

REFORESTATION IN BURKINA FASO: A CCCM INITIATIVE FOR SOCIAL RECONCILIATION

On August 14, 2024, the humanitarian community in Ouahigouya organised a reforestation activity at the Temporary IDP Site in Gourga as part of the World Humanitarian Day 2024 celebrations. The site was selected for the event following a request from the state site manager and in consultation with the Ministry of Environment. The site manager aimed to address social tensions caused by cutting of tree for firewood.

The site has a significant number of displaced people living near host communities, but it suffers from a lack of trees, resulting in minimal shaded areas. Extensive logging for firewood used for cooking has visibly depleted the already scarce local tree cover, exacerbating resource scarcity and potentially fueling conflict. The tree planting initiative aimed not only to promote environmental sustainability but also to foster social cohesion by bringing together displaced and host communities to work towards a common goal related to energy resources.



CCM of Gourga site receiving maintenance kits from the Acted CCCM/GSAT team, June 2024. Photo credit: Acted – DIABATE Farida, Assistante Redevabilité.

The Mixed Community Committee (CCM), established by the Ministry in charge of Humanitarian Action with the support of the international NGO Acted, facilitated the reforestation effort. These committees, which consist of representation from displaced and host populations, work together to identify and implement activities that foster social cohesion through community initiatives and co-facilitate other project activities. The CCM in Gourga played a key role in mobilising the community to prepare the soil using tools and equipment distributed by Acted to the CCM for site care and maintenance work. The community planted a total of 100 seedlings¹ of mango, baobab neem and *Parkia biglobosa* trees.



CCM in the midst of a reforestation operation in the Gourga site on August 14, 2024, Photo credit Amadou Sanfo-UNHCR Field Office

They were selected for their resilience to wind and climatic hazards, drought resistance, nutritional benefits, shade provision, and therapeutic properties. These trees contribute to combating desertification in a region facing severe environmental challenges and enhance the living conditions for displaced people at the site.

¹ As part of a multisectoral project supported by USAID

The synergy created between various technical and financial partners in this initiative enables the reforestation of an area on the verge of losing its green cover while creating a welcoming environment for the displaced population. The initiative engages displaced people and the host community in environmental restoration efforts. Through the CCMs, the displaced and host community has committed to maintaining the newly planted trees, and awareness-raising efforts

will be conducted to ensure the plants' proper care and growth.

To protect the young plants from animals and ensure their healthy growth, Acted has provided protective grids purchased from a local association of craftsmen living with disabilities. This initiative safeguards the reforestation efforts and supports the livelihoods of people with special needs, highlighting a commitment to inclusivity and community empowerment.

This reforestation activity will be replicated in an urban area hosting IDPs in the Northern region and will be prioritised as a theme in community initiatives across the region, aligning with the authorities' vision and commitments to environmental restoration and sustainable development.