

# Fighting Poverty Among the Bocos

Country: Benin

Category: Development and relief

Project number: 68140

Need Oct 08: \$70,091

Update from Project Manager, Ross Jones, November 2008.

The Boko people are almost entirely subsistence farmers and their daily income is less than \$2. The children suffer nutritionally and educationally.

This project helps the Boko people through farming support, training of women, medical assistance, and financial support for students.

The outcome over a four year period is for better crops and nutrition, better job opportunities for women, and students given the opportunity to finish their education.

There is a continuing food crisis and high cost of living in the Boko area. The oil, energy and food crisis that involves the whole world has had a huge effect on the households of beneficiaries of this project. There has been a shortage of foodstuffs on the market, and what there is has been very expensive. This year the price of maize increased by 75%, which is out of reach of rural Bocos.

SIMaid has responded by training 110 farmers in better maize production. 180 farmers then re-

ceived loans of \$120 each to help with this year's planting.

One of the farmers involved had this to say:

*I call myself GBASSIDE AYOUBA. I have prepared 0.75 ha of maize. I sowed on June 24<sup>th</sup> to have a good harvest. I respect the principles which I received during the training and also the technical advice of the agricultural technician who follow us up. When I look at my fields, I am very happy, because I am sure to have a good harvest. I expect to harvest 2.5 tonnes of corn. The loan enabled me to easily do the ploughing and use fertiliser and herbicides. With the loan I have increased my area of cultivation.*

Stories such as this one show the benefit of this project. It is having a powerful impact on the life of these communities, because they are proud to have food in this period of crisis, and have hope for a good harvest.



One of the newly trained farmers displays his crops.



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