

Rainbow Development in Africa

Working for farmers and farming communities in southern Mauritania and northern Senegal

Newsletter Winter 2009



Madam Sow of the Sylla Women's Cooperative, with compost

A Community Project

Rice farmer Mamadou Aw, *below*, shows his rice test-crop developed as part of our Mid-Gorgol Community Project. A community is often an ill-fitting collection of peoples forced together by external factors and struggling to share scanty resources. We are working across this 75,000-strong community developing with them better farming practices, conducting farmer training and stimulating cooperation. One noted success so far has been the the introduction of animal traction for ploughing. Farmers are clamouring for this cheap, simple piece of equipment as it helps the meagre rainfall penetrate deeper into the soil, saving crops.



Organic Farming

Compost, or "Brown Gold", can transform small-holder agriculture. We have been working with the 329 members of the Sylla Women's Cooperative in northern Senegal, helping them develop a 9 hectare market garden site utilising various organic farming methods, from composting to natural crop protection to association planting. This has greatly increased profitability by lessening input costs and improving both soil and and produce quality. Less watering is needed, the growing season is extended and the vegetables are more marketable as they have a much longer shelf-life. The self-organisation and motivation involved with the project have been inspirational and we plan on using the project as an example of good practice throughout the region. Already, it has featured on local radio. As Madam Sow, President of the cooperative says: 'The women have more money now. They have paid off debts and can contribute to family finances. People want to see how we have done this.'



School Project: This room, *above*, has been fixed for use as a library in a primary school in Leqceiba Mauritania. We are helping build another library and will be equipping both with books and desks.

Where We Work

The arid lands of southern Mauritania and northern Senegal, just south of the Sahara, are home to some of the most marginalised and impoverished communities in West Africa. Recurrent drought and the spiraling costs of living mean subsistence farming can no longer support families. With our local partners, ADMAPE, we help local people develop sustainable livelihoods that can give them a hope for the future.

