision** is the development of a global network of women, working together to bring about a deeper honouring of our planet, of women themselves and of feminine energy, principles and leadership.

**Context**

Our mind-based cultures have grown at great cost to life and to the feminine principle on this planet. Our ecosystems are being stretched beyond their ability to maintain equilibrium. Women have had to become whatever version of themselves is found acceptable within their culture. As a result humanity has been starved of many powerful feminine qualities that could have helped maintain balance in our world.

Climate change presents the need for a game change; new energy, new awareness and the willingness to face facts and respond appropriately. It's time for new ways of being and doing that reflect a different consciousness: one that is in direct service to life, not against it. Women can support this shift.

**A social experiment**

The collective energy of women could be the greatest force for positive change this world has ever seen, but how do you tap it? The nature of an experiment is that you learn on the pitch, and this is no exception. We are constructing a campaign of messages, actions, films and events that bring women together to explore the terrain, but the reality is that this campaign needs to be co-created to reflect us all and as such it will change.

Early testing shows that the TS concept attracts a very diverse, often not environmentally-orientated range of women, which bodes well for us. How we start out will most likely not reflect where we end up, but the underlying thread of **restoring balance** on our planet will remain.

**Question:** How can women contribute to a large-scale awakening around our potential role as stewards of a sustainable planet, rather the consumers of a warming world? What form of campaign will break through apathy, denial and overwhelm and help raise collective awareness around the need for us all...;

- **to give back to the planet to balance our taking** (shared ecological responsibility)
- **to cool the planet to balance our warming** (reforest fast, reduce fossil fuel consumption)
- **to 'feel' our dependence on our ecosystems, not just 'think' how best to use them** (heart *and* mind)
- **to value and embrace feminine principles as intrinsically as we have embraced the masculine**

**Answer:** We will co-create, offer, trial, feedback, integrate and learn as we go. What is clear is that while audacious, TS is a useful, relevant and timely exploration that will provide great insight into what is needed to empower women and hasten the journey to a more balanced and sustainable world.

## The concept

TreeSisters is envisaged as a growing, self-organising network and global community of pro-active women who are aligned through their love of the natural world and commitment to the safety of future generations. It is a brand, a way of being and a sisterhood that is bonded through five choices that are in service to a sixth, TS's primary purpose - **to protect and celebrate life**.

The choices are:

- **consideration** – (open mind) the choice to consider the planet in all our actions
- **encouragement** – (open heart) the choice to care for, inspire, support and include others
- **intimacy** – (receptive body/soul) the choice to feel more deeply connected to self, others and nature
- **responsibility** – (right action) the choice to take care of the planet through balanced giving and taking
- **courage** – (creativity/personal purpose) the choice to offer one's gifts and talents towards the cause

<http://www.treesisters.org/news/16/81/Introducing-the-5-choices-the-heart-of-the-TreeSister-campaign>

These choices in their most expanded states highlight the qualities that would contribute to the creation of the type of world that we would choose for ourselves and future generations. The map (see final page) and the understandings we have gained from working with both light and shadow aspects of each choice, underpin all aspects of our campaign development, website, and events.

## Practical application of the five choices

1. **get real (consideration/denial)** – the educational 'wake up', easy downloadable factsheets, interactive 'confessional space', links to films, books, animations and eco partners- self education to support behaviour change.
2. **get together (encouragement/exclusion)** – celebrating women, building the network and relationship between women, communities, cultures and nations; message boards, gallery of ideas, interactive map of the network, stories from the field, newsletter, partnerships etc
3. **get nourished (intimacy/disconnection)** – increasing 'felt' receptivity to self, other and nature, practical pathways to nature-connectedness, access to leading teachers in areas as diverse as dance, meditation, creative writing, perma-culture, shadow work and voice to support feminine healing, calendar of related workshops, retreats and TS events.
4. **get active (responsibility/irresponsibility)** – practical action; normalising the monthly payment of money for trees, easy access to ethical suppliers, retailers, existing local green initiatives, local conservation organisations, school packs for mobilised mothers etc
5. **get creative/get out there (courage/fear)** - encouraging feminine creativity, leadership and empowerment, stories of breakthrough from fear, direct action/activism/causes to support, upload facilities and database for nature-related children stories, art, theatre etc

## Campaign development

Our development is emergent, organic and network-led. The early campaign reflects the experience and ideas of its current team, and the understandings gained through the two focus groups working for a year with the map of five choices. Further development of campaign content, films, materials, intentions and activities will reflect the ideas, experience and participation of the network. As an action research initiative, the feedback gained through events and the website will be crucial for ongoing development.

## Engagement, expansion and evaluation

After the launch of our full website (intended late autumn 2011) roll-out will be through every medium possible: word of mouth, public speaking, radio, YouTube films, film competitions, social media networking, PR, networking events, partnerships with existing media, conservation and women's organisations, regional launches and subsequent related events.

Our 2012 international launch event <http://www.treesisters.org/news/11/81/The-Launch> aims to seed the concept through attendees into their cities and regions, supporting later regional launches that could build more localised networks in each area. We aim to make everything we do accessible and replicable so that any aspect of it can be adopted, personalised and rolled out reflecting the women of that region or culture. Ultimately we hope to support the emergence of new leadership groups in other cities and countries.

The website and events will be formulated to gather feedback. We will track purchases, donations, discussions, uploads and feedback both at events, on the website and the web itself to continually re-evaluate the campaign and hone our approach.

### **Partnerships**

The development of partnerships will be as organic as every other aspect of the campaign. We see ourselves as providing a service to women, and also to the women of existing networks that see our value. We aim to become a sizeable market for green goods and existing initiatives of every kind relevant to the five choices. Our partners will range from those that we are directing our network towards, for instance:

- **Personal growth:** Women in Power, Women Within, Women on Fire etc
- **Green retail:** My Green Space (coming soon), Energy Switch, Bibico, Green Metropolis etc
- **Existing initiatives:** Transition Towns, ERS School Tree Nurseries Program, Food from the Sky etc
- **Tree organisations:** Earth Restoration Society, BTCV, WWF, Woodland Trust, University of Trees, The-Tree, our beneficiaries etc

...and those that we reach out to, to help build or fund our network, and through our platform, serve theirs:

- **Women's organisations:** the WI, the Wise Women Council, Women of Spirit and Faith etc
- **Women's funding bodies:** Women Moving Millions, Women's Funding Network, the Sister Fund etc
- **Media and business:** World Pulse, Guardian Green, Positive News TV, Mumsnet, the Co-Op etc

### **Developmental overview**

The rate of expansion and uptake of an experimental campaign is impossible to guess. Thus far, it has been a case of holding back the tide of interest while the infrastructure is built. The best case scenario would see us financially sustainable through crowd fundraising by the end of year two, enabling the flow of funds to shift towards trees. The likelihood of this depends upon the success of our engagement strategy and our offering as a positive addition and support in the already overcrowded lives of women.

### **Year 0 Research and development**

July 2010-July 2011

- Concept development, experiential research of the five choices with two focus groups, initial social media campaign, branding, temporary website for crowd-funding campaign, team development, business plan, network development, first short film, early seed funding, first grant applications

### **Year 1 Pre-launch phase and launch**

July 2011-July 2012

- Fundraising focus, interactive website development, build, launch and first PR campaign, first gatherings to trial the map of five choices as a personal/collective change tool, further team development
- Major social media campaign to build network, while crafting event content and materials, TS group syllabus, early partnerships, sponsorships, first international replication template, celebrity engagement and five further short films
- PR push, international launch event (two days) in Bristol at the Passenger Shed, integration of feedback, strong focus on building the crowd-funding/monthly payments towards trees

### **Year 2 Consolidation, integration and expansion**

July 2012-July 2013

- Focus on consolidation, feedback, integration of women's ideas into the campaign, enabling first revamp of campaign strategy and event content with focus on reaching more diverse range of women
- Further fundraising to cover core costs, enabling donations to go out to beneficiaries, first regional launch events nationally and internationally, and first exploration of TreeCities concept
- Increasing funds raised for reforestation partners, first international TS groups adopt their own beneficiary projects and launch their own campaigns.

The spread is organic, the campaign is emergent, reflecting an ever more diverse range of women. This is the expected ongoing cycle of growth....

## Funding strategy and revenue streams

We are raising funds through a combination of crowd-funding, grants, philanthropic donation and sponsorship. Our speed to self-sufficiency will depend on the success of our campaign roll-out and actual enrolment of TreeSisters. Membership will not be a set cost, but a personally chosen, manageable monthly paid commitment will be required to enable use of the interactive features on the site.

We aim to become sustainable as fast as possible through monthly crowd-funding, enabling us to send increasing quantities of funds to our beneficiaries as we grow. For the campaign to achieve its goals we need to reach and engage millions of women in 'giving back' every month. With average monthly donations of £5, we could become sustainable through as few as 1500 women. Ideally we will be supported by core donors enabling all monies raised by the network to go directly to the trees.

Revenue streams:

1. TS voluntary membership fee and direct donations
2. Donations through TreeSister individual and group fundraising activities
3. Grants, philanthropy, sponsorships; building lasting partnerships with businesses and foundations
4. Income from launch events, concerts, theatrical performance etc (ticket sales) trainings, gatherings and a margin on products (the web platform will offer an ethical marketplace for green goods and services, and also offer a listing service of courses, workshops etc)
5. Down the line, we will build income from TS products

## Current status

TreeSisters is a currently a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, awaiting charitable status (See Year 0, Developmental Overview, above). We have raised £22K seed funding, built a team of substantial experience and reach <http://www.treesisters.org/about-us>, chosen our first three beneficiary partners ([www.pachamama.org](http://www.pachamama.org); [www.projectgreenhands.org](http://www.projectgreenhands.org); [www.greenbeltmovement.org](http://www.greenbeltmovement.org)) and are in early exploration with more locally relevant organisations.

Without PR we have 240 registered TreeSisters, a growing presence on Facebook (averaging 1000 hits/month) and Twitter. We have good access to ecologically committed celebrities with early interest and offers of assistance. We have yet to confirm our patrons, and are waiting until we secure funding before reaching out. There are women exploring how to bring this to the US, Canada, Brazil, Germany and Iceland.

We are building a long-term funding strategy with a team from Micro-Finance Without Borders to secure early grant funding, and intend to become fully sustainable through crowd-funding within a year from now. We will launch our new website in November 2011 with a media campaign and will submit a new film to Four Years Go's Possible Futures film competition in early 2012. We will launch officially in Bristol June/July 2012.

## Request for support

We are looking for an international circle of wise women and men, funding angels, creatives, connectors and activists who recognise the possibility that TreeSisters represents, to get actively involved now in whatever capacity most appeals. If you are drawn to support us financially, creatively or otherwise, please bring as much of yourself as you wish to the creation of the campaign.

Best case scenario, **we hope to raise £195K for Year 1** (starting July 2011) to enable us to develop all the early campaign materials, core infrastructure and to cover our first major international launch event. This first foundation-building phase is critical for the roll-out of an effective campaign. We are currently seeking the £15K needed for the design and build of the new website.

Our Year 1 costs are:

Short films	£6K
Website design/build	£23K
Launch	£45K
Core costs	£106K
PR/Marketing	£15K

**A further breakdown of costs and our business plan are available upon request. Your support is invited with gratitude. Contact: [clare@treesisters.org](mailto:clare@treesisters.org) Tel: 44 1453 861266**

## The TreeSister Map

The five petals represent a woman, with consideration in her head, encouragement and courage across her heart line and intimacy and responsibility in her feet. The choices are personal, collective or global, and reflect the possibility of choices that could support either personal balance and healing or the wider shift towards a protected natural world.

