

Rainbow Development in Africa

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

Newsletter Winter 2010

Welcome to our 2010 Newsletter. We are a small charity, but we believe that it is this which allows us to be cost-effective and truly grassroots. We and our southern Mauritanian partners, ADMAPE, have had a busy year. Whether helping farmers test new seed varieties, introducing women's groups to compost, or planning for climate change adaptation, we have been making a real difference to people's lives. Please read on to learn more of what we have been up to.



Sylla: Above and left: lettuce seedlings; lemons, onions, bananas.



Market Gardening

In the drought-ridden conditions of the Sahel, irrigating land from the few rivers there makes sense. But pumps to draw the water up from the rivers and diesel with which to run them costs money. The 329 members of the Sylla Women's Cooperative were interested in intensive vegetable growing. We joined forces with them to develop a 9-hectare market-garden site. Employing good management and water conservation techniques, and using compost and other organic farming methods, they have shown that this type of farming can be both economical and sustainable.

Incomes up by 30%

Evaluation has indicated that incomes for families involved with the scheme are up by 30%. This includes the vegetables that the families eat as well as those they sell. The women report that they now have surplus cash that can be spent on schooling and medicines. They are also very happy to have some extra money for themselves.

An additional fifth year

An additional year has been added to the project in order that its successes can be widely disseminated. Already there is much local interest in the project, which has featured on local radio. Now we will train other women's groups in good management and farming practice and build on this fantastic example of economically viable, intensive farming.

Where We Work

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

