

Action Taken by Japanese NGOs and Companies

Japanese NGOs and companies also get involved in villages suffering from desertification, and take actions with the residents in grassroots projects continuously.

Action for Greening Sahel

Action for Greening Sahel has been working on conserving the local environment in the Sahel region, in collaboration with people living there.

Projects

In Takabangu village, Burkina Faso, effective aspects of traditional knowledge, technology and know-how which had been used in neighboring areas were identified. After study trips and workshops, local residents took the initiative to select, introduce, disseminate and establish those technologies which met their needs in the village.

In the Republic of Chad, Action for Greening Sahel supported growing/planting seedlings, promoted more efficient metal/clay cooking pots, facilitated growing soy beans and rice, facilitated holding crops in reserve, and constructed communal springs.

Other activities include sending specialists, receiving trainees and organizing seminars for improving their livelihood in desertified areas.



Making 'Zai' (simple technology for land improvement)
Photo: Global Environmental Forum

Toyota Motor Corporation

In 2001, in partnership with Green Earth Center (an NPO based in Tokyo), Toyota launched the 'Sino-Japanese 21st Century Greater Beijing Reforestation Model' project in Fengning Man Autonomous County, Hebei Province, where desertification had a serious impact. During two terms which lasted in total for 6 years, reforestation was implemented over an area of 2500ha.^{※1} In the second term, programmes which would enhance greening indirectly were also started. These include the introduction of model dairy farms and construction of a methane gas collection/ utilization plant.

In the third term (April 2007-March 2011), Toyota will expand and strengthen the foundation to promote reforestation in China by planting in the area of 500ha, training reforestation specialists, and establishing the 'Center for Sino-Japanese 21st Century Greater Beijing Reforestation' which serves as a focal point to send out information on greening technology.^{※2}

※1 Sustainable Report 2007: Towards a New Future for People, Society and the Planet

※2 Toyota Website:

http://www.toyota.co.jp/en/social_contribution/environment/greendam.html

Certified NPO organization Green Earth Network



Apricot trees are planted in a primary school fruit garden in Lingqiu county, Datong
Photo: Green Earth Network

Green Earth Network (GEN) has been conducting a number of projects to support greening in the Huangtu Plateau (Loess Plateau) in Datong, Shanxi Province, China.

GEN has planted pine trees on the mountains and hills and conducted projects for preventing water/soil loss. GEN also planted apricot and grape trees on the primary school ground as a part of greening activities, and profits from fruit harvest have been

made available to cover education costs. GEN's other activities include the construction and management of an environmental forestry center with a nursery and facilities for experiment and training, and a botanical garden and an experimental forest for increasing diversity of trees to be planted and improving technologies. 17.5 million trees were planted in the area of 5,400ha by March 2008.



▶ COLUMN Residents' and NGOs' Roles in Combating Desertification

Local residents' lifestyle and agricultural practices have a strong impact on desertification. Therefore a 'bottom-up' approach involving the local residents for implementation is regarded as one of the important ways to combat desertification effectively.

Some NGOs work on 'sustainable community' building. They provide support for improving local people's

livelihood, using fuel wood more efficiently, and solving poverty-related problems as well as giving assistance for 'greening' such as planting trees. However, they are sometimes finding it difficult to continue their projects due to lack of financial and human resources. How to support NGOs working in the front lines of desertification is becoming a significant issue.