

# [Practical tips to make your tree planting successful and fun](#)

Volunteers at Greenpop's Zambia Festival of Action 2015 prepare compost for tree  planting. (Courtesy of Greenpop)

If you have accepted the [Earth Day challenge](#) to help plant 7.8 billion trees by 2020, thank you! But you may have questions like 'How do I start?' or 'What do I need?' Fortunately, Misha Teasdale and Lauren O'Donnell, the South African founders of [Greenpop](#), and some of your fellow YALI Network members are able to help with some tips and things to consider as you plan your event.

Greenpop learned from their 81-year-old director of Trees in Zambia that the first questions you should ask yourself are "what, where and why."

- Is your ultimate goal to provide shade, fertilizer, a future harvest, reforestation or something else? The answer helps inform where you want to plant and what type of trees.
- If personal or private land is unavailable, try municipal locations like schools, hospitals or prisons. The most important consideration is to find a place where people are willing to take responsibility to look after the trees and provide them with water and security after they have been planted.
- As an example, YALI Network member and Green Champion Umar Gambo Adamu worked with a local Nigerian NGO and found a newly built secondary school that needed both shade and beautification.
- You may be able to get free trees from your local government, especially when they have their own tree-planting events because they may have extras from their project or from the municipal nursery. You can also try local growers for free or discounted trees. Umar said he surveyed his local market before deciding upon a local botanic garden that would also provide him with grass and flowers to plant among his trees.
- Try to get trees that have already grown past the seedling stage, since they will be much stronger and will have a better chance of survival.

Make it fun and you will have no problem finding volunteers. You can initially reach out to friends, family and local organizations to help. Network member and Green Champion Petronilla Odhiambo said his project has attracted both church members and school members by offering side activities, free drinks and dancing. Bring musicians to entertain while people are working. Greenpop's founders have used their projects not only to appeal to those looking for something tangible to do about climate change, but also to people who have never seen townships or met communities near the planting sites, helping to bridge traditional social divisions as part of their environmental activities.

For the work itself, "start small," advises Greenpop, "especially if you are new at this." When Teasdale and O'Donnell first began, they had a project with 1,000 trees in mind. The first day, they managed to plant only five, and finally reached their goal after a month of work. Now, with much more experience both planting and mobilizing volunteers, they are very efficient. Their current record is 7,000 trees in one day, with the help of 400 people. But here are some things they learned along the way:

- Your work will be affected by factors such as the weather, the quality of the soil and how well you have organized your volunteer force in advance.
- Hot and sunny weather is always exhausting. Make sure you have a refreshment station in the shade, with plenty of water and sunblock for volunteers, and ask them to bring a good hat and a pair of gloves. If this will be an all-day project, bring food for them as well.
- Make sure your tools and trees are already on-site so the volunteers can get straight to work rather than have to wait around for them to arrive.
- Hard soil may require pickaxes to break up. Other recommended tools are spades/shovels, wheelbarrows, buckets for water, rice or burlap sacks to hold compost, pitchforks and rakes. Keep track of your tools — they are expensive!
- Bring ropes and stakes or some other means of supporting and protecting the trees after they are planted.
- You will want to mark the area you plant as a separate space. You can use rocks or even reuse trash and gather it into piles to help set the area apart.
- Organize your volunteers in advance. Some can be digging while others are bringing compost and others are planting the trees. It is more efficient than having everyone try to do all the tasks. Group leaders can ensure a standardized approach and quality control that will help make the area more attractive once you have finished.

Lastly, before everyone leaves, make sure your volunteers know how important their work is. “People need to understand the local and global value of what they did so they feel valuable,” said Greenpop’s O’Donnell. “People want to help, but they need to know what they are doing.”

Good luck and keep us posted with your work!

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## [6 Lessons I Learned Organizing a YALI Network Event](#)

*In October 2015, Abisoye Ajayi (founder of Pearls Africa) participated in a YALI Network Tech  Camp designed to develop tools for grass-roots organizers in their communities. She planned her own YALI Network mini-tech camp to bring together community organizers around Lagos, Nigeria. What Abisoye learned from the experience can help Network members as they look to create their own events, big or small. And we’ve added a few of our own! Success is all in the planning.*

They say a journey of a thousand miles starts with a step; I took mine and fell flat on my face. Those were the words of my role model Jacqueline Novogratz, and they perfectly described my first few weeks trying to put together a mini-tech camp in Nigeria.

**Lesson 1: Spend more time developing your application forms so that you won’t spend 10 times more making a shortlist.**

I had plans for 20 participants. I received 37 applications, all beautifully crafted prose, beautiful in all ways except that I was to figure out which would be best suited for my mini-tech camp amongst all great applications.

I spent a week selecting the best 20. I read through their applications and did research on each participant. It was tough, but made for a better event!

*YALI adds: For your events, even small discussion groups, make sure the attendees fit the event you hope to hold. A planning session? Invite stakeholders who care about the issue and want to take action. A debate? Find opposing viewpoints to constructively discuss the issue. A learning event? Recruit individuals eager to learn more about that topic, perhaps from a certain group.*

## **Lesson 2: Star-stud your event! But have two or three facilitators for whom it would be a privilege to speak at your event.**

When I go to all these star-studded conferences with their star-studded speakers, I never would have imagined what chore it is to make stars shine in lower orbits. I had stars lined up for my tech camp, but I never knew it would be a chore trying to manage their schedules. They were really nice people but extremely busy — so busy that your heart would be in your mouth until they showed up. Many times during the days leading up to my event, I just had the feeling of an impending disappointment. That feeling you get after that speaker you had [solid] plans with suddenly isn't sure if she would be in the country on that day.

*YALI adds: Inviting local experts or speakers is a great way to provide multiple perspectives to your event. They can be other YALI Network members who can help facilitate the event, an expert on the issue to help lead a discussion or teach a session, or even a local leader or notable figure to provide an opening keynote or welcome.*

## **Lesson 3: Plan for delays in your program and call it “arrivals and networking.”**

On the day of the event, pray hard it doesn't rain! Especially if your event is on Lagos Island. This would have been the last thing I could have envisaged but somehow, rain happened! In Lagos, the bustling capital of excellence, once it rains everything slows down, grinding to a halt. Luckily for us on the day of the event, the rain started five minutes to the arrival time and it lasted about five minutes. But that was enough to warn me about many late arrivals.

*YALI adds: No matter what the reason, people will always arrive late to events. Make sure you build in time for delays, transportation issues, and check in — a great time to have attendees network with one another, and start on small brainstorming or discussion questions. Light refreshments and networking, or even “ice breakers” to get to know each other, are great to fill time as more individuals arrive.*



## **Lesson 4: Make the program as flexible as possible such that the delay of one facilitator doesn't affect the event flow.**

Like the many movies that have framed my view of the world, I like it when the actor comes in [to save the day] to the climax of a Hans Zimmer score. But life's not like that! So I had planned the

event to be kicked off by a notable personality and enshrined it in the program of events. Unfortunately, my notable personality did not arrive on time so my program was delayed.

*YALI adds: Build in redundancies and always have a back-up plan should your guests not arrive on time or at all. Be careful about building your event around one person or specific groups in particular. Make sure you focus on the goals of the event. Confirm with your guests in advance so that you can cancel or postpone if their presence is critical.*

### **Lesson 5: Be ready to capture the energy of the meeting. Collect feedback and be ready to continue the conversation after the event.**

When you bring three of the most bright and passionate ladies in a room, expect a big response. We started strong and the energy did not stop until the end — it was a full immersion into the world of storytelling. The participants were all excited to see that they could do much more with the social media tools they were already exposed to, and collaborations began to form. All the organizations working on child rape issues realized that they could amplify the cases, which they became involved with daily through social media, so they decided to work together to create a platform for that. Also, all the participants wanted a more prolonged interaction so we created a Whatsapp group to continue the conversations. This made me realize that you don't expect to give people a good meal without anticipating they will ask for more.

*YALI adds: A single event is a great first step toward community action and change. Make sure you engage with the most active individuals in attendance and continue to work with them long after the event is over. Work together to find a common cause or challenge to solve together.*

Finally, Angels are real. I had a lot of help preparing for my mini-tech camp. Ask for assistance from friends and colleagues who you can call when you are tired and a minute from giving up altogether. Perhaps this is the most important lesson: Always ask for help! There are people who know more than you at organizing workshops, would be honored to help you, or also have set out to solve similar problems. If you are lucky, your Angels might be as nice as mine. ☺

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## **Toi aussi, un jour, tu seras présidente**

Lorsqu'elle était présidente par intérim de la Centrafrique, Catherine Samba-Panza s'est  efforcée de trouver une issue à la crise qui déchirait son pays. Dans le cadre de leurs opérations de maintien de la paix, les Nations unies ont constaté que les conflits meurtriers peuvent être évités quand les femmes sont impliquées. (© AP Images)

Les femmes sont capables de faire de la politique.

Ça vous paraît évident ? Ça ne l'est pas pour tout le monde. Dans beaucoup de pays, les candidates

doivent se démener pour convaincre les électeurs, et même leur propre parti, qu'elles ont les qualités requises pour assumer un poste d'élu.

« Jamais on ne demande si les hommes sont capables », fait remarquer Caroline Hubbard, conseillère principale sur le genre, les femmes et la démocratie au NDI, qui répondait aux questions de leaders tchadiennes lors d'une conversation en ligne à la fin mars. Néanmoins, les statistiques le prouvent : « Quand les femmes participent, les pays réussissent mieux, explique-t-elle. La recherche montre que plus les femmes occupent des postes d'élues, plus le niveau de vie des pays augmente. »

La [liste des contributions des femmes élues](#) est longue. Et pourtant, moins d'un quart des parlementaires dans le monde sont des femmes. « Il faut changer les mentalités », recommande Caroline Hubbard. Comment ?

Une association de la société civile peut, par exemple, monter une campagne pour changer l'image de la femme en politique, suggère-t-elle. « Elle peut mettre en avant des femmes qui ont réussi et, statistiques à l'appui, donner des exemples de ce que les femmes apportent » une fois élues. Il est aussi important de s'adapter à la culture locale et de « développer des arguments pour convaincre vos voisins, votre famille et votre parti politique ».

Au niveau des partis politiques, en effet, des changements s'imposent. Certes, grâce au système des quotas, les partis sélectionnent plus de femmes pour les représenter lors des élections. Malheureusement, ils les laissent trop rarement figurer en tête de liste.

**« Les hommes doivent être les alliés des femmes en politique »**

Mais d'après Caroline Hubbard, il est également crucial de chercher des hommes respectés, tels que les chefs religieux, et de les convaincre de faire passer le message. « Il faut se faire des alliés parmi ceux qui ont le pouvoir. Ce sont souvent des hommes », souligne-t-elle.

Une autre barrière, et non des moindres, à laquelle se heurtent les femmes, se situe au niveau individuel. « Souvent, elles ne comprennent pas en quoi la politique peut améliorer leur quotidien », regrette Caroline Hubbard, qui encourage les partis politiques à rendre leurs formations plus accessibles aux femmes.

**« Même à la maison, j'apprends à mes filles que les femmes aussi sont des leaders »**

La formation au leadership doit commencer dès 10-12 ans, estime Caroline Hubbard. « Il faut leur expliquer ce qu'est la politique, leur montrer des exemples de femmes leaders, préconise-t-elle. Et il est important de commencer très tôt pour éviter que les fillettes ne 'digèrent' cette idée que les femmes ne sont pas capables. »

Beaucoup d'organisations américaines s'efforcent de développer le leadership des filles. Le département d'État travaille avec certaines d'entre-elles [pour encourager les filles et leurs aînées à faire du sport](#), par exemple. Car c'est un fait : les sportives qui excellent sur le terrain réussissent également dans la vie.

Vous avez envie de vous présenter à des élections ? Caroline Hubbard vous propose la stratégie suivante :

- 1 - D'abord, discutez avec votre famille et expliquez les avantages de votre candidature pour vous, pour la démocratie et pour le pays ;
- 2 - Essayez de convaincre d'abord les chefs de partis, puis vos citoyens ;
- 3 - Apprenez à chercher de l'argent pour financer votre campagne ;
- 4 - Apprenez à utiliser les ressources non monétaires (bénévoles, etc.) ;
- 5 - Apprenez à développer un message ciblé pour le communiquer au public et aux médias (traditionnels et réseaux sociaux)
- 6 - Apprenez à gérer une équipe.

Vous pouvez rencontrer des personnes motivées comme vous pour faire changer les choses dans leur collectivité au sein du réseau [YALI Network](#) pour les jeunes leaders Africains. Et jetez un coup d'œil à sa campagne [#YALIVotes](#).

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## Femmes candidates aux élections : quelle stratégie pour l'emporter ?

(© AP Images)



« Votre campagne doit être scientifique, et en même temps, venir du cœur. »

C'est le conseil de Caroline Hubbard, spécialiste du genre, des femmes et de la démocratie au [NDI\\*](#) aux femmes candidates à des élections. Elle répondait aux questions de leaders tchadiennes lors d'un webchat, fin mars.

Face à leurs adversaires masculins, les candidates partent avec de nombreux désavantages, a-t-elle rappelé, notamment au niveau financier. Être bien organisée est donc crucial. Elle suggère de suivre un plan en quatre grandes phases :

- La recherche : sur la circonscription, les adversaires, les acteurs locaux ;
- L'identification : des électeurs, des sujets qui les préoccupent, du message de la campagne, des ressources financières et non financières, et de l'équipe de campagne ;
- La communication : le développement d'une stratégie vis-à-vis du public et des médias ;
- La campagne : la maîtrise parfaite de son message, l'importance de cibler ses électeurs pour le propager, le recours à tous les moyens de communication disponibles.

### **Savoir se démarquer, même avec un petit budget**

« Vous devez et vous pouvez demander de l'argent pour financer votre campagne », insiste Caroline Hubbard, encourageant les candidates à ne solliciter que des gens motivés par les élections et par leur campagne. « Soyez spécifique : dites-leur de combien vous avez besoin exactement et à quoi l'argent va servir. »

Que peuvent faire les candidates quand leurs propres partis ne les soutiennent pas financièrement ? Caroline Hubbard cite l'exemple du Mexique, où « les femmes ont milité pour faire changer les lois de financement des campagnes et obligé les partis à allouer aux candidates 2 % des fonds versés par l'État pour payer les frais de campagne ».

Se présenter en indépendant est une autre possibilité, mais le risque est de rester totalement inconnue du public. D'où l'importance « d'identifier des alliés qui ont du pouvoir », insiste Caroline Hubbard. « Cela peut-être des chefs religieux ou des chefs communautaires, c'est-à-dire des gens qui vont pouvoir convaincre les autres de voter pour vous et vous aider à trouver des ressources. »

Les candidates indépendantes peuvent également gagner de la visibilité en formant une coalition et une liste commune.

Des bénévoles américaines dessinent des  affiches électorales lors d'élections en Pennsylvanie en 2004. (© AP Images)

### **L'aide décisive des bénévoles**

Qui dit petit budget, dit [bénévoles](#). « Pour vous aider dans votre campagne, recrutez des étudiants ou des jeunes membres de votre parti politique, désireux d'acquérir une expérience en politique, suggère Caroline Hubbard. Vous pouvez aussi motiver des femmes de travailler pour vous en leur expliquant pourquoi elles ont intérêt à ce que davantage de femmes soient élues. »

### **Comment la société civile peut-elle aider les candidates ?**

- en menant des campagnes pour montrer que [les femmes peuvent être de bons leaders](#) ;
- en sensibilisant les femmes sur l'importance de voter - ce qui peut mener à l'élection de davantage de femmes ;
- en introduisant les préoccupations des femmes au cœur des débats électoraux, obligeant ainsi les candidats à prendre position.

### **Éviter les promesses en l'air et ayez un message positif**

Soyez honnête quant à vos promesses de campagne, recommande Caroline Hubbard. Vous aurez ainsi plus de chances d'être réélue.

Évitez le langage négatif. « Au lieu de signaler les points faibles de votre adversaire, mettez en avant les atouts de votre candidature. »

Restez calme et échappez aux stéréotypes: « Les femmes n'ont pas la même liberté de se battre. On leur reproche de trop crier, de trop se plaindre », explique Caroline Hubbard. En cas d'attaque, donc, recentrez les débats sur votre message car, au final, « les citoyens veulent savoir ce que vous allez faire pour améliorer leur vie, pas avec qui vous êtes mariée ».

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# Agroforestry: Good for Yields, Good for the Environment

Abdala Liingilie checks on a test field of maize in Tanzania.(Courtesy photo)



By integrating tree crops into your farm and ranch land, you can improve your harvests, diversify your income and help fight the effects of climate change in the process.

The land use system known as agroforestry is already being used across Africa to help replenish depleted soils. By growing “fertilizer trees,” such as species of acacia, farmers are adding nitrogen to the soil and increasing their grain production by two or three times, while the trees help absorb carbon emissions contributing to climate change and provide wildlife habitats.

One of your fellow YALI Network members, Tanzania’s Abdala Liingilie, has been encouraging agroforestry among farmers in the Kongwa and Kiteto districts who usually grow maize, beans, sunflower, ground nuts and finger millet.

With support from the [World Agroforestry Centre](#) and the U.S. Agency for International Development, Liingilie ran six research trials and helped train 250 farmers during the 2013–2014 growing season. In 2015, he mobilized more than 650 farmers to work in intercropping trials. The group planted about 300,000 tree seedlings among crops and houses.

Farmers who adopt agroforestry can expand their income opportunities, Liingilie said. For example, by having both trees and crops on their land, they can raise bees and then sell their beeswax and honey. By planting trees as canopies for ground crops they can earn money by selling the trees’ high-value fruit, timber and resins.

Agroforestry can also include these other benefits:

- Improved water quality through reduced nutrient and soil runoff.
- An increased number of drought-resistant trees, including those that produce fruits, nuts and edible oils.
- Home-grown wood fuel, reducing deforestation and pressure on woodlands.
- Less need for insecticides, herbicides and other toxic chemicals.
- Increased crop stability.

The type of agroforestry you pursue can depend on the land conditions and your goals:

- Alley cropping: planting trees between rows of already grown shrubs or trees.
- Riparian forest buffers: planting trees next to bodies of water.
- Silvopasture: sustainable integration of grazing land and forestry.
- Windbreaks: planting trees or shrubs to manage the effect of wind on erosion and soil moisture.

Here is a link to [resources and contacts](#) on how to get your agroforestry project underway in different African regions.

Liigilie's advice for other YALI Network members is simple: "Don't give up. ... Changes start with you. Be ready to handle them in positive ways."

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## [Want healthier soil? Don't plow your fields.](#)

Maize field growing in mulch from a previous crop in Malawi (FAO)



If you have been farming for years, it may be difficult to break from the tradition of plowing your fields and feeding crop residue like maize stalks or wheat stubble to livestock rather than leaving it in place. But climate change is forcing many to rethink their traditional farming methods, and the practice of conservation tillage (also called conservation agriculture) has been shown to reduce soil erosion and retain moisture for plant roots. It also saves labor!

Conservation tillage methods include no-till, strip-till, ridge-till and mulch-till.

- No-till and strip-till involve planting crops directly into residue from the previous season's crop that hasn't been tilled (no-till) or has been tilled only in narrow strips with the rest of the field left untilled (strip-till).
- Ridge-till involves planting row crops on permanent ridges about 12 centimeters high. The previous crop's residue is cleared off ridges into adjacent furrows. Maintaining the ridges is essential.
- Mulch-till is a method that leaves at least 30 percent of the soil surface covered with crop residue.

The goal with all of these methods is to minimize soil disturbances. This helps to build the soil's health and its ability to hold moisture, allowing crops to grow better during dry weather extremes. Farmers also benefit by:

- Reducing soil erosion by as much as 60 percent, depending on the tillage method and amount of residue left to shield soil from rain and wind.
- Adding healthy organic matter to soil.
- Decreasing their expenditures on fuel and planting because fewer tractor trips across the field are needed.
- Reducing potential air pollution from dust and diesel emissions.
- Reducing soil compaction that can interfere with plant growth.

Over time, conservation tillage accompanied by crop rotation and the use of cover crops has been shown to increase harvest yields, in addition to helping the soil. The U.N.'s Food and Agriculture

Organization (FAO) did a case study in Tanzania that showed that by the sixth season, crop yields had increased from three bags of maize and one to two bags of beans per acre to 30 bags of maize and 10 bags of beans per acre.

Interested in learning more? Here are some practical steps from an [FAO publication](#) to get you started.

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## [April 22, 2016, is a good day for Africa. Here's why:](#)

A view of South Africa's beautiful Namaqualand countryside in bloom. (© AP Images) 

On Earth Day 2016 more than 120 countries who are parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will meet in New York City to sign the Paris Agreement on climate change. This is an important step in the process to formally ratify and bring into effect the December 2015 Paris Agreement as scheduled by 2020.

For Africans, who are already seeing some of the effects of climate change, the Paris Agreement offers a more hopeful future by limiting global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius and establishing ways developing countries can create jobs through renewable energy technologies while reducing energy costs for consumers.

- Unlike the 1995 Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement takes the situation of the developing world into account by encouraging “nationally determined” action in the global efforts to advance climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Developed countries are continuing their commitment to mobilize \$100 billion per year for mitigation and adaptation actions through 2025, when the parties will design a new financing plan.
- African countries will be able to define their commitments based on their own priorities, with support through finance, technology and capacity building.
- Through the renewable energy sector, the continent has the potential to create an estimated [2.5 million](#) temporary and permanent jobs.
- With more efficient and clean energy sources like solar power, African households could save up to [\\$8 billion](#), helping to lift 16 million to 26 million people out of poverty.

Four African countries will directly benefit from investment projects approved by the [Green Climate Fund](#) board in November 2015, and the fund plans to scale up its operations further in 2016.

- Malawi is increasing its use of modernized climate information and early warning systems.
- Senegal is increasing the resilience of its ecosystems and communities through the restoration of productive bases of its salinized lands.
- Rwanda and Kenya will benefit from the KawiSafi Ventures Fund, which will provide them with off-

grid solar and other clean energy technologies.

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## [A special conversation between YALI Network Coordinator Macon Phillips and South African climate change agent Catherine Constantinides in the lead up to #EarthDay2016](#)

<https://soundcloud.com/americagovfr/yali-network-discussion-between-macon-phillips-and-catherine-constantinides>

[Macon Phillips] Hello YALI Network. It's Macon Phillips coming to you from Washington, D.C., with a special message about Earth Day. That's right, Earth Day is on Friday, April 22nd. We wanted to make sure that everyone knows about this important moment. You're organizing events in your communities, you're talking to folks about climate change, about the environment, and we're really excited about the YALI Goes Green initiative that we've been pushing to raise awareness about important climate issues. Today I wanted, in addition to sending you this reminder, to offer you a special treat. We have been working on a YALI podcast that's going to be coming out soon. We had a great conversation with a member of the YALI Network. As part of that I wanted to get to you even sooner, before we even started the podcast. So without further adieu, this is Catherine Constantinides who comes to us from South Africa and we asked her about Earth Day. Hope you enjoy it.

[Catherine Constantinides] So Earth Day's a huge deal for me. This year Earth Day I'll be doing several things throughout the week. One will be a Twitter chat that we host on Wednesday night and then on Earth Day itself we're going to launch a campaign. And the campaign specifically stems from a huge challenge we have found here in South Africa, where we've had the biggest municipal collection of our waste come to a halt.

[Macon] When people ask you what do you do, which I'm sure you get a lot, how do you answer that?

[Catherine] I think the easiest way to describe it very quickly and in a nutshell is, I describe myself as an international climate activist and a humanitarian who focuses on human rights issues across our continent.

[Macon] Why climate? I know that there's a number of other issues within the human rights area, but why do you lead with climate? Why is that the most important?

[Catherine] You know, through my work, I have actually seen how climate change has affected our people across the continent. How people are no longer able to live the way that they used to 10, 15, 20, even 5 years ago. We see here in our country in South Africa the drought has affected us in a

huge way, especially over this past summer season. We have seen people who are dying and people who are termed climate refugees.

[Macon] So I think one of the challenges that we run into with climate change, this has certainly been the case in the United States, it's pretty clear where you paint a picture of where the problem is. To run through all the effects that the change in climate is having on food security, on the weather patterns, and the list goes on and on. But you almost do that at the cost of painting such a dismal picture — people wonder what we can do about it. So what's your message to your peers? I guess, where should they start? And what are actions that people can take and inspire others to take?

[Catherine] So I think first, identify the problem, work collectively, and also you need to really understand that education and awareness around climate change and the issues underneath that big umbrella needs to be unpacked at a local level for people to understand. And allowing the community to feel like they can take responsibility to look at the small things that they can do within their home, at work, and within their communities; those are the ways that we're going to be able to solve the climate injustices that we do see across our continent.

[Macon] Well wonderful, I really enjoyed the conversation; it's really nice to see you again. Congratulations on being named a Washington Mandela Fellow, so we look forward to hosting you when you come out here to the States. Until then, if you have any other thoughts or feedback about podcasts or things generally, I know you're not too shy about reaching out, so I look forward to hearing from you.

[Catherine] Awesome. Thank you so much and thank you for the opportunity. And again thank you for an amazing platform that allows us as young Africans to really be inspired by each other through this specific network.

[Macon] Awesome. Okay, have a great day.

[Catherine] Take care, you too, bye.

[Macon] Bye.

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## **The goal is to plant 7.8 billion trees by 2020. Can you help?**

(© AP Images)



Many Africans are [already feeling the effects](#) of climate change. Not only does the daytime heat sap your energy, but it's also hotter at night and harder to sleep. The number of droughts and floods has

doubled across the continent over the past 25 years, creating natural disasters that ultimately affect everyone by reducing crop yields and livestock production.

Can planting trees help mitigate these challenges? Yes! And this year's [theme for Earth Day](#) is "Trees for the Earth: Let's Get Planting." The goal is to plant 7.8 billion trees over the next four years — one for every person — in time for Earth Day's 50th anniversary in 2020.

Stay tuned to the [yali.state.gov](http://yali.state.gov) blog and learn how you can participate by organizing your own tree-planting activities. In the meantime, here are some reasons why restoring nearby forests and planting trees in your neighborhood will help you and your community. They provide much more than food, fuel and shelter.

- Trees directly combat climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide gases that contribute to the greenhouse effect. One hectare of forest can offset the yearly emissions of between [333 and 417 cars](#).
- Trees clean the air by removing dust and absorbing pollutants like carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide and trapping them in their leaves and bark.
- Tree roots improve water quality by holding soil in place and preventing erosion and water runoff. They also prevent harmful chemicals from entering streams.
- Trees moderate heat by providing shade and preserve warmth by blocking strong winds. With proper placement of trees around your home, [you can save](#) 20 to 50 percent of heating expenses and reduce air conditioning needs by 30 percent.
- Trees improve your mood and health. They are aesthetically pleasing, adding natural elements to urban settings that might otherwise consist of concrete and metal. Having shaded areas in cities and developed areas will encourage more outdoor activities and social interaction.

These are only a few of the reasons why Earth Day 2016 is encouraging everyone to start or support a tree-planting initiative. This blog will soon be sharing some practical tips from your fellow YALI Networkers on how you can participate.

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## [Tapping the Entrepreneurial Potential of Africa's Women](#)

Amini Kajunju (Courtesy photo)



"I feel like African women are some of the most entrepreneurial women in the world," said Amini Kajunju. "Many African women become entrepreneurs because that's where the opportunities are."

Kajunju has been studying entrepreneurship and advising entrepreneurs for her entire career. A native of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, she was a program manager at the International Executive Service Corps, which provides free consulting services to businesses in developing

countries. She also spent 10 years advising under-resourced entrepreneurs in the New York City area as executive director of the Workshop in Business Opportunities.

Now Kajunju is president and CEO of the Africa-America Institute, a U.S.-based organization working to promote development in Africa. In 2013, she was named among Forbes' 20 Young Power Women in Africa.

In spite of their entrepreneurial potential, women in the workplace still face significant challenges in Africa and most other countries in the world, Kajunju says. When shown a selection of comments from YALI Network's [#Africa4Her Virtual Town Hall](#) in which men expressed the belief that women made difficult bosses, she said, "I think views like that are common everywhere." She thinks they will be less common when more women are in leadership positions and are building businesses. "Entrepreneurship can hopefully create a meritocracy that can break down some of these barriers," she said. "Because you're not going to sell your products if you're just hiring friends of friends, whether they have skills or not."

When it comes to advice for entrepreneurs both male and female, Kajunju keeps it simple:

- 1) Know your target market and what your product or service can do for them.
- 2) Hire or work with people who are smarter than you and help them be as productive as possible by being kind and fair.
- 3) Develop thought-leadership within your industry. Share information within your marketplace.

"That's why entrepreneurship is so amazing to me," she said, "because it's the opportunity to set your own rules. Those who join your team get to abide by those rules. And if those rules are about inclusion, gender parity, respect, hard work, productivity, then it doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman. We can all rally around those ideas."

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