

# Volunteer association engaging women and youth in agroforestry and reforestation on degraded land

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**A volunteer association promotes agroforestry, sustainable farming techniques, and forest restoration through the empowerment of youth and women who are traditionally excluded from land ownership and the benefits of production.**

The Association Tchadienne des Volontaires pour la Protection de l'Environnement, or Chadian Volunteers' Association for the Protection of the Environment, trains women and youth in ecosystem restoration and agroforestry. The initiative focuses primarily on countering the impacts of drought, land degradation, and desertification that all threaten food security in the area. One of the association's central activities is the planting and management of trees. To date, they have planted 20,000 trees and distributed 70,000 seedlings to surrounding rural communities. The association teaches mainly women and youth the basics of soil fertility, plant production, and natural resource management. Sustainable agriculture methods are promoted including the use of intercropping, locally available organic compost, natural insecticides, and hedgerows and living fences to protect crops from wind damage, erosion, and water evaporation. The association also managed to help women access farmland, something they have historically been excluded from in this region. Through improved agroforestry and soil management, these women turned degraded lands into productive farmland, replanted thousands of trees, and began producing okra, cucumbers, peppers, and other crops for sale.

## Case effectiveness on

### Climate change

**Mitigation:** Positive

Although not quantified, improved soil fertility and tree planting is estimated to have improved the carbon sequestration potential of the landscape in participating communities.

**Adaptation:** Not reported

Although no adaptation benefits were reported, the association reported creating green spaces in urban areas intended to provide shade and prevent evaporation. These greenways likely increase urban resilience to climate change events such as prolonged heatwaves.

### Ecosystem health



Photo © Annie Spratt

Targets poor/disadvantaged  
Conducted at landscape scale

### Intervention type

Food production  
Restoration

### Ecosystem type

Tropical & subtropical grasslands  
Terrestrial production

### Climate change impacts addressed

Loss of food production  
Drought  
Desertification

### Instigators

Local NGO or CBO (eg. indigenous)

### Societal challenges

Biodiversity conservation  
Climate change mitigation  
Economic and Social development  
Rights/empowerment/equality  
Food security

### Literature info

Grey literature

Case methodology not reported

### External case resources

Read resource 1

**Ecological effect:** Positive

The planted acacia trees are reported to have partially restored soil fertility as their extensive root systems bind soil and minimise erosion. Furthermore, composting efforts are reported to have increased the diversity of microorganisms present in soil.

## Socioeconomics

Reforestation efforts and training in agroforestry techniques have generated additional revenues for local communities through the sale of surplus food. In one village, yields have reportedly tripled thanks to agroforestry training. Increased incomes for women in particular have reportedly spilled over to investments in schooling and medical fees. According to the Association, women have gained greater access to land, rendering them more autonomous. Youth involvement and training in the association's work has motivated greater community engagement on their part. Young women in particular have been documented embracing roles as guides at the national nursery where they learn to care for seedlings, identify plants, combat the impacts of drought, and manage tree crops.