

Northcliffe Electronic Publishing, Oxfam, Goats, Recycled Inkjet Cartridges?

What's the connection?

Aiche Mint Inmzine struggles to survive with her four children on land devastated by drought and freak storms that wiped out crops and destroyed livestock. The future looked bleak for the small farmer, and thousands like her when rains failed for the third year running in Mauritania, West Africa, where she lives with her young family.

Then the rain came. But instead of bringing life – the storms brought death – killing 120,000 animals used for food and milk. There was a real risk of starvation and the Mauritanian government appealed for help.

Oxfam responded by providing animals, such as goats, to those worst affected, like Aiche, who lives in Aftout, one of the areas most badly damaged by the drought. She was one of thousands of poor families who depended on her animals for food and income. Without them she faced a real risk of starvation. "Before receiving help from Oxfam we were living in very hard conditions. Because of the storms and drought our animals had died and the only source of income left was agriculture," she said.

"[I consider] the goats we received from Oxfam... a gift from the sky... Giving animals to people like us is very important. It gave me confidence and increased my family's security. Two of the goats gave birth so we have more animals and we had milk at a traditional time of hardship.

"Life here has always been hard and the people have suffered, but we'd have suffered more without this help. We thank Oxfam, and all who have helped bring assistance to us, because we know that this help came from people of good will, people who have assisted us without knowing us."

The goats sourced locally, not only provide milk and manure for the crops. A goat sharing-scheme – which offers female kids to other families – means that other farmers are quick to benefit from a single gift.

But simply giving an animal is not enough. Farmers also need to be shown how to care for them when conditions become more difficult

Like Aiche, Khadidjetou, Mint Mohamedva also from Mauretania, benefited from the scheme. She is one of the local people taught to look after the animals in case they become ill. "I was trained by Oxfam to be a veterinary assistant," she said. "This is the first time a woman here has become one. The training lasted 10 days and included how to inject animals, how to use medicines and vitamins for animals, and how to identify diseases. They also gave us a basic kit to use."

Supporters have already bought nearly 6.000 goats for the poor farmers across West Africa – thanks to the alternative gift scheme Oxfam Unwrapped.

Now readers can also help – simply by sending in their used inkjet cartridges. Fifty cartridges will buy one goat. Our scheme is run by Northcliffe Electronic Publishing (NEP) (the paper's) online arm, and their business partners Environmental Business Products Ltd, which have joined forces with Oxfam to provide more families with life-saving livestock.

It's easy to help. All you need do is put your used cartridges into a freepost envelope, drop this into an envelope and post them FREEPOST - you don't even need a stamp.

NEP's green scheme organiser, Sally Parkin, said: "Our aim is to provide as many goats for families as we can. Your contribution will change the lives of others, cost you nothing, and help the environment at the same time. "As well as sending in your own used inkjet cartridges, encourage everyone you know to do the same; family, friends, colleagues or even customers.

"Your group or organisation may want to collect cartridges in bulk. All you need do is to collect as many as you can. When you have at least 30 call me and I will be happy to arrange collection – it won't cost you anything. The more cartridges we receive, the more goats we can provide and the more lives we can change for the better."

Brendan Cox, Oxfam Press Officer says: "The inkjet cartridge recycling scheme is a great idea. I was recently in Rwanda and met families who have received goats through Oxfam Unwrapped. It was great to see the difference they make to the lives of people who have little else."

To obtain your FREEPOST envelopes or for more information please contact Sally Parkin on 0116 227 3102 or email her on sparkin@nep.co.uk. Or you can visit our website www.thisisrecycling.co.uk for more information and a FREEPOST label.

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