



DEC 2025: Newsletter

Pluses & minuses in our continuing work in Morocco



Life is full of pluses & minuses, and we are continuously trying to find a balance so that we can live life to the fullest, learning to deal with disappointments and appreciating all the positives that we experience. As we travel to Morocco twice a year, we rely on others to continue working on our different projects. We need to be patient, be flexible, find a new balance, make new agreements and have the trust to continue with the work that we have set out to do, knowing that many believe in what we are ultimately trying to accomplish. And therefore, we are very grateful to all those who continue to support us in so many different ways.

IYOGA & SYNGENTA: Talking about sowing seeds!

During the spring and summer months we received many donations from a fundraising project organized by Ingrid through a sale of seeds via Syngenta, a seed company from the Netherlands. Talking about sowing seeds! We are very grateful for their donations which will enable us to continue planting.

In February 2026, Karin Sluis and her [lyoga](#) group traveling to Morocco, will continue planting on the Joudour Sahara Culture Center site in M'hamid with the help of these donations. A big thank you to Ingrid & Karin for all your greening support!



National Geographic June '25 & Dutch Embassy, Rabat



In the June 2025 edition of the National Geographic, Tristan McConnell's article "[Oases on the Brink](#)" was published. In this article we also read about Halim Sbai's (our partner) work to try and save the environment around his birth village M'hamid Ghizlane.

It was through this article that we received a large donation to help us in the fight against desertification, a big thank you to Katja Kirsch!

DUTCH Embassy Rabat

On our search for funding our tree-planting projects, we came across an "Open Call" from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of the International Cultural Policy for cultural activities in Morocco. This "[Open Call](#)" temporarily provides funding for Dutch Moroccan partner projects. So, we decided to apply without having ever applied for something like this before. After having filled out the required documents we waited patiently.

FindNFund
Doing Good, Done Better

But unfortunately, we received notice that we were not accepted. It was a good experience for us, and it led us to the next step in our search for funding: FINDNFUND. [FindNFund](#) is a charity platform for Finders & Funders which helps connect social enterprises that are committed to helping others.

Great news via FINDNFUND

After making a profile for Stichting Sahara-Roots we completed the application forms for a tree planting project which would start during the Zamane festival in November 2025. We received great news from FINDNFUND: "Congratulations! Stichting de Hoorn has awarded you €8,000 for the project "Tree planting activities using the Dutch invention "[Groasis Waterboxx](#)" during the Zamane Festivals 2025, 2026 & 2027"!

Funder De Hoorn: "A wonderful project that has been running for many years and is well-managed and monitored." We as Finders are grateful for the funding that we received from Stichting de Hoorn which enabled us to buy 200 Groasis waterboxx's and ship them to Morocco!



INSPIRATIONAL MEETING IN ZEIST

On the 11th of October we were invited to an inspirational meeting organized by Hanze Bakker of the Lions Working Group Africa, in the "Moskee aan De Clomp" in Zeist. This informal meeting was truly inspirational to all 20 attendees, and it was wonderful to meet so many enthusiastic volunteers working on the different projects in Africa that were showcased.

The Reforest Foundation <https://www.riforest.nl/voedselbossen/>,

Perma-atlas Foundation <https://perma-atlas.com/>,

Stillare Social Engineers <https://bambanani.org/> .

A big thank you to Arnout Schaap of Recycle Valley <https://www.recyclevalley.nl/> for connecting us!

2025 ZAMANE FESTIVAL

On 14th of November 2025 the official opening ceremony of the 4th edition of the [Zamane Festival](#) in Mhamid took place. The entrance to the [Joudour Sahara](#) grounds had become greener but unfortunately it quickly became clear that our buildings were not yet finished. After all the handshaking with the contractor last April we had high hopes, but we were disappointed. However, even though the amphitheater is not quite finished, concerts could take place here and we heard from Thomas Duncan from our partner [Playing for Change](#) (PfC), that the acoustics are great and that there have already been music workshops recorded in the past weeks.

Together with many visitors, local and international musicians such as [Luke Winslow King](#), [Aziz Sahmaoui](#) and [Vieux Farka Toure](#), and boardmembers & sponsors of PfC who had flown in from the US, we enjoyed the different styles of music during the 3-day concerts given in the Joudour Sahara Amphitheater with beautiful sand dunes as a backdrop!

As the sun set over the sand dunes, the concerts shifted to the main stage in M'hamid which allowed the locals to also enjoy the concerts given 3 nights in a row.



Checking plots & tree-planting!

15 November: time to check our tree-planting plots, especially the fruit trees planted by the IYOGA group last February. We found that 50% had not survived the long hot summer although they were planted in the Groasis waterboxx's. We talked about the problems with our tree caretaker and once again explained how to work with this system. Together with Abdelqadir & Habib we started replanting the trees lost and on the positive side we have discovered which fruit trees can handle the heat as well as the "salty" conditions of the soil.

16 November: planting day the Sahara-roots team helped prepare the tree-planting area together with Abdelqadir. We planted palm trees in waterboxx's and it was the honour to invite the co-founder of Playing for Change, Whitney Kroenke Silverstein, to plant the 1st tree after which all Pfc visitors & musicians where able to join in.



Building a positive change for others to follow!

17 November: on our last day in M'hamid, we continued tree-planting, in quiet on the Joudour Sahara site. It is becoming greener although we still lose many trees & plants to the heat of summer. But we remain positive as every tree that survives is a miracle in this hot, dry and fragile environment! We hope that with a "grassroots" approach, others will follow our example for a better tomorrow!

Next to a big thank you to Halim Sbai [#halimsbai](#) and Thomas Duncan [#playingforchangefoundation](#) we also owe Marika Barthelemy and our tree-caretakers Abdilqadir & Habib a huge thank you for all the work done during the 4th edition of the Zamane Festival!!

With the amazing support of [Stichting de Hoorn](#) we can continue to build on a positive change in the region. Also, a special thank you to Ilham, Anouk & Adriaan, where would we be without you! And thank you to all those who continue to support the Sahara-Roots initiative! Wishing you all a GREEN and HEALTHY 2026!

Wanda Hebly, December 2025

