



# SUCCESS STORY

## USAID Builds Economic Resilience in Mali

**Through USAID, nearly 55,000 conflict-affected people in Mali are benefiting from Mercy Corps' agricultural and economic assistance.**



Courtesy of Mercy Corps

*Fatoumata Aboubacar started a fish-selling business using the profits from her USAID-supported vegetable garden.*

*"Now our gardening is going much better. I even helped a neighbor in her field to practice the same gardening tips that Mercy Corps taught me, and the results were amazing."*

- Gardening group member Fatoumata Aboubacar

Protracted conflict in 2012–2013 closed markets, damaged land, and destroyed livelihoods in northern Mali, leaving three out of four households in the area food-insecure by mid-2013. In Gao Region's Ansongo commune, food insecurity affected approximately 90 percent of households, forcing families to sell livestock and divert expenses from other household goods to survive.

USAID is assisting Mercy Corps to enhance food security and economic resilience for nearly 55,000 conflict-affected people in Ansongo through community gardening of key cash crops; improved fodder and health services for livestock; the rehabilitation of land, agricultural infrastructure, and irrigation systems damaged by conflict; and support for microfinance and village savings and loan activities to generate and protect incomes.

Among these activities, Mercy Corps is supporting more than 50 agricultural groups with vegetable seeds and training on composting and other techniques, thereby strengthening vegetable production for approximately 1,200 vulnerable people.

Gardening group member Fatoumata Aboubacar recalls her association's poor harvest prior to Mercy Corps' assistance: "In 2014, we only used about half of our garden and produced just 4.5 pounds of tomatoes—which earned us \$80."

Thanks to seeds and training provided through USAID support, including the adoption of techniques such as using organic fertilizer, Fatoumata's group more than quadrupled production in 2016. The association successfully planted its entire garden and harvested approximately 47,000 pounds of potatoes—worth more than \$8,700 at current market prices.

With her newfound income from the garden's success, Fatoumata started a small business selling fish to earn additional income for her family.

Through USAID support, conflict-affected people like Fatoumata are regaining their livelihoods, improving their food security situations, and building their economic resilience for the future.