

UPDATE



2020 ISSUE 15



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- **NEW PROJECT AROUND NIGER'S PARK W**
- **INCREASING INCOMES THROUGH CASHEW FARMING**
- **A GUIDE TO HOW WE MONITOR OUR WORK**

TREES MEAN LIFE TREES MEAN LIFE TREES MEAN LIFE



Dear supporters,

There are lots of exciting projects underway this year. As TREE AID's Programme Funding Officer I'm delighted

to be able to tell you that we have recently secured funding for a new project in Niger's W National Park. This is our second project in the park and is being made possible thanks to funding from The Swedish Postcode Foundation. The new project will expand our existing work in the park to a new area in and around Dosso. You can find out more on page 8. Other highlights in this edition are an introduction to how we monitor and assess the impact of our work, and an update on our innovative cashew farming project which is helping communities in Ghana to earn much needed income. None of these projects and the life changing impact they have would be possible without our supporters, so thank you.

Best wishes

Becky

Becky Graham
Programme Funding Officer

Front cover image: Tree planting in Yendi, Ghana.
Photo: Rowan Griffiths – Daily Mirror

Highlights in this issue

- 4** Increasing incomes through cashew farming



- 6** Monitoring our work for maximum impact



- 8** New project in Niger National Park W



Get the latest news and insights about our work on our website
www.treeaid.org.uk

Sign-up to receive TREE AID email updates for the latest news, insights and information on how to get more involved.
www.treeaid.org.uk/subscribe-to-our-email-newsletter/

Please get in touch if you would like to stop or change the information you receive from us.



Tel: 0117 909 6363 | Email: info@treeaid.org

Website: www.treeaid.org.uk | Twitter: @TREEAID | Instagram: @tree_aid

TREE AID, Brunswick Court, Brunswick Square,
Bristol, BS2 8PE

Registered Charity No. 1135156
Company No. 03779545



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**



NEWS

TREE AID'S CHAIR AWARDED MBE

Shireen Chambers

was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2019. Shireen has been TREE AID's Chair of Trustees since 2017, and received the honour in recognition of the positive contribution she has made to forestry.



Over Shireen's esteemed career she worked with the Government of the Bahamas to set up a new forestry department in the 1980s. On returning to the UK she held a role with the Central Scotland Forest and has been in her current role as Executive Director of the Institute of Chartered Foresters since 2006.

Shireen is passionate about the social, economic and environmental benefits that trees offer rural communities. Since Shireen became TREE AID's Chair of Trustees, she has been a great advocate for our approach to drylands development amongst the forestry community in the UK. Shireen received the honour in December and said:

"It is a great honour for my work to be recognised but I am receiving it on behalf of the fantastic teams at both the Institute of Chartered Foresters and at TREE AID, who both contribute in very different ways to making a difference with trees."

TREE AID IN THE NEWS



In November 2019 TREE AID was featured in two special editions of the **Daily Mirror**. The newspaper did its first ever Climate Crisis edition on 14th November. To write the story Daily Mirror journalist Rhian Lubin travelled to visit a TREE AID project in Ghana.



The double page spread showed how we're supporting communities to plant and protect trees, manage natural resources more sustainably and build resilience to a climate in crisis in the country.

The next day there was a follow up article featuring our work with communities – planting trees, helping people to make a sustainable income and contributing to the Great Green Wall across Africa.

NEW PROJECT: GHANA RURAL AGRICULTURE AND CASHEW ENTERPRISES PROJECT (GRACE)

August 2019 – August 2022

THE PROJECT AIMS TO:

- Establish 150 village tree enterprise groups and 1 Co-operative Union
- Increase incomes for 3,000 cashew farmers
- Increase cashew yields by at least 25% for 3,000 farmers
- Increase incomes for 600 honey, legume, and cashew apple farmers
- Train 3,000 farmers in Natural Resource Management and silvicultural techniques



Increase in quality of cashew nut harvests

In Northern Ghana where the project is taking place, over half of the population are living in poverty. For the rural communities living here, poor agricultural productivity is among the main causes of poverty.

People are reliant on the natural resources around them, but these are increasingly under threat from climate change and overexploitation, putting livelihoods at risk. Land degradation means many farmers are producing lower yields as their land becomes more and more unproductive.

The project will support people in rural communities to **improve their environment and livelihoods by increasing and diversifying their incomes** through cashew and legume farming and honey production.

The project is being funded by the UK government and is being implemented with our project partner, Northcode

Ghana. The project got underway in August 2019 and aims to work directly with 3,000 poor smallholder cashew farmers and 600 additional women and young men. Indirectly the project aims to work with about 14,400 people in Ghana's Northern Region.

Cashew farmers will be trained in silviculture and agricultural skills to help them improve their cashew production. The 600 women and youths will be supported to farm nitrogen fixing legumes and develop honey enterprises alongside their cashew farming. The honey not only provides another vital source of income to farmers but increases pollination. In total 150 village tree enterprises (VTEs) aim to be established. One much larger Co-operative Union will also be set up, this will help develop links between smallholder farmers and wider markets, ensuring that they can get a fair price for their produce.

Partner focus

TREE AID is working with local partner Northcode to implement the project in Northern Ghana. There are many benefits to working in partnership with local partners to deliver projects. Particularly their expert knowledge of the local area, environment, communities and languages spoken.



Cletus is the Ghana Co-ordinator for Northcode. He told us about some of the challenges faced by people in the project area:

"In this part of Northern Ghana, in rural communities, the socio-economic situation is one of extreme poverty, misery, hopelessness, relative to the standard of living of the [rest of the] people.

These people lack the very basic necessities of life that make them feel secured as human beings. For instance, they experience a lot of insecurities. Water insecurity, health insecurity, shelter insecurity, income insecurity, indeed environmental insecurity and they feel the future of their children is uncertain. So they feel all these amount of insecurities around them."

The GRACE project will help address these insecurities and in an area where over half of the population are living in poverty it crucially aims to increase incomes by up to 60% by the end of the

project. The project will focus on three activities to increase incomes; cashew farming, beekeeping and legume farming.

As the project gets underway Cletus told us how inspiring it is to be involved:

"When I work with a community and I see that results are coming, I see hope, I see change coming, I feel the messages we are carrying to these communities is going down well and they are receiving it. So together we can build a better community."

He also had a message for TREE AID supporters:

"We are so happy with your interventions, we are so happy that there is a lot of love for us in this part of the world. Thank you and may you continue to support these rural communities who do not have all the privileges of life so that they can have the basic necessities of life."

Nitrogen Fixing

Nitrogen is an essential plant nutrient. It's also the most commonly deficient nutrient in soils, a lack of which leads to reduced agricultural yields. Nitrogen can be supplied to crops by biological nitrogen fixation. Plants such as legumes, soybeans, lupins and peanuts all contribute to 'nitrogen fixing', improving the quality of the soil and helping to increase the yields of other crops. Nitrogen fixing plants are an important part of sustainable agricultural systems and naturally help increase yields.

MONITORING OUR WORK TO MAXIMISE IMPACT

To ensure that we are always delivering long-term change for the people we work for, we need to be able to gather detailed evidence of the impact of our work. Technology is an essential part of our monitoring work, helping us to compile meaningful data to support our projects.

Just one of the ways in which we measure our impact is through the digital survey approach known as RHoMIS (Rural Household Multi Indicator Survey).

What is RHoMIS?

In simple terms, RHoMIS (Rural Household Multi Indicator Survey) is a digital questionnaire and monitoring system. It allows us to survey the people we work with about their household incomes, livelihoods, diets and decision-making power, and how this has changed with the help of our projects.

While there may be many different ways to acquire this sort of information, RHoMIS provides a consistent and comparable set of questions that meets internationally-recognised standards of data collection and analysis.

It is designed with rural households in mind and helps to reduce the cost and time burdens associated with data collection, making it a great choice for TREE AID's monitoring and evaluation team.

How does TREE AID use it?

Equipped with solar-powered computer tablets and training on how to carry out the surveys, TREE AID's in-country teams visit communities we are working with to put this tool into action.



In order to understand the impact of our projects on its beneficiaries, they carry out participant surveys at the beginning and end of each project. The surveys focus on key project indicators such as household income, fuel-wood usage, dietary diversity, use of trees and forests, natural resource management techniques and women's decision-making powers.

Why is it so important?

At TREE AID, we pride ourselves on always learning, reviewing and adapting our work to maximise the impact of your donations – and RHoMIS helps us to do just that.

By regularly checking in against our impact targets through discussions with the project participants, we can better understand how they are benefitting from the project and what challenges they are facing – therefore helping us to adapt where necessary to improve our results.

As well as helping us assess the impact of our work on beneficiaries, the data collected also contributes to a global research project to further global understanding of international development practices.



What impact has TREE AID demonstrated through RHoMIS?

Since adopting the RHoMIS approach, our project staff have been working to put this tool into action – increasing our data collection and analysis efficiency.

In Burkina Faso, we have collected results from people supported by our projects which shows that their income from non-timber forest products, such as baobab powder and shea butter, more than doubled **from an average of \$18 to \$39 per year***.

TREE AID provided them with the tools and training so they are able to earn a higher and more sustainable income from tree products. What's more, thanks to additional training on reducing land degradation, our project participants also increased their income from farming.

*Source: 2,355 households in Burkina Faso from 2017-2019.

Furthermore, project participants in Ghana are **doubling the contribution of non-timber forest products in their household income, from 9% to 15% over a 12 month period***. This also corresponds with a drop in the proportion of income from “off-farm” sources (for example, income generated from working away on other people's farms) – showing that TREE AID projects are reducing people's need to work away from home.

*Source: 889 Households in Ghana from 2017-2019.

Adopting the RHoMIS approach has provided us with invaluable insights into the lives of the people we work for – allowing us to learn, review and adapt our work to ensure we are helping them in the best ways possible.

NEW PROJECT: PARK W - DOSSO

OBJECTIVES

- Alleviate poverty and food insecurity for 1,260 people and their families
- Train 350 farmers in natural resource management
- Help local communities to sustainably manage 174 hectares of land
- 100% Increase in incomes earned from Non Timber Forest Products
- Set up 10 Village Tree Enterprise groups

TREE AID started working in National Park W in July 2018. Now a new project, funded by The Swedish Postcode Foundation, will expand on that work to protect and restore the environment in a new region of the vast park, which spans over 10,000 km².

This new project in the Dosso region launched in September 2019. Communities will receive support to protect the natural resources that they rely on and help to earn a sustainable income from trees.

Restoring and protecting a World Heritage Site

The project will reduce unsuitable practices in the park and increase the opportunities for local communities to earn a sustainable income. 350 farmers will be trained in skills to sustainably restore and protect their land, while increasing long term productivity. Three tree nurseries will be established at the start of the project, to provide communities with seedlings and help



them to plant 60,000 trees to rehabilitate 174 hectares of land. By strengthening the area's natural resources, the local community's resilience to the impacts of climate change will also be strengthened.

Enhancing livelihoods through tree enterprises

In Niger, gender inequality is still a huge problem with women struggling to get the same access to education, healthcare and financial support, as men. In order to tackle this inequality, the majority of people helped will be women. They will be supported to develop their own income opportunities and as a result, improve their social status.

Communities in the Dosso region will receive the training and tools they need, to develop Village Tree Enterprises and earn a sustainable income from non-timber forest products such as fruits, nuts and seeds.

Thank you to The Swedish Postcode Foundation

TREE AID is excited to be working with The Swedish Postcode Foundation to improve the environment and livelihoods around Niger's Park W. Marie Dahllöf, Secretary in General of The Swedish Postcode Foundation said, ***"Planting a tree can make a huge difference for both planet and people and help create sustainable communities. We are therefore very pleased to support TREE AID and their work in Dosso, Niger, an area affected by deforestation, land degradation, providing harsh living conditions."***



Someone who's already benefited from a TREE AID project is Mekerem. She lives high up on a hill in Guarage, Ethiopia. It's isolated and life is difficult, particularly for women in the village who have more responsibility for the household and fewer opportunities to earn an income.

Makerem got married at 18 years old and had her first child the same year. She didn't have any savings and her husband didn't have a steady income which made life very difficult for the family.

When a TREE AID project started in her village, Mekerem was suggested by her neighbours as the chair of the women's co-operative.

The group runs a savings and loans scheme which allows members to take loans and invest the money in enterprise schemes. Some women have invested the money in beekeeping, growing vegetables or planting fruit trees on their land.

These activities provide a small income, an opportunity that many of the women wouldn't have had without the co-operative. Mekerem explained the biggest difference that the group has made to her:

"Personally the biggest benefit of the project to my life has been the knowledge and practice of saving. Before the project I thought saving was for rich people, we lived hand to mouth and we had no hope for the future".

It may sound simple but, the practice of saving and the chance to improve her own life through the small loan she received has been life changing for Mekerem. When asked how she manages to juggle caring for her children, her income generating activities and being chair of the saving and loans group Mekerem said:

"I just consider the co-operative as one of my children. I don't want the young girls in the village to struggle like I have. That is what motivates me."

Just like all of TREE AID's work, the new project in National Park W will empower more women like Mekerem. Helping women to set up village tree enterprises in their communities will give them the opportunity to earn an income and as a result will help to improve gender equality in the region.

FANTASTIC

A big **THANK YOU** to TREE AID supporter Chrissie Morris who embarked on a sewing project to raise money for TREE AID in the run-up to Christmas. Chrissie sewed around 20 stockings and a similar number of bags made from silks, linens and cotton. She also used the leftover pieces of fabric to make bags for lavender and had help from her grandchildren cutting, drying and filling the bags.



She then sold the stockings and bags at a local market along with some books. She put a TREE AID leaflet with every item sold and raised a fantastic £304.

"It cheers me to think of the trees planted and communities sustained. It was fun. I felt positive and empowered by my actions, and their ripple effects - several friends and family have asked for (Gifts that Grow) trees for presents next birthday."



Thanks to West Didsbury primary School who raised £284 last year in their harvest Festival assembly. The Year 2 classes performed the story of the Great Green Wall and Wangari Maathai – the renowned Kenyan social, environmental and political activist. They also had a 'wear it green' day where children were encouraged to dress in green and bring in a £1 donation.

St Mary Redcliffe Treefest

Every year St Mary Redcliffe Church in Bristol holds a festive display of decorated Christmas trees. This year TREE AID was one of the organisations invited to decorate a tree. One of our corporate supporters The Christmas Forest kindly donated a tree and we gave visitors the opportunity to write a message of hope to communities across the drylands of Africa.



FUNDRAISING

BRISTOL 10K



Challenge yourself on 3rd May and join TREE AID's team running the Bristol 10K!

This beautiful course through Bristol takes in the sights of the iconic Clifton Suspension Bridge, and helpfully finishes up at the Harbourside so runners can make the most of the restaurants and cafes for a well-deserved rest. Whether you're looking to beat your personal best, meet new people, or raise funds to enable people to lift themselves out of poverty, this is the challenge for you! By taking part, you're doing something amazing, you're joining the global fight against climate change.

To register please visit:
www.treeaid.org.uk/challenge

WORKPLACE FUNDRAISING

Offsetting Christmas trees

A big thank you to TREE AID corporate partner RPS, whose staff fundraised over the Christmas period. They made donations to offset the purchase of their Christmas trees. They raised a total of £331.95.

Get in touch if you'd like to organise fundraising in your workplace. Let us know what you have in mind and we can send you a fundraising guide and TREE AID materials to help. You can also set up your own online fundraising page at www.justgiving.com/treeaid.

PAYROLL GIVING

If you would like to encourage your colleagues to donate to TREE AID, why not speak to your employer about payroll giving.

Payroll giving offers a convenient and tax-efficient way to support charities. Many employers will already have a payroll giving scheme set up, so it might just be a case of putting TREE AID forward as a charity that colleagues can support. It's an incredibly convenient and effective way to protect and restore the environment while supporting communities across dryland Africa.

Please contact our Supporters Team at info@treeaid.org or call 0117 909 6363 for more information.

If any of these stories have inspired you to get involved,
please contact us on **0117 909 6363**
or email info@treeaid.org.

DON'T FORGET!

Sunday, 22nd March is Mother's Day

GIFTS THAT GROW
TREE AID's charity gifts for all occasions

What better way to celebrate your mum or other amazing women in your life than by giving a gift from TREE AID's Gifts that Grow catalogue. Each gift comes with a greetings card and an information card describing your gift. You can either have the cards sent to you or we can send directly to your recipient with your chosen personal message. Every card comes with the satisfaction that it will help to change the life of a mother in the drylands of Africa.

£10



Fantastic Shea

Shea trees are an essential source of income across dryland Africa, helping lift families out of poverty. Their nuts can be made into shea butter that villagers can sell at market all year round.

Your gift can enable someone in dryland Africa to learn how to graft fruit seedlings. Grafted trees reach maturity sooner, produce their first fruit quicker and in a greater quantity. This invaluable skill can be passed on within the community, meaning more trees and more fruit for everyone.

£19



Grafting training



Fuel-efficient Stove

£20

These amazing stoves make a huge difference to a family's life, greatly reducing the amount of wood used and of harmful smoke produced while cooking. They also drastically reduce the time spent collecting firewood giving people more time to earn an income.

Order by 12pm on Thursday 19th March to ensure delivery in time!