

From local actions to influencing global dryland policies



THE IMPACT OF THE DRYNET NETWORK



drynet

DRYNET



Strengthening and supporting local initiatives in drylands

Arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, also known as drylands, cover more than 40% of the world's terrestrial surface and are home to some of the world's most vulnerable ecosystems. Drylands are home to a great range of biodiversity and can play a fundamental role in the global fight against poverty, climate change and desertification. Most inhabitants of drylands depend directly upon an often unpredictable natural resource base for their livelihoods. Land degradation is widespread in drylands, leading to food insecurity and undermining the livelihoods of the estimated 2 billion people that reside in the drylands. Such degradation is linked to changes in land use and production practices, including the clearing of woodlands, monocultural farming, the overuse of pesticides and overgrazing. By protecting and restoring biodiversity in these regions it is possible to reduce this vulnerability and support climate resilient livelihoods and sustainable development.

In 2007, fifteen Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from all over the world joined forces in a programme called DRYNET to work together in countering dryland degradation. DRYNET believes that local organisations and communities living in drylands should be at the heart of this effort. Yet, these organisations and communities are often not adequately involved in designing and implementing the projects and policies that affect their livelihoods. To change this, DRYNET's programme provides a supportive framework that links CSOs working in 22 countries around the globe. These CSOs collaborate at home and internationally to promote the interests of dryland communities and ecosystems. The DRYNET network is goal-oriented, collaborative, and bottom up.

DRYNET's partner organisations are engaged in numerous initiatives to combat desertification and improve the living conditions of people living in drylands. They have been documenting the impact that their work has had on local communities. This publication shows some of the results they have achieved and highlights the added value of acting

as an international network. This increases the recognition afforded to member organisations, broadens their outreach and facilitates exchanges of expertise between members.

These stories not only show how DRYNET's collaborative work has reversed land degradation at the local level, but also how partners have influenced changes in policies that affect drylands. DRYNET strives to increase the visibility of local grassroots initiatives and to ensure that policy makers remain informed about the positive effect that they can have on dryland communities.

DRYNET has developed unique working methods which involve:

- building strong CSO partnerships, both between organisations in the participating countries and within the network as a whole;
- building linkages and dialogues between CSOs, the policy community (at national and international levels) and other stakeholders;
- documenting successful grassroots' responses to dryland problems, publicising these and encouraging their up-scaling;
- establishing avenues for CSOs and civil society to have more input into policy and decision making.

Many positive results have been achieved in the countries where DRYNET has been active. These include:

- the development of vibrant CSO networks in countries with a history of weak civil society participation;
- CSOs collaborating with scientists, public authorities and local communities in developing participatory research programmes;
- CSOs becoming valued contributors in policy formulation and evaluation;
- local groups developing the skills to produce funding applications and the confidence to





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support or challenge policies related to drylands;
• local initiatives becoming more visible, regionally, nationally and internationally.

DRYNET believes that the experience and know-how that it has built up is highly relevant to national and international fora which make policies and decisions that affect dryland communities. DRYNET believes that there is an urgent need to place more emphasis on the strong links that exist between land-use, climate change, food security and poverty and to give more support to promoting participatory approaches to addressing these problems.

* More information about DRYNET and our activities can be found on our website: www.dry-net.org

picture: Herders with sheep in North Kordofan state



SCOPE



Sustainable dryland management in Pakistan

The Society for Conservation and Protection of Environment (SCOPE) has been working at the local level in the drylands of Southern Pakistan for the past 24 years and has been involved in the evolution of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) since its birth in 1992. The main focus of SCOPE's work has been mobilising local stakeholders in fragile drylands and maintaining land resources in a sustainable way. DRYNET gave a new dimension to SCOPE's mission enabling us to intensify our activities in awareness raising and capacity development, engaging a large number of civil society groups and stakeholders, working at different levels. SCOPE's core message is that urgent action is needed to maintain the fragile ecosystems in drylands. Pakistan is losing its fertile top soil at a disastrous rate, through deforestation, uncontrolled grazing and bad irrigation methods.

Through DRYNET, SCOPE has undertaken a number of communication and capacity development initiatives, attended by major stakeholders including government officials and representatives of NGOs, community groups, the private sector and scientists. The emphasis of these initiatives has been on joint and collaborative approaches to sustainable land management. SCOPE was also able to engage with the Sustainable Land Management Programme (SLMP), a Pakistani government initiative, funded by GEF. SCOPE led consultations in Sindh Province and worked with stakeholders, developing projects in two dryland areas (Tharparkar and Dadu districts) of the province. These projects developed innovative approaches to halt rapid land degradation, including rainwater harvesting, coupled with judicious use of water for irrigation and plantations, the re-vegetation of local plants and the introduction of controlled grazing.

In Tharparkar SCOPE has collaborated with the Arid Zone Research Institute (AZRI), to promote awareness about sustainable land management and to help local farmers and pastoralist

communities to introduce drought resistant crops and reseed rangelands with indigenous plant species that are in decline. Mr Yar Mohammad, the former Director of AZRI says "Collaboration between SCOPE and AZRI proved that public and social sector organisations can achieve wonderful results in the service of ecology and communities to improve production and resilience against climatic changes".



SCOPE was also instrumental in collecting local experiences and case studies of sustainable land management practices, implemented by community groups. These initiatives were widely communi-

cated through the DRYNET network, using newsletters and the website. These efforts resulted in stronger links and a cross fertilisation of ideas among community leaders and several stakeholders. SCOPE has been in constant touch with Pakistan's Ministry of Environment, the contact point with the UNCCD, to strengthen the National Action Programme (NAP) to combat desertification. SCOPE has presented the Ministry with the experiences of local communities and their initiatives to protect their land resources.

Participating in DRYNET has proved beneficial to SCOPE in many ways and has helped us to attain our goals. Membership of DRYNET has increased SCOPE's connections, through better communications and the sharing of experiences. The newsletters have been particularly useful in bringing together stakeholders with an interest in sustainable land management. Capacity building workshops have provided opportunities for linking with institutions and individuals directly involved in local land management. DRYNET has also increased SCOPE's exposure to international events and institutions engaged in similar work. This has helped SCOPE to develop linkages with a number of international partners, with whom we are now collaborating in sustainable land management programmes.

picture above: Inauguration of a dryland development project in Tharparkar



*Visit to a dryland development
project, Tharparkar*



ENDA



Successfully advocating sustainable development in Senegal

The challenges of sustainable development, including sustainable land management and fighting against desertification, highlight the need to raise awareness and to provide information and training to a range of stakeholders, including the population at large, local authorities and civil society organisations. This is a vital first step towards the sustainable management of natural resources and organisations' having development strategies that pay more attention to environmental issues.

When the DRYNET network was first established, ENDA supported the establishment of a framework for local consultation on environment and development in Joal-Fadiouth, a place strongly affected by soil salinisation and the degradation of its mangrove ecosystem. This framework, recognised by a municipal ordinance, promotes information sharing and coordination among all stakeholders and develops skills within rural communities. The framework operates as a tool to mobilise civil society and increase its involvement in the design and implementation of national and local environmental policies. It also plays the role of a municipal authority, promoting real participatory management of the environment and development in the locality.

Together with representatives from local organisations and other local stakeholders, ENDA developed a series of trainings, with a focus on advocacy in the fight against land degradation and on increasing the level of environmental monitoring. This partnership, strengthened by awareness campaigns, received national recognition on June 17, 2010 - World Day of the Fight against

Desertification. ENDA had been raising awareness to the acute problem of soil salinisation that is affecting the rice cultivation practiced in this area for over a decade by local women. That day, many people (and especially women) made the case to representatives from the Ministry of the Environment and local authorities for rehabilitating the dyke which allowed the retention of rain water upstream for rice production and prevented an increase in salinity downstream.



This call came at a good time as the following year Senegal received money from the Adaptation Fund. Lobbying of ministerial representatives led to the rehabilitation of the dyke at Joal-Fadiouth being included among the projects to be funded. This will boost rice production and reduce soil salinisation in the coming years, which will help increase agricultural production and improve food security.

The activities undertaken by ENDA through the DRYNET programme have strengthened our position as a key interlocutor in the fight against desertification in Senegal. It has also led us to become more involved in advocacy at the international level.

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DRYNET has enabled ENDA to have a seat in an international forum – membership of the network led to the appointment of an ENDA representative to the International Panel of Civil Society, established after the Ninth COP session.



Both ENDS



*Facilitating dialogue and
building skills*

Both ENDS is a Dutch environmental organisation that has been working together with other organisations throughout the world for more than twenty-five years. Our main efforts are directed at strengthening civil society groups working in areas such as the environment, sustainability and human rights in developing countries. Both ENDS works directly with CSOs but has also developed a very strong lobbying network at both national and international levels. These lobbying efforts are aimed at ensuring that themes such as land and water rights and the degradation of the environment stay in the spotlight. Both ENDS was one of the founders of the DRYNET network and currently acts as DRYNET's Secretariat and manages its funding.

Both ENDS' participation in the DRYNET network entails developing methods for strengthening civil society in countries suffering from land degradation, food shortages and injustices over land rights. Both ENDS also seeks to help communities in arid regions to improve their situation.

The most significant result of the DRYNET network has been that all of the countries involved have seen substantial improvements in cooperation between DRYNET members and other organisations, including government agencies. Both ENDS has contributed to this by developing a 'DRYNET method', through which local NGO platforms are created and dialogues with relevant policymakers and other stakeholders established. The exchange of information and experience within these networks has drastically improved the

negotiating position and knowledge base of its members. They are now more able to link their local realities to national policy and international efforts. Sustainable local initiatives have been effectively brought to the attention of policymakers and knowledge and information is more readily passed along from the policy level to local organisations (and vice versa).

"The DRYNET network has helped Both ENDS establish stronger local roots for its international lobbying activities about sustainable land use."

DRYNET members have participated in an EU project, attended international conferences and workshops and given support to network members. These activities have increased the members' professional skills and improved their international performance and profiles. Both ENDS has organised specific training packages in intercultural cooperation and these have significantly improved the communication skills of many network members. All the countries with DRYNET member have seen dramatic increases in the impact that civil society has in areas such as human rights and the environment in arid regions over the last 5 years. Many governments and international organisations have indicated that DRYNET members are now in great demand as discussion partners. Both ENDS has, in the process, also learned a great deal about facilitating networking and particularly South-South exchanges.



The DRYNET network has helped Both ENDS establish stronger local roots for its international lobbying activities about sustainable land use. Having access to the expertise and experience of DRYNET partners and, in turn their local partners, has allowed Both ENDS to develop a more thorough vision and to be able to reach many more local organisations. This improves our credibility and gives us a stronger voice in social and political debates at various levels.



CAREC



Media tours to promote environmental awareness in Central Asia

Desertification and land degradation are among the most-pressing environmental issues of Central Asia. Nevertheless attention to these problems and actions to resolve them are still limited. Since 2007 the

DRYNET initiative, led by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) in Central Asia has significantly contributed towards raising awareness about these problems and getting people to share their experiences. This has been done through using a variety of communication tools, such as national and regional seminars, trainings, media tours, newsletters and environmental cinema halls.

In 2009 a media tour to Karakalpakstan was organised by DRYNET in partnership with the "Ecosan" NGO to raise public awareness. During this tour 30 journalists were acquainted with best practices for addressing desertification and land degradation in Uzbekistan. These included forest plantations in the Aral Sea seabed, the construction of dams in the Amu Darya delta, the development of animal husbandry schemes, the application of a micro-loan programme and earthworm breeding to improve soil quality. Journalists improved their knowledge and developed an in-depth understanding of these issues, thereby improving the quality of information shared with the general public.

The media tour continued with an environmental cinema club. According to Ms. Natalia Shulepina, a journalist and DRYNET associate in Uzbekistan: "*Environmental cinema*

clubs are an important source of knowledge for journalists and other stakeholders, enabling a deeper insight into the problems". More than 200 experts, policy-makers, environmental activists and journalists attended these screenings, finding out more

about the state of the Aral Sea and its dried-out seabed and the biodiversity of Ustyurt plateau. Together, the media tour and cinema club led to more than sixty local radio programmes about the environment being broadcast.



Electronic and hard copy DRYNET newsletters have also generated significant interest among stakeholders in the region and helped raise awareness. These newsletters cover news on national and global initiatives, projects and best practices for combating the desertification and promoting sustainable land management. These newsletters also provide a platform for other regional projects and

programmes, such as the GEF Small Grants Programme, to share their news with a broader audience.

Being part of the DRYNET network has enriched stakeholders in the Central Asian region by providing them with more information about international experience and expertise, which was integrated into the content of regional awareness materials. Global networking and capacity building with DRYNET have improved the skills of CAREC's staff in intercultural communication, experience sharing and networking. DRYNET plays as an important role in Central Asia as it is the only network in

the region focused on knowledge sharing and strengthening CSOs involved with desertification and land degradation. Beyond being a unique network in Central Asia, it also mobilises and actively involves CSOs and other stakeholders in the issues of desertification, drought and land degradation in the region.

"Being part of the DRYNET network has enriched stakeholders in the Central Asian region by providing them with more information about international experience and expertise."



CENESTA



Traditional knowledge for sustainable land management in Iran

CENESTA has made considerable progress in capacity building among indigenous nomadic peoples and local communities in the desert and arid areas of Iran. It has focused on reviving the customary laws and institutions of these communities, which often played an important role in maintaining sustainable livelihoods and conserving natural resources. Nomadic people play a crucial role in ecosystem management in Iran. Two of CENESTA's major achievements are worth highlighting; the establishment of the National Union of Indigenous Camel Herders and the expansion of existing participatory and evolutionary plant breeding initiatives. The latter have received considerable support from government agencies and encouraged the direct involvement of farmers in participatory action research in their farms.



CENESTA has also been involved in promoting and developing indigenous knowledge and introducing and supporting new approaches for natural resource management. Examples include the 'Territory-Based Sustainable Range Management Programme' (TBSRM) and 'Indigenous and Community Conservation Areas' (ICCA) an attempt to better manage arid and semi-arid rangelands, especially those where seasonal migration occurs.

For the past 4 years, CENESTA has been in negotiations with the Forest, Rangeland and Watershed Management Organisation (FRWO) and the Department of the Environment (DoE). These negotiations have brought about changes in the country's Fifth Five-Year Development Plan which (in article 187) sets out a new approach to sustainable ecosystem management. Another important milestone has been CENESTA's selection as a representative of CSOs accredited to the UNCCD to become a member of the National Working Group on Combating Desertification. This gives us (on behalf of other CSOs) equal voting rights with governmental organisations and ministries.

Being a part of the DRYNET network has promoted our institutional legitimacy at all levels but in particular in combating desertification issues. It has also allowed for a useful exchange of experiences and lessons with other partners in the network and enabled us to participate in, or maintain links with, a wide range of international events such as CRIC, the COPs, the World Water Forum, RIO+20, World Conservation Congress, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UNFCCC and others.

We continue to act as a bridge between two very different sets of cultures (high-level policy makers and civil society organisations), effectively bringing these different stakeholders together. Although these worlds are often distant from each other, and they rarely get a chance to share experiences, their views can be remarkably similar as these two quotes below show:

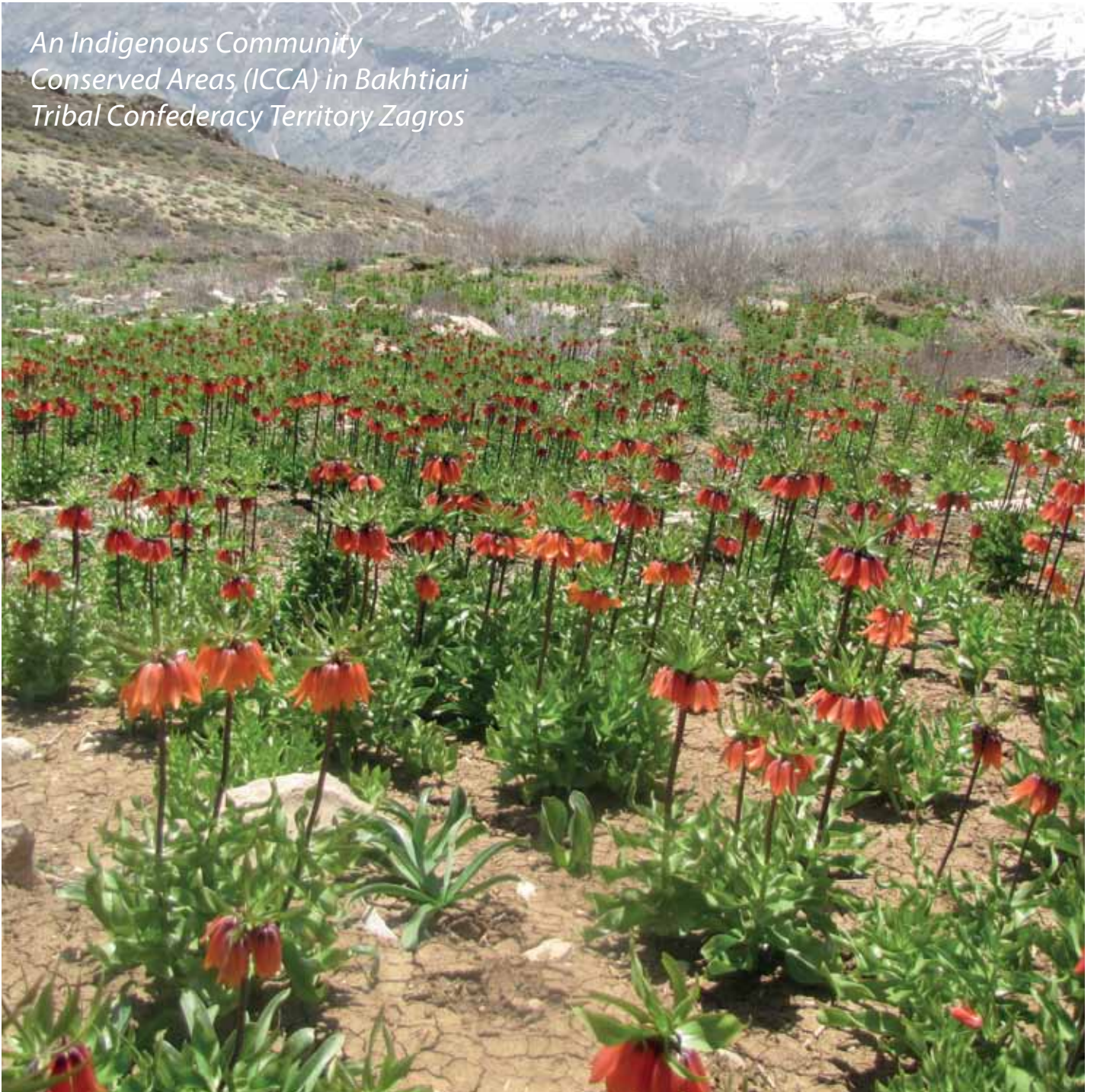
"All over the world, pastoralism is the human management of livestock in the environment. There are 3 components in this: humans, livestock and rangelands. If we want to achieve sustainable development in Iran, we need to know and conserve each of these 3 components..." **High-level policy maker**

"Traditional knowledge has reigned for thousands of years and it is not to be confused with folklore. It has been fine-tuned through trial and error over and over again, and knows how to conserve biodiversity and natural resources much better than specialists. It is the role of civil society to link researchers, who often have no effective relation with the indigenous peoples in the field who have been forgotten and neglected." **CSO representative**

picture above: Field visit by the UN Resident Coordinator of participatory plant breeding activities to the Touran Biosphere Reserve, on the periphery of the Central Desert, Iran



*An Indigenous Community
Conserved Areas (ICCA) in Bakhtiari
Tribal Confederacy Territory Zagros*



Drylands Coordination Group



Linking farmers and research

The Drylands Coordination Group (DCG) is a network for capacity building through the exchange of practical experiences and appropriate knowledge on food security in the drylands of Africa.

DCG's networks are

in Ethiopia, Mali and Sudan. They consist of NGOs, research institutions and governmental agencies. The members of the DCG networks jointly conduct research projects with the aim of improving food security for vulnerable households and communities in the drylands of Africa. The research relates to DCG's focus areas: agricultural production, pastoralism, sustainable natural resource management and climate change adaptation.

DCG's projects generate results that are useful to a wider audience, and we strive to share these results through information and policy work linked to the UNCCD and other initiatives aimed at drylands. In this regard, working together with the other NGOs in DRYNET has proved invaluable to DCG.

The strength of working together with similar organisations as an international network on lobbying efforts on dryland issues was the main reason why DCG joined DRYNET. Sharing knowledge and experience with other DRYNET members through regular meetings (both in person and through internet conference calls) enables DCG to follow the debate and policy issues more closely than it could in isolation. Working together with other DRYNET

members to strengthen civil society's engagement within the UNCCD has been particularly important for DCG.

Through its work with DRYNET, DCG also seeks to contribute to relevant policy processes for dryland issues beyond the UNCCD. In 2012, DCG benefitted from DRYNET's participation in the World Water Forum (WWF) held in Marseille in March. DCG had previously conducted two specific research projects, one in Ethiopia and another one in Mali, on the topic of water harvesting.

DCG cooperated with DRYNET to make the results from these projects, and other information on the topic of water and water stress in the Sahel, accessible to the large number of participants at the WWF. We have also presented our own information materials at the forum, such as a fact sheet on water harvesting and the results from our projects in the DRYNET Newsletter.

DRYNET also hosted a seminar bringing together various experts on water issues in the Sahel, and the author of DCG's report from Mali, Dr. Mamadou Doumbia, presented the results of this study at the seminar.

DRYNET's presence at the WWF is but one example of how DRYNET provides an important meeting place to exchange the knowledge needed to strengthen civil

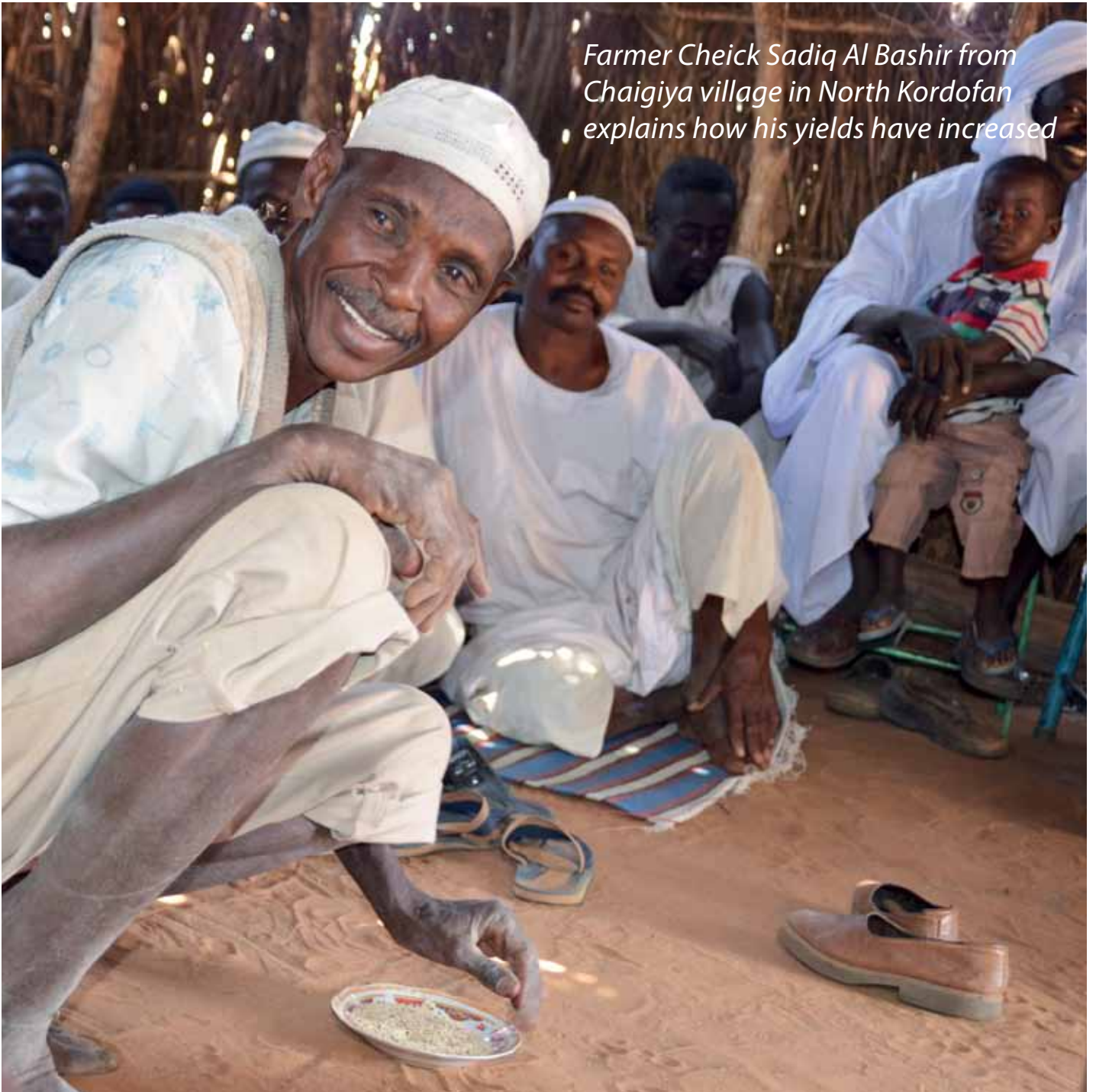
society's influence over the development of drylands. Being an active member of DRYNET takes DCG one step further towards our goal of improving food security for vulnerable households and communities in the drylands of Africa.

"DRYNET's presence at the WWF is but one example of how DRYNET provides an important meeting place to exchange the knowledge needed to strengthen civil society's influence over the development of drylands."





*Farmer Cheick Sadiq Al Bashir from
Chaigiya village in North Kordofan
explains how his yields have increased*



Environmental Monitoring Group



Promoting sustainable agricultural production in South Africa

One of the key results of EMG's work in South Africa is that farmers have taken the lead in initiating innovative approaches for the sustainable production of cultivated rooibos, applying and modifying

'best practice' approaches that are better adapted to climatic variability, conserve biodiversity in the production areas, prevent soil erosion caused by wind or water and provide more predictable incomes.

The impact of these changes in agricultural practice has to improve farmers' livelihoods through reducing the costs of establishment (fewer losses from the failure of seedling plants) and increased and more stable income from the harvested product.

EMG has been developing a number of technologies in collaboration with farmers. These include: conserving or re-establishing belts of biodiverse vegetation in areas where rooibos is cultivated in order to counter wind and water erosion, and limiting the lands between these belts so that run-off or wind cannot gather enough force to do damage. In addition, scarified rooibos seed is directly seeded in prepared lands (instead of using seedlings). Previously it was thought that it was not possible to establish rooibos from seed in the southern parts of the Suid Bokkeveld region as the germinated seedlings were thought too prone to wind damage.

The experiences of the farmers have been disseminated through farmer to farmer learning exchanges, through DRYNET

newsletters and talks (for example, Noel Oettle shared these experiences in a talk given at Land Day at the COP 17). Being part of the DRYNET network, gives EMG a solid platform for engaging in local and national spheres and beyond. It has jointly built strategies for lobbying activities in international events together with the other African DRYNET partners (ENDA and GRET).



For EMG one of the great values of being part of the DRYNET network has been the opportunity to network and be stimulated by national and international experiences, and share our experiences internationally. For example DRYNET funding

made it possible for women farmers to share their experiences at the COP 17 in Durban in 2011. We have also had the opportunity to share the outcomes of our work with via regional initiatives, such as the Greater Cederberg Biodiversity Corridor. We have acted as DRYNET's lobby group coordinator, aligning the positions of the different CSO's and keeping everybody in touch with international processes.

"My rooibos seedlings germinate when there is enough rain to trigger them, which means that they have enough available soil moisture and establish themselves before the soil gets too dry."

As Pieter Koopman, a farmer says: "my rooibos seedlings germinate when there is enough rain to trigger them, which means that they have enough available soil moisture and establish themselves before the soil gets too dry. Not only are my rooibos fields growing beautifully, but I have fewer problems with

pests in my tea and no problems with erosion or wind damage. I feel proud when I see what I have been able to achieve in our dry and wind-ridden area."



GRET



Linking stakeholders to combat land degradation in Madagascar

In Madagascar, GRET has made a number of significant steps in the fight against desertification since DRYNET's establishment in 2007. One initial barrier for DRYNET in Madagascar was a widespread misunderstanding of the term desertification. Many CSOs did not recognise that they were in fact combating desertification. Now that they have come to appreciate this, many CSOs are coming forward and sharing their experiences through newsletters and workshops. These communication tools have highlighted the technologies that are useful in arid areas where innovation and adaptation are clearly required.



GRET has brought different stakeholders together and initiated discussions on practices and how to adapt and adopt different techniques. In one case the network responded to a national programme to promote and distribute sorghum as a recovery strategy in the south of the country. GRET discussed this issue with the involved research institutions, projects and donors stressing the importance of focusing on drought resistant crop varieties. This approach was subsequently expanded to other crops (millet, maize, mucuna, etc.) in recognition of the need to diversify production and overcome food insecurity.

In another intervention, GRET focused on the issue of degradation of the country's highlands. This campaign sought to highlight the causes of degradation and to disseminate information on stabilisation techniques. Local communities were made aware of the driving forces (such as wind erosion and diminishing biodiversity) of this degradation and dialogues were established with technicians, project developers and scientists in an attempt to find appropriate solutions. As the researcher Michel Pakotondrazafy Amos Fety from the Univer-



sity of Antananarivo remarked: *"We, researchers, are not generally invited to meetings on development. However, we have to share research results that can advance the fight against environmental degradation. We thank the DRYNET network for this initiative and we hope that it will continue"*

The network has become a platform for disseminating local knowledge and technological innovations which has in turn led to dynamic exchanges and an upsurge in activities to benefit dryland communities.

Joining the DRYNET network gives partners instant access to a wide range of published information. People living and working in Madagascar's arid zone agree that it is strategically important to learn from best practices when looking to introduce new initiatives. South Madagascar has often been called 'a project cemetery' on account of its poor soils, harsh conditions and cultural specificity. These factors mean that the issue of integration (into the local landscape and culture) needs to be well-thought through. Overcoming these barriers is a key element to improving the implementation of projects and diffusing knowledge, technologies and methodologies. Being part of the DRYNET network helps increase the success rate of actions designed to benefit such communities. The DRYNET network has enough visibility to make its voice heard and influence policy in these regions. In addition, the multiplicity of actors inside DRYNET means that there are many available solutions as each organisation brings a different kind of expertise to the table.

picture above: A meeting with a local community / A field of a local variety of cassava in an arid area



OLCA



Building networks and raising awareness in Chile

OLCA's approach to the problem of desertification has focused predominantly on the environmental problems and the conflicts caused by activities that can give rise to land degradation and desertifi-

cation. These include large-scale mining operations in arid and semi-arid lands; pesticide use in intensive agriculture; monocultural tree plantations (mainly using exotic, commercial species) and urban sprawl.

Over the past four years we have arranged meetings, seminars, workshops, in situ studies, undertaken monitoring activities, provided technical and legal assistance and counselling, produced publications, radio campaigns and other activities. Our work has been closely focused on communities facing problems arising from land degradation and desertification. These activities, conducted within the scope of the DRYNET project, have achieved some important results, as listed below.

- A growing acknowledgement by affected communities, some local authorities and other sectors of civil society that natural resource extractions, such as mining and monocultures, as well as uncontrolled urban expansion are important driving factors for soil degradation in the country.
- A stronger capacity among community-based organisations to act to defend their rights and common resources against the proliferation of industrial mega-projects that degrade their lands and consume and pollute their water sources.
- A greater involvement of community organisations in networks that have been developed throughout the country to work against the degradation and desertification of the countryside.

- More opportunities for communities from different regions of the country to exchange their experiences and to act together. This has empowered community based organisations in their claims against public and private projects with huge environmental impacts that threaten their livelihoods.



DRYNET has enabled OLCA to broaden its relations and benefit from belonging to a network of CSOs facing similar problems associated with land degradation and desertification. For example, through the DRYNET network we learned about Probioma's biotechnological techniques for rehabilitating degraded soils. OLCA decided to test the Trichoderma fungi on degraded land in Chile after hearing about it from Probioma. Probioma assisted us by sending an agronomist to provide training on how to apply the Trichoderma for soil bioremediation. There are many places in Chile where this method could potentially be beneficial: large areas of land that have been contaminated by toxic waste and run off of contaminated water used in the chemical processes associated with mining. The study revealed that the fungus could survive in soil contaminated with mining waste and helped improve the survival of colonising and re-established plants.



These sustained efforts and the many activities carried out at local, regional and national levels in the past years as a member of the DRYNET network have substantially increased our influence and profile. OLCA has come to be seen as a reliable partner for community based organisations and other CSOs, and as a leader in

promoting participatory activities that defend the rights of communities.

picture above: Demonstration against large scale mining projects in northern Chile / Training seminar held at La Serena (12-13 May 2012)



CARI



Voicing the concerns of CSOs in policy processes

For 25 years CARI has been providing technical support and training in agroecology to rural organisations in order combat land degradation and desertification in drylands. Besides transferring technical knowledge, CARI's work also focuses on advocacy, an essential activity for creating the policy environment in which civil society organisations can thrive. In addition, advocacy is needed as there is often difficulty in translating environmental issues conceived by states in international fora into concrete actions at the national level.



CARI recognises that well-organised CSOs can play an important role. As such CARI has evolved two strategies: providing more and better support to our partners in the south and seeking to have more impact on public policies in the north. We quickly realised that as a single organisation acting alone we could not have significant influence on high-level policies, so in 2000 we created Groupe de Travail Desertification (GTD), a French language multi-stakeholder platform. Involvement with this platform has extended the range of field activities which CARI now has contact with and articulates these field activities with advocacy at different levels. This dynamic increases CARI's credibility to speak on behalf of civil society. It has allowed us to become more involved in decision-making processes and strengthened our argument that French public policy should give more support to drylands development. CARI was a co-author of 'A French strategy for combating desertification,' a document that has influenced French cooperation and development policy. We have become increasingly more engaged with CSOs in different networks and decision making processes in West and North Africa. This has enabled us to relay the concerns of these groups about several initiatives. These include the PRGDT (Regional Programme of Sustainable Land Management) which

is co-funded by France and more recently the proposal for the Great Green Wall of Sahara, where CARI worked closely in cooperation with DRYNET. In addition, we have also relayed CSOs' views and concerns to the EU, the world's leading donor of development aid. Working through the auspices of DRYNET, we have also been able to increase the opportunities for advocacy during multi-lateral decision making processes in the UN system. Representing a constituency of interests, such as the DRYNET network, adds to our credibility as the 'voice' of civil society at a national or multi-lateral level.

DRYNET gives CARI legitimacy in putting forward views and concerns that represent a broader set of interests and also provides us with access to more expertise and other perspectives. DRYNET has been an important vehicle for expanding CARI's scope and competence in advocating for dryland development. Following the presentation made by CARI (on behalf of CSOs and DRYNET) to the General Assembly of the UN in 2011, Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of UNCCD said "CARI has become the ambassador of the cause of drylands."



The alliance that DRYNET is forging among southern-based CSOs provides them with new opportunities to become involved and contribute to decision-making in their countries and at multilateral levels. These CSOs are working on a daily basis with local communities. This is a direct way to make an impact at grassroots level, responding to and voicing the concerns of local communities. In such cases,

DRYNET has added value by enabling CSO's to become more credible and effective, by turning them into speaking partners.

picture above: P. Burger, Executive director of CARI during UNCCD COP8 plenary in Madrid / CARI as facilitator of an Open Dialogue session during COP 10 in Changwon Korea 2011



Side event in the French Pavilion during RIO+20 in Rio de Janeiro 2012



PROBIOMA



Promoting soil bioremediation in Bolivia

Desertification is a critical issue in Bolivia where 60% of the territory (more than one million square kilometres) is in the process of desertification, a process that is directly affecting 2.2 million inhabitants.

The Bolivian Government was quite slow in recognising this problem and its economic consequences. When DRYNET started its activities in Bolivia through PROBIOMA in 2007, one of the main goals was to lobby the Bolivian Government to address this problem and establish a clear policy for tackling it.

PROBIOMA-DRYNET engaged in discussions with the Vice-Ministry of Waters and Water Resources (the official focal point for the UNCCD in Bolivia), encouraging it to develop a National Strategy to Fight against Desertification and to engage a wide range of stakeholders (universities, NGOs, social organisations, municipalities and producers) in this process. After several stakeholder meetings a National Strategy was devised, with the government committing itself to providing economic support. This led to the development of an Action Plan (which PROBIOMA-DRYNET was centrally involved in developing) which has widespread stakeholder support. It also led to the Bolivian Government playing a lead role at the COP-8 in Buenos Aires, the first time it had fully engaged in the COP process.

Since that time the government has changed and ministerial responsibilities were altered. Responsibility for implementing the Action Plan now lies with the Vice-Ministry of Science and Technology. PROBIOMA-DRYNET has maintained pressure to keep the process moving, some-

times supported by international representatives of the Global Mechanism. A multi-stakeholder encounter was held, bringing together more than 150 participants from government ministries, academia, local organisations, NGOs and other sectors. This

encounter focused on the country's environmental problems and led to the establishment of networks to address the most pressing problems, including the RRA (*Red de Remediación Ambiental* - Environmental Remediation Network)

which PROBIOMA-DRYNET became a founder member of. The RRA, which also involves several state and private universities, is focusing its efforts on remediating soils degraded by monocultural farming, the excessive use of agrochemicals, mining and hydrocarbon extraction. The network is focusing on disseminating knowledge about approaches and experiences which can help address soil degradation.

Because of the scale and speed of desertification in Bolivia, PROBIOMA-DRYNET suggested establishing a special environmental unit that would include scientific and civil society actors. The government supported this proposal and has since

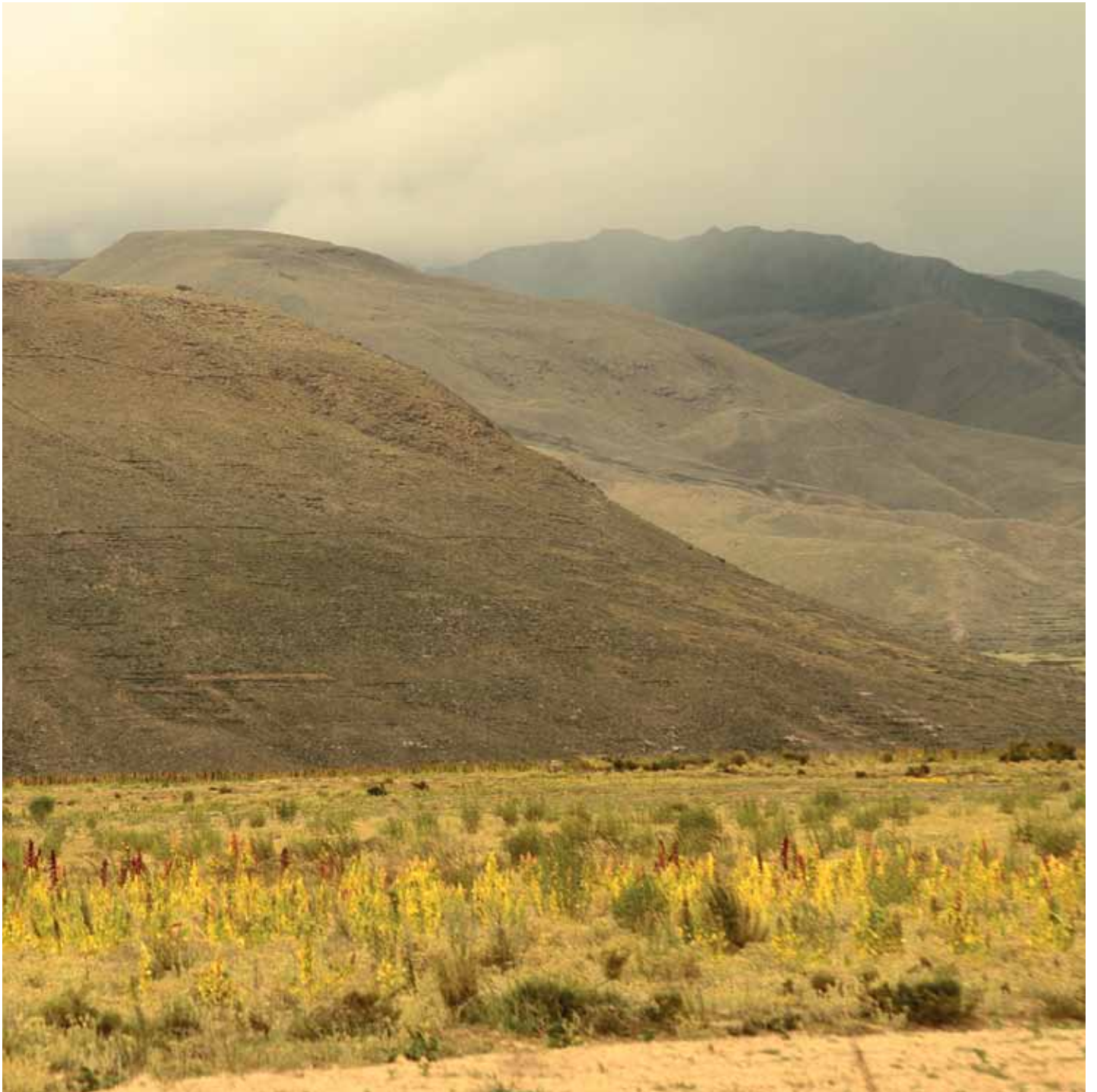
established the Environmental Remediation National Centre (led by the Vice-Ministry of Science and Technology which works with academics and scientists and PROBIOMA-DRYNET).

In the five years in which PROBIOMA-DRYNET has been active in Bolivia it has managed to generate strategies, policies, plans, actions, laws and now a task force

that engage different sectors of society and provide linkages between the global and the local levels. These efforts will surely benefit and empower the millions of people struggling in areas undergoing desertification.

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TEMA



Building civil society capacity in Turkey

TEMA was a founder partner of the DRYNET network. Although TEMA is involved in other international projects, DRYNET is unique in that it is the only project that TEMA is involved in that focuses on developing the capacities

of CSOs. Membership of DRYNET also gives TEMA access to the knowledge and experience of the other partners, which we share with our representatives all over Turkey as well as with other international, national and local NGOs. TEMA's involvement with DRYNET equips us with the tools and competencies needed to follow the international agenda and link the global perspective to local and national ones, while pro-actively influencing environmental processes at local and national level.

Working within the framework of DRYNET, TEMA has established a core project working group and a list of stakeholders with whom we are building a network. TEMA has engaged in capacity building activities, trainings and established various communication channels, including a website, newsletters and a radio programme. Additionally, we have built a strong platform for sharing information about the UNCCD process and on desertification in Turkey. Through these channels we share information about international best practices and on the resources and funding opportunities available to local NGOs, TEMA representatives and other grassroots groups.

One of these groups, the Ba ak Ecological Life Association, from Sarayönü, a small district located in Central Anatolia, has worked together with the District Governorate and the local Agricultural Directorate to develop a 'No Tillage Conservation Agriculture Project'. As the first such project in Turkey, it has attracted much attention, not only from local and neighbouring villages but also from national government agencies and international research institutes. TEMA helped provide the skills to make this multi-partner project to come to life and also

helped the group to win a UNCCD 'Land for Life' Award. TEMA dedicated this year's DRYNET national training to the topic of 'monitoring anti-desertification projects' to improve the ways in which local projects are evaluated (and thereby improve their implementation). Muhammet Demirpolat, the President of the Ba ak Ecological Life Association, described DRYNET as a platform that provides personal development opportunities and offers a guide for future action. He added "Through DRYNET, we have learned about practices in other countries and international opportunities. We would like to thank TEMA and DRYNET for making this possible."



The interactions between TEMA representatives, DRYNET partners and NGO representatives attending DRYNET trainings, events and other international meetings (such as the COP and the World Water Forum) have been very valuable. They have provided learning opportunities, particularly about the international desertification agenda and the role of CSOs in implementation processes. These interactions have improved TEMA's ability to act as an advocate and speaking partner and increased its intercultural competence, especially with regard to styles of communication and cooperation.

TEMA has employed these new competencies in its national advocacy efforts. One of our campaigns has been against a bill proposing the sale of certain forest areas that are seen as no longer having conservation value, as well as land formerly classified as forests. TEMA has organised a petition campaign, prepared an alternative draft law and generated public awareness about solutions for the issue. We have focused on justice and taken into account the social and economic aspects of the proposal. Despite widespread public opposition the bill was passed in April 2012. TEMA will follow the implementation of this law, but use legal means to oppose land sales of this type and continue to advocate on this and other issues nationally and internationally.



TENMIYA



Building CSO networks in Mauritania

As a member of the DRYNET network, Tenmiya has carried out a number of successful projects and activities such as sector mappings and the upscaling of success stories. One example was the launch of

a networking exercise with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Mauritania. This involved building a comprehensive database of actors (NGOs, CBOs, donors, etc.) that are active in combating land degradation and desertification. The database includes experiences of good practices and success stories implemented by various CSOs and government agencies.

Through DRYNET we have disseminated numerous tested success stories. These include the recovery of degraded lands through integrated water resource management in Guidimakha (in the south of Mauritania) a project that we led. Another example is a project conducted by the NGO AMAD to promote drip irrigation technology to optimise the use of water resources in the horticultural areas of the Senegal River Valley. This experience was later adapted and duplicated by Tenmiya in the oasis ecosystem of Tagant, a mountain region in the centre of Mauritania.

The network has also allowed Tenmiya to establish a framework for sharing and exchanging information about initiatives related to land degradation and desertification through regular meetings of the network and publishing newsletters. Other communication tools, such as rural radio and awareness campaigns, have provided access to a wide audience, including community groups and local communities.

Being part of DRYNET has undoubtedly contributed to strengthening the capacity of TENMIYA. DRYNET partner CSOs have benefited from several training workshops covering topics such as project development, vulnerability assessment, communication and sharing best practices.

DRYNET has been the catalyst for networking Mauritanian CSOs engaged in the fight against land degradation and desertification. At the national level, DRYNET is now considered as an important civil society partner of the Ministry of Environment and

Sustainable Development on issues related to land degradation and climate change. The three organisations selected to lead the consultation process and local consultations to update the NAPA (National Action Plan for Adaptation) have been mentored by DRYNET.

The added value of DRYNET for local actors has been in helping them to make the connection between

their actions and practices and the international experiences of sustainable development and particularly the UNCCD process. Through DRYNET, local CSOs exchange information and experiences, allowing them to recognise similar practices that occur beyond our national borders and to be involved in high level processes that affect national policies.

Membership of DRYNET has also allowed Tenmiya to take part in, and better understand, the UNCCD process. This opportunity has allowed Tenmiya to express the concerns of local communities and Mauritanian CSOs to an international audience. Participation in the network has opened the door to other international networks such as the Climate and Development network and the CLACC network (focused on adaptation to climate change). This international visibility means that Tenmiya is often invited to contribute to international conferences. As an example, we recently presented a successful experience about restoring degraded land in Mauritania at the International Conference on Community Based Adaptation in Dhaka. Tenmiya also took part and contributed in the West African civil society preparatory meeting for RIO+20, held in Cotonou on April 2012.

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LPPS



Safeguarding livestock biodiversity and food security in India

LPPS has been working in India's western drylands since 1996 and has a special focus on extensive livestock systems, especially camel herding. With the help of DRYNET we have been able to share and promote innovative approaches to improving the economics of camel production that we had previously developed. In a national-level workshop, attended by key actors representing government, research and academic institutions, as well as the camel pastoralists themselves, LPPS demonstrated its new value addition initiatives and techniques, including ice cream making, camel wool processing and camel dung paper manufacturing. The recommendations of the workshop were submitted to the National Planning Commission.

Due to the lobbying of LPPS, value addition is now being promoted by the Indian government as an avenue for conserving camels, as well as other livestock adapted to drylands. The Indian government is planning to allot financial resources for this approach in its 12th Five Year Plan.

The DRYNET newsletter has provided LPPS with the opportunity of sharing many success stories from the field with a wide audience. Because of our focus on livestock, these success stories have tended to focus on various groups of pastoralists – besides the Raika with whom we work closely, these have included the Banni buffalo pastoralists and the Kutchi camel breeders in the drylands of Gujarat. Our reports have highlighted the traditional knowledge of these groups, their contribution to the conservation of livestock biodiversity and their role in contributing to food security. The DRYNET newsletter is an

important tool for developing and promoting an alternative ecological paradigm which is more appropriate to drylands than the mainstream high-input livestock production system. It also has helped LPPS, as a fairly small grassroots NGO, to

obtain a national profile and to become a much sought after speaking partner in policy making processes. Currently we are involved in lobbying for the implementation of the Forest Rights Act, a law that is meeting a lot of resistance.

Our association with DRYNET is adding to our credibility and raising our profile, enabling us to become nationally known and recognised as a serious organisation

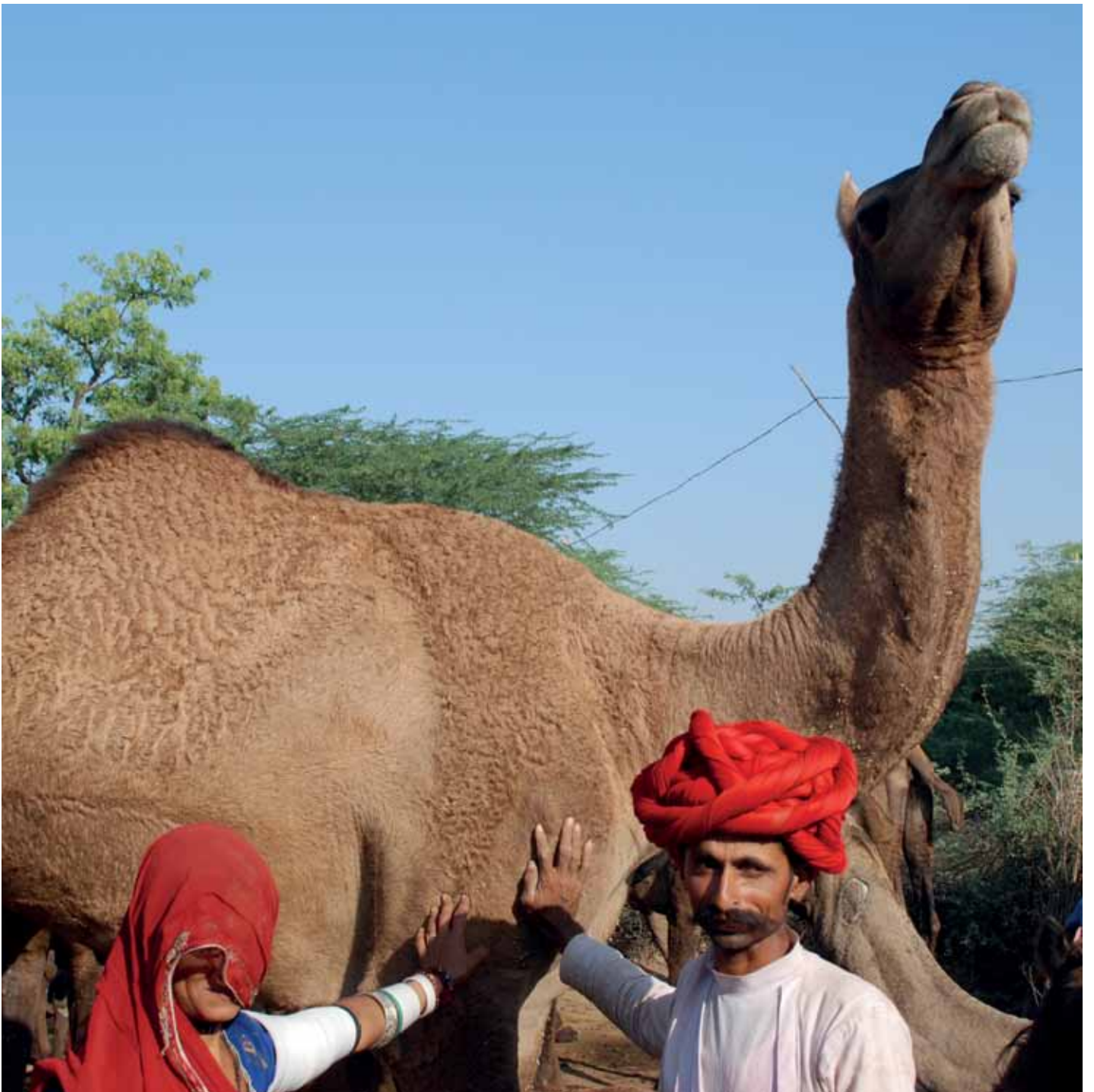
that works close to the ground but whose experiences are valid for the whole country. It has helped us highlight and emphasise the enormous contribution that pastoralists make to the national economy. We were also invited to participate in the five yearly review (2007-12) of the work done by the National Camel Research Centre, Bikaner.

Having had our success stories published on the DRYNET website has also given us some international recognition. LPPS frequently receives requests to participate in international conferences and visitors from many countries who are interested in our work. In the words of Dailibai Raika, a traditional animal healer "with the help of LPPS

we hope to survive and maintain our role as livestock keepers. Without LPPS, there would be no hope and pastoralism would be finished."



picture above: Spinning in Khabha



**DRYLANDS
COORDINATION
GROUP**



LEAGUE FOR
PASTORAL PEOPLES
AND ENDOGENOUS
LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT

Cenesta
Centre for Sustainable Development



PROBIOMA
Productividad Biológica y Medio Ambiente



Tenmiya



Both ENDS
Connecting people for change



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Orders and all other correspondence concerning this publication should be sent to:

DRYNET

Nieuwe Keizersgracht 45

1018 VC Amsterdam

The Netherlands

Phone: +31 20 530 6600

Fax: +31 20 620 8049

E-mail: drynet@bothends.org

www.dry-net.org

www.dry-net.org



Text: DRYNET partners and Diogo Pereira da Silva

Editing: Nick Parrot

Design: www.margovlamings.nl

Print: Ars Grafisch