# Boreholes in the Sahel: Man made oasis that helps the soul - Burkina Faso

Title
The BirdLife Living on the Edge (LoTe) Project funded by the Dutch Post Code Lottery/ Vogelbescherming Nederland (VBN) - the BirdLife Partner in the Netherlands is slowly but surely changing the perceptions that exist in some sections of society that BirdLife International ? a consortium of national NGOs, is only about birds. Since its inception, the project has implemented a diverse number of livelihood interventions at nine sites in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Nigeria. The latest milestone is the commissioning of three of the four boreholes at Oursi and Higa in Burkina Faso, with a depth ranging from 50 to 80 metres. The boreholes are located in Oursi town and Gonadaouri village for Oursi site and in Baham and Denga village for Lake Higa Site.

The answer to why boreholes- should naturally be an easy one given that the Sahel in the north where these project areas are located receives less than 600 millimeters (23.6 in) of rainfall per year and has high temperatures, 5?47 degrees Celsius (41?116.6 °F). Burkina Faso is in West Africa?s Sahelian belt, an arid land area on the southern fringes of the Sahara desert. Water shortages, drought and desertification are perennial problems. The daily challenges that people in this region face due to such harsh climatic conditions are beyond human comprehension. The Executive Director of Naturama, the BirdLife Partner in Burkina Faso through which the project is being implemented had this to say ?*it is our convinction that investing in water supplies will have a dramatic impact on poverty- a curse bedivilling many of our communities?*- Mr. Idrissa Zeba. In siting the boreholes, both advanced technology as well as local knowledge was put to good use.

Since the boreholes were drilled, the communities have been accessing clean water supplies for their daily chores and for watering their livestock. Women are a strategic vehicle in reducing poverty; hence any interventions contributing to easing their plight should be encouraged. The rural women are predominantly the ?hewers of the wood and the drawers of water? not only in Burkina Faso but in many parts of Sub Saharan Africa.

*«The boreholes are an oasis of hope. We are grateful to the Naturama and the Dutch Post Code Lottery for thinking of the needs of women, before these boreholes were drilled it was not uncommon for women and children to walk a considerable number of kilometres to fetch water for basic needs »-*

said Madam Fadimata (50 years)  at Gonadaouri village, 27 km from Oursi.

These are meeting places for women to unwind and discuss topical issues. Drilling of the boreholes could not have come at a better time as a total of 500 to 800 people and an average of 750 goats, sheep and cattle benefit from the facility 24/7. The major concern at the moment is that the boreholes are not adequate to meet the needs of the local people.

As more resources become available, Naturama intends to drill additional boreholes and build reservoirs in consultation with the local community. The reservoirs will help ease the plight of women and children and give them an opportunity to undertake diverse income generating projects. *«These interventions are complimenting government?s efforts to tackle water shortages in Burkina Faso and BirdLife International and its supporting agencies are highly commended for this»*- says *Mr Adama NANA Lote Project Coordinator, Burkina Faso.*
The Living on the Edge project is a key component of the BirdLife? Local Empowerment Programme. For further details, contact Adama.Nana@naturama.bf / Thandiwe.Chikomo@birdlife.org