

Rainbow Development in Africa

UK Registered Charity No: 1087744

Newsletter: 2006



Improving the soil: Farmer Kane Samba, who struggles to cover fertiliser costs, showing compost from a pit he dug as a result of attending a training course.

Five-Day Seminar in Leqceiba

In March this year we had a particularly successful five-day seminar in the small town of Leqceiba, southern Mauritania. This resulted in the creation of a four-year project that will address a range of poverty issues faced by the Mid-Gorgol agricultural community (pop: 60,000). The success of this seminar, attended by 144 participants representing over 80 village, cooperative and farming groups, was itself a demonstration of how successfully local partner ADMAPE has over the last few years gained the confidence of, and deeply penetrated, this disparate community. Participants from backgrounds as diverse as Moor and tribal African - including pastoralists, market gardeners, semi-commercial irrigation farmers and women's cooperatives - came together and were both inspired and encouraged to speak out by Dr. Amadou Diop of the American organic farming group, The Rodale Institute, who oversaw proceedings and with whose organisation Rainbow Development in Africa (RDA) is partnering on the project.

"Only when communities are inspired, motivated and well organised can they be helped to help themselves," Dr Diop, who originates from near this region, told RDA Director Peter Hudson after the meeting, echoing RDA's own philosophy.

Thus our Mid-Gorgol Community Project (*Promotion of Regenerative Agriculture and Capacity Building as a means to Sustainable Development in Southern Mauritania*) was born, drawn from the community amongst whom it will operate and capitalising on the experience and resources made available by RDA, local partner ADMAPE and The Rodale Institute.

What has RDA achieved this year?

- **The Futa Initiative:** our service-provision project with local partner ADMAPE has over the last year: assisted in the rehabilitation of 2800 hectares of traditional farming land benefiting 21 villages; helped 1540 pastoralists to form a union in order to better access services; given assistance with seeds and advice to a number of women's market gardening cooperatives; constructed water catchment barrages for four communities. Other activities have included transporting vegetables/merchandise to market (162 tons) and patients to hospital, farming training for 20 cooperatives, coordinating mass crop pest control and assisting in various regional farming conferences.
- **The Sylla Project** has seen the 329 members of a women's cooperative in north Senegal work closely with a local agronomist to design and implement an organic market gardening project on 9 hectares.
- **Community Project** (see above): This project is now in full development addressing primary issues of agricultural, economic and organisational viability through a combination of training, research and practical demonstration.
- **Other:** ADMAPE Resource Centre construction is completed; a new well digging project is in development (see over); Leqceiba primary school has been provided with desks and chairs; RDA now works from a small office in Presteigne, Powys.



In the thick of it: Mohamedou Sall, Director of local partner ADMAPE, talking with a crowd of farmers at the five-day seminar. With three staff, two consultant staff and a range of other resources including a tractor and truck, ADMAPE coordinates project activities in the Mid-Gorgol region and provides various agricultural services.

*How Can
You help!*

(see over for details)



Rainbow Development in Africa

Founded in June 2001 as a registered charity with a Trust Deed, Mid Wales based RDA works exclusively in the River Senegal Valley regions of northern Senegal and southern Mauritania. Our core commitments remain:

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

News Update / What's in store

Mauritania

In August '05 a coup d'etat brought about the timely end of President Sid' Ahmed Taya's 21-year reign. There are high hopes for the new government with municipal elections taking place in the autumn this year and presidential elections planned for 2007. Oil from Mauritania's newly developed off-shore oil fields came into production in 2005. Meanwhile, Mauritania remains 157th (out of 177) in the UN's Human Development Index. This is felt nowhere as acutely as in the south where RDA works and where decades of political and economic marginalisation coupled with drought, desertification, poor markets and a spiralling cost of living has driven whole communities into chronic poverty.

Challenges

To meet these challenges RDA and partner ADMAPE will continue to work with local communities to help them create sustainable livelihoods, focusing primarily on economically viable agricultural systems which can create employment and revenue. Our Sylla project is an exciting example of this and the coming year will see the 329 members of the Sylla women's cooperative fully develop their 9 hectare market garden site. Here, they will demonstrate a system which maximises outputs whilst minimising costly inputs utilising numerous regenerative farming methods ranging from composting and association planting to drip irrigation and integration of animal husbandry. Promotion of regenerative farming will also be expanded into pastoralist and irrigation farming communities via our extensive Community Project where further demonstration sites supported by research, training (including literacy) and micro-credit at ADMAPE's newly completed Resource Centre will build the capacity of farmers' and women's organisations.

Water needs

Whilst researching our Community Project the need for basic provision of domestic water for many semi-pastoral villages which currently rely on poor-quality water carried as much as 8 Km became apparent. Over the next year we will be developing a program of well digging linked to small amenity market gardens. With all this and our ongoing work supporting ADMAPE to provide basic services to the Mid-Gorgol agricultural community, we have our work cut out for us this year!

funding news:

Again we had a successful year fundraising with some exceptionally generous support from individuals and income from Trust Funds and events. On our annual sponsored walk, Director Peter Hudson, part-time assistant Richard Priestley, trustee chair Mark Hudson and others raised £7400 walking 170km from Presteigne, Powys, to Weymouth in Dorset. We would like to thank all who have supported our work this year.



Mango tree: Mesdames Sow, Athie and Kane of the Sylla Women's Cooperative taking notes on association planting during the 5-day seminar.



Modernisation: African agriculture must develop sufficiently to feed large populations. ADMAPE's tractor services the semi-commercial farming sector.



Schools In: Leqcieba primary school has 400 pupils and 2 members of staff. It now also has new desks and books thanks to RDA.



Amadou Diop of The Rodale Institute discussing well and water problems with Tall Dahirou, Community Project committee member.

Look Out For:

- **Website:** (as of autumn '06) www.rainbowdevelopmentinafrica.org
- **Charity Sponsor Scheme** to ensure continuity of work we are actively seeking donors who will give regularly, by direct debit or otherwise. We are also seeking sponsors for individual items such as a well. For details see flyer

For more information please contact Peter Hudson or Richard Priestley at:

Tipton, Willey, Presteigne, Powys LD8 2ND Tel: 01544 260352 email: peter.rda@freeuk.com