



**SDG** covered by this initiative: **16**

## WORKING THROUGH RESETTLEMENT CONCERNS

### A LEGITIMATE AND EFFECTIVE GRIEVANCE MECHANISM

Regardless of size, a resettlement project is a sensitive process and has the potential for negative impacts to the people being relocated. The Fadougou village resettlement at the Fekola Mine directly impacted over 900 households. Having the right to express their opinions, concerns and complaints was fundamental to Fadougou residents throughout the process. The Fekola Mine ensured that a community grievance mechanism was in place from the outset of the project in order to guarantee this fundamental right to local stakeholders.

Widely communicated in the communities around the Fekola Mine through radio, posters, and public and individual meetings, the grievance mechanism received 466 complaints related to resettlement between 2016 and 2019.

Grievances were received by B2Gold staff through regular community activities and engagement, or were submitted in person at the Community Relations office in the village. Following an investigation, a resolution would be proposed to the complainant, usually in the presence of traditional authorities. If the complainant was not satisfied with the proposed resolution, they were able to appeal to the multi-stakeholder Resettlement Committee, which proved to be an effective body for dialogue and collaborative resolution of cases. If still unsatisfied, the complainant could elevate the appeal to a regional government development committee. The option to pursue the complaint through the formal legal system was available to complainants throughout the process, with this option clearly communicated at the start of the grievance process.

Most of the issues raised by residents were related to asset surveys and inventories (41% of all resettlement-related grievances received). Issues were also raised related to information from socio-economic surveys (29%) primarily correcting the number of household members. Other concerns included the process for electing a “power of attorney” for any absentee residents (14%), and conditions of the old village during the resettlement process such as access to water (4%).

The majority of complaints were able to be resolved without being escalated to the appeal mechanisms: 15% were appealed to the Resettlement Committee, and no complaints were escalated to the regional development committee or the formal legal system.

The grievance mechanism has been important for residents to express their concerns throughout the resettlement process and address any errors in data or compensation packages. The mechanism also proved to be a useful tool for B2Gold to adjust and improve its approach throughout the resettlement process.

