



Background Information

Plant-for-the-Planet – A Children initiative is born.

The children's initiative Plant-for-the-Planet was first launched in 2007. This initiative was brought to life by the then 9 year old Felix Finkbeiner, who felt inspired to take action following a school report on the climate crisis. While carrying out his research, Felix became aware of Kenyan environmental activist and Nobel Peace laureate Wangari Maathai and her initiative that had led to the planting of 30 million trees over 30 years. By the time he finished his research project, Felix had developed his own vision that 1 million trees be planted in each country by children around the world. Over the lifetime of each tree planted, approximately 3 tonnes of CO₂ would be extracted from the atmosphere, thus significantly helping in fight for climate justice.

Following his success in his own class Felix went on to other classes and soon other schools to present his report and his vision. Just a few weeks later, on the 28th of March 2007, the first tree was officially planted and Klaus Töpfer, former German Environment Minister and former Executive Director of UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) became an official patron of this new children initiative.

1 Million Trees to be planted in every country in the world!

How this children initiative developed into an international movement.

Over the next two years Felix brought the Plant-for-the-Planet initiative to the world. In June 2008, at the UNEP children's conference in Norway Felix presented his vision once more. 700 children delegates, from over 105 countries were so inspired that they voted Felix onto the UNEP Junior Board. Felix has since spoken at many important environmental and climatic events, such as the European Parliament in November 2008. In August 2009 at the UNEP Tunza Children and Youth Conference in Daejeon, South Korea, Plant-for-the-Planet officially progressed into Global children's movement. At this time 100's of children from 56 different countries committed themselves to join the initiative and work towards planting 1 million trees in their own countries.

Since then Plant-for-the-Planet has developed into an international network of 'global citizens', who are committed to climate justice by means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and achieving parity in the distribution of these emissions for all people across the world. Of particular importance to the children is the reality that it is most often developing countries that are hit hardest by the consequences of climate change. The children are convinced that a solution for climate justice can only be reached, through the implementation of a binding global treaty. Plant-for-the-Planet children have been campaigning tirelessly, to Government representatives and to the public, to push for further action. The children are also taking action themselves by planting trees. This is viewed both as a practical act, as each tree removes harmful CO₂ from the atmosphere, and as a pivotal symbolic action for climate justice.

Children from 105 countries around the world are now involved with this initiative and UNEP is also an active supporter of the Plant-for-the-Planet initiative.

The One Millionth tree in Germany – “Every tree is a symbol for Climate Justice”

On May 4th 2010, 45 children from Plant-for-the-Planet, together with Environmental Ministers from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Canada, Turkey and Mexico, planted the one millionth tree in Germany. This planting initiative was held under the programme heading “Stop Talking. Start Planting”, and took place alongside the so-called “Petersburg Climate Dialogue” being held in Bonn. This was also the location where preparations were being made for the climate summit in Cancun. Together with delegates and important participants in the World Climate Change Conference COP 16 in Cancun, December 2010, the children planted another 193 trees. Through this action the children were able to demonstrate to the participating representatives just how important it is that they adopt a global contract for climate justice.

The 3-Point-Plan

If the children were the Government leaders, and had to face the big decisions at the next climate summit, they would already have a clear plan of action for the future. On 1 July 2010, the children handed over their "3-Point-Plan" to 133 embassies in Berlin. They also put forward their challenge to the Government leaders, to reveal their plans and proposed solutions for the climate crisis and subsequently the procurement of a safe future.

The 3-point-plan outlines the demands of the children in a clear and concise manner.

- 1) Carbon to be shipped to the Museum: The technology necessary for a CO₂ free future has already existed for a long time. By 2050 CO₂ emissions should be reduced to zero.
- 2) Climate Justice: In order to stop the predicated warming of 2C, only 600 billion tonnes of CO₂ can be emitted until the year 2050. 600 tonnes divided by 40 years leaves an allowance for 15 billion tonnes per year. This must be fairly shared among the world's inhabitants, which would mean 1.5 tonnes of CO₂ per person, per year. Whoever wants more, must then pay more.
- 3) Planting Trees: If 500 Million trees were planted every year, this would mean an additional 5 million tonnes of CO₂ could be removed from the atmosphere. This sounds like a lot, but of course it is possible. In 2009 the Chinese planted 2.7 million trees as part of the UNEP Billion Trees campaign. If every person were to plant as many trees as the number of years they had been alive, then almost 500 billion trees could be planted!

Diplomats in Gumboots - Children train other children to become Climate Justice Ambassadors through the Plant-for-the-Planet Academies.

Since October 2008, Plant-for-the-Planet Academies were established first in Germany, and then around the world. This was done by children, for children. In the Academies, those children who are already active as advocates for climate justice are then able to pass on their knowledge and experience to even more children. They demonstrate that they will not accept the climate crisis, and that they wish to take responsibility at a global level to effect change and improve the future of their country and the world. As part of a world network of global citizens, the children are able to achieve great things in the battle for climate justice.

Across 16 countries, including China, Germany, France, Italy, Mexico, Austria, Poland and Switzerland, there are now over 9,726 trained Climate Justice Ambassadors. By 2020, the children aim to have trained over one million children in up to 20,000 Academies. These children will then be able to join the Global Network and spread Plant-for-the-Planet's vision even further.

Stop Talking. Start Planting – A 'cheeky' global campaign.

The world wide slogan for Plant-for-the-Planet is "Stop Talking. Start Planting". The children are adamant in their belief that talking alone does not achieve results and that now is the time for action. This slogan has been adapted into an eye-catching promotion where the children stand along side high profile community members, holding their hand over the respective community member's mouth. A number of prominent community members, such as Prince Albert II of Monaco, Gisele Bundchen and Muhammad Yunus, have already participated.

A Foundation with a worldwide network and a democratic structure

Plant-for-the Planet is set up as a worldwide network. The individual clubs are represented by a world wide board of directors. In March 2011 at the Plant-for-the-Planet yearly conference, the 14 members for this board were chosen from 7 different world regions. Children from all around the world were able to cast their votes through the internet.

The Foundation helps to fund the activities of children worldwide. With an average age of 12 years old, this board is probably one of the youngest foundation boards in the world. The tenure of a board member is one year and they are re-election is not allowed. Adults also work to support the children with advice and practical support.

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