

May 2026: Newsletter

Spring is well on the way!



This year we traveled in March to Morocco to visit our different projects as well as drive into the High Atlas Mountains to see a project which is supported by the Perma-Atlas Foundation founded by Latifa Oumlil, a Dutch Moroccan lady that we met in the Netherlands in 2025.

Rains came as we drove from Zagora to M'hamid and we were delighted to see the river Draa filling up as we crossed the bridge in M'hamid. Time was spent with local women, sorting through materials & determining colors for carpets to be made as well as checking different tree-planting sites.

We even managed a trip into the desert in search of "lions" and found ostriches within beautiful landscapes and enjoyed a cup of tea with nomads!

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Iyoga starts our “Green Wall”



In February 2026, Karin Sluis and her [Iyoga](#) group once again travelled to Morocco for a desert retreat as well as to continue planting trees on the Joudour Sahara Culture Center site in M’hamid. This time they started planting, using new and re-usable Groasis waterboxx’s , close to the encroaching sand dunes. By planting trees such as tamarisk (which were grafted), Parkinsonia and acacia in 5 rows, we hope to create a “Green Wall” around the Joudour Sahara boundaries and the neighboring village of Zaouia. A start was also made on palm branch fencing to help protect the newly planted Groasis waterboxx’s. With this experiment we want to show how we are trying to combat the desertification of the oases land as well as the villages.

A big thank you to Ingrid of Syngenta & Karin of Iyoga for making this start possible.

VISITING PERMA-ATLAS FOUNDATION



We paid a visit to the [PermaAtlas Foundation](#) in Anguelz in the High Atlas mountains. Having met Latifa Oumlil during a LIONS workshop event in Zeist (the Netherlands) we were interested to see the work that has been done against erosion in this area that was severely hit by an earthquake and flooding. By constructing gabions (stone dams) and swales (water channels), the foundation helps villages such as Anguelz to better retain rainwater, limit erosion, and enhance biodiversity. Latifa also works with “Vetiver grass” which is recognized worldwide as a natural solution for combating erosion, landslides, and drought problems.

As we are not used to working in a mountainous area, we were very impressed with all the planting and work that has been done on the mountain slopes of Anguelz! We donated some Groasis waterboxx’s to Latifa so that she can experiment in this very different environment.

300 Groasis Waterboxx's finally arrive in M'hamid

FindNFund

Doing Good, Done Better



On arrival in M'hamid we were happy to see that our 300 water boxes have finally arrived! Even though door to door transport took six months, we are definitely grateful that they were finally delivered!

200 waterboxxés were donated by [Stichting de Hoorn](#) through [FindNFund](#) a charity platform for Finders & Funders which helps connect social enterprises that are committed to helping others.

And 100 Groasis waterboxxes were donated by Syngenta.

We felt a big responsibility in making sure that all would go well! ! These will be used to continue our fight against desertification!

A big thank you to Stichting de Hoorn and Syngenta for making this possible!

FLASH FLOOD ARRIVES IN M'HAMID

What a surprise we had the morning after we arrived in the small desert town of M'hamid! The Draa river was once again flowing and many locals walked along the banks of the river. **Spring had arrived!** During the winter months there were no rains to replenish the much-needed water in this area. Two concrete dams had been made in the riverbed in 2025 to help slow the flow of the water to replenish the groundwaters in the hope that this will help to carry through the long hot summer. Many palm trees are dying due to lack of ground water and for economical reasons in the area we need to help the palm trees survive!



Checking plots & tree-planting!

Next to discussing the progress of our tree-planting on the [Joudour Sahara Culture Centre](#) site together with our partner Halim Sbai, and Habib & Abdelqadir (our tree-caretakers), we also spent time with Thomas Duncan of [Playing for Change](#) (PfC). Next to my interview with Thomas to celebrate [10 Years of the Joudour Sahara](#), Thomas also mentioned that Playing for Change is very impressed with our commitment to the environmental aspect of this great project as well as our help to finance the buildings that are now being completed on the Joudour Sahara site.

Thanks to PfC we are now able to hire a 3rd person to help with the botanical garden as well as building and maintaining our “Green Wall”. And together with Hayat, Maryem, Anouk, Adriaan, Habib & Abdelqadir we planted trees & shrubs that had been donated by various people through Sahara-Roots.

To celebrate 10 years of Joudour Sahara as well as International Earthday 2026, the video below was recorded and released by Playing For Change on 22 april2026:

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1161638732713502>



Our construction continues on the Joudour Sahara site

The Water reservoir: is being checked for leakage. The final touches are being made so that it can be used to collect much needed water.

The Amphitheater: the constructors have been working to restore the adobe bricks for the amphitheater's acoustics. These came down during the rains of Sept 2024 and were recommended by a sound expert in the original plans. After discussions with director [Bousaleh from CERKAS](#), who is guiding the construction of our Joudour Sahara project, it was decided to rebuild this adobe wall by integrating wooden blocks into the stone walls. The seating area was also damaged by the rains and have now been repaired. Next in line is the roofing as well as access doors and bamboo arches will be placed on top of the walls. Toilet buildings: in the coming months, the sewerage system will be finalized and will also be used for [Kasbah Joudour](#), our 5-room lodge which is also underway. The lodge is being built in a traditional style using natural materials. Although a lot of work still needs to be done, we are hopeful that we will have the grand opening of all these buildings, (donated by Stichting de Hoorn in the Netherlands), in December 2026 during the next [Zamane Festival!!](#)



Gathering together with women of Zaouia



We were delighted to gather with the women of the Womens Association in Zaouia, the small village next to the site of Joudour Sahara. As our project continues to grow, we are hopeful that they will become more involved with the various Joudour Sahara projects. They will be needed in the kitchen, cooking local foods for visitors to enjoy, as well as being active in the different workshops to develop artisanal products.

In this way we want to ensure that the women become economically independent and that they feel that they are appreciated. After discussing the possibilities of making wall carpets for Kasbah Joudour, we set off for “downtown M’hamid” to select materials and colors, a process that took almost three hours! During this process we experienced how different our ideas for colors and materials are and of course we compromised! Each room will have its own color theme based on the outcome of this visit.

Building a positive change for others to follow!

A big thank you to [Halim Sbai](#) and Thomas Duncan [#playingforchangefoundation](#) and our tree-care takers Abdilqadir & Habib for all the hard work and for being with us during our time in M'hamid! We even managed a desert trip enjoying a visit to nomads and the beautiful surroundings!

With the amazing support of [Stichting de Hoorn](#), the [Playing for Change Foundation](#) and [IYOGA](#) as well as all other sponsors and volunteers, we can continue to build on a positive change in the region.

Wanda Hebly, May 2026

