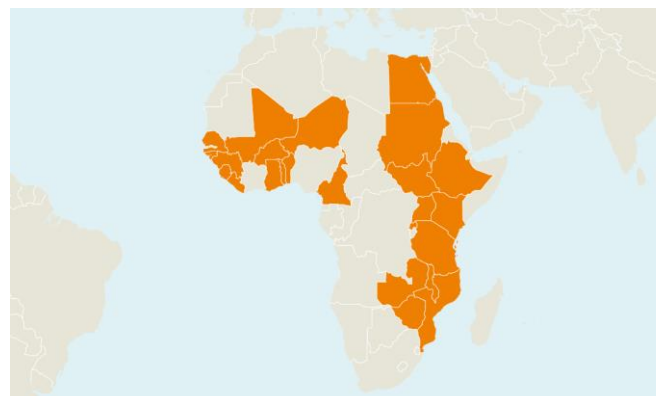


ANNUAL UPDATE

MALI BOUGOUNI



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

Most people in Mali practice income-generating activity through agriculture and small businesses. Empowering women with resources for economic independence is key—and this year, projects focused on farming techniques to improve food self-sufficiency.

In addition, educational campaigns provided youth with information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, supporting young people with the tools to make healthy decisions about their sexuality and their futures.



400

Maize producers improved farm yield and village nutrition



200

Pupils learned to make reusable sanitary pads



754

Educational talks informed youth about sexual health

“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 BOUGOUNI ARE HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE



200 pupils learned about menstrual health management, and how to make their own reusable sanitary pads.

EMPOWERING YOUTH



Young people make up more than half of the Malian population. However, many young people lack information on sexual and reproductive health and rights. This can lead to early marriage and pregnancy, gender-based violence and sexually transmitted infections.

This year, campaigns educated youth on family planning, female genital mutilation (FGM), early marriage and sexually transmitted infections. These sessions empowered young people with information about their sexual health, providing tools for them to make informed decisions. As a result, there was a decrease in early pregnancy and child marriage in the 81 schools in the project area.

In addition, 300 peer educators were trained in making reusable sanitary pads. Girls no longer miss school due to a lack of menstrual hygiene products, since each girl makes her own reusable pads.

IMPROVING NUTRITION AND INCOME



Food self-sufficiency and economic empowerment were two key initiatives in Bougouni this year.

With the support of market gardening equipment and seeds, 1,000 women farmers increased their income by 80%—and improved nutrition in the community. A total of 1,500 corn producers and market gardeners trained on corn cultivation techniques and composting, which improved their technical skills and food production. The new technologies for the production of corn, composting, and preventive measures against pests made a positive impact on the harvest.

In addition, 16 cereal banks made it possible to ensure the community's access to nutritious food during the lean season.

“Our family's nutrition has improved thanks to the market garden and the increase in my mother's income through the sale of market products. She ensures my school and health expenses and those of my brothers and sisters.” -**W. Traore (17) from Bougouni**



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 Bougouni.

- Key projects this year will promote the representation of young people in school decision-making, strengthen youth clubs, and support dialogue on gender-based violence.
- Strengthening youth' skills in literacy, communication and maths will empower young people with access to employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Supporting young people to influence leaders and local authorities will continue to be a priority. Through their advocacy, positive changes will happen in areas such as gender-based violence, discrimination and sexual and reproductive health.

Thank you for your continued support.



“Thank you for your support, which helped us protect children and young people against food insecurity and carry out our projects.”

Oumar Malle
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

1,000

Women improved income and nutrition with market gardens



FEBRUARY

300

Peer educators trained on reproductive health rights



OCTOBER

60,850

Students benefited from school kits



NOVEMBER

16,276

Out-of-school children reintegrated into school

