

Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai

Brief Summary

TAKING ROOT tells the story of the Green Belt Movement of Kenya and its founder Wangari Maathai, the first environmentalist and first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

Professor Maathai discovered her life's work by reconnecting with the rural women with whom she had grown up. They told her they were walking long distances for firewood, clean water was scarce, the soil was disappearing from their fields, and their children were suffering from malnutrition.

'Well, why not plant trees?' Maathai suggested. These women found themselves working successively against deforestation, poverty, ignorance, embedded economic interests, and government corruption, until they became a national political force that helped to bring down Kenya's 24-year dictatorship.

Through TV footage and chilling first person accounts, **TAKING ROOT** documents the dramatic confrontations of the 1980s and '90s and captures Maathai's infectious determination and unwavering courage. *Cinema verité* footage of the tree nurseries and the women and children who tend them brings to life the confidence and joy of people working to improve their own lives and ensure the future and vitality of their land.

TAKING ROOT captures a world-view in which nothing is perceived as impossible and presents an awe-inspiring profile of Maathai's thirty-year journey of courage to protect the integrally connected issues of the environment, human rights, and democracy.