

KOMBIT

THE COOPERATIVE

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**TIMBERLAND KICKS OFF NATIONAL TOUR OF DOCUMENTARY FILM,
“KOMBIT: THE COOPERATIVE”**

Commitment to plant five million trees sows seeds of hope in Haiti

STRATHAM, N.H., February 16, 2016 – Global outdoor lifestyle brand [Timberland](#) announces the national tour of “[KOMBIT: The Cooperative](#),” a documentary film chronicling a five-year project to reforest Haiti in partnership with the [Smallholder Farmers Alliance](#) (SFA), a Haitian nonprofit farmer cooperative dedicated to reforesting the country.

In 2010, Timberland made a Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) commitment to plant five million trees in five years in Haiti, aimed at reversing the country’s dangerous decline in tree populations. That commitment evolved into the development of a large-scale, self-sustaining agroforestry program owned and operated by smallholder farmers, creating lasting value well beyond the trees themselves. The film documents the story of Timberland’s journey, and in partnership with Film Sprout, will be screened with local nonprofits, universities and other partners in more than 250 communities across the country. To find or request a screening near you, visit [KombitFilm.com](#).

Rebuilding Against the Odds

Haiti’s biological diversity was one of the richest in the Caribbean and its mountainous topography included lush forests, beaches and arid deserts. Today, with less than two percent tree cover, the country is threatened by severe deforestation and desertification caused by natural disasters, over-use of land by farmers and livestock and harvesting of trees to sell as charcoal. “[KOMBIT: The Cooperative](#),” produced by the award-winning filmmakers at [Found Object](#), follows as Timberland’s global commitment to tree planting quickly progresses into the empowerment and growth of a community of Haitian smallholder farmers.

The majority of these farmers, numbering 2.1 million in Haiti alone, lack proper training and live in poverty, many forced to have their children work rather than attend school. Timberland and SFA worked together to create a model whereby farmers voluntarily tend to a network of nurseries that produce one million trees annually. In return, farmers receive training, crop seeds, seedlings and tools that help restore tree cover and increase the farmers’ own crop yields – a mutually beneficial and sustainable cycle. The full story of this sustainable cycle is now being told through film to inspire others to explore innovative thinking and partnerships around the world.

“As a filmmaker and partner at Found Object, I’ve had a chance to tell stories of social impact around the globe, but rarely the chance to return again and again to affected communities to tell a developing story,” said Gabriel London, partner and creative director of Found Object. “As *KOMBIT* begins, you see a Haitian community accustomed to broken promises and intractable problems being promised solutions and a way forward. We didn’t know where that would lead. For the next five years, the unfolding story became the vehicle to explore what goes right and what goes wrong as an unlikely set of allies tackle twin challenges of farmers’ livelihoods and epic deforestation. In that way, we weren’t just presenting a model, we were testing it, recording it and finding its real impact.”

Making Change Through Social Entrepreneurism

Timberland challenged its partners in Haiti, who eventually founded the SFA, to create something that wouldn’t be contingent on a donor-based model, but rather have a lasting positive impact for the people of Haiti beyond just writing checks. They successfully worked together to create a sustainable, long-term solution that would actually make a difference.

“With Timberland’s impetus we found a way to provide small-scale farmers in Haiti with the three things they needed most: tools, better quality seed and specialized training to improve their agricultural practices,” said Hugh Locke, co-founder of the Smallholder Farmers Alliance. “Doing so resulted in much more than the planting of five million trees – it has created real environmental, social and economic impact for farmers, prompting the creation of new farmer-run small businesses, including agricultural supply stores, marketing operations and now, what has become an export model for the moringa plant – a new ‘superfood.’”

To date, this self-sustaining business model has helped some 3,200 farmers increase productivity on their farmlands an average of 40 percent, resulting in increased household income of 50 percent, on average. The program has also resulted in increased access to education and healthcare, including an estimated 3,400 additional children of SFA members placed in school. Most recently, the development of an export model for “superfood” moringa is underway with the U.S. brand [Kuli Kuli](#), which hit shelves at Whole Foods markets in February 2016.

“Kombit’ is a Haitian Creole word for ‘a community working together toward a common goal,’” said Timote Georges, co-founder of the Smallholder Farmers Alliance. “This is exactly what happened over the last five years in Haiti as a result of Timberland’s vision. The farmers have found their voice, they have renewed their passion – they feel completely empowered and are eager to continue building the cooperative. I personally can’t wait to see what we do next.”

Documenting the Journey

To learn more about the SFA or “KOMBIT: The Cooperative”, visit [KombitFilm.com](#), where you can find local show times and/or request a screening of the film in your market. Following the national tour this summer, the film will become available for rent and/or purchase at [KombitFilm.com](#).

About Timberland

[Timberland](#) is a global leader in the design, manufacturing and marketing of premium footwear, apparel and accessories for the outdoor lifestyle. Best known for the original yellow boot introduced in 1973, Timberland today outfits consumers from toe-to-head, with versatile collections that reflect the brand’s rich heritage of craftsmanship, function and style. Timberland markets lifestyle products under the Timberland® and Timberland Boot Company® brands, and industrial footwear and workwear under the Timberland PRO® brand. Its products are sold throughout the world in leading department and specialty stores as well as company-owned retail locations and online. Timberland’s dedication to making quality products is matched by an unwavering commitment to environmental and social responsibility – to make things better for its products, the outdoors, and communities around the globe. To learn more about Timberland, a brand of VF Corporation (NYSE: VFC), please visit [timberland.com](#) or follow us along the modern trail @timberland.

About Found Object

Found Object creates story-led social impact campaigns that inform, inspire and influence. Founded in 2009 by filmmaker Gabriel London and producer Charlie Sadoff with the aim of harnessing the power of storytelling in the social impact space, Found Object has spawned award winning documentaries and impactful campaigns for leading companies, nonprofits and government clients. Building on the partners’ documentary film background, Found Object works to leverage innovative ideas through powerful stories to create ever-greater social impact. Be it clean energy or the health and wellness of our nation’s veterans, criminal justice stories or innovations to tackle global poverty, we believe great stories, well-told can change the world.

About Smallholder Farmers Alliance

The Smallholder Farmers Alliance (SFA) applies business solutions to help feed and reforest a renewed Haiti by establishing market-based farmer cooperatives, building agricultural export markets, creating rural farm businesses and contributing to community development.