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YOUR

UPDATE



2021 Issue 20



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Dear supporters,

Thank you so much for helping to make the recent Future Forest appeal such a success. We're delighted to confirm that, thanks to your support, the project will be going ahead as planned. Now that the appeal has ended the hard work of planning and delivering, the project begins. You can find more information on the appeals success on the opposite page.

Many of you may remember the last UK aid match appeal, which ran in 2019, the She Grows appeal. We're excited to share the news that the She Grows project is now at the halfway stage. You can find an update on the progress made on pages 4-7.

We also have some incredible results from a completed project in Burkina Faso. The project focused on increasing household income from tree products and on improving food availability and nutrition for families. You can read about some of the achievements you've helped make possible on page 8-9.

Thank you so much for standing with communities across dryland Africa. None of the projects you'll read about would've been possible without you.

Best wishes



Melanie Knight, Director of Fundraising and Communications

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appeal success!**



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**Results and learnings
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on forest products**



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An update on the Future Forest appeal

Thank you so much to all of you who supported the Future Forest appeal. We're delighted to announce that the campaign was a huge success exceeding the target of £325,875. So thank you to all of you who donated. The project will mean so much to communities in the Metema region of Ethiopia who will benefit from it. We'll be announcing the verified total in the next month or so on the website and on social media so look out for that.



We'll also be getting in touch with everyone who donated to the appeal to let you know the final total raised and the amount that was eligible to be matched by the UK government.



Virtual Forest

The virtual forest is here to stay! After launching in April as part of the Future Forest appeal, the virtual forest has proved popular and we now have over 1,000 trees named by supporters. Due to its success we can confirm the Virtual Forest is staying on the website. That means you can still discover our virtual forest community by heading to www.treecaid.org/virtualforest.

The virtual forest allows you to be part of a growing movement. If you donate online, you can choose to add your own personalised tree to the virtual forest. You can either add your own name to the forest or dedicate a tree to a loved one. You can also share a link to your personalised page with friends and family – helping spread the word about the vital work you support, tackling poverty and the climate crisis in the drylands of Africa.

Project launch in Burkina Faso

In January 2021 Tree Aid launched the 3rd phase of the non-timber forest products project. This phase of the project will focus on supporting rural households including internally displaced persons, women and young people to improve their food and nutritional security. They'll get help to increase their household income through trading non-timber forest products.



An official launch took place in June. Chaired by the Minister of Environment, with the Minister of Agriculture and other officials in attendance along with partners in the development sector.

This large-scale project will have a big impact helping communities to improve their lives. To get an idea of the scope and ambition of this 3rd phase you can turn to page 8 where you can read some of the incredible results from the 1st phase of the project which recently finished.

She Grows project

Working with 1,000 women in Mali to grow sustainable businesses



She Grows project

Now that the project is at the halfway stage, we're delighted to be able to report back on how the project is progressing.

Funding for the project was raised via a UK aid match scheme in 2019; the appeal ran between 1st April 2019 and 30th June 2019 and raised £343,542. With match funding from the UK government the grand total raised by the campaign was £638,091.

The She Grows project began in 2020 and will conclude in 2023. The project is helping 1,134 women in Mali to grow trees, produce food and earn an income.

It has already empowered the women taking part to secure access to trees and forest resources. With tools and training, they are turning tree products like fruit and nuts into nutritious food to eat, and products like soap and shea butter to sell.

With training in key business skills and links to buyers, women are increasing their household income. That means that they are able to gain financial independence and increase their ability to support their children.

Project Progress

The project began in February 2020 around the time that COVID-19 was declared a pandemic. Although this delayed the start of the project, it allowed for a change of priorities in those first months. The survey phase of the project was adapted to include essential information about the global health crisis to the people we work with. Thankfully, cases of coronavirus have remained low in Mali and across West Africa. Since then the project has been able to continue at pace and is making good progress towards achieving the goals originally set out:

1 Long-term secured access to forest resources granted to women's cooperatives in 10 villages

Ten women's cooperatives have been established and we're working with them so that they can gain legal registration as a group. This is essential for them to be able to secure access to forest resources - something that hasn't always been easy for women in rural Mali.

A radio programme covering gender issues and including both female and male community leaders was developed and aired on local radio in June. Radio is a trusted source of information in rural areas and can help educate and change attitudes. Across societies and cultures, gender inequalities are stubbornly engrained. The radio production provided

a way for local leaders and community members to talk on the subject and challenge perceptions.

Two successful training workshops covering the concept of gender and gender perspectives, roles and equality in the communes and beyond were held in September 2020. The training also looked at gender-based violence, both in general as well as in relation to the current situation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A number of workshops for the women leaders, covering land tenure rights, public speaking and communications techniques took place before the end of the project's first year.



2 Effective and sustainable land management practices adopted and implemented by women's cooperatives in 10 villages

Two members of each of the cooperatives took part in training on soil and water conservation (SWC), assisted natural regeneration (ANR) techniques and production of seedlings in July. In a training-of-trainers approach, these 20 women have shared this knowledge with the rest of their cooperative groups. A total of 40 women also attended two video sessions on soil and water conservation and each of the 10 villages has now been provided with a full kit of equipment to support the implementation of ANR and SWC practices.

A restructuring of the natural resource management committees has also been carried out in the participating villages, increasing both the overall number of women on the committees as well as their empowerment through appointment to strategic positions. A total of 50 women,

five from each cooperative group, have been brought into the natural resource management committees, taking on positions including supervisor, administrative secretary, and conflict secretary.

All 10 of the women's co-operatives have received a plot of land from their community. Four of the co-operatives have chosen to focus on beekeeping and have set up apiaries on their plots. Each apiary contains around 16 beehives and will allow the women to practice beekeeping all year round. The other six co-operatives are using their plots of land to focus on agroforestry activities. All 10 co-operatives are collecting and processing shea nuts. But each one has also selected another three tree products that they will focus on. These include baobab, tamarind, balanites and locust bean.





At the halfway point

Setou is now taking part in the She Grows project that you and other supporters made possible. We spoke to her recently and she told us:

“The project gave us plants. The project trained us in agroforestry. The project brought us women together, trained us on lots of different topics, agroforestry, how to plant, the importance of all that.”

“The project started not that long ago but I think it’s going well, it’s started helping us and teaching us things we didn’t know. The project has helped me to blossom and helped me to be less stressed. I was a bit timid but I’ve got better at expressing myself in front of other people.”

The project has helped us to set up gardens, it’s given us equipment to build stone bunds and other methods of conserving soil and water. I think we can see things a bit more clearly now, we have a bit more hope for our future and for that of our children.

I am glad the project is continuing, it will increase our capabilities, equip us, and strengthen us women. On top of the gardening, the project has also helped us to diversify our incomes. If a woman has a bit more income, she can flourish a bit more.

This project is truly welcome, it’s as if it’s helped us women come out of obscurity. It must continue, it’s given us more hope for the future.”

Before the project

You might remember Setou who featured in the She Grows appeal in April 2019. She lives in the Koulikoro region of Mali. Like many women across the drylands of Africa, she is dependent on the land and trees for survival.

Before the project started she told us of the difficulties she faced. She relies on farming a small patch of land to provide for her family. But the effects of the climate crisis and deforestation are making this even more difficult:

“Agriculture is all we do, and we are entirely dependent on the rain. I do not have access to good soil. The produce from the fields is unable to feed us throughout the year. I cannot save any money, the need is always there.”

Soil degradation and inconsistent rain are just some of the problems Setou faces. Shea nuts can provide food and a source of income, particularly during the lean season. But she could never make much money from selling shea butter by herself.

“It’s thanks to Tree Aid that we have this project. They gathered us women together and they gave us training on how to farm sustainably - the first training that we had was on the fight against erosion, it was me who had this training and I came back and trained the other women in the village. I benefited from the training - the project allowed me to understand a lot of things and to train up other women.”

Growing food and incomes

from forest products in rural Burkina Faso

Completed project January 2017 - January 2021

The recently completed project was one of Tree Aid's largest – spread across four regions in Burkina Faso. The project worked with 98,241 people from rural households to improve their food and nutritional security. It supported communities to improve their incomes through the sustainable management and use of non-timber forest products.



The challenges for local communities

Climatic shocks like floods, droughts and irregular rainfall are common challenges. Many people living in rural areas are reliant on agriculture, animal breeding and forestry. Climate shocks mean there often isn't enough food to feed their families all year round. Natural resources are also under pressure. These factors affect the level of food and nutritional security of the rural populations in these areas.

Project objectives

The key aims of the project were to:

1. Increase the overall production of Non-timber Forest products (NTFPs) and the transformation of the raw materials into products with greater value.
2. Increase the consumption of NTFPs at the household level to reduce malnutrition in children under five.
3. Increase the number of laws and decisions made by the authorities and local authorities in favour of preservation and promotion of NTFPs.

Natural Resource Management

The project helped implement **natural resource management measures across 93 sites and 9,919 hectares**. These measures concern the management and local use of natural resources. They included setting up community-managed enclosures, the utilisation of farmer managed natural regeneration and reforestation.



9,919
hectares of land now
under sustainable
management



375,000
trees grown in project tree
nurseries and planted
out into communities



79
locally-led forest
management plans
developed

Increasing incomes through enterprise development

To help increase household incomes the project worked with **179 village co-operatives and enterprise groups to devise enterprise development plans**. Groups received assistance with investment in equipment and encouragement to focus on one type of tree product. This and a focus on value chain development led to huge growth in the income amongst Village Tree Enterprise (VTE) members. The additional income from the sale of products is spent primarily on the purchase of food, schooling for children, clothing and medical expenses.

Annual average (mean) household income in 2017 was \$551

In 2020 this had increased to \$1,439, a 161% increase

Amongst VTE members, this has increased to \$1,579, a 186% increase



186% increase in household income for VTEs from 2017–2020

Such a dramatic rise in cash income is hugely significant. It means families have an opportunity to save or invest in other opportunities to earn an income. It means they have a buffer and resilience to economic or climate shocks.

Improving food and nutrition security

Hunger and food security is a real issue for rural communities in Burkina Faso. Calorific intake was recorded at the beginning and the end of the project. The results showed a dramatic increase in the source of calories from tree foods amongst project households. From almost nothing to 25% of calories in 2020. This has reduced the dependency of households on agricultural crops for food security. And it means that **2,656 households are no longer undernourished**.



2,656
households no longer
undernourished



1,981
children no longer
malnourished



212
nutrition gardens set up and
being used to grow nutritious food,
benefiting around 6,379 people

Growing nutrition gardens

The project has raised awareness of the nutritional value of tree foods and helped to increase household consumption. **The setup of 212 nutrition gardens** has helped provide an important, complimentary source of nutrition for households. The availability of fresh leaves for a large part of the year is helping to improve food and nutritional security for families.

“My family has greater awareness of the value of Non Timber Forest Products. Our living conditions have improved and we have greater variety and quality of food available.

Guindo a project participant in Ouahigouya village, Burkina Faso

I hope you enjoyed reading about some of the progress achieved on the project. If you would like more detail an 18-page learning brief is being published on our website in September. Head to <https://www.treeaid.org/publications> to find out more.

Fantastic Fundraising

A huge thank you to all of you who helped raise money or spread the word about the Future Forest appeal. The appeal ran 12th April - 11th July 2021 and during that time every pound raised or donated was matched by the UK government.

It's thanks to you and other amazing supporters that the campaign was such a huge success. We're thankful to every single one of you who got involved. Some of the fundraisers who helped where:

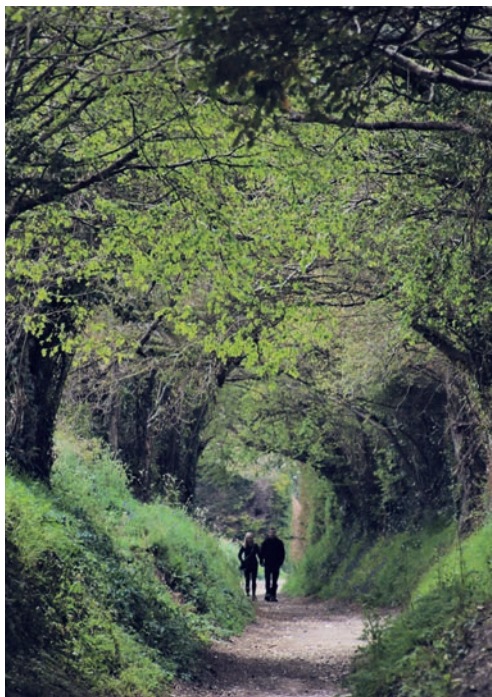
Wooton Area Climate Action Network

A huge thank you to the Wooton Area Climate Action Network who organised a series of activities to raise funds for the Future Forest appeal. They took part in their own Great Green Walk and members of the group had covered over 400 miles last time we checked in with them. Their youngest participant, Charlotte, also did a cake sale. It's great to see a grassroots organisation making a difference in their local community. We were honoured that the Wooton Area Climate Action Network decided to fundraise for Tree Aid. The group has participants aged 8-75 and they've raised over £500 so far!



Steve Lewis walked the South Downs Way and raised over £1,300!

The South Down Way is a national trail following the old routes and droveways along the chalk ridges of the South Downs. The route is 100 miles long in total, and as you can see from the pictures, it's a beautiful trail.



Get involved!

We are keen to chat to more of you who want to get your local community involved, the funds you raise all contribute to the Great Green Wall – growing trees, restoring the land and creating green jobs. If you have an idea for fundraising, or would like some resources, please do contact our Supporters Team on info@treeaid.org.

Volunteering opportunity

We are also recruiting a Community Fundraiser volunteer! If you have experience with building relationships with community groups and events, we would love to hear from you. Head to the website or get in touch to apply.





**THANK YOU
FOR SUPPORTING
THE FUTURE FOREST
PROJECT**