



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Harande
(*'Food Security' in Peulh*)



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Note: Training of Dagabidié FFBS participants on good market gardening techniques, gender and other topics / Dagabidié / Dandoli / Bandiagara

Farmers' Field and Business School - FFBS

*An approach to improve gender equity for rural women in
Dagabidie, Bandiagara, Mopti*

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RURAL MALIAN WOMEN

Rural Malian women make most of their income from agriculture, small livestock and poultry. These women, who make up 75% of the agricultural workforce and play a vital role in food security, are illiterate, employ inefficient traditional farming techniques and have limited access to arable land, inputs and credit. These barriers limit their production despite their sound intention.

Harande used the Farmers' Field and Business School (FFBS) approach to build women's capacity to ensure food security and adapt to climate change. This CARE-developed approach helps farmers develop the skills needed to increase their production, access markets, sell at competitive prices, collaborate with each other, and engage in beneficial and effective decision-making.



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FFBS IMPLEMENTATION

FFBS were implemented in Dagabidié village, which was selected based on the results of *Harande's* baseline survey. After this selection stage, a diagnostic study was carried out in the village with the producers and the community to identify the root causes of the barriers women farmers face in order to prepare an appropriate response. The strategy took place in several stages, including:

❖ **Selecting participants and land**

The criteria for selecting participants were determined in collaboration with village delegates and local village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) with mostly women members. In total, 50 women and six

men from three VSLAs were selected (15 women and two men from Ambayaba, 18 women and two men from Yamondo, and 17 women and two men from Indomo). The demonstration plot was chosen following a recommendation by an Agricultural Technical Officer, and because it needed improved soil fertility.

❖ Partnership with the Department of Agriculture's technical services

In order to ensure the sustainability of the FFBS and to offer quality training to participants, a partnership agreement was signed with the Department of Agriculture for the provision of an Agriculture Technical Officer to support the promotion of the FFBS curriculum. A training plan was developed based on identified challenges and was validated by the actors and implemented according to specific protocols.

❖ FFBS training

The demonstration plot serves as a classroom, and learning is done through practice, experimentation and observation. This includes direct comparisons between traditional production practices and climate-improved practices. Technical officers with the Department of Agriculture provided support to the participants on several aspects, including soil preparation techniques; the use of bio-pesticides; soil conservation; liquid and solid composting; and the harvesting, processing and storage of produce.

The agricultural technical officers also led follow-up support to participants working on their individual plots, and led the evaluation of the agricultural cycle in the demonstration and replication plots.

The *Harande* program supported the farmers by providing nutritious seeds, such as scallion, chili, tomato and amaranth seeds.

❖ Complementary activities

Activities related to nutrition, sanitation, gender, good governance, conflict prevention and conflict management were facilitated by the program team. Given that the women's daily schedules were generally overloaded, trainings were done every two weeks, and nutritional demonstrations were done through CARE groups.



FFBS training on making liquid compost in

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

The main challenges in implementing FFBS in Dagabidié were:

❖ **Choosing the most vulnerable VLSA members**

Most women wanted to take part in the training and benefit from the experience. To avoid weakening their enthusiasm and frustrating them, the number of participants was increased to 56 people (50 women and six men). The men supported the women in cleaning the demonstration plots, labeling sites, etc.

❖ **Demonstration plot quality**

The demonstration site had poor-quality soil and was not suitable for market gardening. Faced with this situation, manure was deposited to improve the quality of the demonstration plot's soil.

❖ **Water Accessibility**

Given the difficulty of accessing water, the women organized themselves in rotating, small groups to water plants at the start of the activity. Subsequently, they organized themselves to buy a pump to improve efficiency.

❖ **Appropriate Meeting Times**

Due to the high labor burden of the women participants, Sundays, the rest day, were chosen as FFBS meeting days to increase participant attendance in the training sessions.



ACHIEVEMENTS

The FFBS produced several key achievements in Dagabidié.

❖ **Cascading trainings on good agricultural practices**

After the first training sessions with the original 56 participants, the trainings were replicated with 636 women and 36 men from the village of Dagabidié during the 2019 to 2020 season, alone.

❖ **Space for the exchange of information**

In Dagabidié, the FFBS demonstration plot has become a space for exchange of information on other topics, including nutrition; marketing; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); good governance; gender;

and conflict prevention and management. The plot has also strengthened solidarity and mutual aid among the participants.

Testimony

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My name is Mrs. Nantoumé Aminata from the village of Dagabidié in the commune of Dandoli. I am married and the mother of five children. I am a member of the Yamondo VSLA, and it is in this capacity that I have benefited from the training of trainers on improved agricultural techniques. After the training, I had the opportunity to put what I learned into practice on a portion of my plot. Following the instructions received during the training, I harvested 400 kg of shallot bulbs, which was double my usual yield following traditional practices.

I found that I could halve the amount of seed I was using on the same plot. I was also able to save money due to the fact that I used organic manure instead of chemical fertilizer. Overall, the shallot bulbs on my demonstration plot are larger and the amount of leaves is greater, and so they are more appreciated by customers.

Today, thanks to these innovative techniques, I have been able to increase my income considerably. The funds generated from the sale of my products are around 500,000 francs CFA, which allows me to cover certain daily expenses, like education and children's health, as well as the purchase of supplemental food.

We, the women of Dagabidié, thank *Harande* for this noble act, and we are committed to teaching other women from the village and those from the surrounding villages to practice these less expensive and more profitable techniques.

RESULTS FROM THE APPROACH ACROSS THE INTERVENTION AREA

The FFBS approach was implemented in 64 villages as part of the *Harande* program. As a result, there are now 64 FFBS fields, with five sites for market gardening and 59 sites for dry crops.

Harande has had the following impacts in the villages:

- The formation of 39 VSLAs in 2019 and 2020 in the Bandiagara and Douentza circles, which trained 1,483 women and 48 men, including 550 women and 32 men on market garden plots and 933 women and 16 men on dry crops;
- A total of 3,245 women and 479 men were trained on good agricultural practices, nutrition, marketing, gender and governance to increase their production and incomes; and
- A total of 1,176 women and 83 men were trained on liquid compost preparation techniques and technical flower-planting routes, which have enabled them to improve the production and quality of shallot bulbs.



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- The adoption of these innovations by farmers has increased crop yields significantly, compared to the average yield in the area:

Crop name	Traditional yield	Improved yield
Scallion	25 to 35 tons per hectare	35 to 55 tons per hectare
Millet	500 kg per hectare	800 kg per hectare
Peanut	600 kg per hectare	950 kg per hectare
Cowpea	450 kg per hectare	700 kg per hectare

- The FFBS fields have also helped to strengthen social cohesion and solidarity among the participants.
- The installation of 30 market garden perimeters with a total area of 61.8 hectares allowed 2969 women and 80 men to operate in all seasons.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Organize visits between villages to exchange experiences and best practices;
- Hold awareness-raising and information sessions on FFBS through local radio stations;
- Advocate for men to make fertile land available to women; and
- Advocate with the local government to take ownership of the approach and popularize it in the community.



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The *Harande* program, funded by USAID, is being implemented in the Mopti region for the period 2015-2020 with the aim of sustainably improving the food, nutrition and income security of 224,100 vulnerable households by 2020 in the circles of Youwarou, Tenenkou, Bandiagara and Douentza in the Mopti Region - a region of central Mali suffering from frequent droughts, recurrent conflicts and instability. The program is funded through the Development Food Assistance Program (DFAP), and implemented by a consortium of national and international NGOs led by CARE.

Contact:

© CARE Mali
Idriss Leko, Chief of Party

110 Street, Gate 368
Korofina North Bamako
www.care.org
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