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How a Treedom project comes to life. Cooperation, perseverance and transparency.

Treedom projects are stories of collaboration and perseverance, often becoming stories of friendship and tenacity among a group of people who share a common goal. Treedom's Forestry Managers, expert agronomists, contact NGOs or associations already present in the project areas. These become the main points of contact that allow Treedom to maintain a bond with local farmers. The Forestry Managers will also visit regularly in person.

Together, they draw up a forest plan. The combination of species is different every time, because it must enable farmers to harvest the first fruit within a few years of planting, whilst also depending on the soil and climate conditions of the area in question. The final choice must always respect the biodiversity of the project area and potentially enrich it.

Once the species to plant have been selected, we begin by creating a nursery as close as possible to the areas where the trees will be planted. The reason is simple. Having our own production allows greater control over the quality of the seedlings and minimises travel to different countries, because most beneficiaries are located near the nursery.

These are no aseptic environments with white plastic and neat little seedlings. Treedom nurseries are often built with recycled materials, old boards, fruit boxes and dusty bottles, but they're born from great dedication and patience.

When they are ready to be planted into the earth, the trees are distributed to the women and men who will take care of them, often complete with a colourful, celebratory ceremony. Like all worthwhile experiences, it's the beginning of something new, beautiful and challenging.

Once planted in the ground, every single tree is photographed and geolocated to ensure the transparency and traceability of each project. The Forestry Managers receive the aggregated data in maps and check the photos one by one, to make sure the photos match the species and that the young trees are doing well.

With saintlike patience, they check that each one has been grafted correctly, there are no weeds around it that threaten to suffocate it, and the hole it's been placed in is large enough to hold water.

And then?



And since success is contagious, it's not uncommon for the life cycle of projects to look more like a circle than a straight line. It can happen that some communities close to the ones we've involved get in touch with us spontaneously to start working together. This is what happened to Federico, Project Manager of a Treedom project in Haiti.

and the farmers have now acquired all the skills to keep taking care of them on their own.

A few days ago, I received a call from an unknown number.

What with the interference and getting lost in translation, it took me a few minutes to sort out the pieces of the puzzle, figure out who was on the other end of the line, and above all what he wanted from me. The voice was that of a young man, who spoke to me about trees, but also crops and bees.

At the end of the phone call, I hung up with a smile on my face: a young beekeeper, in his early twenties, asking me if he could plant trees with us to "give a home" to his bees. For me, word of mouth – through which we often manage to involve new communities – is the best proof that our work is going in the right direction.

Each Treedom project is a small success of cooperation, with a happy ending that can take on different appearances over time.

Treedom's partners. The selection criteria and the importance of trust.

NGOs and associations are key players in Treedom projects. Often, thanks to many years of work, they have already built those relationships of trust and confidence that are so valuable for working well together with communities and local authorities.

Forestry projects sometimes arise from spontaneous applications that Treedom receives from these organisations; at other times it's Treedom itself that organises scouting in a specific area where it wants to take action.

Each partner is asked to detail their proposal, to ensure that it meets the same values and objectives pursued by Treedom.

The projects selected are all unique, but they have something in common:

- A significant environmental and social impact for the local communities involved
- The potential to grow over time, to plant more trees and involve more people.

Most of Treedom's partners are NGOs and small and medium-sized associations, and this is no accident. This choice stems from the desire not to lose direct contact with the farmers: we know their names, their story, and sometimes even their dreams. The larger the organisations, the more this bond frays, and the harder it is to repair. At the same time, these partners must be structured enough to quantify the benefits of the projects through field surveys and frequent monitoring of the work.

The NGOs and associations Treedom collaborates with guarantee a direct relationship with people, and therefore greater transparency for our customers and partners.



What agroforestry systems are and why Treedom has chosen this method.

Why is planting new trees so important, and what's the right way to do it?

The method Treedom has chosen involves planting trees in agroforestry systems. This method has its roots in popular wisdom, capable of doing good for the climate and for people.

In agroforestry systems, trees are added to existing annual crops (like corn, beans, wheat, etc.), which form the basis for the livelihood of farming families. Integration with trees doesn't upset the crops, but offers farmers the opportunity to diversify their income, creating an ecosystem where the different species can lend each other a hand.

For example?

Trees help retain moisture in the soil and thus promote crop growth. When positioned strategically, they help to delimit crops and defend them from the most extreme climate events. What's more, fruit trees become an additional source of income and sustenance for the farmers.

Each Treedom project consists of a combination of species created according to the specific characteristics and needs of the individual location and the individual community. That's why each of our forestry projects is different, and requires a thorough explanation to describe the benefits. But all agroforestry systems have something in common: a silent and super-productive collaboration.

We know that we need long-term strategies to become more sustainable, which is why Treedom projects think in terms of cycles, not calendar years. Planting trees in agroforestry systems is a winning way to maximise the environmental, economic and social benefits these giants of the earth can generate.

Because in nature, nothing is thrown away and everything has a purpose.

The benefits of Treedom projects for the environment and biodiversity.

Trees are valuable allies in the fight against climate change because they produce oxygen and absorb CO_2 , trapping it in their trunks, branches and roots. By doing so, they improve air quality and help lower temperatures by removing CO_2 from the atmosphere.

But that's not all. Trees have many ways of making themselves indispensable.

- They support life, offering shelter and nourishment to various plant and animal species
- They promote biodiversity: a landscape rich in varied species is more resistant to disease and becomes a paradise for pollinating insects
- They create an undergrowth capable of intercepting rainwater and giving the soil time to gradually absorb it
- They absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere
- They counteract soil erosion thanks to their roots
- They offer shade to smaller plants
- They protect crops from winds and increasingly frequent extreme climate events

• Wood for cooking can also be obtained from the branches of some species (such as Grevillea, Gliricidia and Cassia), thus avoiding cutting down the entire tree

(treedom)

The socio-economic benefits for the communities involved in Treedom projects.

Treedom projects aim to have a positive impact not only on the environment they act on, but also on the people who live there. For this reason, project areas are located in developing countries, where the benefits of trees can really make a difference.

A practical example?

We often work in areas where the practice of annual monoculture has taken hold, such as corn, beans, cereals or wheat. That's because these crops grow very quickly and can provide a first harvest just a few months after sowing.

But as well as impoverishing the soil, the choice of monocultures exposes farmers to market fluctuations and the unpredictable climate.

At a time when both are unstable, it's a risk these communities cannot afford to take.

Treedom projects don't upset the productive nature of the farmers' land: the previous crops are also preserved, but are integrated with tree species that will improve their production capacities.

• All the trees planted remain the property of the farmers who take care of them

• Treedom finances the production of seedlings and the entire phase of training, distribution and mapping the trees

- Communities are trained step by step, acquiring skills they can transfer to others in turn
- Fruit trees offer farmers an extra income opportunity and enrich their diet
- Some trees can provide branches, leaves and fronds which are also used as fodder or to build fences for animals

• Some species are indispensable as medicinal plants for communities which, without easy access to medical infrastructure, still rely heavily on traditional medicine. For example, the Neem tree is also called "the healer of all ailments". There are almost endless uses for every part of this tree, from the bark to the leaves: it's used to lower fever, treat inflammation and even brush teeth!

Taking action for the long term. How the virtuous circle of Treedom projects works.

Treedom's chosen method involves planting trees in agroforestry systems. It's a process of care and maintenance that lasts over the years, and doesn't end with simple planting.

It's an investment in the future that requires time and trust, because the production times of an agroforestry system are much longer than those that local farmers could face alone.

For this reason, the aim is always to create a coexistence of annual crops (like corn, wheat and beans) and trees, and is why Treedom is committed to supporting farmers during the years when they're not yet productive, providing the seedlings and financing the training needed to learn how to care for them.

In the long run, this means:

- Multiplying farmers' harvests, and therefore their income opportunities
- Transferring skills and professionalism to local communities
- Avoiding the use of chemical products or synthetic fertilisers, because the soil is naturally rich in nutrients
- Avoiding the use of pesticides, because a welcoming ecosystem for insects that defend plants from parasites is recreated
- Improving the resilience of crops and trees to extreme climate events
- Restoring the biodiversity of project areas by favouring native species

The SDGs. What they are and how Treedom projects contribute to them.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by all UN member states in 2015. It is a global partnership dedicated to reducing inequalities and stimulating economic growth, working together to preserve our oceans and forests.

With tree planting in Asia, Africa, South America and Italy, Treedom contributes to achieving the following 10 Goals to ensure a sustainable future.

- No poverty
- Zero hunger
- Quality education
- Gender equality
- Economic growth
- Responsible consumption
- Climate action
- Biodiversity
- Reduced inequalities
- Partnerships for the goals

The role of local communities and the voices from the field.

Involving local communities is essential, because ensuring their trees are profitable (and therefore useful) is the best guarantee of longevity we can offer. It also means giving farmers an alternative to practices that are as harmful to the environment as they are risky for their livelihood. Treedom projects aim to have a positive impact not only on the immediate environment that they act on, but also on the people who live there. For this reason, project areas are located in developing countries, where the benefits of trees can really make a difference.

Treedom offers their farmers specific training on managing fruit trees, forest heritage and the most common diseases afflicting the species they care for.

Treedom's Forestry Managers regularly visit each project area and over time create relationships and friendships with farmers, experiencing firsthand the impact the projects have on their lives.

Voices from the field:

"Since I got my trees, I've reaped so many benefits. We can eat the fruit or sell it at the market. Soon we'll get rich!" Everlyne, a farmer in Haiti.

"I have three avocado trees, I'm very happy. My dream is to make sure my children can study up to university." Nadine, a farmer in Cameroon.

Dickson, Kenya Project Manager, summarises the collaboration with Treedom as follows: "We've given our farmers the tools to manage their land sustainably."



The role of women in Treedom projects.

Women are an active part of our agroforestry projects: from creating the nursery, to transporting the seedlings, to maintaining the trees. Many hold positions of responsibility and deal with delicate tasks, such as grafting and geotagging trees.

In almost all parts of the world, caretaker roles are traditionally associated with women. In Africa as well as in South America, looking after the house and fields are typically female tasks, so women are naturally involved in Treedom's agroforestry projects. It's an opportunity to transfer their skills and professionalism without upsetting the cultural habits of the communities involved in the projects.

Women learn how to grow a seedling from a seed, how to take care of it, how to graft, and how to geotag trees with GPS. They find themselves in possession of professional skills they can pass on to others, and with an additional income opportunity that they almost all decide to invest in their children's education.

FOR THOSE WHO PLANT IN AFRICA

We'll take the example of Juliana, the Nursery Manager of the RUCONET project in Tanzania. Juliana plays a crucial role, because she is responsible for the entire life cycle of the nursery. She manages the purchasing of seeds, coordinates the staff who work at the nursery every day, and ensures the well-being of the seedlings.

She's the one who entrusts them to the farmers according to their requests and the characteristics of each area, and who coordinates the grafting activities that allow the trees to become productive more quickly.

It's a task she carries out with a pride she makes no attempt to hide, and over time she's become a real point of reference for her community (who admire her determination and the colourful clothes she wears on the tree delivery days).

FOR THOSE WHO PLANT IN SOUTH AMERICA

In the Huehuetenango region, an area in the northwest of Guatemala, right on the border with Mexico, the currents of warm air meet those of cold air from the Cuchumatanes mountains, allowing coffee to be grown up to very high altitudes.

Huehuetenango coffee is highly prized, and for this reason its cultivation has traditionally been reserved for men. But things are changing.



Here Treedom has inaugurated a project focused on coffee, involving almost exclusively enterprising indigenous women, who have long been looking for a way to enter this market. They will oversee the supply chain from seeds to seedlings, from daily care to harvesting the coffee fruit. With a bit of luck and Treedom's support, they will be able to sell their coffee to eco-friendly circuits or set up agricultural cooperatives to access the market directly.



More than just scattering seeds: Treedom's transparency and traceability.

Planting a tree is not just about scattering seeds in the field. It's a process of planning, training, care and maintenance that lasts years. That's why it was fundamental for Treedom, right from its first steps in 2010, to build a traceability system that guaranteed the transparency of the projects.

Photographing and geolocating the trees, which are planted one by one, takes a lot of time and energy. Forestry Managers kneel in front of each individual tree, take a picture and record its GPS coordinates.

But it's worth it, because this step is essential to check the status of the seedlings. Whether they're being watered enough, whether those that need it are supported by a stick or have the right mulch to protect them. It's a way for Forestry Managers to evaluate the professional skills and commitment of the project beneficiaries.

These materials (photos and GPS coordinates) also serve to create the tree page for each user to follow the story of the project they're part of.



Making the benefits of Treedom projects measurable. CO_2 absorption estimates.

Over the course of its life, each tree absorbs CO_2 (carbon dioxide) from the atmosphere and stores it in its wooden parts. This process removes CO_2 from the atmosphere, and its effects are greater the longer the trees are able to grow and live.

To calculate CO₂ absorption, our Treedom Standard uses a model built by the Department for Innovation in Biological, Agro-Food and Forest Systems at the University of Tuscia. Taking into account various elements (the species, the latitude and longitude of the location and the average lifespan of a tree), the model calculates the wood mass of each tree, and consequently the amount of carbon it is capable of absorbing from the atmosphere in the first 10 years of its life.

The data used to make these calculations comes from GlobAllomeTree, a database used specifically to calculate the storage capacity of carbon dioxide by trees. These calculations are therefore estimates – we cannot measure and weigh every tree every year, and some will be larger while others are smaller. This is true of all our projects. However, to ensure that our calculations are conservative rather than optimistic, Treedom always plants around 5-10% extra trees.