



## MALI SUGU YIRIWA, DELTA ZONE

Rural women's entrepreneurship contributes to the fight against child malnutrition in the Delta zone of Mali



**Photo 3:** Hands-on fortified flour processing session during one of the UTA product fortification and enrichment trainings in Mopti. CARE Mali/Sugu Yiriwa.

Food insecurity and malnutrition are endemic in Mali, hitting children hard. Nearly 1.5 million children under the age of five are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition between June 2022 and May 2023, or 19% more than the previous year<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the path out of the extreme poverty that a large portion of Malians face is hard. By one estimate, only 45,020 new jobs are created each year, while at the same time, the labor supply grows 300,000.<sup>2</sup> Gender inequality is exacerbated by the fact that many women aren't part of the workforce.<sup>3</sup> The USAID Feed the Future Mali Sugu Yiriwa Activity is striving to respond to all these issues. Since its launch in 2021, the USAID Feed the Future Mali Sugu Yiriwa Activity

<sup>1</sup> ReliefWeb, Mali: Acute Malnutrition Snapshot | June 2022 - May 2023: <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/mali-acute-malnutrition-snapshot-june-2022-may-2023#:~:text=It%20is%20projected%20that%20nearly,the%20cases%20forecasted%20in%202021> (last seen on 12/21/2022).

<sup>2</sup> BTI Transformation Index, Mali Country Report 2022: <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/MLI> (last seen on 12/21/2022).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

has trained and coached a network of 167 agro-processing units in the Delta area of Mali, spread across the different circles and communes of the Mopti and Tombouctou regions. With the support of Sugu Yiriwa, these agro-processing units, primarily run by rural women entrepreneurs, were trained to produce, market, and sell fortified flour—supporting at least 2,500 employees in those businesses.

In parallel, the USAID Feed the Future Mali Sugu Yiriwa Activity has worked closely with the regional authorities and community health to fight against child malnutrition and promote the consumption of a balanced diet. As part of the effort to increase the availability of nutrient-dense local foods for pregnant and lactating women and children under the age of five, the Regional Health Directorate tested and approved the quality of the flour produced by the rural women entrepreneurs.

Mrs. Fatoumata Coulibaly – one of the women’s entrepreneurs from Djenné said and we quote: *“Before, we were processing our fortified products without really following the recommended hygiene and packaging rules. Thanks to Sugu Yiriwa, we received trainings on the techniques of fortification/enrichment of products and foods. Since then, all the processors in our cooperative have placed great emphasis on hygiene and respecting the proper processing of our products, especially the enriched multi-vitamin flour. The enriched flour remains our flagship product here in Djenné, it sells well. It has been recommended to several patients with children under 5 years old and some pregnant women by Doctor Aboubacar Sidibe, chief pediatrician of the Community Health Center (CSCOM) of Djenné. This is a great achievement and a great pride for us. It is all because of Sugu Yiriwa”.*



Photo 5: Some beneficiaries of enriched flour at the Mopti-Barigondaga Health Center. CARE Mali/Sugu Yiriwa.

USAID Feed the Future Mali Sugu Yiriwa Activity is now transforming the agro-processing units into self-sustaining service providers. The Activity buys enriched flour directly from these women. This approach not only allows to respond to life-saving needs, but also to gives a boost to women’s entrepreneurship in very remote areas of Mali. The Activity has, so far, bought and distributed 14,000 kilos of their fortified flours, costing FCFA 27,000,000 (approximately \$43,699), to communities in the Mopti and Tombouctou regions. That has served 1,042 pregnant and lactating women so far. In addition, the Activity is nurturing sustainable market links between the agro-processing units, Malian health authorities, and farmers to ensure the distribution and the availability of the inputs for production of fortified flour.

Mariam Coulibaly, a pregnant woman from Koro Cercle, said the availability of nutritious food for her children was transformative. "With the fortified flour given by Sugu Yiriwa, I will be able to feed my children for at least the next two months." "My gratitude is quite deep today," she added. "I am very happy and thank USAID wholeheartedly for bringing us Sugu Yiriwa."

Link to article on USAID Mali page : <https://www.usaid.gov/mali/news/feb-01-2023-usaid-and-rural-women-entrepreneurs-boost-child-nutrition>

