

Makhad

People Spirit Environment

FINAL PROJECT REPORT FOR the Helen's 60th Birthday Well Fund Sponsorship donations received 20.10.17

The Makhad Trusts Project – Restoration and Development of Bedouin Orchards, South Sinai, Egypt.



Introduction

The purpose of this Report is to inform all the kind donors to Helen's Sinai Well Fund how their donation has been applied to the Makhad Trust Projects in South Sinai, Egypt.

Project Reminder

The Wells project, which began in 2007, aims to restore the agricultural economy to over 500 of the traditional mountain orchards in the mountains of St Katherine's. These ancient orchards have always been managed in an environmentally friendly way

by the Bedouin and grow a mixture of vines, fruit, nuts and vegetables. Due to the demise of the tourist industry, there are no jobs in the area and the orchard gardens are the only way people can feed their families. Each orchard has a well and most of these have no water through flood damage and the drop in the water table. Many of the wells also supply drinking water to the surrounding houses

Originally the Bedouin were able to dig their wells themselves to a shallow depth. But they cannot now do this because work at a greater depth in granite requires expensive and specialized labour. Costly cement is required and often metal bars and a metal lid. The Makhad Trust's project has been to restore these wells as funds permit.

After site inspections wells are selected according to need and a strict criteria which ensures that the water is carefully used. A contract is signed with the well owner and the allocated funds are paid to him in two halves with site inspections in between and at the close of the contract.

Additional Problems 2013 - 2017

1. In the Spring of 2013 and 14 and then again in October 16, the whole area was subject to drastic flood damage totally destroying many wells which were in any case only just functioning. Now the pressure on good wells is greater than ever.
2. The uncertain political situation has meant that the tourist industry in South Sinai around which the Bedouin economy was based has collapsed. Bedouin can no longer earn any money to support their families. Neither can they repair their wells without cash. So they cannot grow vegetables for their families and many give all their well water freely to their neighbours for drinking at the expense of their garden. Even goats cannot be grazed without well water in strategic positions.
3. In December 2016, the Egyptian pound was devalued and food and fuel subsidies were withdrawn. The result has been rampant inflation, making it even more difficult to fund wells or feed their families.

Target

The donations were collected to fund one Orchard Garden well belonging to Mansur Hamid Mohamed. This contract has now been successfully completed and details are laid out below.

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Mansur Hamid Mohamed (NS469) – Wadi Itlah



These photos were taken last spring after heavy winter rains, and the garden was full of weeds which died during the hot summer.

Mansur is a young man, living near the town of St Katherine's in central South Sinai. He used to work as a camel driver, giving lifts to tourists climbing Mount Sinai, but now there are few tourists and he couldn't earn enough money to keep his camel. He decided to sell his camel to put the money into the abandoned garden he inherited from his grandfather in Wadi Itlah. He is married and has a small child.

The well was 3m deep but only had water in it after rains. With your help, the well he has employed skilled well diggers to dig down 2.5 m to the water table and now he has 1 cubic meter of water a day. They lined the well and built a wall around it to protect it from floods. He has been able to buy a new generator and has had a gate made to keep animals out of the garden. The garden is quite a large one but the only trees still alive were the big palms with long roots into the water table. He cleared the garden of rubbish and has now planted lots of almond, olive, pistachio and fruit trees. It is just coming into spring now and he will soon be planting lots of vegetables.

Besides his wife and children, his father, mother, three sisters and two brothers and their families will also benefit. Around 25 people will be relying on food from this garden as the other family members don't have gardens of their own. In the future he plans to build a stone garden room in the garden, so that his family can come and stay for days at a time. His dream is to grow enough almonds and olives to have enough money to buy another camel one day.

We will pass by Mansur's garden often as we visit other wells, so we will keep an eye on progress.



These photos show the newly restored well and Mansur standing next to new holes where he has planted small trees.

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Effect

- Agriculture This contract has helped to save one garden which supplies produce for the extended family of at least 20 individuals as well as yielding some for sale.
- Drinking Water The well has also given at least 15 families (6-10 people per family) sufficient drinking water. This will have contributed to the health of the people, in particular children as well as the animals the people rely on for food.
- Employment In addition this contract has employed 6 men – digging, stone breaking, sand collecting, cement mixing, building, and a camel man. This at a time when there is virtually no work because of a lack of tourists is providing a much needed economy and helping to feed families.

Conclusion

This help from you is part of a successful and highly valued water project helping the Bedouin to lead independent lives. We have so far restored **196 garden wells** and **186 drinking wells** in the desert and mountains, but our waiting list for help stands at 420 wells.

The well owners and the Makhad Trust would once again like to thank you for your support which means so much to a community totally reliant on underground water.

Makhad Trust Project Manager, Helen Cranston, March 18



Paying a well owner and signing the contract



The Makhad Team on the road



Children from El Mada who have benefited from clean water