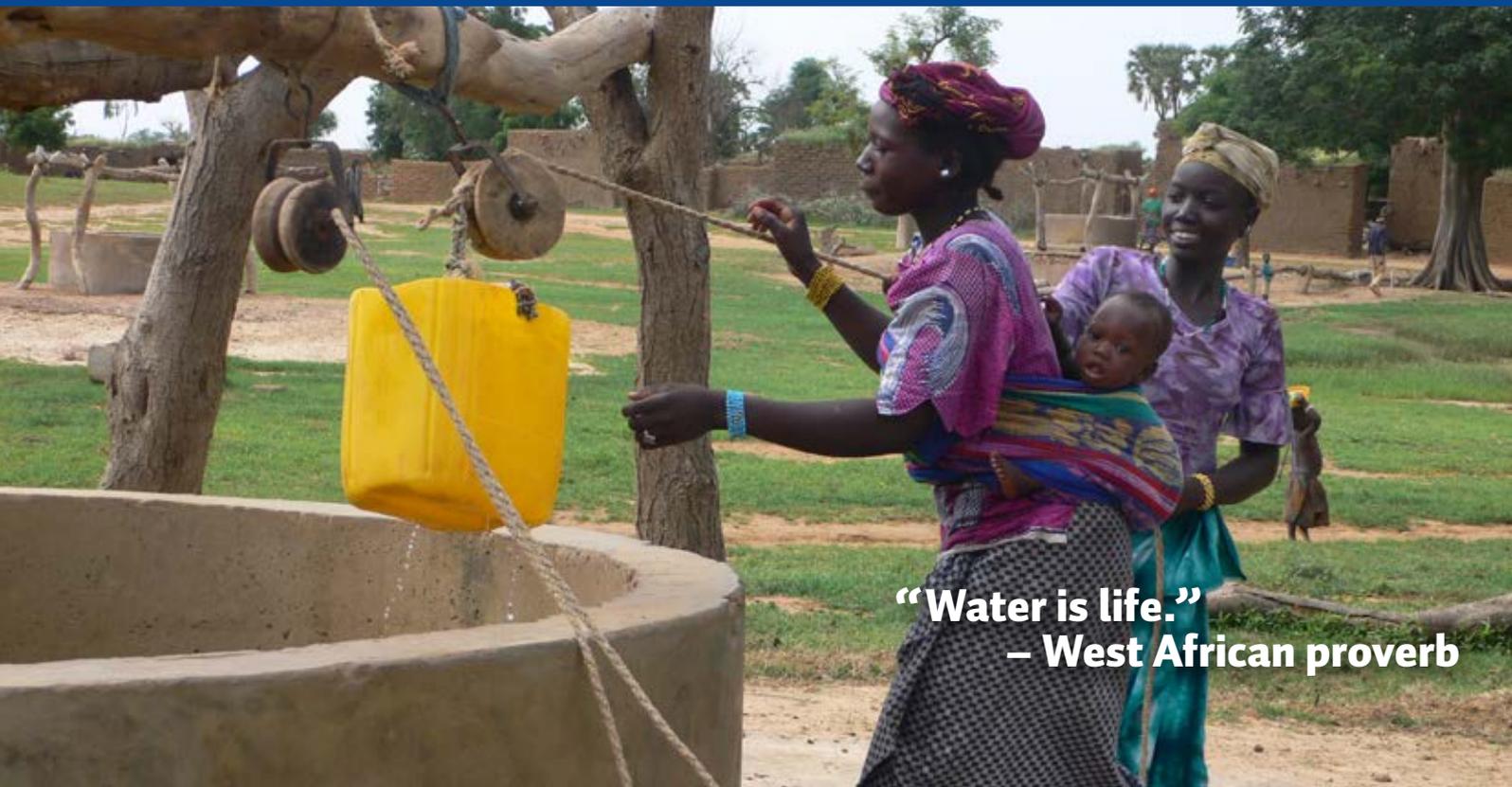




## Mali and Burkina Faso

RAIN is a non-governmental organisation based in the Netherlands. RAIN works across Europe, Africa and Southeast Asia. In Africa, RAIN collaborates with partners in Ethiopia, Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia and Tanzania.



**“Water is life.”  
– West African proverb**

Rain is the lifeblood of the Sahel. Even though Mali and Burkina Faso border the Sahara, most Malians and Burkinabe live in areas that see 600 to 1500 millimetres of annual rainfall – mostly enough to cover basic needs. However, this rain falls in a short wet summer of three to four months, followed by eight to nine months of drought. The solution seems simple: store the abundant rainwater which falls during a very short rainy season, in order to make it available during the long dry season.

Many communities have always depended on rainwater collection for their basic water needs, but climate and resource issues as well as political and social events challenge their ability to do so. The consequences of climate change have affected the rainy seasons, and the unpredictability of rainfall makes buffering all the more crucial. Large segments of the population now face

greater challenges than before in terms of accessing water, especially in places where conventional means of water supply, such as boreholes and wells, are not feasible for geophysical reasons.

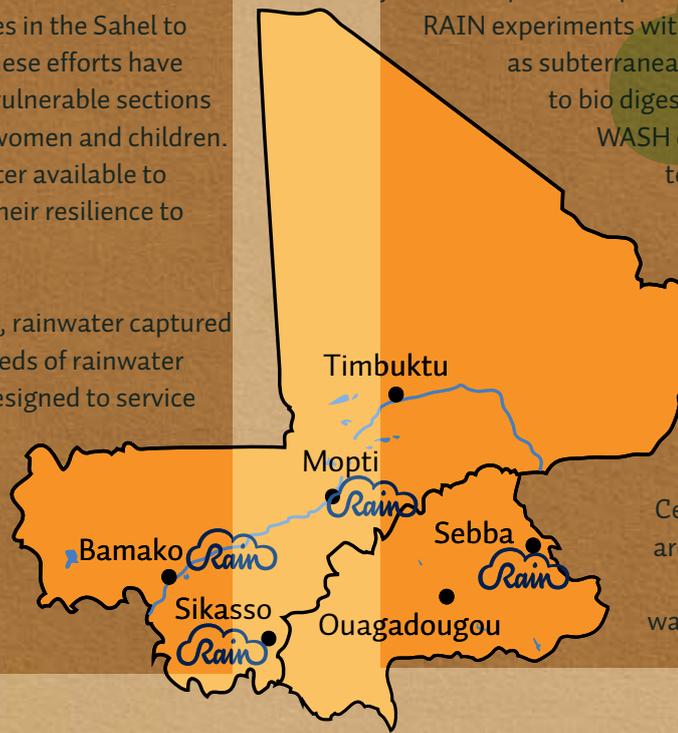
Recent political and social problems – such as Ebola infections, a coup d'état, political protests or jihadi invasions – interrupted service delivery in rural areas. In 2015 much has changed for the better. Although some political problems are yet to be resolved, the current situation allows for governments and NGOs to return to the field and work on service delivery and combating environmental challenges. RAIN is one of the organisations that stayed in Mali and Burkina Faso uninterrupted during their recent periods of political and social turmoil.



## RAIN in Mali and Burkina Faso

RAIN has supported communities in the Sahel to harvest rainwater since 2006. These efforts have made water more accessible to vulnerable sections of the population, especially to women and children. Rainwater harvesting makes water available to villagers year round and builds their resilience to climate change.

Using a system called *impluvium*, rainwater captured from rooftops replenishes hundreds of rainwater harvesting tanks. Each tank is designed to service one extended household throughout the year. Seasonal riverbeds are transformed into large water storages with the help of sand dams. Sand dams can safely store water in their sandy reservoirs throughout the



year and replenish aquifers. In Mali and Burkina Faso, RAIN experiments with innovative solutions, such as subterranean reservoirs, *impluvia* linked to bio digesters to generate energy and WASH credits in rural communities to reduce poverty and induce behavioural change.

We believe that rainwater belongs to everyone. With our local representation in West Africa, the Rainwater Harvesting Capacity Centre (RHCC) in Bamako, we are working tirelessly to make sure that anyone in need of water can unlock the potential of rainwater.



## Water for the environment & ecosystems

In Kéri, Burkina Faso, RAIN works with small collectives of female farmers. Using small filtering dikes the population managed to fight erosion and to make room for intensified growing of crops like sorghum. Women stated to be “happy with the aid received, and eager to expand and to involve more women”.

In the framework of the Dutch WASH Alliance, we organise trainings for rural communities to improve environmental sustainability. Villagers are enabled to protect and regenerate degraded spaces and to preserve the water quality of rivers.

**3R** stands for the Recharge, Retention and Reuse of water. It covers the broad process of retaining and intercepting rainwater and runoff, conserving it in the soil and allowing it to percolate and refill the underground water table. Groundwater can be extracted with different techniques and retained in above-ground and below-ground tanks. Households and communities can easily reach and re-use this retained water in dry periods. The improved soil moisture regenerates and conserves the landscape, benefitting both the farmers as well as the environment.

## Water for health

Since 2006, RAIN implemented 865 *impluvia* in Mali and another 80 in Burkina Faso. In December 2014 the national laboratory for water quality in Mali did a study on the water quality in dozens of *impluvia* in the Mopti region. They concluded that rainwater in the Sahel is perfectly drinkable and fulfils WHO standards for drinking water. With relatively simple procedures the water can be stored over longer periods of time. This is no news to RAIN, but it does greatly strengthen our case towards partners, governments and communities.

Supported by the Dutch WASH Alliance, 'WASH credits' combine poverty reduction and behavioural change. In exchange for exhibiting and encouraging behaviour that improves hygiene and sanitation, local communities in the Koulikoro and Mopti regions in Mali gain access to

microcredits for sustainable development. This has been a great success and will be scaled up to include more communities as well as ecosystem rehabilitation activities that enhance the water buffer (3R and RWH techniques).

**Multiple Use water Services (MUS)** is an approach that meets people's domestic and productive needs while making the most efficient use of water resources. The approach takes into account different water sources and their quality, quantity, reliability and distance from point of use. A MUS approach can be used to plan a new water service or to upgrade existing domestic or irrigation services.

## Water for food & agriculture

Food security is a pressing issue in the Sahel region. RAIN supports local communities to make the most of the limited resources they have.

We rehabilitate and build micro-dams and sand dams to recharge the groundwater level and to save more water in the reservoir behind the dam. As a result local communities gain months worth of extra surface water to feed their livestock. In the proximity of the reservoirs, people dig their own wells next to their crops as ground water can now be found within meters.

In hilly areas, such as Douentza, Mopti, we helped channel run-off water for rice production and vegetable gardening.



## Knowledge development & capacity strengthening

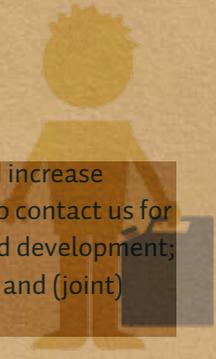
Rainwater harvesting is easy to understand and scalable to apply in other areas. We provide a platform for knowledge exchange, generating ideas through discussions and sharing ([www.rain4food.net](http://www.rain4food.net)). The evidence generated from our own and our partners' experience is the strength of such a knowledge-sharing platform. With our permanent Rainwater Harvesting Capacity Centre (RHCC) on the ground in Bamako we work on knowledge development and capacity strengthening throughout the Sahel.

Since 2006, the RHCC supports NGOs, governments, individuals and donors in West Africa. Millions of litres of water are collected annually through *impluvia*, micro-dams, sand dams, the development of land and many other water storage techniques. The RHCC has an experienced multidisciplinary team in the field of hydraulics and irrigation schemes. The centre's experts are engaged in project management of water and sanitation projects; practical training on techniques for rainwater harvesting; feasibility studies and evaluations.

# RAIN: our role and services



We aim to make our approaches and processes easy to understand, scalable to other areas and we provide a platform for knowledge exchange, generating ideas through discussions and sharing. We bring together various actors under our **Rain-for-Food** community of practice. The evidence generated from our own and our partners' projects is the strength of such a knowledge and sharing platform.



We would like to grow our partnership and increase collaboration with you. We welcome you to contact us for experience sharing, programme design and development; technical assistance through consultancy; and (joint) project implementation.



## Implementation

RAIN has extensive experience in programme and project management in the field of water harvesting and buffering. We have implemented programmes and projects in various countries in East and West Africa as well as Southeast Asia. Our strength lies in our local and international partner network and our hands-on experience in applying unique approaches to rainwater harvesting. RAIN actively promotes the 3R and MUS approaches in which rainwater harvesting plays a key role. Our experience, network, expert knowledge and skills have proven to be valuable to international programmes and projects on rainwater harvesting.



## Intelligence

RAIN provides knowledge management services that link information and theory with practice and people. Drawing on our experience in implementing and advising on rainwater harvesting technologies and programmes in various countries, we deliver knowledge products and provide knowledge sharing activities such as workshops, training courses and webinars. Regular discussion and collaboration with experts and partners in our extended network allow us to keep our expertise fully up to date as well as spread new ideas and innovative practices.



## Advice

RAIN's consultancy services support programmes from the field level to the institutional level. We help to integrate the technical, institutional and social aspects of water harvesting and buffering, from project and programme design to technical advice at the landscape level as well as strategic advice and capacity building. We use approaches like 3R, MUS and landscape approaches, all based on environmental sustainability principles. Our programme advice is practical and geared towards results. We help project officers and management staff to translate programme objectives into tangible actions and outputs.

## Contact us

### RAIN

Barentszplein 7  
1013 NJ Amsterdam, the Netherlands  
Telephone: +31 (0)20 58 18 250

[info@rainfoundation.org](mailto:info@rainfoundation.org)  
[www.rainfoundation.org](http://www.rainfoundation.org)