



One Goal At A Time

Lesein Mutunkei, Trees4Goals
Kenya

☀ Call to Action

By planting trees we can fight against the effects of climate change. Are you in a football club? Basketball? Hockey? Plant a tree for every goal or point that you score. Follow Lesein on Instagram and Twitter @Trees4Goals.

☀ Values

- Sportsmanship
- Cooperation
- Commitment
- Creativity
- Leadership
- Environmentalism

☀ Lessons Learned

Do what you can to help others. Every bit of help, no matter how small, makes a difference.

Effective change can happen when we fight for it, one goal at a time.

Always give back more than you take. It's the only way to ensure we are leaving a healthy planet for future generations.

Lesein Mutunkei is passionate about playing football.

So when he read about the issues of deforestation and air pollution in his home country of Kenya, he decided to use his passion to do something about it: he started Trees4Goals. He decided that for every goal he scored, he would plant a tree. “No matter how big the problem is, I just needed to make a difference,” he says. Soon, people began to notice his activism. His football team joined in the effort, and now Lesein is branching out internationally -- he has started a cooperative relationship with a high school in South Africa.

He also traveled to the Climate Youth Summit, and was even invited to plant a tree together with Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta. But Lesein has even bigger plans: he wants FIFA to adopt his strategy. “There’d really be a big number of people that would be talking about it, and I think it will be amazing,” he says.

☀ Language Arts

What is the moral of the hummingbird story? How can we relate this story to climate change? Write a personal essay in which you reflect on these questions and explain if you have ever felt “too small to make a difference,” and what you would do if you knew that there is no such thing.

Create a 5-7 minute video on the state of Kenya’s forests: what they were like fifty years ago, what they are like now, what is being done to preserve them, and how deforestation has affected the people of Kenya (their economy, culture, lifestyle, and health).

Working in groups of 3-5 people, create a social media campaign aimed at sports coaches in which you invite them to join Trees4Goals. Your campaign must include Twitter content (6-10 tweets); 6-10 pictures to post on Instagram; TikTok

videos (one by each member of the group); and one Facebook post. Don't limit yourself to football coaches; include the coaches of at least two other sports in your campaign.

STEM Activities

Using [this graph that shows the FIFA World Cup goals scored from 1930-2018](#)¹, calculate how many trees would have been planted during that time period if for every goal scored, a tree had been planted. Research how much carbon is stored in an average tree, and calculate the total amount of carbon the planted trees would have removed from our atmosphere. (For an extra challenge, instead of using the average amount of carbon stored in a tree, consider the type of tree and its age when calculating the amount.)

Select [one type of ecosystem](#)² and research how it is being impacted by deforestation. Create a poster, model, or another type of visual presentation to display the information you have gathered, and present it to your class, parents, and/or the school community.

Explore **alternative materials or solutions** that can substitute for tree-based paper or wood products (bamboo, hemp paper, etc.).

Sustainability Innovations

[Tree Sisters - Kenya](#)³ focuses on the engagement and value of women working in plant nurseries and planting trees, while also emphasizing the importance of restoring Kenya's watersheds.

Deforestation is one of Kenya's biggest problems, but their water resources and watersheds are at the root of these problems. [Kenya Water for Health Organization \(KWAHO\)](#)⁴ is one of the first non-governmental organizations in Kenya to focus on water implementation, sanitation, and hygiene. They have a watershed program that is centered around issues of social accountability.

Review [this article](#)⁵ highlighting seven different reforestation projects that are revitalizing Africa. Two of these projects are focused in the heart of Kenya. Assess the differences in the projects and how they are affecting the ecosystems of Kenya's communities.

Sustainability Career Pathways

Sustainable Sports. As Lesein notes, football--and sports more broadly--have a great influence over fans, whether by modeling green behavior, or by stars encouraging their fans to take action. There are groups like the Green Sports Alliance, which leverages "the cultural and market influence of sports to promote healthy, sustainable communities." If you love sports, why not join an organization like the [Green Sports Alliance](#)⁶? Or contact a specific team's sustainability department, in order to help mobilize fans, franchises, and communities to live more sustainably.

Urban Forester. One of the best places to plant trees is in cities--where they improve air quality, human health, and reduce the urban heat island effect. Most cities, even smaller ones, recognizing the many health and environmental benefits trees (especially native trees) [have to offer](#)⁷, have an urban forester in their employ. These individuals manage tree plantings and removals, map and manage

the canopy (using GIS skills), and so on. Sound like a career for you? [Learn more here](#)⁸.

Ecological Restoration. One of the best ways to limit the local effects of climate change is to heal the ecosystems and their functioning in your region--whether wetlands, lakes, forests, or others. The field of [ecological restoration](#)⁹ focuses on this, with restoration ecologists, field technicians, and others working together to “rewild” degraded areas. [Learn more about opportunities in this field here](#)¹⁰.

1 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/269029/number-of-goals-scored-at-fifa-world-cups-since-1930/>

2 <https://sciencing.com/types-environmental-ecosystems-8640.html>

3 <https://treesisters.org/about/our-partners/kenya>

4 <https://www.kwaho.org/watershed-program/>

5 <https://www.womenconsortiumofnigeria.org/>

6 <https://greensportsalliance.org/>

7 <https://www.americanforests.org/our-work/urban-forestry/>

8 <https://www.zippia.com/urban-forester-jobs/>

9 <https://www.ser-rrc.org/what-is-ecological-restoration/>

10 <https://www.ser-rrc.org/what-is-ecological-restoration/>

