

RESULTS SUMMARY

Economic empowerment of women in the Sikasso region

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PROJECT	<i>Title:</i>	Good Governance Decentralisation Programme/Sikasso Regional Council – Capacity Building
	<i>Partner:</i>	Sikasso Regional Council
	<i>Country:</i>	Mali
	<i>Period:</i>	2017-2024

CHANGE	<p>Since 2017, the project has improved the well-being and climate resilience of 448 vulnerable households through the economic empowerment of women in rural communities in the Sikasso region. The project has supported women in improving their skills and capacities in market gardening and business, including the establishment of a communal garden. Improved agricultural production has not only improved the income of women, but also the food self-sufficiency, nutritional diversity, and climate change resilience of their families.</p>
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CONTEXT	<p>Decentralisation is an integral mode of administration in Mali aimed at promoting local development close to the communities. However, decentralised authorities often lack adequate resources. In addition, the positive role of women's groups in the local rural economy, for example through vegetable production, is well-known and appreciated. However, there is a lack of support for women's groups in the Sikasso region, which represents wasted potential.</p>
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CONTRIBUTION	<p>The programme has contributed to strengthening relations between decentralised authorities and communities in the municipalities of Bougouni, Sikasso and Koutiala through support to public investment in the development of local market gardening infrastructure. The aim is for women to play a major role in the organisation of production and marketing of agricultural products. This has improved the productive capacities and income of women, and the vegetables produced have contributed to improving the eating habits of their families.</p>
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IMAGES	 <p>Onions and water reservoir in the Zangasso garden perimeter. Photo: Abdoulaye Tounkara.</p>	 <p>Cabbage and corn in the Kapala garden perimeter. Photo: Abdoulaye Tounkara.</p>
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACTIVITIES

Denmark has worked with the local authority of Sikasso Regional Council to improve the living conditions of populations in the region through improvement of local governance, provision of basic services, and support to economic growth. With regards to economic empowerment, women's groups have been trained in production, conservation, and marketing of garden products. They have also received new and improved infrastructure and facilities, and have gained access to banking services. The programme has supported women in securing land ownership in order to ensure the sustainability of their financial and time investment, thereby granting them access to and control over resources. In addition, the municipalities have invested in improved road infrastructure, which has facilitated the transport of market gardening, livestock, fish and forestry products to urban centres.

LESSONS

Lessons from the project include the success of market gardening boosting the role of women in agricultural marketing organisations, highlighting the importance of supporting women's market gardening associations with the aim of obtaining land titles for land tenure security. The project also found that the sustainability and profitability of the market gardening operations depended on the establishment of comprehensive and robust facilities that provide a functional public service. Together, these aspects were found to lead to the successful exploitation of market gardening perimeters and to an expansion of the association and the extension of the perimeters.

EVIDENCE

The claims regarding economic empowerment, improved wellbeing, and climate change resilience are supported by regular progress reports. The market gardening perimeter in Kapala, Zanagasso, and other localities, has ensured that more than 448 families now have income-generating activities enabling them to meet the needs of their families. For example, Ms. Awa Keita, president of the producers of Zangasso, was able to increase her revenue from FCFA 75,000 (DKK 850) to FCFA 400,000 (DKK 4,545), through the project. The market gardening systems allow the use of water resources for income-generating activities during the dry season and thereby increase the resilience of populations to famine. Thus, the dry period, which was previously not conducive to market gardening, now allows for market gardening production and thereby profit for the women. The market gardening systems also have an impact on improving family nutrition in terms of availability of nutrients.

DOMAINS

<i>Development strategy priorities:</i>	Climate, Nature and the Environment
<i>Changes in the lives of people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability</i>	X
<i>Changes in laws, policies and practices that affect people's rights</i>	-
<i>Changes in the capacity of organisations and communities to support rights</i>	-
<i>Changes in partnerships and collaborations that support people's rights</i>	-
<i>Changes in participation of groups facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability</i>	X
<i>Changes in local leadership of development and humanitarian work</i>	-