



Newsletter No 3 August 2005

We are a bit late writing to you this year as both Mamadou and I were out of the office for much of July. Now back in Mali, we are delighted to bring you news of the four large diameter wells which have been dug in Bankass this year thanks to your generous support and the grant we received from the Big Lottery Fund.

We hope you enjoy reading about them



Mary & Mamadou

◆◆ FOUR NEW WELLS ◆◆

The four villages chosen by community leaders to benefit from wells this year are *Bagourou*, *Sokolo*, *Djinado* and *Donkono*. The main reason for choosing them was the severity of the water shortage but villagers also had to commit themselves to a lot hard work, as can be seen in the report and pictures from *Bagourou* overleaf.

At the end of June three of the wells, in *Bagourou*, *Sokolo* and *Djinado*, were completely finished and providing a reliable supply of clean water to local communities and their livestock. The wells range in depth from 28 to 32 metres and have at least 3.5 metres of water in them.

In the fourth village, *Donkono*, the well diggers encountered a layer of harder, chalky subsoil and have had to hire a compressed-air drill and use explosives to loosen the rock. Latest reports are that the well has reached 30 meters and has about 70 cm of water in the bottom. Work is continuing during August - despite the rains - and we hope that it will be finished in the next month or so.

◆◆ CHANGING LIVES ◆◆

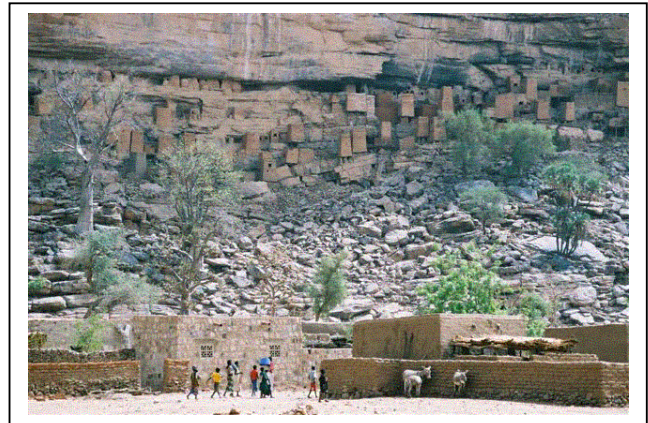
In the next newsletter, we'll tell you about the difference that having a new well has made to the lives of people in these four villages.

Partnership agreement signed

In our previous newsletter we told you how SOS Sahel UK is helping the former country programme in Mali become a strong and independent national organisation, *Sahel ECO*. This process passed an important milestone on 28th April, when SOS Sahel and Sahel ECO signed a Partnership Agreement - formally marking the transfer of responsibility to Sahel ECO and the beginning of a new phase in the relationship between the two organisations.

Fundraising on Target

Lucy in Oxford tells us that donations to JITON have now reached £4,469 - just £371 short of our target of £5,000 by the end of this year. Special thanks to **Sue Allen**, who asked friends to give a donation to Jiton to mark her 50th birthday, and to **Peter de la Roos**, a trustee of SOS Sahel, whose moral support for the work of Sahel ECO is as invaluable to us as his generous donation.



The spectacular *Dogon Plateau*, is close to the villages of *Bagourou* and *Sokolo* where wells were dug this year (Photo: Sue Cavanna)

SOS Sahel UK supports JITON by collecting UK donations for us. Please send your donations to **Lucy Polson** at SOS Sahel UK, 10C Littlegate Street, St. Ebbes, OXFORD, OX 1 1QT Tel: 01865 723200 lucyp@sahel.org.uk Cheques should be made payable to SOS Sahel International UK

If you have questions about the wells programme or about any other aspect of Sahel ECO's work in Mali, please write to **Mary Allen** Sahel ECO, BP 3066, Bamako Mali. mary.sahleco@afribone.net.ml

SPECIAL REPORT FROM BAGOUROU



April

Bagourou chose nine men and four women to be on the **Well Committee** the group responsible for organising all the work. Sahel ECO then ran a training course in the village for the Committee, covering all the technical aspects of digging a well (materials and labour, costs, suppliers, keeping accounts, safety, maintenance hygiene etc.) plus training in basic literacy skills for those who needed it. Training started on 6th April and, for the basic literacy course, continued through to the end of June. The picture shows members of the committee in the straw roofed classroom built by the village.

May

The Well Committee drew up a budget and agreed this with Sahel ECO. They received an advance of about £850 and were paid the rest in instalments on the basis of their receipts. They organised the young men of the village to transport sand and gravel to the site of the well and went to the town of Mopti (160 km away) to negotiate delivery of the cement and reinforcing rods needed to make the concrete lining. Finally they signed a contract with Allaye Guindo, a skilled well digger from the nearby village of Ogotena. Work to actually dig the well began on 30th May.



June

Digging progressed quickly in the sandy subsoil at Bagourou. Concrete lining rings were formed progressively, as the well deepened, to prevent it collapsing on the well diggers. The Well Committee supervised the work, making sure that there were adequate supplies of sand, gravel, cement and iron and that at least 10 young men from the village turned up each day to do the unskilled work - mainly hauling buckets of sand out of the well and mixing concrete. By the end of June the well was finished. It is 28.5 m deep and has 4 m of water in it. We'll report back in the next newsletter about the changes this new well has brought to the lives of people in Bagourou.



Photo credits : unless otherwise stated all photos taken by staff of Sahel ECO