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YOUR

UPDATE



2021 Issue 18



Inside this issue:

- **A new project starting in Ghana**
- **Sharing some incredible results from a completed project in Mali**
- **Plus a Daka river trees project update**

Dear supporters,

This issue of Update magazine marks an important time for Tree Aid's work in Mali so I was delighted, as Tree Aid's Mali Country Manager, to be asked to introduce it.

If you turn to pages 6 – 9, you will see the incredible work that has been going on in the country over the last three years. The pages refer to a project we ran with funding from Darwin Initiative and with our partner, Sahel Eco, to work with local communities to better manage their forest resources and to help lift them out of poverty.

Without giving too much away, we achieved a 34% decrease in poverty in the communities – that's 900 households who are now no longer living in poverty. During the project 345,000 new trees were planted and a further 327,000 regenerated! Turn to page 6 to find out more.

This issue, we are also calling on you to help raise money for us in a unique way – by holding a Tea for Trees event with your friends or community – see page 10 for more details. And turn to pages 4 and 5 for some updates on new and ongoing projects in Ghana.

Our work would not be possible without you so thank you for your ongoing support.

Regards

Amadou Tangara, Mali Country Manager



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New project starting in Ghana...

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...And some incredible results of a project just completed in Mali

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Fantastic Fundraising - Walking for the Great Green Wall



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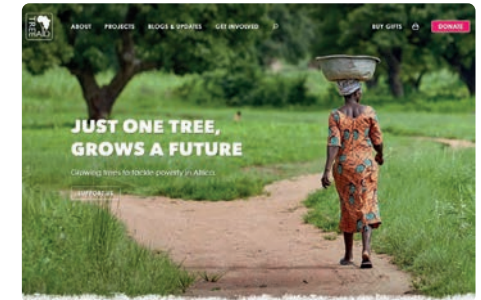
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News

New website launched!

Late last year, we launched our brand new website and online virtual shop! If you haven't already, head to www.treeaid.org to take a look around. We'd love to know what you think of it, if you have any feedback. You'll find lots of information on the impact of your support, stories from the countries we work in and from the people you help. You'll also find the latest news and views in our blogs section and some of the Update magazine back catalogue in case you've missed an issue!



Build your own forest!

We are pleased to announce that Tree Aid has teamed up with MyForest – a platform designed to enable users to create their own virtual forest and support good causes at the same time. Take a look yourself at www.myforest.earth and start creating your forest today – look out for the Tree Aid “tiles” so you can continue to support people in the drylands of Africa to tackle poverty and the effects of the climate crisis with us!

Your impact in 2019-20

Last month, we published the impact of your support over the 2019-20 year. You may have received your own copy of the mini Impact Report by post. Together, we achieved some incredible things during this time – all made possible because of the loyal and generous support we receive from you and other supporters. Here's a little reminder of all that you made possible:



If you would like to receive a full copy of our full annual Impact Report, to be sent either by post or email, please get in touch with us on info@treeaid.org or 0117 909 6363. You can also see the full report at: www.treeaid.org/impact

Ghana : New project: Bongo Reforestation Project

In January this year, we embarked on a new reforestation project in Ghana with our partner Trees for All. The project is reforesting land around vital water sources in Ghana's Bongo District.

The Bongo area is severely degraded, the area is one of the driest in the region and the climate is erratic. Poverty is high here with 67% of people living in poverty. You may remember we worked in this area before; this new project will build on our work from 2012-17 to further improve the environment for rural communities living here.



In the first year, 400 lead farmers will be trained in agroforestry, soil and water conservation, soil fertility management (e.g. composting), nursery establishment and management, tree planting, bushfire management and bushfire belt creation.

We will establish two nurseries and provide the necessary equipment, including water pumps, seeds and other materials, as well as training on nursery practices. 150,000 trees will be planted by the Bongo River – species include African mahogany, Kapok and African locust bean.

Look out for further updates on this project soon!



Ghana : Project update: Transforming land and livelihoods

In the northern regions of Ghana, over half of the population live in poverty and rely on farmland for food and income. But the climate crisis is making rainfall unpredictable, and drought and floods are becoming more frequent and severe. Farmers are forced to overuse their land in an attempt to grow enough crops to eat and sell. As a result, soil that was once fertile is no longer able to support life. This means that many people are facing hunger and poverty.

The project is supporting farmers in the northern regions of Ghana to restore and protect the land. They are also be supported to earn an income through processing and selling tree products like shea butter. Farmers will learn sustainable agriculture techniques and develop 'Climate Adaption Plans' to help tackle the effects of the climate crisis. Women's farmer groups will also be supported with access to social protection schemes like savings groups and disaster relief funds.

Ghana : Project update: Restoring the Daka river

Through our project in partnership with Ecosia we are working with people living along the Daka River to grow trees and restore the river.

For many people in northern Ghana, the Daka River is a vital source of water for drinking, washing, cooking and farming. But a rapid loss of trees and soil fertility, and the effects of the climate crisis, mean that the river dries out for months on end. For local people, this makes growing enough food difficult. As a result, many people are living in poverty. But trees offer a solution. Through this project we are growing trees to restore the river and land, for now, and the future.

Project aims

We are working with local people to grow millions of trees to provide food and incomes and restore the river and land. The trees we plant mean stability and protection for the people living along the river. The roots stabilise the soil and prevent nutritious soil from being washed away in floods. They also help the land to stay fertile so that other crops can grow and provide communities with food.

Impact of the project so far

Almost three years into this project, we have grown nearly 1.5 million trees along the Daka River. We've also supported 775 farmers with tools and training to help them restore and protect the land. Some techniques they learnt include bushfire management, tree grafting and assisted natural regeneration - a method used to regenerate trees. With this technique, over 350,000 trees have been regenerated.

How you can help!

Donating to Tree Aid is still the most effective way to grow trees and support communities across the drylands. But, if you're looking for an extra way to make a difference – you can switch your search engine to Ecosia today. Visit www.ecosia.org and you can start supporting tree planting through your searches.



An update on our impact last year

Due to the COVID-19 global health crisis, we've had to adapt our project to ensure that we keep the people we work with safe and well. To support communities during the pandemic, relief items like rice, face masks and soap were distributed to 4,000 women. We also helped raise awareness of the coronavirus and how its spread can be prevented.

Over 1,500 people took part in training on social protection schemes like savings groups. Some community members also started to enhance their shea butter, honey and farm enterprises.

The project is funded by the European Union and implemented with our partners, ActionAid Ghana and URBANET.



Impressive results from the Strengthening Forest Management project in Mali

One of our projects in Mali has recently finished and we are delighted to share the results with you.

The problem

Located in the heart of West Africa, Mali is a fragile state facing drought, food insecurity and terrorism. 58% of the country lives below the poverty line. In the project region of Ségou, there have been sharp population increases from internal displacement and migration from the Saharan north of the country. This, alongside poverty, poor farming practices and the effects of the climate crisis, has led to over-exploitation and degradation of the natural resources that local people depend on to survive.

In particular, there has been an expansion of agriculture over the past three decades, resulting in the clearing of natural habitats, including forests.

This is having devastating effects on biodiversity, while the loss of natural resources is pushing people deeper into poverty.

In the arid south of Mali lies two very important forests that provide a vital source of food and income to many surrounding communities: Duwa and Sutèbwo. But over the years they have been struck by the full force of deforestation. Tree diversity has been severely reduced and the biodiversity loss deeply affects local communities, whose livelihoods are dependent on natural resources like shea and honey.



Tree Aid's solution

In July 2017, Tree Aid and Sahel Eco secured funding from Darwin Initiative to support communities in Duwa and Sutèbwo regions.

The project has been restoring land, planting trees, providing assistance to manage the forests sustainably and helping to establish village tree enterprises to improve livelihoods and increase incomes.

Project highlights

- 1,435 farmers took part in training to manage their natural resources.
- Over 345,000 new trees were planted and 327,000 trees restored.
- Soil and water conservation techniques were used to restore 8,300 hectares of degraded forestland.
- 192km of firebreaks were created around restored areas to stop the destruction of the forests and new trees.
- We worked with local authorities to ensure that forests are now managed by the local communities who depend on them.
- 44 new village tree enterprise groups were set up. The groups process shea and honey. They received support to improve quality and learnt new business skills.
- The enterprise groups helped to significantly increase the incomes of members. you can find out more on pages 8-9.

Mali : Delila's story

Delila is 35 years old and lives in Mankoina village in Mali. After the death of her husband, she found herself at the head of the family, solely responsible for her four children.

Determined to give them opportunities, she works hard to keep her children in education. She told us how your support and the project improved her life:

"Before, we would have four months of the lean, hungry season. Since I joined the project, I am with other women. We give each other ideas and we sell butter, almonds and other forest products together. It really makes it easier for me to take care of my children."

We have been trained in planting, natural regeneration and erosion control techniques. I have used these techniques and it is starting to have a positive effect on my field. Previously, we weren't aware of composting techniques and assisted natural regeneration.

We don't cut the shea trees anymore. Before there were more trees but we didn't make a lot of money. Now, shea and other fruits have become valuable sources of income... us women make the maximum profit thanks to the support of the project. If we continue to make a profit from trees the trend of deforestation will be reversed."



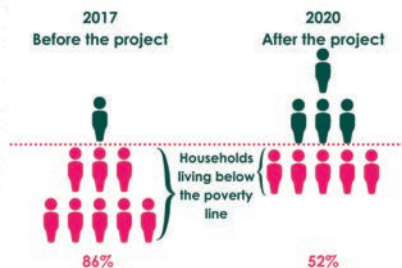
**Turn over for our
key achievements →**



Mali: Key project achievements

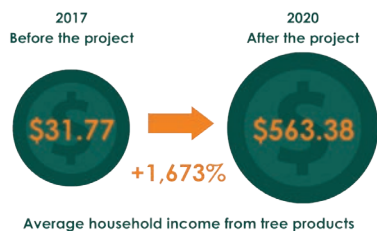
1 Growing businesses to reduce poverty

We worked with over 2,500 households, supporting them to form enterprise groups and increase incomes by processing and selling tree products like shea butter. And we are thrilled to announce that we recorded a **34% decrease in poverty** in the households we were working with. That's over 900 households that are no longer living in poverty!



2 Increased income from tree products

Overall, household income from tree products increased by a huge 1,673% over the lifetime of the project. This means that more families can now afford to send their children to school and save money, providing stability for the future.



Over a quarter of total household income is now coming from trees, compared to less than 3% before the project. This means that more people are now using tree products to grow a steady and stable income that is less dependent on the climate and crops.

3 Improving diets and nutrition

This increase in household income also resulted in other benefits. We found that the people we worked with were able to buy more diverse and nutritional foods for their families, increasing their dietary diversity.



4 Accessing and protecting natural resources

With trees being such an important source of income for these communities, we worked with them to enhance their understanding of their access to forests and how they can protect them for years to come. **75% of the people that we surveyed agreed that after the project they now have fairer and equal access to local forests and their resources.**

Through the project we worked with almost 1,500 farmers, supporting them to improve their management of the natural resources that they rely on. They learnt how to grow and protect trees, conserve water, improve soil quality and prevent the spread of wildfires.



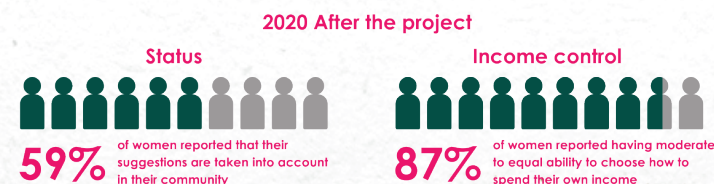
5 Improved management of resources

These farmers then **planted over 345,000 new trees and regenerated a further 327,000.** At the end of the project, **almost 90% of households we worked with were using a land regeneration technique**, Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration. Empowered with the knowledge of land restoration techniques, the farmers were able to **restore 8,300 hectares of forest.**



6 Growing women's voices

Working with women was particularly important in this project because, in Mali, women are often prevented from managing the forests that they rely on for income and food. At the end of the project, our survey showed that **almost 90% of women reported having moderate to equal ability to choose how to spend their income.**



Fantastic Fundraising

As ever, we are so grateful for the support of the wonderful communities out there raising money on our behalf.

The Great Green Walk

Late last year, we were delighted to hear about the fundraising efforts of Belhaven Hill School. Pupils in their "Eco Activity Group" organised an event to walk 800km between them to raise money for Tree Aid and our contribution to the Great Green Wall. The Great Green Wall is an initiative to re-green and restore 8000km across the width of the Sahel region of Africa where we work; all money raised for Tree Aid contributes to this initiative. The school raised more than £4,300, an incredible achievement – thank you so much.

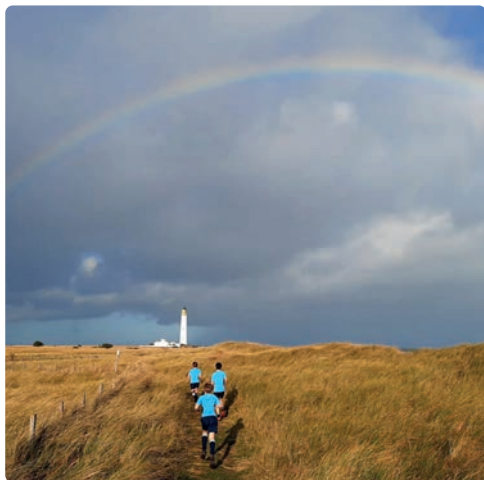


THE GREAT GREEN WALK



The Great Green Walk is such a great idea, we wondered if you and other supporters would like to take part in your own version? Could you walk, cycle or run 80km, 800km or even the full 8,000km with your community or group of friends?

If there were 10 of you, you could set yourselves the challenge of walking 80km each during the month of May. The more the merrier, making the challenge a little easier all round! If so, we would love to hear from you!



Something exciting is coming soon!

Look out for news of an exciting appeal next month. Your fantastic fundraising efforts will have **twice the impact** on our work across the Sahel region - and now is the time to get in touch and get involved!

Contact our Supporters Team by emailing info@treeaid.org or calling 0117 909 6363 for your fundraising pack today.

Tree Fest

We were honoured to be a part of Tree Fest in December last year – an event organised by St Mary Redcliffe Church in Bristol where our UK office is based. The event usually takes place in and around the beautiful church and attracts hundreds of visitors to see Christmas trees decorated by local organisations. With Covid-19 restrictions in place, the event took place virtually with an online gallery of some truly creative Christmas trees.

A huge thank you to our corporate supporters, Pines and Needles, who donated a Christmas tree for the UK Tree Aid office. The team at Tree Aid decorated our tree with some wonderful tree and plant-based decorations and we submitted our photos for inclusion in Tree Fest. Thank you to the local community in Bristol who raised £400 for Tree Aid through the event.



TEA FOR TREES



Would you like to host your own teatime fundraiser? Our Tea for Trees event on 7th and 8th May might be the perfect way for you to get together with friends – either face to face (if you can) or virtually – for a cuppa, all for a good cause.

Please do contact us for your fundraising pack – your Tea for Trees doesn't have to take place on 7th or 8th May – you can organise it when it suits you.



North Coast 500

A huge thank you goes out to Annabel Martin, who set herself the challenge of cycling the North Coast 500, solo. She embarked on the 516-mile scenic route around the north coast of Scotland in September 2020. A huge challenge which Annabel completed alone and in wet and stormy conditions. She raised a total of £1,554, enough to train 3,600 farmers in sustainable land management techniques! Thank you once again from everyone at Tree Aid.

“ **Now I feel happiness every day. I am proud and I feel strong.** ”

These are the words of Zalissa Congo from Passimtenga village in Burkina Faso.

Six years ago, Zalissa barely had any food to feed her family and no means of earning an income. At that point she was desperately unhappy and trying to get by each day with nothing was exhausting.

But thanks to Tree Aid supporters, Zalissa has transformed her life. She stands tall today - happy, proud and strong.

That's because of the tools and training she received to protect the trees in her village. And earn a sustainable income from tree products. Trees are vitally important in Zalissa's village. Trees offer hope to so many families living in poverty.

If you're proud of the difference your support makes and Zalissa's words fill you with hope then perhaps you'd consider leaving a gift to Tree Aid in your Will. It would ensure that you leave a lasting legacy – one that would have a positive effect on so many people's lives. People like Zalissa and her family. You can change a family's life with the generosity of a truly transformative gift that will be felt for many generations to come.



If you are considering leaving a gift to Tree Aid in your Will – you can find out more by visiting www.treeaid.org/will. Or if you like to receive a free information pack please call 0117 909 6363, email info@treeaid.org or write to us at Tree Aid, Brunswick Court, Brunswick Square, Bristol BS2 8PE.