

## Sylla Women's Organic Market Garden Project



Planting seed beds

In the Gorgol region of southern Mauritania most irrigation agriculture is unprofitable. The 329 members of the Sylla Women's Cooperative, however, are using many different approaches to make it viable. Incorporating composting, association planting, animal husbandry and water conservation techniques on their 9-hectare irrigated market garden, they are proving that high input costs are not necessary. Already they have seen

their produce, which has extra long preservation qualities as well as better taste, command premium market prices. Primary project activities to date are:

- fencing a 9-hectare site.
- growing from seed and planting 3000 windbreak trees and 150 fruit trees.
- making over 300 compost piles.
- conducting numerous organisational, financial, mechanical and agronomic training sessions.
- successfully completing a first vegetable harvest.

The enthusiasm and commitment displayed for this project by the cooperative women, as well as many others in the wider community, has gone beyond our expectations. Even local project manager/agronomist M. Djiby Ba is surprised: 'This project is the best I have seen,' he says. 'Its success is the result of the hard work of the Sylla women and the free hand we have been given in which to conduct it. I am very hopeful that, as planned, others will take courage and example from this.'

## Well Digging

The savannahs to the north of the Gorgol region are dry and barren and the semi-pastoral livestock herders who live there represent today some of the most marginalised and impoverished communities in West Africa. The 1000-strong community of Windy Jammy, where we have dug our first well, had to walk 8 km to their nearest permanent water source. Substantial community resources were going into this daily trek and people were getting ill from drinking from fouled alternative sources. At 55 metres deep, the well we have dug has been a logistical and technical challenge (especially as it is our first well), but it has been successfully completed: work on a new well is planned for the end of 2008.

## funding news:

Since our last Newsletter we have conducted three sponsored walks: two in France and a local one in Wales (led all the way by Daniel Beckett, aged 7!). These walks are always great fun and a good way of raising funds, so anyone wishing to join us either locally in Wales or for an extended weekend abroad, please contact us. Other than that, a number of Trust Funds continue to support us, and we would like to thank them and all those who have so generously given funds privately or organised fundraising events. Many thanks.



Some happy hikers: France

## Mid-Gorgol Community Project

The Mid-Gorgol community comprises up to 75,000 people from a wide variety of ethnic groups. Many different types of agriculture are practised, from flood-recession and rain-fed farming to animal husbandry and the more commercial irrigation farming. The one thing all have in common, however, is their struggle to make ends meet. Taking the concept of 'seeing is believing', this project will work with people across the ethnic and social divisions in the community and help locals to develop three sites where people can experiment with, and see many different agricultural applications that can make farming viable. Micro-credit, farmer-to-farmer training, management and mechanical training, animal health, organic farming and food processing are just some of the activities that will take place.



Peul herder milking

This project is the result of a lengthy process of community consultation and motivation, for unless the ideas and energy for a project come from within the community it aims to help, it is worthless.

## The Futa Initiative

The Futa Initiative is the name of the long-term project whereby local partner ADMAPE provides on-going services to the Gorgol farming community. Activities this year have included:

- ploughing 800 hectares of marginal arable land.
- digging 3 rain barrages.
- organic farming training.
- promoting environmental protection.
- representing communities at national level.
- conducting project research, humanitarian assistance, pest control and many other services.



Ouma Si shows healthy millet head

## Projects in the pipeline

Schools: two libraries to be built and equipped with exercise books (with local town council matching grant).  
Fencing: 6000 hectares of arable and livestock grazing land fenced for community of 20,000 people.



Coming very soon:

[www.rainbowdevelopmentinafrica.org](http://www.rainbowdevelopmentinafrica.org)

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