



Summer hosting programme

This summer we have been involved in a 6 week hosting programme for 10 Western Saharan language exchange students along with 2 of their teachers and of course Fatimatu, the director of the Growing Hope vegetable Project. The logistics behind the hosting project were organised by our friends from Sandblast Arts who offered a whole range of fantastic experiences to the group (who were on their first visit to the UK and indeed to Europe) based in and around London. You can read about this and more by clicking on the link to the Sandblast newsletter.

<https://mailchi.mp/sandblast-arts/special-sandblast-newsletter-june-10980392>

The group also spent a memorable 10 days at Woodcraft Camp100, where they had the opportunity to not only practice their language skills but also to network with like minded young people, and importantly gave them the opportunity to share their story with a receptive audience, a story of 50 years living as refugees.

The **WSSG** was responsible for the northern leg of the hosting programme and we provided homestays for the group along with lots of enjoyable and worthwhile activities. The youngsters went canoeing at Debdale, walked up Lantern Pike in the Peak District, visited the Bee sanctuary in Wythenshawe, had a day trip to Ainsdale beach and a swim in the sea, went swimming at a pool in Bolton, had a musical workshop at the Contact theatre and also visited RHS Bridgewater. The group were also visited by their pen pals from a school in Selby whilst they practiced some circus skills in Cringle Park before joining in some sports activities at The Energy Box. The northern leg culminated with a couple of days at Ghyll Head outdoor adventure centre where the group went canoeing, swimming in the lake, marshmallows around a camp fire and a range of death defying stunts involving heights and ropes! Social activities included BBQs and just hanging out with host families.



Special moments for ourselves as hosts and the youngsters. We had an enormous ice cream bill, shattered our open water swimming risk assessment given the youngsters complete lack of fear, smiled as our wife was used to the full, and generally marvelled at the resilience, positivity and sense of optimism from the group given the reality of their lives and the uncertainties surrounding their future.

Click the link
to visit the BBC Manchester coverage of the visit.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwy5dj6xjdvo>

Watch edited highlights of the whole Northern hosting programme

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pLxLbJhlacqewMWU6Msl_VuFNFt5ODXM



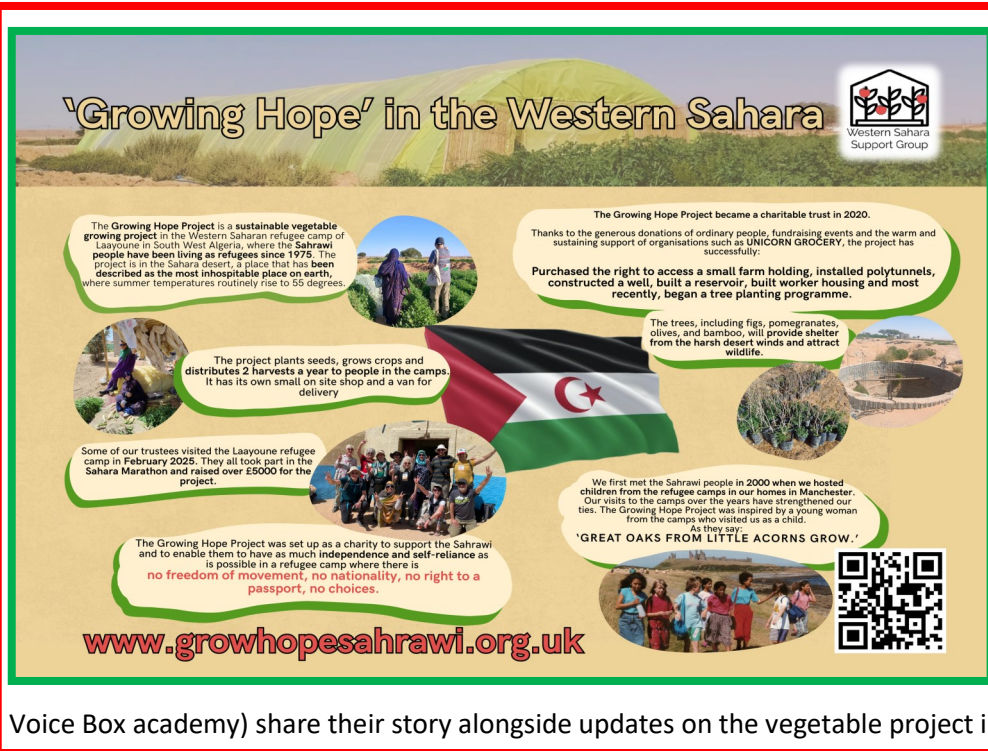
Project update The trees that were planted this year are looking more and more established and you can clearly see they are providing a clear boundary along some of the sides of the project. Whilst this is an ongoing piece of work it has already made an impact at the project. Remember this is the Sahara desert!



GROWING HOPE

A sustainable vegetable project to help the Western Saharan refugees to support themselves.

Newsletter no: 6 October 2025



Poster now on display in Unicorn Grocery . Unicorn have been generously supporting the Growing Hope project over the years.

An important part of the hosting programme was to find opportunities to share the story of the Western Saharans in their struggle for self determination . As part of this we have continued our excellent relationship with Unicorn grocers by having Fatimatu and Nanaha (a teacher from the Desert Voice Box academy) share their story alongside updates on the vegetable project in Layooune refugee camp.



The Big Ramble 5

This September saw 40 people walking 15 miles through the beautiful Peak District countryside on our annual Big Ramble. An overnight stay in a youth hostel, a chance to share information about the vegetable project and the western Sahara, catch up with old friends, plus Annie's Quiz made it a great event. To be continued by popular demand!



Upcoming events

Christmas Calendar appeal 2025/26 details on website

This year we are raising money to build a toilet for the project from the sales of Calendars. Such a basic human right unless of course your human rights are compromised!

The Big Ramble 6 Sept 5th 2026 Information out soon

