

Greening the Desert Tree by Tree

Improving communication among local stakeholders, stimulating collaboration and change

A tree planting campaign to reinforce and promote the production, distribution, and planting of trees in select Dogon country nurseries of Mali. Targeted assistance is provided to select nurseries in the region in an effort to curb threats to endangered plant and tree species and simultaneously rebuild species stocks.

The campaign was inspired by a new technique for tree planting called PLASA that focuses on improving local resource management. PLASA also has a tree planting method for the dry season that was featured in a stakeholder-produced bi-monthly newsletter. PLASA generated significant interest among local communities that wanted to learn more about this technique. As a result, training on the PLASA method was conducted for tree nursery staff, local NGOs, local authorities and Service Conservation de la Nature (SCN) agents. The training included a theoretical overview of PLASA and the field-based application. NGO participants contributed tree seedlings, compost, and rocks that were necessary for the training. The Association Vigne created and distributed a PLASA manual to all workshop participants. Following the training, participating villages and associations were encouraged to use the newly learned method.

Following the workshop, 945 trees were planted by 248 volunteers from eight villages in collaboration with local authorities, NGOs, and associations. Local nurseries supply local groups with seedlings to further facilitate the planting campaign. Also, three hotels in Bandiagara have contributed money for the purchase of seedlings,



sustaining and reinforcing the wide-spread support and success of this initiative.

The campaign has produced a number of interesting and diverse outcomes. For example, the SCN and Prefet of Bandiagara employed the same PLASA methodology during a ceremonial tree planting for the Government. Also, during the distribution of tree seedlings, the Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance Pays Dogon (GSTA/PD) further promoted natural resource management techniques and biodiversity conservation among participating villages. Four local NGOs have continued to promote and educate their target groups on the PLASA technique. Additionally, some local NGOs have indicated their intent to recruit volunteers for future planting efforts due to greater participation experienced as compared to past approaches.

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