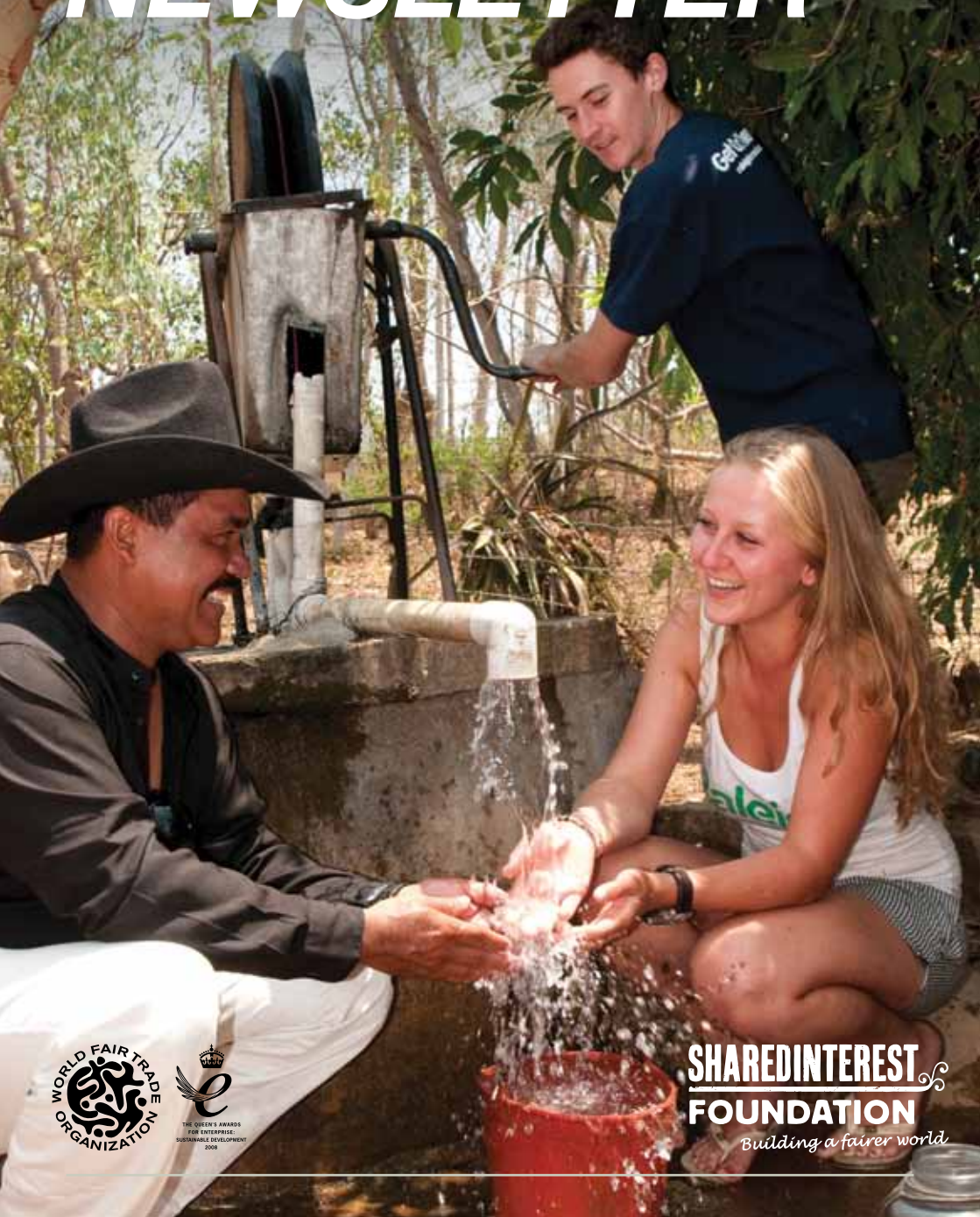


SHARED INTEREST FOUNDATION Winter 2010

# NEWSLETTER



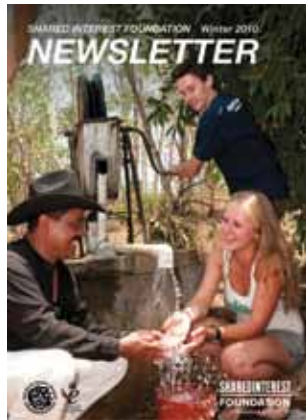
**SHAREDINTEREST**  
**FOUNDATION**

*Building a fairer world*

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## COVER STORY



*Hurricane Mitch caused mass destruction in 1998 when it hit the remote area of Achuapa in Nicaragua. More recently, Shared Interest Foundation has been working with Raleigh International on a project that provides a clean water supply for the community.*

Volunteers testing a new water pump with the local community.

## AFRICAN PRODUCERS TO ATTEND EUROPEAN ETHICAL AND FAIR TRADE MARKET PLACE (EFTAM)



***Shared Interest Foundation approved a grant of £3,257 in August 2010 to enable nine African fair trade producer groups to have a marketing presence at the ETFAM trade fair in Eindhoven, the Netherlands.***

To ensure cost effectiveness, two organisations were identified to represent all the groups at the event. The businesses presented themselves on a common marketing platform to demonstrate unity. This approach was a great success and established new market opportunities in Europe. They gathered the latest market trends and information about the European market and disseminated it to fellow producer groups. The producers made 17 new contacts, two direct orders were taken and four sample orders were secured.

*"Thank you very much for your trust in us and for providing a grant that assisted us to open new doors into the European Market.*

*"The general feedback was very positive towards the new look of African product promotion. The products were liked, the quality was approved and the price was almost for all products acceptable to the European market. Traders are looking forward to seeing more of the MAP participants at trade events to come."*  
**Alexandra Farrington-Schomburg, COFTA Market Access Programme**

If you would like to help other organisations faced with similar situations, please donate. You can either donate online at [www.justgiving.com/sif/donate](http://www.justgiving.com/sif/donate) or <http://bit.ly/9VATYV> or send a cheque to Freepost NT1883, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1BR.

## EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS IN RWANDA

***The evaluation at the end of the second year of the Rwanda Project revealed extremely encouraging results that showed the project is having a significant impact on the businesses trained. The project evaluation submitted in June 2010 was approved by the Big Lottery Fund.***

The producers are pleased with the training they are receiving. George, president of soap company Dusabane, put the training in context when telling us about the development of his co-operative. He said: "When you are a baby first you crawl, then you walk. Shared Interest training has helped us to walk without falling over." And the results speak for themselves. The total average income for the 35 producer groups trained by the end of year two of the project has increased from £351,338 in year one to £475,161 in year two; an increase of 35%. These figures compare favourably to the expected trading level that was pegged at 10% among the targeted 50 producers at the end of the project period.

One of the businesses that has increased its income is Buranga. The group also benefitted from support which enabled them to attend the Cooperation for Fair Trade in Africa (COFTA) conference in Swaziland: Buranga is a co-operative of 38 jewellery makers based in the outskirts of Kigali. The business was established by Odette Murebwayire who lost her family during the genocide; as did many of her fellow co-operative members, all of whom are women. Two representatives from the organisation attended training in business and financial skills and market access, as well as environmental sustainability training.

Odette told us that they are pleased to have been given training as it has empowered them to make significant changes to their business. After a year's training they now have a business plan and a six-strong management committee. They are determined to trade their way to a better standard of living, and share the Foundation's 'help for self-help' ethos. Odette explains, "We have to have training because no-one will help us, we have to look after ourselves."

In addition to providing training, Shared Interest Foundation funded Odette Murebwayire's attendance at the COFTA conference in Swaziland in June. When asked what she had learned, Odette said: "I have learned more; for example the study tour that we had, I have seen and learned how to display the products and how to market them."

She added that it was helpful to compare Buranga's products to other products and she had made useful contacts, who plan to come to visit Buranga in Rwanda. Odette said the conference was useful and it encouraged her and the other staff "not to give up when there is not direct impact or direct benefit, because I have seen people who are very active and they focus on the future." She added that they would "do our best to attend other fair trade conferences because I have seen that they are very fruitful."

The members of Buranga recognise the importance of making their business more sustainable and take pride in their enterprise. They are determined to make a brighter future for themselves and their children.



Above: Buranga founder Odette Murebwayire and her colleague

## CLEAN WATER FOR NICARAGUAN COMMUNITIES



*Shared Interest Foundation contributed to Raleigh International's project in Nicaragua to provide clean water to communities of poor producers in Los Tololos and Cerro Juan Sapo, in the remote area of Achuapa; many of whom are fair trade sesame seed farmers.*

They had clean water in their homes until Hurricane Mitch struck in 1998, destroying the water system, and since then they have been collecting water from wells or from the river, this has resulted in a variety of health problems. As a result of the donation from Shared Interest Foundation and the hard work of Raleigh International volunteers, a total of 75 homes (or 400 people) and the Los Tololos Primary School now have a supply of clean water.

*"Before there was no water, we had to walk 1km to shower and collect water. But now we will have more time to work, the animals will be healthier and the community too. Less time and money going to the doctor. I could imagine the community growing different crops; more variety will grow due to more water being available."*

**Oscar Espinoza of Los Tololos, Nicaragua**

If you would like to help other organisations faced with similar situations, please donate. You can either donate online at [www.justgiving.com/sif/donate](http://www.justgiving.com/sif/donate) or <http://bit.ly/9VATYV> or send a cheque to Freepost NT1883, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1BR.

Above: Raleigh International volunteers work with the local community to build a new well. Photo courtesy of Raleigh International

## HADRIAN'S WALL WALKING CHALLENGE

BY LOUISE MCLAREN



*We would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to some of our most dedicated fundraisers who came along to show their support to our cause by participating in the Hadrian's Wall Walking Challenge. The 7.5 mile circular walk began with one of the most rugged sections of Hadrian's Wall and the group was rewarded with good weather and stunning views. Together, the 15 walkers raised a grand total of £2,738 which was a fantastic amount and far exceeded our hopes for the day.*

The money raised is being put towards our work supporting producers to trade their way out of poverty. This includes the Livelihood Security Fund as well as planned projects in Rwanda, Swaziland and South Africa. A big thank you also goes out to all those who sponsored the walkers, including many who sent sponsorship in lieu of taking part and, crucially, to our volunteers on the day, especially our two expert guides from Haltwhistle Walking Festival, Colin and Tony.

The walk was enriched by Colin's commentary on the archaeological treasures we encountered and his extensive local knowledge, which several people said was the highlight of their day. The photograph above by supporter and volunteer photographer, Emma Clark, captures the atmosphere perfectly – thanks Emma!

If you were unable to attend our Hadrian's Wall walk, would you consider holding a sponsored walk in your area or another sponsored event in aid of Shared Interest Foundation? We would be very happy to provide help in raising sponsorship online or by traditional methods. Please contact Louise McLaren on 0191 233 9112 or at [louise.mclaren@shared-interest.com](mailto:louise.mclaren@shared-interest.com) for tips and sponsorship forms, or a chat about how you can support us.

Above: Colin Mills and Tony Miller of Hadrian's Wall Walking Festival lead the group through the stunning countryside. Photo courtesy of Emma Clark

## “IN OUR CASE MONEY REALLY DOES GROW ON TREES”

*For the craft producers that Shared Interest Foundation is working with in Rwanda, environmental conservation and sustainable livelihoods go hand in hand. Their future prospects for earning a livelihood are entirely dependent on having a stable, sustainable source of raw materials.*

Shared Interest Foundation is currently providing training in environmental sustainability to a group of 50 small businesses. The training is part of a major three-year project that is significantly improving the prospects of the craft businesses, enabling them to become more sustainable with training in business and financial skills and market access in addition to the environmental training.

The environmental sustainability training has been delivered as part of its Rwandan Producer Support Project since 2008, but there is currently only provision for classroom-based training in subjects such as forestation, energy conservation, sustainable production and consumption methods, and water catchment.

Responding to the requests of producers, the Foundation is planning to deliver training in the Muhanga District, Southern Province, in a year-long nursery and tree planting project, providing 10,000 seeds.

The seeds will be planted in handcraft producers' farms with technical assistance from local environmental organisation, Rural Environmental and Development Organisation (REDO), and producers will be trained in how to develop nurseries in their villages.



Above: Members of COPABU help to plant the 5,000 trees

The main objectives of the project are below:

- 1 Producers will be taught how to make a tree nursery to enable them to plant trees themselves, giving ongoing benefits to the 410 cooperative members and the wider community.
- 2 Deforestation, partly caused by many producers taking raw materials from the forests, will be reduced.
- 3 The habitat of important wildlife (including snakes, monkeys, birds, jackals) and the biodiversity of the forest will be protected.
- 4 Tree planting will lead to soil conservation through erosion control. This will indirectly benefit the 1,640 residents of Muhanga district.

Shared Interest Foundation has been inspired by one producer group's determination to secure materials for their basketwork and wooden craft products.

COPABU is a producer group in the west of Rwanda which supports approximately 400 co-operative members who make wooden craft products and baskets. At the outset, producers had some limited environmental knowledge, which in many instances was inaccurate and ill-informed. COPABU attended their first environmental training in January 2009 where they learned about sustainable methods of production. As a result they assessed their working environment with the aim of making their production of raw materials, wood for the crafts and sisal for baskets, sustainable for the future.

They then wrote a letter to their District Officer, explaining the training they had received and stating their desire to preserve the environment which they rely so heavily upon for their income. The group worked in partnership with the District Officer to plant 5,000 trees (jacaranda and sederara) and sisal around the bottom of these trees.

Annonsiate Nyiramisago the Head of the Cooperative stated: "The training has been a great help to us. Before we thought we knew what environmental sustainability meant, but I think that we were confused. Now not only do we know what it means because of the training, but we also know practically what we can do to help.

"In our case money really does grow on trees, without the trees and sisal we would have no raw materials to make our products and therefore no form of income, so it is our responsibility to make sure that we replenish our resources and plan for the future. Thank you for supporting us in this mission."



Above: The tree planting projects aims to benefit the whole community

The initiative of COPABU is a great testament to the determination of Rwandan producers to protect the biodiversity and natural resources of their beautiful country and at the same time help their businesses survive and provide sustainable livelihoods. Shared Interest Foundation will be continuing the exemplary work of COPABU with a further project working with producers in the Muhanga District to prevent deforestation and soil erosion and enable producers to protect their source of raw materials.

The project will deliver benefits directly to 410 producers and indirectly to 1,640 residents of Muhanga. We were delighted to receive a grant of £4,000 from a charitable trust, which means we only have to raise the additional £2,625 to go ahead.

If you would like to make a donation and bring us closer to starting the project, please send a cheque to Freepost NT1883, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1BR.

## LIVELIHOOD SECURITY FUND UPDATE

*Thanks to your continued support, the Livelihood Security Fund pilot continues to go from strength to strength. The scheme aims to help producers whose businesses have suffered a shock, be it natural disaster or extremely difficult political and economic circumstances.*

Producer groups that benefit from the Livelihood Security Fund are requested to feedback on what they used the grant for and how it has helped the business to survive and recover from the shock it has sustained. Our work in disaster relief has directly impacted CCAP in the Philippines, Mountain Fruits in Pakistan and most recently CESMACH in Mexico.

### Community Crafts Association of the Philippines (CCAP)

The story of Community Crafts Association of the Philippines shows how making a grant at the right time can make a huge difference to the prospects of a business that provides a livelihood for many handicraft producers.

Gina L. Sadorra, Executive Director of CCAP explains that the Livelihood Security Fund grant, and particularly



This page: CCAP deal with the aftermath of the flooding



the quick response, was exactly what was required to enable her business to continue trading: "The fund greatly helped CCAP recover and continue its trading operations by immediately serving buyer's orders through cash advances to the producers. The fund supported the major repairs and construction of damaged CCAP facilities, particularly the showroom, warehouse loading area and producers' quarters which are needed in the trading operations. The repair of the board room was equally important as it is the place where meetings with producers/networks and/or buyers as well as small training sessions are usually conducted."

She continued: "The grant has paved the way for us to accept other small order, serving both our partner producers and fair trade buyers."

### Mountain Fruits

You may remember that in our last edition of the Foundation Newsletter, we reported that we had recently leveraged financial support for Mountain Fruits; a business based in the Hunza Valley of Pakistan that had been struck by landslides. Following our article in the newsletter, many of you

kindly responded with donations to help the producers' business survive the disaster.

In August however, Mountain Fruits suffered a further natural disaster. Major flooding destroyed more trees and buildings. It had a devastating effect on the infrastructure of the area and further hampered their abilities to operate. Still, Mountain Fruits has, against all odds, managed to survive.

Managing Director of Mountain Fruits, Sher Ghazi emailed not long after the flooding to explain their plans to use the funds to help build a new infrastructure once they settle again. He said: "The farmers are delighted with the donations they have received; they were excited to know about the financial support so they wanted to spend on an everlasting project like constructing a water tank in the new land or any other project which can be seen and remembered."

### CESMACH

At the beginning of October, Hurricane Matthew crossed over the Mexican state of Chiapas, causing severe damage to the land used by Shared Interest customer CESMACH, an organic coffee producing co-operative. The area in which the group lives and works suffered landslides and broken bridges which has greatly impacted their coffee production.

Carlos Omero Velasco López, President of CESMACH, estimates that 70% of the group's farmlands and coffee plantations are devastated and of the 30% that remains, approximately half is likely to be damaged by excessive rain and humidity that causes disease. This is a



disaster for the coffee producers and their families who rely on coffee sales to survive. In addition to suffering the loss of coffee plants, many people have been left homeless following the floods, plus communications and transport are limited due to damage to bridges and roads.

CESMACH has planned a recovery programme and Shared Interest Foundation was pleased to be able to support it with a donation of £5,000. This will fund the purchase of 2,500 new coffee plants along with land clearing and digging, which will go a long way towards helping the producers who have suffered damage start to earn a living from coffee again.

If you would like to help other organisations faced with similar situations, please donate. You can either donate online at [www.justgiving.com/sif/donate](http://www.justgiving.com/sif/donate) or <http://bit.ly/9VATYV> or send a cheque to Freepost NT1883, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1BR.

Above: Landslides on land farmed by CESMACH producers. Photo courtesy of Octavio C. Carbajal of CESMACH.

## WAYS TO SUPPORT US

*At Shared Interest Foundation we are passionate about the work we do and we are grateful for your support. We are always looking for ways to make donating to our cause all the easier so that we can raise more money and enable more producers to maintain sustainable livelihoods.*

With the rise of online giving, the variety of ways in which our supporters can make a gift are increasing. Here's a quick guide to help you choose your preferred method(s) of giving:

- 1 Regular giving by standing order is a simple, efficient way to donate. Regular donations are immensely helpful, particularly in the current climate, as they help increase the sustainability of projects and allow us to commit to the beneficiaries. If you would like to set up monthly or annual donations, please contact us on 0191 233 9112 or send in the enclosed form.
- 2 Online giving is quick and easy, and it cuts down the time the charity spends on administration. You can make one-off or regular donations at [www.justgiving.com/sif/donate](http://www.justgiving.com/sif/donate) or <http://bit.ly/9VATYV>
- 3 Do you have any unused items cluttering up your house? If you sell on e-bay you can donate either the whole amount or a percentage to Shared Interest Foundation very easily by choosing 'Advanced Sell'



rather than 'Quick Sell' on the Sell Your Item form.



Above: Shared Interest Foundation fundraisers at a sponsored event

- 4 We are, of course still more than happy to receive donations by traditional methods. You can simply send in a cheque to us at Freepost NT 1883, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1BR.
- 5 We would love it if you were to hold an event in aid of Shared Interest Foundation, or participate in an organised event and raise sponsorship. Please contact us for sponsorship forms and advice about Justgiving and Virgin Money Giving.
- 6 If you are a Shared Interest Society member, you could make a provision that upon your death, your investment in Shared Interest Society Limited be converted to a donation. If you are not a member, please consider including Shared Interest Foundation in your will. For more information, please fill in the enclosed form to request further details, or contact Louise on 0191 233 9112 or at [louise.mclaren@shared-interest.com](mailto:louise.mclaren@shared-interest.com)

Your donations are always very much appreciated, both by us and by the beneficiaries of our work. Thank you.