

FADUGOU MARKET GARDEN

Also in its third year of implementation, the Fadougou Women's Market Garden project started with 16 women. Now, twenty women cultivate a one hectare plot of land. After an initial modest support offered by B2Gold, the women market gardeners are now completely independent.

The garden's yield has grown from 1,986 tonnes of vegetables in 2017, to 14,669 tonnes in 2018. The women's associated annual income rose from approximately \$3,580 in 2017 to approximately \$21,430 in 2018 – an increase of almost 500%. These income levels allowed 18 of the women to rise above the poverty line (based on the UNDP poverty line estimate for Mali).

For both projects, the beneficiaries made contributions – either through the provision of land or financial contribution – as a sign of commitment and trust in the projects. B2Gold contributed technical training, seed supply, land management, equipment, and an irrigation system.

Some of the produce is sold to the local villages. A significant amount of vegetables are consumed by the women's families: approximately half a tonne of vegetables were consumed in 2017, and now 3,667 tonnes have been consumed by the women's families in 2018. Gradually, the dietary nutrition of local families is improving.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

In the initial stages, skepticism from the communities was one of the main challenges to secure the full commitment from participants. Delays in the implementation of the rice program due to lack of seeds or fertilizers, and limited water availability for the market gardens, were temporary hurdles. Lack of discipline in production monitoring by the women and farmers also contributed to difficulties along the way.

B2Gold's Fekola Mine purchases a significant portion of the produce from the women market gardeners. As production grows, alternative markets will need to be found in order for this economic activity to be sustainable.

Despite the challenges and difficulties, the positive results of the initiatives have certainly confirmed the potential of the agricultural sector in the area, and the possibility to involve more people in these economic activities.

MALI SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Providing a Path to the Future

Yatandou Tembine is one of the female beneficiaries of the B2Gold Mali Scholarship Fund. The fund was established to grant 10 scholarships across Mali. The Fund represents an investment over seven years that will provide financial support for students to cover tuition fees, study aids, health insurance and/or subsistence for the duration of their studies.

The aim of the program is to provide deserving Malian students with access to quality tertiary education and to increase their chances of successfully completing their studies – which will help them secure professional jobs and contribute to socio-economic development in Mali.

"I urge parents and host tertiary institutions to support our young people, and to show them the path to excellence, merit, and the future," said Mohamed Diarra, Country Manager of B2Gold Mali – expressing his satisfaction at seeing the initiative come to fruition.

To ensure inclusivity and transparency, applicants were assessed by a selection committee comprising representatives from Kéniéba's district authorities, school administrators and technical services, B2Gold representatives, as well as an external consultant.

Various factors were considered in the vetting process, including academic performance, home district, type of qualification sought, and personal financial circumstances. In support of B2Gold's Local Content Social Performance Standard, students from the

Kéniéba district (the region where B2Gold's Fekola Mine is located) were given preference. A minimum target for female students was established, and students studying STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and math) – like Yatandou – were given special consideration. The 10 recipients include five girls and five boys; four of the 10 are from the Kéniéba district.

"I AM DETERMINED TO BECOME A CIVIL ENGINEER AND WOULD LIKE TO HAVE MY OWN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY AFTER MY STUDIES... HAVING INHERITED KINDNESS FROM MY PARENTS, I HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF MAKING PLANS TO HELP PEOPLE IN NEED... GIVING THEM WORK AND MANY OTHER THINGS."

The scholarship recipients are now studying at various Malian tertiary institutions towards qualifications in the fields of medicine, pharmacology, finance, information technology, environment and engineering. B2Gold's investment in education is a focus area of our Community Development Plan for Mali.