

SACK GARDENS

Not your average variety...

In Goz Beida, Chad rains fall hard during the month of August. Throughout the rest of the year, not a single drop of rain can be found and temperatures reach 120 degrees. Dust and sand fill the air and the extreme heat feels like standing in an oven. In such a hot and dry climate, growing vegetables for food is a constant struggle. People often walk long distances to wells, making water a precious resource that must be used sparingly.



The Sahara Desert covers 33% of Chad.



World Concern staff members introduced sack gardens in Goz Beida as a way to use every drop of water to help families grow fresh vegetables. The soil in Goz Beida and in other places where sack gardens are used is unfit for growing healthy vegetables because it is too dry and sandy to hold water. Using a sack that can be filled with good soil helps to make sure plants receive the nutrients they need. The sack also holds in the water and keeps the soil from drying out too quickly.



Khadidja's Story



Khadidja Adam Abakar Oumar is a mother of six children. She once lived in the Darfur region of Sudan, but war near her home forced her to leave behind everything she had and settle in Goz Beida. As a refugee she had no land of her own. The heat and poor soil also made traditional farming difficult.

Khadidja attended a World Concern sack garden training, received the necessary tools to make her own sack garden, and learned how she could recycle

household water (grey water) to keep her vegetables healthy while conserving water. She has now successfully used her sack garden for many months and says, "I eat fresh vegetables whenever I want. I even have enough to share with my nearest neighbors! I'm really excited to try expanding my garden and adding new vegetables."



How Does It Work?

At the center of each sack garden is a channel (or tower) of rocks that provides an irrigation system that keeps all the plants evenly watered. On the outside, holes are poked evenly around the sack to give each plant its own space to grow. Using a sack helps to conserve moisture, contain good soil, and it's even portable for refugees like Khadidja who may return to her homeland.

Consider...

- About 25,000 people die every day of hunger or hunger-related causes, according to the United Nations. This is one person every three and a half seconds. Unfortunately it is children who die most often. (poverty.com)
- There are 925 million undernourished people in the world today. That means one in seven people does not get enough food to be healthy and lead an active life.
- One out of four children in developing countries is underweight. (World Food Program)
- Chad is the seventh poorest country in the world. (UNDP Human Development Index)

Donate a Sack Garden

You can raise the money it takes to provide a sack garden for someone like Khadidja. For every \$25 you donate, World Concern will provide the materials and training for a sack garden to help a family receive necessary food and nutrition throughout the driest months of the year.

Make Your Own Sack Garden

Materials needed:

A woven polypropylene bag (a common food aid sack) works best. You can contact Mark Lamb at World Concern to receive one free of charge at markl@worldconcern.org. You can also use a burlap or sturdy plastic sack.

Soil mixed with organic compost

Rocks for irrigation (golf ball size or larger)

A cylindrical bucket or tin, open on both ends (we use seed tins or vegetable oil tins, but a large coffee can would work well too)

Instructions:

1. Put about 4 inches of soil in the bottom of the bag. Place the tin on the soil in the middle of the bag and fill with rocks. This will serve as an irrigation channel.
2. Fill the bottom of the sack around the tin with organic compost.
3. Slowly lift up the tin, so that the rocks remain.
4. Fill the tin with more rocks and surround it again with soil. Repeat this until the sack is filled with a tower of rocks surrounded by soil.
5. Poke holes into the side of the sack an even distance apart.
6. Transplant seedlings into the sides of the sack.
7. You can try direct seeding beets, carrots or other vegetables or herbs in the top of the sack.
8. Use garden stakes to keep the sack garden upright if needed.
9. Enjoy your harvest!

