

SAMSON



SAFAD Members Source of News - WINTER 2003

SAFAD, Cranfield University, Silsoe, BEDS MK45 4DT E-mail: safad@cranfield.ac.uk http://www/silsoe.cranfield.ac.uk/safad	Page 1: Page 2: Page 3: Page 4: Page 5:	Message from the SAFAD President Project update - Guatemala Project update – Cameroon and Malawi New project developments Events and How you can help
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Welcome all to the 2003 winter edition of SAMSON, our bi-annual newsletter. Once again, a new student committee has been thrust into the role of furthering the work of this exciting charity. Our committee is 24-people strong this year to ensure that fundraising is effective without requiring the efforts of the whole committee. This will mean that other committee members will be able to help SAFAD continue to evolve in other ways. This year we have designed a completely new website and are creating a new SAFAD brochure explaining our work.

With our new fundraising team in action, we are planning to hold a wide range of fundraising activities and have set a target of £37,500 in order to send 15 volunteers abroad.

Our volunteers overseas are working hard and are thriving on the challenges and rewards that come with such grass-roots community-based work.

We currently have eleven volunteers overseas, and more volunteers will be joining them in the New Year. Unfortunately, two potential projects fell through at the end of last year for reasons outside our control and as a result, we are still only operating in Malawi, Cameroon and Guatemala. The work of our volunteers in these countries continues to play a vital role in community development and you can read about their experiences on the following pages. As you will also read, in preparing for the next wave of volunteers, our project development officers have been busy setting up new connections and we are currently reviewing a variety of exciting potential projects.

On behalf of the SAFAD team here at Silsoe, I would like to thank you all for your generous support and wish you a Happy Christmas and joyous New Year.

*Robin Farrington
President*

Thank You Donors!

Agrisystems Ltd, Ampthill & District Rotary Club, ARUP, B. Williams, C. Allerton, CAF, D. Hudson, Dreams Come True Charity, Hitchin Rotary Club, J. Bently, J. E. Elsworth, Julia Aked, M. Jeeves, Medaney and Fielding, Mimram Valley Rotary Club, M. Smethurst, S. Neo, Nestle, R. Carter, R. J. Timms, R. W. Radley, Roger and Sarah Bankcroft, Clark Charitable Trust, Rotary Club of Bedford Castle, Roughley Charitable Trust, S. Chaler, S. Magne, SMOAT, St. Marks Overseas Aid Trust, TWOAT, Viscountess Boyd Charitable

Agroforestry in Guatemala

The agroforestry project supported by SAFAD in Guatemala is hosting two volunteers, who arrived in the capital on the 15th November. Pau, a forestry engineer with a geographical information systems specialisation, and Begona, an agronomical engineer with a natural resource management specialisation, are staying in Antigua, and travel daily to the project location near Chimaltenango. Their experience so far has been very exciting, focusing on being introduced to the different communities and offering technical advice on resource management issues.

Here are some recent comments from our volunteers (Begona is writing): “Pau and I are so glad to have this great opportunity to be here. It is a huge experience in every sense: personally as well as professionally. The technicians with

whom we are working are lovely and really value our advice. Although they already have a lot of experience, they lack certain very important theoretical knowledge. They always ask us to correct and advise them during the workshops and reunions. On the other side, Pau and I are learning so much, having had little practical experience as our Spanish universities were very theoretical. Everybody is a winner!”

Pau and Begona are working with an integrated participatory agroforestry programme and deal with issues such as erosion, deforestation, chemical soil and water contamination. They are both due to stay in Guatemala for 6 months.

A Water Project in Guatemala

A typical working day with our partner NGO (COMENSA) in Nebaj, Guatemala.

It is 6.30 am, and the masons are getting up. I open an eye from my warm sleeping bag. The cook has prepared the breakfast; it is time to go. I get up and rapidly dressed as it is cold here in the mountain at 2000 metres. I am going out of the wooden house, which is used as a bedroom by the masons and the volunteers. I stretch my back a bit: I am still not used to sleeping on the wood boards. The night is over and I enjoy the panorama that is in front of me for a few moments. The mountains are covered by a tropical forest and the corn crops, everything is green and yellow. I like this moment. I am now joining the others around the little fire, in another house. Tea, rice, egg, frijoles and tortilla are my breakfast. I am French and at the beginning this was difficult to stomach, but I am used to it now. And I actually really like it... so typical!

At 7.30am, the masons are going to work on the water system. One is going to finish the spring box, a device used to prevent the contamination of spring water, and the other one is going to start the tank. I am going with the local community to supervise the trench digging, ensuring that it is in the right place in respect to the design of the system. Upon arrival, all the villagers are digging the trench. It is amazing to see how they are working together: they are very efficient and I think the project will be finished earlier than we had planned. Even the elders of the community are working on the project. After 20 years of civil war, it is certainly a pleasure for them to participate in the re-construction of Guatemala. After a while, the trench will meet a stream and we will have to build a bridge. We established the design in the COMENSA office last week. I spend most of the morning assessing the design of the system and the possible

challenges of the terrain. Two Mayan women who are employed by COMENSA as cooks are meeting us with the meal, here, in the middle of the forest. The tortillas and the soup are still hot and it is a pleasure to eat. At 12.30pm, the work starts again. I am helping one of the masons to build the tank when it started to pour with rain. Quickly, we are put a big plastic cover on our work and shelter under a plastic sheet. Twenty minutes later, the rain ends and the sun appears again. For the rest of the day I plan the logistics of the remaining construction and make an inventory of all the materials needed to be sure everything is on site, ready for use.

At 5.00pm we have finished working and all the villagers are cleaning their tools in the stream. We are all going back to the house where we will eat soon. At 6.00pm, it is the night and we are around the little (too little) fire. Some cornhusks are in the fire. I love them! We discuss our different countries and cultures with the masons, whilst sharing some frijoles, rice and tortillas. At 8.00pm, we are all in our sleeping bags. Buenas noches!

Jerome Lassalle

Cameroon - A Field Report

SAFAD / SOWEDA Water Project 2003/4, Cameroon: Field Report

The first month of work has provided an opportunity to engage with stakeholders and understand the intricacies of the technical and social sides of the project. We have met all stakeholders, including the people of the four villages directly benefiting from the scheme. Recently we have been meeting with villagers and farmers near the spring source to establish preferred tap stand locations. The pipe route has been cleared and surveyed to its 2034m length, and has been marked out to aid digging of the trench. Each village has been allocated a quarter of the total length, as agreed in a series of meetings. The first day of digging saw encouraging results, though the soil is hard and rocky in places making the going quite tough.

We have set the deadline for completion of the main digging for the 31st December. Villagers are keen to complete it early while the soil is still soft from the wet season. Enthusiasm generally runs high, except some minor disagreements over section allocation.

We are committed to assisting with digging each Thursday (the 'community day'), and we use the rest of the week to plan spring boxes, make lists of materials required, and go about sourcing them – usually in Doula or Kumba. We have also set up a SAFAD beehive which we hope will continue to run after our departure.

Sean Whitaker

Back From Malawi

Nick Evans, recently back from Malawi, writes about his year as a SAFAD volunteer.

After completing my MSc in Natural Resource Management in 2002 I wanted practical experience but was unsure how to go about it. I decided to join SAFAD and accepted a place on their Malawi macadamia nut project. I had an amazing opportunity to put the skills obtained at Cranfield University to practical use whilst making a contribution to people's lives. I extended my initial 6-month placement for a further 6 months in order to dedicate more time

to SUNESMA (Support to Neno Smallholder Macadamia Association).

The placement within SUNESMA enabled me to gain practical field experience with communities while working alongside government, private and NGO parties; I was heavily involved with planning and management of the project. SUNESMA introduces innovative farming techniques into communities whilst

improving community organisation. Organised into 7 clubs, the 300 farming families have planted 6000 macadamia trees in 3 years. The project makes available affordable agricultural inputs, planting materials and credit to assist in food security and income generation.

My role was to provide technical advice, deliver training and develop future strategies. I was part of a management team taking on responsibilities to deliver services. Past SAFAD Volunteers developed the project to deliver livelihood support in the form of food security, small business loans, and income-generating activities in addition to macadamia.

The year I have spent in Malawi has given me a firm base of skills, and experience working

within the development sector. SAFAD gave me a great opportunity to gain a taste of development practice whilst learning to live in a rural African village. I have a much better sense of a realistic career path and the placement has opened up avenues to me I would not have considered otherwise.

I am currently planning to return to Neno, pursuing funding to set up a Fair Trade certified farmer owned trading company. It is my hope that this will provide access to fair trade markets for SUNESMA's macadamia and other products.

Nick Evans

New Project Developments

This is an exciting time for the Development Officers, Julie Caillet-Pariel and Michael Arthurs, as we are busy creating project opportunities for our SAFAD volunteers. We have several new prospects in the works that will allow SAFAD to expand into different countries and fields of assistance to better represent the diversity of courses Silsoe has to offer.

Two projects in India have been proposed. One is an opportunity for water management, environmental management for business and medical diagnostics graduates to assist the Organization for Social and Environmental Development (ORSED), in Pondicherry, with water, renewable energy and sanitation issues. The other project is with the Centre for Rural Development in the Maharashtra State and will assist with community land management.

An urgently needed bio sand water filtration and water catchment project in the community of Nwken – Bamenda, Cameroon, appears to be an excellent opportunity for SAFAD to apply its expertise and assistance. We hope to be able to link this project with the proven bio sand water filtration technology.

We are also working to establish a Geographic Information Management project mapping the rainforests and jungles of Ecuador as well as a project for environmental and medical diagnostics graduates dealing with Kwashiorkor (protein malnutrition) in Transkei, South Africa.

EVENTS!

SAFAD's on-campus fundraising started with a bang this year with the highly successful Halloween party, raising over £300. We were also heavily involved in the organising and running of Silsoe's Snow Ball, which was a fun-packed night for all, especially with the star appearance of SAFAD's very own Santa.

The coming year will just as exciting with SAFAD organising a Silsoe New Year party

during the first week back in January, a Valentines party in February, an international meal in March and a "Good-bye" party at the end of the year.

The SAFAD annual seminar will be held towards the end of May, and the date will be confirmed shortly. All of our members are invited to this event and it is a great opportunity for you to meet some of our ex-volunteers and discover more about what we do.

How You Can Help!

None of SAFAD's work would be possible without the generosity of our donors and the hard work of our members. Our charity is run entirely on a voluntary basis and therefore has minimal overheads covered by on-campus fundraising activities. Most of our funding

comes from private sources and charitable organisations, and we rely heavily on such donations to send our volunteers abroad each year. If you are in a position to help us make this happen, please complete the form below and send it to us. We would be most grateful.

Join SAFAD or renew your membership and receive our newsletter with project updates.

Your contributions are essential to our work.

Registered charity No. 289621



- I would like to become an associate member: £10 (students £5)
- I would like to renew my associate membership: £10 (students £5)
- I am already a member and I would like to make a donation
- I enclose a donation of £_____ (cheques made payable to SAFAD).
- I am already a member and I would like to make a regular donation by direct debit. I would like SAFAD to send me the relevant forms.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

I declare that I am a taxpayer and would like any donation I make on or after 6th April 2003 to SAFAD to be considered as gift aid.

Signed:

Date:

SAFAD, Cranfield University, Silsoe, Beds. MK45 4DT - SAFAD@Cranfield.ac.uk - <http://www.silsoe.cranfield.ac.uk/safad>