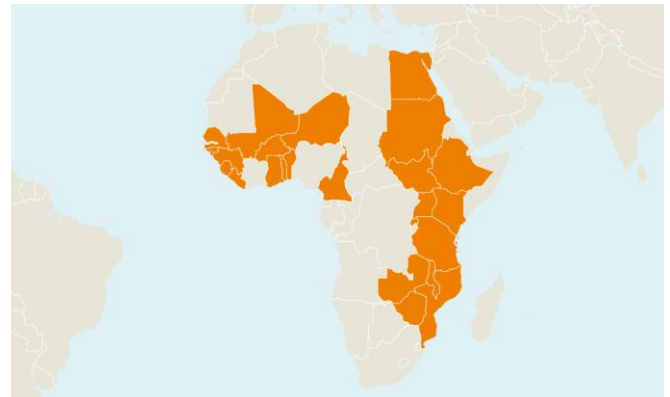


ANNUAL UPDATE

MALI

KITA KOUROU



Together with your sponsorship, children and families are making positive changes in Kita Kourou. Learn more about the valuable ways we work with children and communities.

Most people in Mali earn their livelihood through agriculture and small businesses. Empowering women with resources for economic independence is key—and this year, projects focused on income-generating activities in renewable energies. Working with communities to reduce the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) was another priority—one in which youth and adults became engaged, advocating for an end to this dangerous practice.



200

Women are leading income-generating activities



98

Peer educators learned to make reusable sanitary pads



194

People trained on entrepreneurship and renewable energies

“TRAINING TO MAKE SANITARY PADS HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON MY LIFE. I EARN MONEY AND TEACH OTHER GIRLS.”

Djenebou, 12-year-old Sponsored Child





NAME: BALAKISSA

AGE: 15 YEARS OLD

DREAMS TO BE: AN ENTREPRENEUR

“I THANK THE ALMIGHTY FOR HAVING PUT GOOD PEOPLE ON MY PATH SO I COULD LEARN A JOB, EARN MONEY AND RETURN TO MY NATIVE VILLAGE.”

Meet Balakissa

Like the child you sponsor, Balakissa is making steps towards achieving her goals and building a stronger future for herself.

She has overcome poverty, discrimination and uncertainty. Now with access to microfinancing resources, her small business is thriving—and she is a role model in her community, empowering other girls and young women.

In search of economic security

Balakissa comes from a very poor family in a small village. At age 12, she left school and, like many young people, migrated to the city to seek employment. She eventually found work as a housekeeper in a hair salon. Hairdressing has been a passion for Balakissa since her early childhood. She worked hard, learned the trade, then decided to return to her village in order to be closer to her parents, and to open a salon and train other girls.

The decision wasn't easy: her return meant a financial loss for her family, and she was criticised for her independence—in her village, women are expected to be dependent on a man. Yet Balakissa rented a shop by the side of the road. This was a first in her village.

From entrepreneur to role model

With support from the microfinance project Saving for Change, Balakissa is able to save, borrow and invest in her salon. She can purchase hairdressing equipment to expand her business—and train others to work for her, or to start their own businesses.

“I was able to train 30 girls,” she says, adding: “This will greatly reduce the rate of migration of young girls in urban areas.”

With her success and her position as a role model, Balakissa is making a positive impact in her community—and inspiring other girls and young women to do the same.



Balakissa inspires others to achieve their dreams

OUR PROJECTS IN KITA KOUROU ARE HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE



In one village, 359 people attended a ceremony marking the official end of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

CHALLENGING FGM



In Mali, an estimated 76% of girls aged 0-14 years old have undergone Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). This year, adults and youth learned about the consequences of FGM, and as a result of community dialogue and peer-to-peer education, change is underway.

Intergenerational dialogues have encouraged villages to change their position on FGM, and some have completely abandoned the practice. Members of groups such as Save For Change promoted the end of FGM, spreading awareness in the community.

Young people became active in the fight against FGM. They advocated for children's rights, addressing decision-makers and leaders in the community. Peer educators learned about sexual and reproductive health—including the dangers of FGM—and shared that knowledge with other youth.



GENERATING ECO-INCOME



This year, women in Kita Kourou increased their income through entrepreneurial projects and renewable energies. From business plan development to financing, community members were empowered with resources to develop income-generating activities.

For example, solar power plants enabled consistent electricity—making it possible to sew on a machine, grind cereal and store produce in a freezer. With solar pumps, market gardening was more efficient, with greater yield and less labour. And the re-sale of solar kits provided women with business opportunities. With increased income, the women invested in their children, using the money to buy school supplies, pay medical bills and manage family expenses.



“With this pump, I am no longer subjected to the burden of drawing water and my working time is shortened. The sales of the first vegetable harvests really allow me to hope for an increase in income.” - **Mariam (29) from Kita Kourou**

YOUR SUPPORT MEANS BETTER FUTURES



The best is yet to come—and together we will continue to work for a brighter future for the children in Kita Kourou.

- Social norms in Mali are unfavourable to women's entrepreneurship. With professional training and equipment, we will help support girls and young women establish and manage businesses in various trades.
- A high percentage of girls drop out of school. The continuation of advocacy campaigns will promote girls' education and encourage families to enrol and keep their girls in school.
- Poor nutrition and malnutrition are a concern in Mali. With follow-up screening for malnourished children in 16 health areas and cooking demonstrations, actions will continue to address these concerns.

Thank you for your continued support.



"During this year, with the support of our partners, the projects carried out have made important contributions to improving the well-being of children and their families."

Ousmane Doucara
Programme Area Manager

THE PLAN EFFECT



Your sponsorship commitment becomes long-term change—providing help for self-help. We involve children at the centre of all projects, bringing effective and sustainable solutions to families and communities. With Plan's Effect, your commitment helps empower communities to transform their lives and futures.

THE LAST 12 MONTHS



JANUARY



490

Members of community groups learned about children's rights

MARCH



25

Health centres received kits to care for survivors of violence

MARCH



250

Women trained on market gardening techniques

OCTOBER



328

Preschool teachers learned new education methods