



## SUCCESS STORY

# Rejuvenation in Rice

### Global Food Security Response increases agricultural productivity and income in Mali.



[Insert Photo Credit]

*President of the Benkadi Women's Rice Cooperative Nantené Traoré shows stores of rice stacked head-high. For the first time in the history of their rice cultivation, the women harvested enough to store and receive bank credit to cover inputs for next year's crops.*

*The construction of a small dam increased the availability and retention of surface water for expansion of rice cultivation on the Kouroumasso Plain. In the first year of intervention, women's harvests grew from under 1 t/ha to 2.5-3 t/ha.*

"Nobody--not even the oldest in the village--remembers ever seeing the Kouroumasso plain retain so much water and produce such a large quantity of rice," reflects Benkadi women's cooperative member Kady Berthe. With the installation of a small dam that slows surface water run-off, USAID's Global Food Security Response (GFSR) has boosted rice harvests from less than one ton per hectare to up to three tons per hectare in the first year, improving income, food security, and livelihoods for 355 women and their extended families.

The Kouroumasso plain outside of Sikasso stretches across 600 hectares, supporting rice, millet, potato and cotton production. Through the years, natural resource degradation has reduced availability and retention of surface water and dried up agricultural production. "Right as the plants were maturing," Kady laments, "lack of water would cause the plants to die. It is very unsettling to experience several plantings without harvest, exposing us to famine and a precarious position."

Given the importance of rice in the local diet, a large local and sub-regional demand, and its subsequent economic potential, USAID's Integrated Initiatives for Economic Growth program (IICEM) built a small dam to slow run-off and increase water availability for 150 hectares of rice production by Benkadi. For the first time in the history of their work with rice, the Benkadi women have produced enough to feed their families, get bank credit to cover inputs for next year's planting, and sell the rest.

Increased harvests mean improved income, food security, and livelihoods for these women. Cooperative president Nantené Traoré harvested 2.3 tons of rice at the end of 2009. She stored 0.2 tons in the cooperative's storage facility to receive bank credit against this stock to cover all of the inputs she needs for next year's crop. Next, she stored 1.3 tons which will cover her family's rice consumption for the year (enough for her immediate family as well as her two sons' families, about 20 people). Finally, Nantené sold 0.8 tons for a profit of around \$340, which she uses to buy medicine and clothes for her family as well as her grandchildren's school supplies.