

## Tree Concert (Germany)

<http://www.weforum.org/best-practices/creative-good/tree-concert-germany>

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### Tree Concert (Germany)

#### Scope of Good Practice

[BUND Friends of the Earth Germany](#) in Berlin stands for the protection and preservation of the city

trees. By introducing a unique and interactive campaign, BUND seeks support for the preservation of trees and

calls for donations.

#### The Problem Addressed by the Campaign

With almost 400,000 trees, Berlin is commonly known as the greenest of the European megacities. The

trees are part of the multifaceted cityscape of the German capital: they provide shade, contribute to the

good climate and are responsible for the famous Berlin air with its peculiar scent. The city ' s tree population

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however, is in decline. Local authorities lack enough money for essential tree care. The trees also suffer

from weather extremes like storms and droughts, insects and fungal infestation, and road salt in the winter. As

a result the number of trees that have to be cut down in Berlin exceeds those that are newly planted by 2,000 every

year.

### Background Research

If a tree falls and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound? It ' s a proverbial question known around

the world. But last year, an environmental group in Germany decided to flip the proverb on its head to ask a

very different question: “ What if trees made sounds that everyone heard – would fewer trees fall? ”

### Strategy

Together with Ketchum Pleon, BBDO Proximity and prominent artists from the creative pool “ Gang of

Berlin, ” BUND relied on an integrated approach to achieve its goal using public relations, web, social media,

advertising and events to inform the public about tree preservation and generate donations. The biggest

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challenge of the campaign was to harmoniously integrate the natural surroundings. This is very important

because at the heart of the campaign lies nothing more and nothing less than a Berlin chestnut tree.

### Creative

A nearly 100-year-old chestnut tree was transformed into a street musician and played music for the

preservation of all his fellow trees. When the first chestnut in the Berlin park of Monbijou began to fall down in

early September 2012, a construction of membranes installed underneath the tree translated the bounce of

every chestnut into beautiful sound sequences. In a harmonious concert with the wind and the creaking of the

tree, a unique organic sound composition came into being that in the dark, accompanied by dynamic light

effects: the Tree Concert. Visitors were invited to listen to the concert and to donate to the unusual street artist

and his music. If someone sent in their donation and name by text, the tree would thank the donor through

a personal greeting that appeared on the membrane. The Tree Concert lasted for one week.

### Media

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The official opening of the Tree Concert was preceded by a special media event on site. Journalists were invited to see and listen to the unusual concert for themselves. Through press releases, background texts and interviews with the manager of BUND Friends of the Earth Germany in Berlin, the news about the Tree Concert spread to various blogs and conventional media, both nationwide and worldwide. The Tree Concert was available on the webpage of the campaign as well as on different social media platforms. On YouTube several videos were displayed that showed the installation. Interested people could also broadcast the event on Twitter, Facebook and Google+. Additionally, 2,000 posters were put up in Berlin ' s trendiest districts Mitte, Prenzlauer Berg and Kreuzberg, drawing attention to the campaign among Berliners. Around the tree in Monbijou Park several displays were installed to inform visitors about the event.

## Impact

The Tree Concert exemplified the engagement of BUND in preserving the city trees. It raised awareness of the topic of tree preservation among the public and generated significant donations. The media coverage was

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stunning. The campaign was discussed not only in the conventional media but also on the social web.

55 clippings were generated, among them reports in five Berlin newspapers (circulation: 778,000),

including Der Tagesspiegel, Die Welt, B.Z., Berliner Morgenpost, Neues Deutschland. The media coverage

was very positive; it included coverage in two regional TV stations (TVB, RBB), two news agencies (dapd,

epd), two radio stations (Spreeradio, FluxFM), specialized media for advertisement, marketing and

communications, like Horizont and W&V, different online media, blogs and many other outlets. Internationally,

the media coverage ranged from US-Design blogs to African and French architect blogs to culture blogs in

Russia. Up to 500 visitors came to the concert every day. Donations for the Tree Concert were also very

successful: In September 2012, BUND received a 54 percent increase in donations from September 2011. The

number of donors grew immensely.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

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Even though the last chestnut has fallen down, and the installation was disassembled, the Tree Concert will

continue to exist. Together with popular DJs, BUND is producing a remix compilation of all the chestnut sounds.

The core idea of the campaign will be preserved: all revenues from the CD will go to the preservation of the city

trees.