



Ellyanne Wanjiku – Kenyan Environmental activist

At nine years old, Ellyanne Wanjiku has been the driving force behind the planting of 250,000 trees in Kenya. When Ellyanne was in kindergarten, she learned about Kenyan environmental activist Wangari Maathai, who fiercely defended public land from the government's development plans and through her nonprofit the Green Belt Movement, paid women to plant tree nurseries throughout the country. Inspired by the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Ellyanne decided to follow in her footsteps by planting trees.

After planting her first tree — an orange tree in the family's back yard — Ellyanne found ways to continue planting more. With permission, she began planting trees in Nairobi's Karura Forest with friends and eventually, was invited to organize tree-planting activities for companies as part of team-building events and corporate social responsibility activities.

In 2016, she founded the nonprofit Children With Nature, and has set up tree nurseries in 80 public schools in communities where children lack nutritious meals. Through the partnership, children plant seedlings in bags at school, nurture them as they grow into trees, and the schools sell the seedlings in their community to generate income. In addition, the students — some of whom Dorothy says may not have dinner at home — plant fruit trees at the school, so they can access free, nutrient-rich fruit.

Through her organization and speaking engagements at elementary schools, Ellyanne often educates other children about climate change, deforestation and plastic pollution. She tells them to start taking small actions towards being environmentally conscious.