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# Harande

(‘Food Security’ in Peuhl)



Save the Children.



Credit © Photo Mamoutou Ongoiba/November 2020

Rating: Idrissa Ongoiba, model man who led a good number of heads of household to support women in carrying out domestic tasks/Fombori/Douentza commune/Douentza circle



## Men’s Engagement Lends to Social Transformation of the Village of the Fombori, Mali

December 2020

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## INTERVENTION CONTEXT AND THE PROBLEM

Despite their crucial role in Mali's rural economy, women face challenges that prevent them from improving their agricultural production and income-generating activities. This is largely due to discrimination and gender inequality. Women in the village of Fombori, like many other rural women, devote a large part of their time to household chores, including the care of children and the elderly. Social norms about the role of women in the family and preconceived notions about so-called "appropriate" women's work are among the key factors that perpetuate this inequality.

This "appropriate" work creates an unfair burden for women, because they must do this work in addition to their other livelihood activities. It is also a cause of gender-based violence (GBV) in the community, since women suffer the physical violence when their work is not properly done. In Fombori, as in most villages in this commune, women are the ones who are blamed and stigmatized for being the recipients of physical or other domestic violence, instead of blaming their male abusers. The local governance system maintains barriers that limit the filing and handling of complaints in a formal manner. It should also be noted that these practices that discriminate against women and girls limit their involvement and participation in decision-making at the community level.

Faced with this problem, the *Harande* program has opted for the integration of a gender lens in a cross-cutting way through its components of food security, climate change, nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). To gradually address the constraints anchored in social norms harmful to women and girls, *Harande* sought the participation of male role models and engaged men as allies and agents of change.

## STRATEGY DEVELOPED

The strategy was developed around three aspects:

- ❖ **Identification of men engaged in the community**

The program strategy was based on the assumption that men are the basis of discriminatory practices against women, and so they should be heavily involved in the process of finding sustainable solutions. Thus, after exchanges with several men in the community, the project selected five role model men who understood the merits of our approach and who could lead by example to support the process of social norms change.

- ❖ **Building the capacity of role model men and other community leaders on positive masculinity**

To increase their understanding of the harmful consequences of discriminatory practices and to commit themselves to supporting initiatives to combat these practices, the project's role model men have been trained on the concept of positive masculinity. This approach recognizes men, women, girls and boys as equal human beings.



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### ❖ Communication for a change in behavior through various channels

These five role model men began by raising awareness and supporting community leaders, including religious, cultural and traditional leaders, in the cause of women's empowerment. Topics discussed included, among other things, the contribution of men to domestic work, the participation of women in community meetings, women's access to arable land for agricultural activities, the schooling of young girls and the elimination of physical violence against women.

The role model men participated in the production, staging and dissemination of messages, including radio soap operas on gender-sensitive issues through Douentza radio, as well as through community dialogues.



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## KEY SUCCESSES

### ❖ Contribution of men to domestic work

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Today, many husbands help to transport water and support their wives in the search for firewood and other activities that were once dedicated exclusively to women and girls.

❖ **A growing rate of school enrollment for girls**

As a result of the increased awareness of parents, many let their girls go to school for the first time.

❖ **Coaching women in men's handling of VLSA management tools**

The literacy training by the role model men enabled 70 women and eight men in Fombori's five village saving and loan associations (VSLAs) to maintain their management tools.

❖ **Technical training**

A total of 14 girls and 15 boys were trained on technical trades like hairstyling, sewing, masonry, wood carpentry and others. They were also all equipped with the necessary tools to launch their own businesses.

❖ **Intoduction of women into so-called "masculine" activities**

The role model men facilitated the training of women to diversify their income-generating activities and increase their incomes.

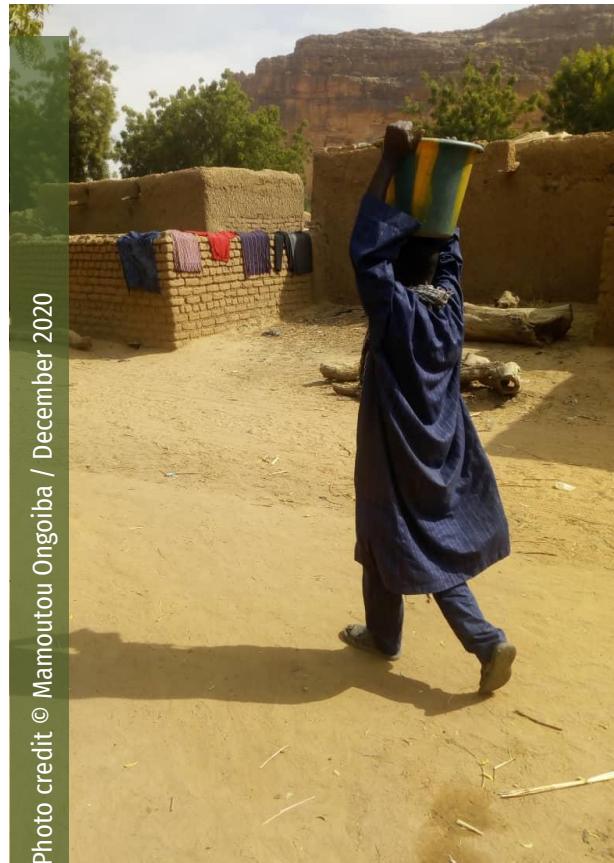


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#### ❖ The legal knowledge of women's groups

The women were supported in obtaining receipts for the creation of their organizations, which facilitated the opening of accounts at local Microfinance Institutions (MFIs).

#### ❖ 100 women on arable land

Thanks to the support of the role model men, 100 women were able to benefit from an area of two hectares of land for vegetable crops, which helped to increase their incomes.

#### ❖ Improving women's access to agricultural equipment

The role model men campaigned for women's access to equipment, including one mill, one cutter and one motorized shallot grinder.

#### ❖ The task of collecting water

The role model men campaigned for the installation of a water supply system for the village with four fountains to alleviate the burden of women, in terms of water-related chores. In the management

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committee, a woman holds the position of treasurer.



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## Testimony of a role model man



Credit © Photo Mamoutou Ongoiba/November 2020

Drissa Ongoiba, Has model man / Fombori / Douentza commune/Douentza circle

In the village of Fomborildrissa, Ongoiba testifies in his words:

Thanks to the training I received on gender and GBV, I am doing chores that I once dedicated to women.

It also allowed me to get involved in enrolling girls in school, since I am a member of the student recruitment committee at my village level.

In addition, I am raising awareness among other men to do the same and to be less violent in their households.

Thanks to my commitment and determination, in the last two years there has been only one

reported case of domestic violence. I made this man understand that being violent is neither natural nor normal.

In addition, I understood that a man who shares housework with his wife has less of a problem and less to spend.

## SOME RESULTS OBTAINED ACROSS ALL AREAS OF INTERVENTION

To ensure the success of the program's behavior change initiatives, *Harande* required strong support from men involved in communities. Indeed, these men have significantly helped to break down the socio-cultural barriers imposed in communities to promote gender equality in households and across communities.

As a result of these efforts, we have seen the following results:

- Promotion and management of community nutrition through the adoption of good nutritional practices, such as the manufacture of flour enriched by women themselves;
- Actions aimed at reducing women's household chores, such as collecting water and finding firewood in 3,012 households, to date;
- The development of small businesses and women's entrepreneurial networks through legal assistance, training on management tools, and the implementation and monitoring of their action plans;
- Conducting awareness-raising sessions within community dialogues and forums. This has helped to improve attitudes and behaviors towards GBV and promoted positive masculinity. For example, at the inter-community forum on gender and the fight against GBV organized by *Harande* as part of a 16-day celebrations of activism, formal commitments against GBV were made by the actors, including traditional and religious leaders, as well as municipal, administrative partners.



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The establishment of 193 groups of men engaged in 193 villages in the Bandiagara, Douentza, Tenenkou and Youwarou circles, with membership totalling 474 men has raised the awareness of community leaders about women's rights, as a means of ensuring the equitable and sustainable development of their localities.

The results of these awareness-raising activities include:

- The participation of 1,066 women in decision-making positions in community structures.
- Women have improved access to the land for market gardening and dry crops. They now actively participate in the Farmers' Field Business School (FFBS) initiatives that were installed by the program. These spaces have served as a gateway for awareness and the building of technical and organizational capacity of communities.
- A total of 3,023 women and 1,653 men have benefitted from literacy training in their local language. Literacy, as a development factor, contributes to women's empowerment and improves the quality of their lives



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 is implemented by a consortium of national and international NGOs led by CARE.

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