

ANDREW LEES TRUST, WORKING TO MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF DROUGHT AND IMPROVE NUTRITION IN SOUTHERN MADAGASCAR

The **Andrew Lees Trust** (ALT) has worked in southern Madagascar directly with beneficiaries and host communities since 1999. ALT aims to empower local people to manage their resources more sustainably, improve food security and reduce the effects of extreme poverty.

The **Drought Mitigation Programme (DMP)** has been funded by the Big Lottery Fund (Dec 05 – May 09) and built on the experience of a six-year project developing fuel efficient stoves in the south of Madagascar. The DMP project developed three principle activities: reintroducing drought resistant sorghum, tree planting for increased land tenure security, and supporting a local association develop an income generating plantation. The DMP aimed to empower rural families **to improve natural resource management in the most food insecure region of the south.**

'**Apemba Soa**', financed by the European Commission, is an extension of the sorghum reintroduction activities following the success of DMP. Apemba Soa distributes seeds and provides training and technical support to farmers who want to cultivate sorghum, as well as cooking lessons to maximise its nutritional benefits.

Re-introduction of Drought Resistant Sorghum as a staple crop



A total of **504 local farming families** have benefited from seed and technical trainings in sorghum growing techniques.

12 sorghum festivals have been organised to publicise the sorghum reintroduction campaign, to demonstrate planting techniques and provide cooking demonstrations. Attendances at sorghum festivals have been high with crowds of approximately 1,000 people at each, the majority of all festivals were televised. Since the beginning of the project participating farmers have borrowed 750 kg, reimbursed 1 ton and **harvested well over 92 tons of sorghum seed.**

The final harvest (May 09) has proved to be the most successful sorghum campaign to date. All the primary crops of maize were wiped out due to the late arrival of the rains in April 09. The sorghum beneficiaries were the only cultivators left smiling in May 09, with sorghum as the strongest and most resistant crop in the Androy.

Three communes in the hardest hit of the drought ridden Androy region reported sorghum as the principle food during the traditionally worst months of the year in 2009; this is a significant result for this region traditionally blighted by food insecurity.

Family tree-planting for increased land tenure security

Tree planting at family level helps to improve security of land tenure as well as providing rural families with fruit produce. **Over 23,111 value-adding trees** have been sold and distributed to beneficiary families, local associations and schools in the Androy Region since the project started in 2006.

Income generation through plantation development

A castor-bean plantation is being piloted in collaboration with Malagasy Association 'Voronokodoho'. The plantation helps to stabilise poor soils at risk from wind erosion, as well as providing significant local employment. Seeds, seedlings and training have been provided by the project, which has **benefited approximately 1,000 people** since its start. Cashew and coconut trees, and legumes, are also grown at the plantation.

Rural Radio Campaign

Alongside its sister project, EC funded Apemba Soa ('good sorghum') **over 176 educational radio programmes** have been produced and broadcast to mobilise community participation, increase knowledge and understanding, publicise events/trainings and serve to address environmental issues. These radio programmes are broadcast via the ALT PR rural radio network. This network ensures a considerable regional production and broadcast capacity for educational programmes reaching approx 900,000 beneficiaries.

Fuel Efficient Stoves

To meet challenges to the environment, ALT has also taught village women to build fuel-efficient wood stoves (Toko Mitsitsy) that can save significant time and reduce the consumption of wood by up to 65%. As a result of these trainings over 36,000 TM stoves have been built across Southern Madagascar since 1999.