

Voices from the Field

The Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) was founded in 1986 by Norman Borlaug, Jimmy Carter, and Ryoichi Sasakawa, to support smallholder farmers in Africa.

*Voices from the Field* offers an insight into the positive impact and benefits of SAA programs and activities, in the words of the smallholder farmers with whom we work. Through their experiences we continue to learn and improve, working together for a better future for Africa's smallholder farmers.

“This foundation seed project has been an opportunity to improve our living conditions”

The Foloda Women’s Group

The Monzonblena Postharvest and Trading Center (PHTC) boasts a membership of 10 villages, and is located south of the Malian capital, Bamako. In 2017, SAA identified the villages, including Foloda, which has a population of 450 and relies on subsistence agriculture as its main source of income, to follow a needs assessment survey organized in collaboration with the national agriculture sector of Dioïla.

Following the survey, a women's group in Foloda was chosen to host a new SAA extra-core project, funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), entitled ‘Developing economically viable models of foundation seed production for vital food security’. The group, comprised of 69 members, trialed groundnut foundation seed production to test the economic feasibility of seed production for major crops.

During the 2018 cropping season, the group established a test plot of 0.25 ha in three replicates, under the technical assistance of an SAA/Applied Research Fund (ARF) project and national agricultural sector agents.

The group’s results speak for themselves, and are a testament to the initiative and hard work of its members. From an initial investment of 96,000 FCFA (\$192), the group made a sale of 300,000 FCFA (\$600) – an impressive gross profit margin of 204,000 FCFA (\$408) on less than a hectare of field, maintained manually by the women.

Coumba Sidibé, who led the group, said: *“As a result of the operational account training that the project has given us, we have found that production of groundnut foundation seeds is very profitable. We have put this amount of money into the account of the group”*. Reflecting on the benefits of reinvesting their profits, Coumba adds that *“members can now borrow money to carry out other income generating activities. We can say that this foundation seed production project has been an opportunity to provide us with resources to improve our living conditions. We now afford food for our children, care for them and send them to school. We will continue with this activity.”*



Dr Nouhoum Sangaré, SAA's Thematic Director for Public-Private Partnerships and Market Access, delivering an operational account training session to the women's group

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