

## The Sahara marathon and visit to the Growing Hope vegetable project Laayoune camp : February 2023

Mel, Ian and Andy spent a week in the camps to participate in the Sahara Marathon. Conditions were very favourable with lovely sunshine, clear blue skies and miles of deserted beach quality sand!! To promote the project, Ian and Mel were dressed as a carrot and a tomato. This went down well with the locals!

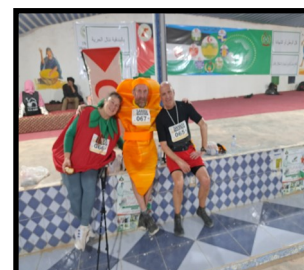
Several hundred people attended the solidarity week and we were able to talk to them and leaflet lots of people from a number of countries across the world.



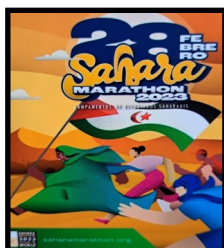
Whilst the camps are always a tough place to visit, we learned a lot about how well the Growing Hope vegetable project is developing, its strengths, as well as the next steps needed and we have returned with a much more detailed understanding as to how we can support its potential to increase and improve productivity .

We met with members of the core team working on the project to listen and learn about their plans for development. The project is selling a considerable amount of vegetables to shops that are committed to making the produce available at a discounted price. Money raised goes to cover wages, purchase essential items as well as reinvestment in the project. They are also distributing produce free of charge when necessary.

We managed to do about 3 hours weeding as they had been prioritising keeping the irrigation pipes clear of salt build up which had been blocking the water from reaching all the vegetables. We were pleased with our efforts and even more pleased to hear they have employed some local people part-time to clear the weeds and improve productivity The core team have repaired the fencing that was blown down in a storm and are currently digging a 10mx10mx10m reservoir. This will greatly decrease salt content of the water and also enable the large well, which is filled by an aquifer, to replenish at a gentle rate.



### Fundraisers 2023



The Sahara marathon.  
We raised £2014



New seedlings  
ready to go!



Planting on in  
the polytunnel



Crops grown  
outside



The main well

### NEXT STEPS:

- To purchase a second pump to increase irrigation effectiveness given the increased size of the productive land . 4500 euros.
- Build a small brick house for the site supervisor who is on site 24 x 7. 1500 euros.
- Complete the reservoir to enhance quality of water and extend irrigation efficiency. Estimate 4000 euros.
- Consolidate the surplus contingency fund.

### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Sign up for a small monthly standing order. If many give a little, it soon adds up. Information can be found in the donate section on our website.
- Contact us with your ideas for fundraising and to help raise awareness of the Western Saharan people.
- Visit our website to keep up to date with the project and follow us on social media and share the posts to spread the word. Search @westernsaharasupportgroup