



YOUR UPDATE

**FEBRUARY 2024
ISSUE 25**

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**The She Grows
UK Aid Match project
was a success**

Dear Supporters,

Hello and welcome to your February Update newsletter. This special edition is jam packed with the latest news and stories from our work in the Sahel and from you, our amazing supporters, here in the UK. We also have some updates to share from various projects happening across West Africa and Ethiopia.

The Tond Tenga project launched in Burkina Faso. A new project, and a new carbon model that puts communities first. In Ethiopia, the Future Forest UK Aid Match project is underway. Work is in progress to save the Metema forest, and we share the results so far. Meanwhile in Mali, the She Grows UK Aid Match project has come to an end. 1,477 women in Mali were empowered to grow trees, food, and an income.

All this is made possible by people like you. Thank you for supporting communities in the drylands of Africa to grow trees and protect the environment.



Best wishes,
Tom Skirrow CEO



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**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

NEWS

THE CLIMATE CHAMPIONS APPEAL

Last winter we launched our climate champions appeal. We are pleased to say we have raised £292,144 to date. A massive thank you to everyone who donated!

Thanks to your support we are supporting climate champions to grow greener futures for people and the planet.

TREE AID AT COP28

In December a Tree Aid delegation led by CEO Tom Skirrow travelled to Dubai for COP28.

We hosted a side event on how we can make the Great Green Wall funding locally-led. To scale carbon finance in the right way, we need climate and development finance to be more directly accessible to civil society and non-governmental organisations.

We attended a roundtable discussion hosted by the COP28 presidency with world leaders on unlocking high-integrity carbon markets.

We also hosted an event launching our Tond Tenga project (see page 11), discussing how in Africa high-integrity carbon projects have the potential to unlock climate finance that fairly compensates local people for land restoration where it is needed most, but only if there is transparency and local forest governance.

A BBC RADIO 4 APPEAL 

BBC RADIO 4 APPEAL

Tree Aid will be featured on the BBC Radio 4 appeal!

During the appeal, Tree Aid patron and Bridgerton actress Adjoa Andoh will be sharing the story of Paulina, who lives in a remote village near Talele in Northern Ghana with her two young children. Ghana is having to address the impact of climate change, and a quarter of all people there currently live below the poverty line. Families are seeing their land devastated, making it increasingly difficult to grow food or earn an income.

Tune in to BBC Radio 4 at 7.54am on Sunday 3 March to hear Tree Aid patron Adjoa Andoh talk about how a Tree Aid project transforms Paulina's life and how with the same support, other women like her could see a similar transformation. The appeal will be repeated later that same day at 21.25 and again on Thursday 7 March at 15.27. Once the appeal has been broadcast, you can listen back to it at www.bbc.co.uk/sounds

Please share with your friends and family!



FUTURE FOREST UK AID MATCH - MID PROJECT UPDATE

APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2025

People in northern Ethiopia are living on the frontline of the climate crisis where temperatures are rising and land is becoming infertile. Ethiopia's Metema forest is in the last green belt before the start of the desert. But the climate crisis and deforestation have taken hold, and without action it could be extinct in 20 years.

Thanks to your support and match funding from the UK government, the Future Forest project is now working with communities to protect their forest, tackle the climate crisis and contribute to the Great Green Wall movement across Africa.

WHY IS THIS PROJECT NEEDED?

The climate crisis, high rates of tree felling and unsustainable tapping for frankincense, is stopping the frankincense forest from regenerating. This will have a devastating impact on communities who rely on the forest for food and income.

OUR AIMS

With tools and training, the local community in Metema can learn ways to harvest frankincense sustainably while protecting their forest and bringing it back from the brink. This means that the communities and the forest can thrive, together.



All of this work will also contribute to the Great Green Wall to stop the encroaching desert and create sustainable incomes for people living in poverty. The Great Green Wall movement will re-green and restore land across Africa, bringing degraded landscapes back to life.

WHY FRANKINCENSE?

The Metema forest is particularly special because of its frankincense trees which are a lifeline for local communities. In this part of Ethiopia, they provide up to 30% of household income for the families who sell their resin which is used as incense and in essential oils around the world.

While frankincense trees can provide a vital source of income, unsustainable practices used to extract the resin are putting their future at risk. That's why, through this project, we are supporting communities with the tools and training they need to sustainably use frankincense trees and protect them for the future.

The project has faced a number of serious challenges including insecurity at the national and regional levels, with a state of emergency declared across the country in February 2022. In the most part, the project communities have remained stable and peaceful and the team has been able to continue activities, although the issues have contributed to some delays.

RESULTS SO FAR

3,083 people supported, surpassing our overall target of 2,774. All project participants are members of Participatory Forest Management (PFM) Cooperative Groups which were established to govern and protect the Metema forest. Each group is responsible for an area of the forest and ensures that no illegal tapping of frankincense is taking place for example.

Establishment of a multi-agency task force and stakeholder forum.

The task force consists of members of the judiciary, police, and local government. It helps to protect the forest from a legal and an advocacy perspective.

116,000 indigenous tree seedlings that are suitable for the dry environment were raised and planted across the forests.

1,211 people took part in sustainable land management practices training. This includes how to use organic fertilizers, how to retain water moisture, how to protect the seedlings that are being grown, how to use agroforestry trees within people's farming within the context of the dry forest land.

Review and development of new forest management plans which provide a best practice document to guide members of the cooperative groups.

373 people took part in a fire awareness and fire belt creation training, and protection equipment was provided. First areas at risk of fire were demarcated, then people cut the grass and vegetation in these areas, usually around the base of trees and areas around trees.

Training on gender equity in the context of conflict management and group dynamics which was delivered to both men and women. Throughout this project we are trying to improve and strengthen women's involvement and are striving to get more female leaders at the cooperative level.



3 warehouses were constructed to enable people to store, sort and grade frankincense. This improves the production of frankincense.

This project has been made possible with match funding from the UK government through the UK Aid Match scheme. We are working with our local partner, SUNARMA, to implement this project.



COMPLETION OF THE SHE GROWS PROJECT IN MALI

FEBRUARY 2020 – FEBRUARY 2023



In 2019, our She Grows appeal raised £343,542. With the addition of match funding from the UK government, we reached a grand total of £638,091 to help fund the much needed She Grows project.

THE PROJECT

The She Grows project ran from February 2020 to February 2023, with the aim of empowering women in rural Mali through improved forest access and enterprises.

Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world where women have few opportunities to earn money.

Most women depend on what they can grow on their land for food and income, but the climate crisis is making this even harder.

To make matters worse, women living in Mali have less access to healthcare, education and jobs. They are also prevented from managing the trees and land they rely on.

THE OBJECTIVES

Through the project, we aimed to:



Empower women to secure access to trees.



Train women so that they know how to care for trees, helping local forests thrive, and increasing the number of women making decisions about the use of local natural resources.



Provide women with training in key business skills and links to buyers so they can increase their household income, and tackle poverty.



Provide women with the tools and training they need so they can turn tree products like fruit and nuts into nutritious food to eat, and products like soap and shea butter to sell.

ACTIVITIES

We led a number of activities throughout the project, including:



40 cooperative groups established, focused on shea and honey

10

10 cooperatives signed agreements to have access to land. These agreements represent the areas of land negotiated and allocated to the women cooperative groups.

58

58 women incorporated into natural resources monitoring brigades. They were equipped with bikes, torches, pairs of boots and machetes. These items will help the brigades implement the management plans of the forests and protect their resources.

500+

Over 500 women trained in soil and water conservation (grafting, pruning, restoration techniques for trees, gully control, etc.)



Women's cooperatives trained in nursery production, planting, beekeeping, land rights, advocacy, communication, public speaking, gender, shea butter production techniques



Equipment such as pots, barrels, tarpaulins, rubber seals, rubber basins and labels were distributed to support the transformation of non-timber forest products (NTFPs).

3

3 kiosks were constructed. They reported their first sales of juices, syrups and honey in February 2023.



Workshops took place between cooperatives, Village Savings and Loans Associations, and local sellers. Cooperative groups were presented with the different saving and banking services available. This enabled them to understand how to leverage credit so they can be independent and have control of their own finances.

1496

The project worked with 1,496 households across 10 communities.

“**We make good use of the kiosks provided for us. We have sent bags of Artemisia, moringa powder and sclerocaria syrup to be sold in the kiosks.**”

Dounaba Konaré,
President Djinidiebougou Cooperative

THE IMPACT

We are delighted to share some results from the project, which include:

IMPROVED REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (NRM) STRUCTURES



The proportion of women in management positions increased from 31% to 57%. This is very promising as it means that more women are making decisions about the use of local natural resources.

A POSITIVE IMPACT ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT



'Voice, choice and control' is a 20-question survey we use that measures the relative power that a woman has in comparison of her male partner.

There was a substantial increase in the proportion of women reporting equal or more power than their partners, from 14% to 49%.

This means that more women feel that they can speak in public, have a choice in how to spend their own income or allocate household resources for example.

PROPORTION OF PEOPLE USING NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES HAS GONE UP, AND SO HAS THE NUMBER AND VARIETY OF TECHNIQUES USED



Increase in the number of people using biological techniques on their land (such as mulching, grass strips, fire breaks, strip cropping, vegetative fencing) from 51% to 71%.

Increase in people using soil and water conservation techniques (such as zai pits, half-moons, rainwater harvesting and improved drainage) from 46% or 61%.

This all contributes to making the local forest thrive.



REDUCTION IN POVERTY

There was a 12% points reduction in the proportion of households below the poverty line, as measured in cash.

This increased to a 34% points reduction in the proportion of households below the poverty line when looking at the Total Value of Activities (TVA). The TVA takes into account cash income and the consumption cash equivalent (usually, food).

The number of households reporting 'Severe Food Insecurity' was halved, reducing from 52% to 26%.



THE AVERAGE INCOME OF HOUSEHOLDS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT WENT UP BY 171%

This includes an increase in household income sourced from non-timber forest products (NTFPs) by 260%. It means that through the project, households were able to diversify their income.

The proportion of income sourced from NTFPs has gone up, which puts the households in a more secure position and helps them to weather difficult periods like droughts, etc.

The above changes were achieved in a challenging context. Not only was there political instability in Mali at the time, but the project took place in a highly patriarchal and conservative context, where gender norms are very established. Despite the challenges, the project demonstrated strong performance overall, making significant strides towards empowering women, increasing their incomes, and improving their participation in decision-making processes within the targeted communities.

Sitan's story

You might remember Sitan Diarra, we featured her story in a previous edition of the Update in 2020. She is one of the 1,000 women supported through the She Grows project.

Sitan and the women from her community process and market forest products like balanites. They are involved in the village cooperative and pay their savings into the cooperative.

Thanks to the project, Sitan learned many things, including how to speak confidently in public. She was also trained in water and soil conservation. Now, she is able to earn a sustainable income.

“ I'm very grateful for the processing and sale of balanites syrups, which has enabled me to earn an income. ”

Sitan's confidence has improved enormously, and so has her place in society.

“ I play an important role in the community, because being a woman here means hard work and courage. I contribute to all household expenses. ”

She is planning on sharing all that newfound knowledge with other women in the community.

The future looks brighter for Sitan and her family.

“ I hope for health, food security and total happiness for myself and my children. I want our future to be better. ”

Thank you to everyone who supported the She Grows appeal and helped to make this project a reality.



This project has been made possible with match funding from the UK government through the UK Aid Match scheme.



INTRODUCING OUR LATEST PROJECT: TOND TENGA

Meaning 'Our Land' in Mòrè (the most spoken language in Burkina Faso), Tond Tenga is a pioneering restoration model that will contribute to the Great Green Wall by regreening degraded lands, capturing CO₂, and giving local communities direct access to a share of income generated from carbon credits.

Through a combination of re-greening efforts, this ambitious 30-year project will empower communities to receive benefits from the land they are the custodians of. This new and holistic approach will help to grow livelihoods, alleviate poverty and create long-lasting resilience to climate change for those hardest hit by its effects.

WHY IS THIS PROJECT NEEDED?

Across African drylands, the climate crisis means temperatures in this region are rising at twice the global average. In Burkina Faso, over 70% of communities are living rurally, relying on land and trees to make an income and grow enough food to eat. But due to the climate crisis and issues such as deforestation, land is rapidly losing its fertility. As a result, poverty and hunger are widespread. Trees provide a solution. Growing trees helps to improve soil fertility, grow incomes and cool the land. Trees also absorb carbon dioxide, providing a nature-based solution to global heating. On top of this, giving

people access to income from the sale of carbon credits makes sure that communities receive tangible, direct economic benefits from the sustainable use and protection of ecosystems, ensuring long-term impact for both people and the environment.

THE AIMS OF THE PROJECT

In the first four years, the project will grow more than six million native trees, restore 12,950 hectares of land, and provide key training to communities in techniques such as promoting agroforestry on farmland to increase farm productivity, soil and water conservation practices (to increase water harvesting and retention) and forest management.

Access to land and its resources will also be improved for all members of the communities who live there, including women, young people and the most vulnerable, helping to make sure the project's benefits are both sustainable and long-term for all.

Overall, this 30-year project will support households from 185 villages, restore 37 forest sites and capture more than 2.97 million tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere.

THE PROJECT WILL:

- Capture 2,970,000 tonnes of carbon
- Support households from 185 villages
- Grow more than 6,000,000 native trees

This project is made possible by Capricorn Investment Group.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

NATHALIE AND ANNIE IN CONVERSATION

Nathalie is Tree Aid's Gender Specialist. She is based in our office in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Annie is our Advocacy & Policy Advisor, she comes from a French/Dutch background and is based in our Bristol office in the UK. They sat down to talk about their careers and what it means to work at Tree Aid and have an impact on climate change, as well as women's empowerment.

Annie

Nathalie



ANNIE:

Nathalie, what motivated you to dedicate your career to women's empowerment?

NATHALIE:

My own education, my father didn't differentiate between girls and boys when it came to education and made sure I had what I needed to go to school, even though he himself didn't go to school.

My mother is a market vendor and during my spare time and holidays I used to help her out. It was mainly a female environment and I saw how hard they worked and also looked after their children. I wanted to understand how our society works and people's attitudes.

ANNIE:

It's really interesting to see how our motivations stem from the environment in which we evolved, from what our family instilled in us. Despite our differences, we have found ourselves working for an organisation with a shared passion for empowerment. A shared battle.

NATHALIE:

Yes, the same cause.

ANNIE:

Since you have been working at Tree Aid for some time now, have you had any moments where you have felt that we were having an impact, that you were making a difference in the empowerment of communities?

NATHALIE:

Empowerment takes time, and change doesn't happen overnight. It's a question of habit. Thankfully with our long-term projects, we have seen an impact in terms of women's involvement in natural resource management. For example, in the town of Lâ-Todin, the forest is entirely managed by women. So it's encouraging. Beyond numbers, there's personal satisfaction when you see results on the field. The data we collect every year or couple of years shows progress in terms of decision making within the household.

I would love to know what motivated you to work in advocacy.

ANNIE:

I ask myself this sometimes! I was interested in climate change, and because I grew up on a farm, I was also interested in the use of land, in sustainable agriculture. I realised throughout my career that I wanted to combine the two, be at the intersection of land use, agriculture and climate change, but especially from a human point of view. When I discovered Tree Aid, it was all the different pieces of the puzzle coming together.

THE WOMEN WHO HAVE INSPIRED ANNIE:

The late **Ruth Bader Ginsburg**, an American lawyer who served on the Supreme Court and was crucial in the recognition of gender equality in American law.

Anaïs Kerhoas, a French woman who started her own farm at the age of 24 and began growing herbs with the aim of selling herbal tea all over the world.

Anna Skarbek, CEO of Climateworks centre in Australia. It was Annie's first job, and Anna was the perfect example of female leadership that overcame the gendered stereotypes that a leader should have masculine characteristics to be influential.

THE WOMEN WHO HAVE INSPIRED NATHALIE:

Fatou Diome, a French-Senegalese writer who expresses her views freely. Her attitude and her career are inspiring.

Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, a Burkinabé economist and politician. She served as the minister of economy, finance and development which is a position mainly held by men. She faced obstacles including verbal abuse but stuck to her guns and made a real impact in her ministry.

Her mother, who, despite all the socio-cultural burdens, knew how to be a woman who gave to her children and educated them to have freedom of thought and to fight in life.

FANTASTIC FUNDRAISING



NICK'S MARATHON

Nick Price has been a regular supporter of Tree Aid for over 25 years. He signed up to run the Florence marathon last November and raised £780 for Tree Aid.

Unfortunately, Nick had to pull out due to injury but he is planning on doing another marathon soon.

Nick – we hope you get back on your feet soon, and best of luck! Thank you for all your support.

“ Like my father before me, I acquired a few acres of land and planted trees, six thousand of them. Now a woodland, I can see, first hand, the opportunities and benefits trees can bring to communities and the environment. As a supporter of Tree Aid for many years, I can now boost this with your help through sponsorship of my marathon very soon. Please help the world through Tree Aid. Thank you. Nick ”



FINLAY'S WALK

Last August, Finlay Latcham undertook a personal challenge and set off on a solo walk from Land's End to John O'Groats. He completed the 1,200 miles in three months. What an incredible achievement!

Not only that, Finlay raised £2,776 for Tree Aid. Massive congratulations and a big thank you!

“ While of course it costs money to buy the kit, and you need the luxury of some free time (I'm on a gap year before uni) long-distance hikes are something many can do! At the end of the day, all it takes is putting one foot in front of the other. You just need the determination to keep going. ”

EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK

Thank you to the employees at the European Investment Bank who have made a series of donations to us. We are very grateful for them donating their seniority bonuses to Tree Aid and helping to grow more trees in the Sahel.



THANK YOU

A big thank you to the Bristol Hotel who presented us with a donation of £1,593. They make this donation every year instead of buying Christmas crackers for their Christmas party events.



NEW BUSINESS PARTNER: TRAVEL LOCAL



We are excited to announce that we have a new business partner. Travel Local is a travel company that provides travel expertise which benefits all: our environment, ecosystems, local partners, and travellers. They have committed to donating 1% of their net revenue to Tree Aid each year.

GET INVOLVED!

If you'd like to take part in an event or fundraising activity in your community, please get in touch. Any funds you raise will help to tackle poverty and food insecurity today while restoring land and protecting the environment for tomorrow.

If you have an idea for fundraising, or you would like some resources, please contact our Supporters Team at info@treeaid.org or by calling 0117 909 6363.

FUNDRAISING IDEAS...

- 1 Walk, run or cycle 80, 800 or even 8,000 km in the Great Green Walk
- 2 Run the Bristol 10k or Bristol half marathon – we have spaces!
- 3 Get together with friends for tea and cake at your Tea for Trees fundraiser
- 4 Why not fundraise for a £500 Farmer Workshop with our Gifts that Grow?

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION!

LEAVE A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

Leaving a gift in your Will is an incredible way for you to make a lasting impact. Gifts in Wills enable Tree Aid to plan ahead and expand the reach of the amazing projects that your support makes possible.

A gift in your Will is also a way of ensuring that you can continue supporting the things that are important to you.

To find out more about gifts in Wills, visit treeaid.org/will.

You can also request a free legacy pack in the post. Simply tick the legacy pack box on the form that came with this magazine and return it to us. Alternatively, you can email info@treeaid.org or call **0117 909 6363**.

If you are considering remembering Tree Aid in your Will, thank you. Gifts in Wills ensure that communities can grow nutritious food and incomes today while growing trees and restoring the environment for future generations.

Find out more
about gifts in wills
by **scanning here:**

