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**Harande**  
(*'Food Security' in Peulh*)



# Labor-saving Equipment helps women improve incomes

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## INTERVENTION CONTEXT AND PROBLEM

In Mali, women make up 52% of the rural population and 64.2% live below the poverty line. They account for 75% of the agricultural workforce. Women face many barriers to earning higher incomes such as their difficult access to productive resources and credits. Less than 20% of women have agricultural

equipment and only 2.9% of women have access to credit for agriculture compared to 6.6% of men according to the Agricultural Census/National Gender Policy/2011. Only 14% of Malian women own farmland compared to 86% of men, and gap is even greater in the Mopti Region (6% of women compared to 94% of men).



The village Kagnantaga, located about 20 km from Bandiagara, lacks water infrastructure and health facilities. In this village there is only one VSLA group of illiterate women. These very vulnerable women make the most of their income from farming small portions of land—no more than 5m<sup>2</sup> per woman. After the market garden season ends, the group delivers enriched soil and organic manure more than

3.5km to men's fields. The group makes between 300FCFA and 500FCFA (\$0.55-\$0.92) on each trip to split between 21 women. They make this trip on foot with the baskets on their heads and children on their backs. In addition, they are responsible for collecting firewood, collecting water, and feeding the family. With no access to production equipment and credit to develop profitable income-generating activities, these

women are forced to carry out these arduous activities in order to survive. Harande's gender analysis revealed these strong gender inequalities in the distribution of roles and responsibilities within households and in access to resources and opportunities. This weakens women and girls and contributes to

food and nutrition insecurity. Because of these realities, Harande put a particular focus on helping women in savings groups access labor-saving devices to reduce women's workload and give them time and tools to develop some income-generating activities.



Credit © Daffa SISSOKO / 2019 Photo Credit

Note: transporting fuels for cooking in the household

## STRATEGY

Supporting access to labor saving devices had the twin goals of reducing the hardship of women's work and helping women increase their incomes to reduce food insecurity. At Kagnantaga, the strategy has several steps:

### ❖ Granting Arable Land

Advocacy was conducted with local authorities to make arable land available to women in the project, and local authorities granted two hectares of land. Women used the areas to grow shallot, gombo,

eggplant, zucchini, peanut and green beans during winter and carrots, tomatoes, shallots and dah—a local green that is a staple of the daily diet—in the summer.



Credit © Daffa SISSOKO / October 2020 Photo

Note: Water transport by wheelbarrow provided by the program

### ❖ **Selecting beneficiaries**

Based on the project's criteria, five of the most vulnerable women from the village's only VSLA group were selected for support in the first phase in 2018. Each of them received 100m<sup>2</sup> on the two hectares and a wheelbarrow. In the second phase in 2019, the VSLA group and two male champions in the project received cart and a motor pump.

### ❖ **Conditions for the transfer and use of equipment**

A local management committee set up criteria for participation and tools to help women access equipment. This local ownership allows for more sustainable results. The main criteria set was the requirement that the community contribute 40% of the purchase price of the equipment or 373,340F CFA (\$688) to maintain and replace equipment.

### ❖ **Value of equipment**

The equipment has been used in a variety of ways. The women primarily used wheelbarrows to transport water. The five women who have them also rent the wheelbarrows out to other women in the community for 100 F per day. Carts are used for transporting organic manure, soil, firewood, shallot, millet after

harvest and even people to go to the market. The motor pump is used for watering plants outside the gardens.

## KEY CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

The main difficulties in the village of Kagnantaga were:

### ❖ **Selection of beneficiaries.**

Although the criteria for vulnerability is clearly defined, it was difficult to select the 5 most vulnerable women from the 21 members of the VLSA group. Women themselves came up with the solution. The women who got wheelbarrows each paid 12,000 CFAs (\$22) so that other members could also benefit.

## ❖ Sharing the land.

It was difficult to distribute the land received equally among the women. Each farmer got a 100m<sup>2</sup> plot. The remaining 800 m<sup>2</sup> was allocated for collective cultivation. This space was used to grow shallots transformed into dried onions and resold at 80,000FCFA (\$147). The women put this money from the collective crop into their account to pay for maintaining equipment and the purchasing seeds for the next growing season.

## ❖ Women's low literacy

The low level of literacy made it difficult for women to easily monitor activities. The one literate man in the village commits to support them in filling out forms and maintaining their records.



## KEY SUCCESSES

We note several successes to this approach:

### ❖ Effective relief of the double burden on women

Vulnerable women got equipment, training, support to manufacture and use fuel-efficient stoves. This greatly reduces their workload in collecting wood and preparing family meals, and allows them to save a considerable amount of time to devote to economic activities.

### ❖ Diversification of revenue sources.

The transport of organic manure and land is now carried out by cart, which increased women's incomes. They also receive income from renting the cart out for 500F-a-day cart for members of the VSLA and 1000F per day for non-members. In addition, women have an average of 2000FCFs per day from the sale of their market garden products. These funds help to cover the family's day-to-day expenses and strengthen the VSLA fund, which offers the possibility of lending to women.

### ❖ Increased group revenues, VSLA

The sum of 60,000FCFA (\$110) awarded to the five women was redistributed in the form of credit to members for the purchase of shallot seeds that members repaid at the end of the campaign with a 10% interest to benefit other women in the VSLA.

This revolving fund was also used as working capital for marketing dried onions, worth to 255,500 CFA (\$471). The VSLA Group purchased 632 kg of shallot seeds, 57% of which came from the contributions of women who received wheelbarrows. These seeds will be given on credit to women repayable at the end of the growing season for interest payments (10%) on capital.

### ❖ Easy access to credit



Credit © Aldjouma TAPILY Photo / 2020



Credit © Daffa SISSOKO / November 2020 Photo

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The VSLA Group was able to access 1,047,000 FCFA from in credit a Microfinance Institution (Kondo Jigima) as part of a warrantage system to store grain.



## Temoignage of actors who have benefited from the action

### Mrs. Kassogu  married to a polygamist and mother of 6 children

"In the past, to get income from the garden season, we used to transport soil and organic manure for men. They were paying us 300 FCFA for all 21 VSLA women over a distance of more than 3km. This was barely enough to buy the condiments for cooking one meal.

Credit   Daffa SISSOKO / November 2020 Photo

Note: Mrs. Kassogu , very moved by the quantity and quality. The community garden has 100m<sup>2</sup> that it operates and intends to harvest at least 600kg of shallot like the past season / *Village* Of the Kagnantaga / *Common* Of the Dourou / *Circle* Of the Bandiagara



We now have the cart, which we lease at 500 FCFA per day to VSLA members and 1000 FCFA to non-members; wheelbarrows, a motor pump, and a market garden plot that we operate throughout the year. Personally, I have produced shallot, okra, green bean, sweet potato, eggplant, and greens on the 100m<sup>2</sup> that I got. In addition to feeding my family, I supply the surrounding villages with vegetables and sell extra surpluses at the weekly market.

Today, thanks to the sale of these market garden products, I have enough to meet the daily expenses, like education, children's health, the purchase of salt, and other groceries for meals. I earned about 160,000 francs (\$294) just this growing season.

To grow in the community garden, we have introduced the payment of contributions, and the price varies based on the season. It costs 500 FCFA/month during the shallot campaign and 250 FCFA/month during winter.

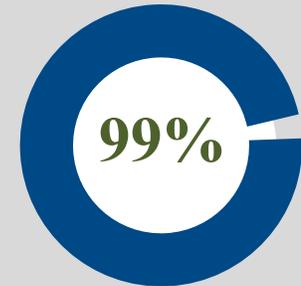
One man in the community has committed to keeping records and helping us manage our affairs. I thank Harande for this beautiful idea that has really eased our daily tasks, to promote the development of our own activities but also strengthened the cohesion and solidarity between us women of Kagnantaga.

## SOME RESULTS FROM THE PROGRAM

The approach to empowering women through labor saving equipment has been developed in 130 villages in the Bandiagara (55), Douentza (30), Tenenkou (25) and Youwarou (20) circles as part of the Harande program.

This approach has contributed significantly to reducing women's domestic burdens and has given them time for economic activities. Interesting results were noted at all program sites:

- ❑ 3842 women and 31 men through accessed equipment (carts, mills, wheelbarrows, motorbikes, grinders, cutters, and threshers) and credit through their savings group.
- ❑ Participants contributed 10,346,795 FCFA (\$19,072) as co-payments. Groups used these funds to purchase seeds, fatten livestock, and other activities.
- ❑ The VSLA groups were able to mobilize collateral so they could obtain 52 million FCFA in credit from MFIs: 39 million in Bandiagara and 15 million in Douentza, which allowed them to invest in higher-profit income generating activities; (warrantage in Kagnantaga and Guiminikoun, livestock fattening in Madina and Koumbewel).
- ❑ The construction of 30 fish farms equipped with 36 solar pumping systems and 4 fishing wells for women has enabled 2,349 participants, including 2,299 Women (98%) and 80 men to exploit 61.8 hectares of land.
- ❑ The manufacture and use of improved stoves in 3,012 households in Bandiagara, Douentza, Tenenkou and Youwarou circles has improved the energy efficiency of firewood, reduced household chores and created time for other income-generating activities.



Harande: 99% of people who received labor saving tools were women (3842)



\$90,000

Savings groups accessed 52 million FCFA in credit from MFIs

Credit © Photo Aldjouma Tembely / February 2019

Note: Women's access to shallot processing equipment: shallot cutter and grinder / Golgou Village / Dandoli Commune / Bandiagara Circle



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## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❑ Taking into account the needs of rural women's labor saving equipment in project planning increases their production and income while offering them the opportunity for other economic activities including, market gardening, agricultural transformations, etc.
- ❑ It is important to validate selection criteria and the types of equipment with communities to ensure that they actually meet their needs and that the equipment will actually be fit for purpose and useful to the people.
- ❑ Validate with the community the recipient selection criteria to minimize the risk of conflict and exclusion. If the access to the opportunities and support from the project is not perceived as fair, that can have an impact on cohesion and social stability.



Credit © Photo Pierre Diallo / 2020



Photo credit © Djibril Kouyaté / October 2019

Note: Women's stains are lightened: the transport of organic, earth and other manure is now carried out in carts. Funds generated from cart rentals strengthen the VSLA / Guiminikun / Dourou / Bandiagara  
9 oct. 2019 15:08:29



Photo Credit © Yacouba Ouloguem / October 2019

Note: Women's access to the mill has been creating income and time for other AGR / Nacombo Village / Dourou

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 a Development Food Assistance Program (DFAP) implemented by a consortium of national and international NGOs led by CARE.

**Contact:**

© CARE Mali  
Idriss Leko, Chief of Party  
Idriss.Leko@care.org

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