

Join the "treevolution", Greenpop heads for Zambia

 By [Sindy Peters](#)

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Founded by Misha Teasdale, Lauren O'Donnell and Jeremy Hewitt (aka Jeremy Loops), Greenpop has launched Trees for Zambia, an initiative that aims to combat the high deforestation rate in Zambia. With its volunteers, Greenpop plans to plant more than 5000 trees in Livingstone during July 2012. Zambia has the second highest deforestation rate in the world; to curb this rate, volunteers are being called upon to get involved. Do you dig trees?



Well, do you?

I do. In order to gain some first-hand experience, and to taste what the mission in Zambia would be like, I joined Greenpop on one of their [plant days](#). We planted 40 trees in an hour-and-a-half at [Blossom Street Primary in Athlone](#), Cape Town with the help of the school and its pupils. The outcome was pretty satisfying, and the experience, enriching. Three-weeks of planting indigenous trees in a beautiful southern African country suddenly sounds

therapeutic.

Planting areas in Zambia include the Victoria Falls World Heritage Site, overlooking the Victoria Falls, Dambwa Forest, a release site for a lion rehabilitation program, and Mukuni Village situated on the outskirts of Livingstone. School children will help plant fruit trees at their schools around Livingstone and will be educated about their natural environment.

5000 trees, three weeks

Planting 5000 trees in 21 days seems a hefty task, but Lauren O'Donnell, director of marketing and communications at Greenpop, is confident that with the help of volunteers, school children, subsistence farmers and community members, it can be achieved.

"We have planted 1000 trees in one day before with 100 volunteers, so we know we can do it. The planting for the project will happen slowly and methodically, and a lot of education will be involved. We have also planned each day out carefully, so we are confident it will all happen beautifully. It's a mammoth task, but with good planning, it will seem easy!" says O'Donnell.



Plant day at Blossom Street Primary School.



Volunteers, schools kids team up to plant trees.

Here are some of the goals of Trees for Zambia:

- Start reforestation to replace the pioneer trees, allowing for new growth and regeneration of rich soil content.
- Develop a culture of planting trees within communities through conservation education, and by teaching people how to plant and look after trees.
- Educate children on their natural environment, and help feed them by planting fruit trees at underprivileged schools.
- Promote conservation farming methods in the local community that will stop erosion and soil degradation, and create more cost-efficient farms.
- Start a micro tree nursery enterprise at a number of subsistence farms, so that Greenpop can provide farmers with an additional income by buying trees from them.
- Create an exciting and stimulating program of practical work, lectures and workshops for international volunteers, through which they can educate themselves and be actively involved in environmental issues.

Catalyst for Trees for Zambia

"Greenpop started in September 2010 and soon afterwards we were contacted by a tree grower in Livingstone wanting to do a large socially beneficial project. The thought was daunting at the time, but it aligned with our overarching goal to plant trees throughout Africa and we took on the challenge. We jumped in at the deep-end and have learned so much along the

way. We've been developing the idea for over a year now and are excited that it is happening and amazing partnerships are being created," says O'Donnell.



Eager corporates looking for some CSI brownie points can get involved by [sponsoring trees](#). The project is also carbon registered with [PACE](#) allowing companies to support the initiative and also offset their carbon footprints. For the man in the street, there are other ways to get involved - one of them being to [join the Trees for Zambia project](#). If you can't make it, then perhaps gift a tree via www.indiegogo.com/reforestation-africa.

"The issue of deforestation and climate change is not country specific - it affects us all. Zambia is in a difficult situation and if it becomes desertified in the next few decades, Zambian people will need to go somewhere - so it's a challenge that we all need to face together," says O'Donnell.

Trees for Zambia, ongoing campaign

From 1 - 22 July, Greenpop volunteers from around the world will be situated on the banks of the Maramba River and hosted by the [Maramba River Lodge](#) in the Mosi-Oa-Tunya National Park. Apart from taking a hands-on approach in fighting deforestation, volunteers may attend environmental lectures and workshops, and key-note presentations by high-profile speakers. They'll also have enough free time to explore the country and partake in some of the [fun activities](#) in the area, including bungee jumping, white river rafting, kayaking, game drives etc.

Based in Cape Town, Greenpop's mission is to green under-greened areas and combat deforestation in southern Africa. Trees for Zambia will be the start of an ongoing campaign to make Zambia a greener and more sustainable place. For more info on the Trees for Zambia project, go to www.greenpop.org/projects/trees-for-zambia/, email zambia@greenpop.org, or call + 27 (0)21 461 9265.

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