

The Naked Earth and the Green Belt Movement

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The Green Belt Movement (GBM) [Kenya]
 ADF grant of \$31,000 for a one-year period (1985)

The Green Belt Movement organized one hundred grassroots Kenyan women to participate and present workshop demonstrations for the UN Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985. A 30-minute video documentary focusing on the Movement was produced for presentation at the Conference and subsequently distributed to groups throughout Africa. Color transparencies were also produced for future use as filmstrips in Swahili and other local languages.

Forum 1985

In early 1985, the Green Belt Movement approached the African Development Foundation (ADF) for funds to facilitate the active participation of 100 rural women at the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Forum 1985 which was organized to coincide with the World Conference on the United Nations Decade for Women which marked the end of the 1975–85 decade, as well as to identify future strategies.

The NGO Forum 1985 made it possible for over 13,000 women to come together in Nairobi, Kenya, to share, exchange, learn, reflect and look into the future with more hope and determination. This was an opportunity for the Green Belt Movement to demonstrate its own activities and involvement in “Women and Development.”

During that time they had taken their destiny into their own hands by taking up the challenge presented by a deteriorating environment resulting in:

- Lack of fuelwood;
- Lack of building and fencing materials;
- Soil erosion and subsequent impoverishment of the soil (which in turn leads to poor crop yield and famine);



UN Decade Conference Demonstration.

- Little cash for the poor rural families; and
- Severe unemployment.

Project Outreach

Beginning as a small project of the National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK), Committee on Environment and Habitat, The Green Belt Movement grew from a simple community tree-planting effort to one in which there is the involvement of 600 nurseries operated by women, 1,500 schools (500,000 children) and about 15,000 small farmers utilizing seedlings and techniques of the parent organization.

One hundred women attended the Forum to share their experiences with other women, thanks to a grant from the African Development Foundation. Transport and expenses during the 10 days of the Forum were covered by the grant, as well as the making of the film, "The Naked Earth," screened during the Forum. The film has subsequently been shown to many groups in Kenya, elsewhere in Africa and in other countries. Because so many requests for the film had been received, ADF, upon request, provided additional funds in 1986 to facilitate film copying costs.

For the 100 women who attended the Forum in

Nairobi, the experience was an event which they will cherish and share all their lives. The grant made it possible for rural women not only to participate in a meaningful way, but also to make a significant contribution in the critical area of energy and the environment. Their exhibit stand at the "Tech and Tools" section of the Forum was very popular.

ADF Assistance

The partnership between the African Development Foundation and the Green Belt Movement has been very productive. The film has injected an important catalyst into the Movement through an audio-visual perspective which can be shared by thousands more than those able to plant or visit the tree nursery sites. Discussions with ADF staff have been open, decisions have been made expediently, and the availability of funds made it possible for the Project to realize its objectives within a very short time. Moreover, it was a pleasure to work with a donor that understood the concept of a non-governmental organization (NGO).