

What's happening in Mauritania

2001 and 2002 were years of drought in much of Mauritania, seeing Oxfam food-intervention programs in some of the worst hit regions. A million head of livestock are reported to have died. In contrast, 2003 saw widespread heavy rains flood large areas under irrigation, destroying much of the rice crop. 2004 has seen locusts and vast flocks of small birds decimate the millet harvest. Meanwhile, urban migration continues apace, with today nearly half the population of 2.5 million living in towns. Slight economic growth over the last decade has seen no improvement to the lives of half the population who live on incomes below the World Bank official poverty line of \$1 a day. In November 2003 President Ould Taya was re-elected in elections condemned by the main opposition parties.

Sponsored Walks

Rainbow has conducted three sponsored walks in the beautiful West of Ireland, raising, thanks to lots of extremely generous sponsorship, over £20,000 in all.

Covering approximately 50 miles in two and a half days, passing the nights in remote B&Bs and watering in the local pubs, the five person groups have enjoyed themselves considerably, whilst at the same time raising funds for the Futa Initiative. Walkers have been: Miranda Wilson and Mark Hudson (both Rainbow Trustees), Andrew Snodgrass, Paul Cullinan and Zeluis Vasconcelos; and (from left to right, above) Alexander Edwards, "champion fundraiser" Adam Bruce Gardyne, Richard Hudson, Peter Hudson and Peter Phillips. A further walk is planned for this year.



Ndiafane: A family based irrigation cooperative set up in 1991 with the assistance of Rainbow Director Peter Hudson and some generous sponsorship.

Benefits and accomplishments of Ndiafane to date:

- Irrigates 20 hectares of rice and vegetables.
- Directly assists 33 families (over 1000 people).
- Provides paid employment for youths.
- Provides fodder crops and other secondary benefits to marginal ethnic groups such as the Harratin.
- Has demonstrated effective machine, financial and agronomic management, encouraging others.
- Has overcome substantial setbacks, such as the loss of two whole crops due to flooding.

Year 2003 saw:

- 95 tons of vegetables harvested and sold.
- 110 tons of rice harvested and sold.

Ndiafane has not only provided dramatic help to many people, it has also shown the potential of small-scale, family-based modern farming systems.



Water being flooded onto a field of onions

Irrigation farming - drawing water from the Gorgol River by pumps - is practiced by many in the region in response to the undermining of traditional, rain-fed agriculture by recurrent droughts. ADMAPE is forming links with regenerative farming group The Rodale Institute in order to be able to help farmers exploit this form of agriculture as sustainably as possible. Lessened reliance on external inputs such as fertiliser and pesticides, and integration with animal husbandry are



Mustapha Konje in his fields

"There was nothing for me here in this region, so I left as a young man to seek my fortune in the city. There, I found only trouble, so when I heard that back home people were practicing irrigation farming, I returned and borrowed money from the bank to set up my project. I have had many problems to overcome, and have been unable to always keep up my interest payments, but this sort of farming is good. It gives us a hope of the future, and if things improve, maybe I can

Rainbow: The Future

Rainbow Development in Africa was founded in June 2001 with the mission of poverty alleviation in Africa. Today its core commitments remain:

- to provide direct, grassroots assistance.
- to focus on the causes as much as the results of poverty.
- to maximise cost efficiency by remaining small and tightly focused.
- to foster confidence, independence and self-determination amongst Africans.

Rainbow is currently exploring partnerships with other development groups in the south of Mauritania. In 2004 it will also be working on its profile and funding base, with talks, sponsored walks, Trust Fund and Corporate sponsorship help.

To support Rainbow Development in Africa, or for information, contact us at:

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