

TEACHER'S CHEAT SHEET

WANGARI MAATHAI

Wangari Maathai's mobilization of African women was not limited to work for sustainable development; she saw tree-planting in a broader perspective which included democracy, women's rights, and international solidarity. In the words of the Nobel Committee: "She thinks globally and acts locally."

Where: Kenya – **When:** 1977 – 2011

Context: Authoritarian regime selling off forest for profit

Challenge: Deforestation and increased poverty

Method/tool: Grassroots initiative that started with tree planting. Holistic approach that led to women's empowerment and turned into a pro-democracy movement.

2004 Nobel Peace Prize "for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace"

KEY DEFINITIONS

Grassroots: movement or organization using collective action on the local level to effect change at the local, regional, national or international level.

Holistic approach: method looking at the whole situation rather than just a part of it. It implies identifying obstacles and finding solutions while thinking about the big picture.

KEY EVENTS

1971 Wangari Maathai becomes the first Eastern African woman to earn a PhD. Doctorate in veterinary anatomy from the University of Nairobi.

1976 First woman professor at the University of Nairobi where she teaches veterinary medicine.

1977 Wangari Maathai founds the Green Belt Movement.

1986 Creation of the Pan African Green Belt Network (Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Lesotho, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe)

1989 The Green Belt Movement organizes a large public protest

against the construction of the 60-foot skyscraper, located in Uhuru Park, Nairobi.

1997 Wangari Maathai founds the Mazingira Green Party of Kenya.

1998 The Green Belt Movement facilitated several protests in conjunction with the tree plantings in order to stop the degradation and privatization of the Karura Forest.

2002 Wangari Maathai is elected to Parliament.

2003–2005 She becomes Assistant Minister in the Ministry

for Environment and Natural Resources in the government of President Mwai Kibaki

2004 Nobel Peace Prize

2006 She leads the United Nations Environment Program's Billion Tree Campaign that has resulted in more than 7 billion trees being planted across the planet.

2011 Wangari Maathai dies of complications arising from ovarian cancer.

Green Belt Movement: grassroots, non-governmental organization based in Nairobi, Kenya. It aims at organizing women in rural Kenya to plant trees, combat deforestation, restore their main sources of fuel for cooking, generate income, and stop soil erosion. 30,000 women have been trained in forestry, food processing, beekeeping, and other trades that help them earn income while preserving their lands and resources.

