



Bankass Rural Water Supply Project - Mali

PROGRESS REPORT 2007 – 2008

INTRODUCTION



Sahel ECO works in the districts of Bankass, Tominian and Mopti near the border with Burkina Faso. We focus on supporting local people through training and capacity building so that they can better manage the natural resources on which their livelihoods depend. Our experience has shown that given access to training, information and capital, disadvantaged rural people are capable of analysing their own problems and deciding which solutions they wish to pursue. SOS Sahel UK continues to raise funds, support and advocate for this work.

In the early 1990s local communities in Bankass identified access to adequate quantities of clean water as a priority need. More than 40 large diameter concrete lined wells were dug with support from SOS Sahel UK between 1993 and 2006.

This report covers progress in the two years from January 2007 to December 2008. During this time support from Jiton, Jersey Overseas Aid, SOS Sahel UK, Comic Relief and the Big Lottery Fund has enabled Sahel ECO to continue this work and to make a significant change to the lives of some of the thousands of people living in small and isolated communities in Bankass who are still obliged to walk more than a kilometre to the nearest secure and safe water supply.

Objectives of the Bankass Rural Water Supply Project 2007-2008

The initial objective was to provide a safe and clean supply of water for approximately 2,000 people in four villages in the Bankass District of Mali through support for two main activities:

- Training 40 members of village Water and Sanitation committees in 4 village
- Digging four concrete lined, 1.8m diameter, wells.

At the end of 2007 Sahel Eco had completed all the planned activities and asked for the remaining funds (available due to cost savings) to be used in 2008 to:

- Deepen wells in the villages of Djinadio and Ogossagou which provide an adequate water supply for most of the year but were reported to have dried out on a number of occasions during the dry season.
- Provide metal coverings for eleven wells so that villagers can close them when they are not in use and thus help to protect the quality of the water.

Changes expected to local peoples lives as a result of this work included:

- A reduction in the distance travelled to collect safe water to less than 1 km
- A reduction of 60% in time required to collect water
- A reduction in tensions and conflict over access to water

Project implementation

Overall Management

The project was managed by Sahel ECO and implemented in collaboration with local partners including the Bankass District council, eight of the twelve rural communes that make up the District and two District level civil society coordination groups representing a broad range of community based associations. General supervision was carried out by Sahel ECO staff in the Mopti region and specialist technical supervision was provided by a qualified Rural Engineering Technician on a contractual basis.

Activities in 2007

Selecting Beneficiary villages: Implementation began in early 2007 at a meeting called by the Bankass District council with representatives of the communes of Kani Bozon, Segue and Diallassagou and the Coordination of Bankass NRM Associations. Sahel ECO attended the meeting as an observer. This meeting examined the requests for wells which had been received and selected four beneficiary villages on the basis of agreed criteria. These include the severity of the water shortage and a distance of more than 1km to the nearest modern water point. The meeting also took into account the findings of an inventory of modern water points in the District (undertaken by Sahel ECO in 2006) which highlighted inequalities in access to clean and reliable water between different communities. As a result, three of the wells were allocated to semi-sedentary Peul (Fulani) speaking communities which had never previously benefited from any external support to improve their water supply despite having established permanent settlements in the district since 1918 (Dia), 1938 (Daymadian) and 1967 (Guilé Peul) respectively. The fourth well was allocated to Dogoguילו, an ancient Dogon village (established in the 1600s) which also, had never benefited from any previous NGO or government water supply projects.

Preparation of beneficiary villages: Leaders of the Coordination of Bankass NRM Associations were mandated by the meeting to visit each of the selected four villages to verify that they met the required criteria and understood the project approach and conditions. In previous years employees of Sahel ECO have led or accompanied these visits but in 2007 they were carried out entirely by the NRM association members. A progressive transfer of responsibilities to local partners is a key element of Sahel ECOs approach in Bankass. Each village then selected eight men and four women to form a Water and Sanitation committee, the structure which has overall responsibility for digging the well and, in the future, for ensuring that

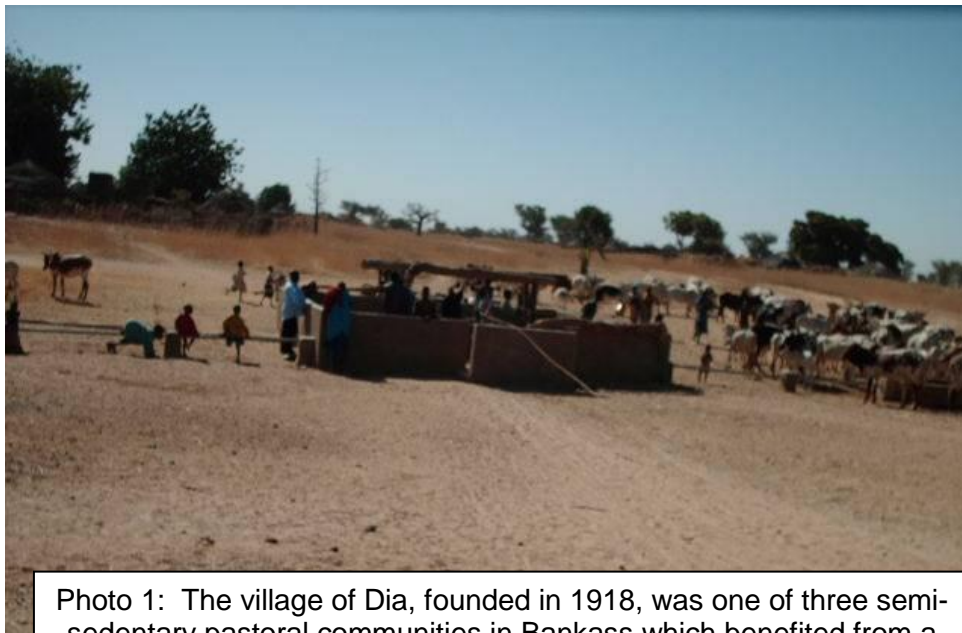


Photo 1: The village of Dia, founded in 1918, was one of three semi-sedentary pastoral communities in Bankass which benefited from a modern water point for the first time in 2007

users respect basic hygiene rules and routine maintenance is carried out (See Box 1, below)

Training Water and Sanitation committee members: Training sessions were organised for members of the Water and Sanitation committees and were underway by 13th February 2007 in each of the four villages. These sessions provide committee members' with the technical knowledge and basic local language literacy skills that they need to fulfil their responsibilities before during and after the well is dug. A total of 16 women and 32 men attended training sessions held over a period of two months. Additional training was provided in prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases in line with Sahel ECO's policy to include AIDS prevention in all aspects of their work.

Selecting Well Diggers: The process to select well diggers began when - as part of the training - each committee drew up and submitted to Sahel ECO a budget based on their local knowledge of the expected depth to the water table and the costs of delivering cement and iron to their village. It should be noted that sand, gravel and non specialist labour are paid for or provided "in kind" by the beneficiary villages.

Following approval of the budgets, the District council with support from Sahel ECO, published on the 14th March a call for tenders from associations of well diggers and engineering companies in the Mopti region. Bids were opened and contracts awarded at a meeting held on 29th March and attended by representatives of the District and commune councils, the Bankass NRM associations, the village Water and Sanitation committees and Sahel ECO.

Box 1: Water and hygiene committees

Key responsibilities after training

- Draw up an estimate of the cost of digging the well and submit it to Sahel ECO for approval
- Take part in the process to select well diggers with commune officials following a call for tenders
- Organise purchase and delivery and manage stocks of cement and reinforcing iron rods
- Organise extraction of sand, gravel and water
- Provide 10 non specialist labourers each day
- Provide food and accommodation for well diggers
- Manage funds, keeping a written account of expenditure and all the corresponding receipts
- Report back periodically to Sahel ECO and village authorities
- Draw up and enforce rules for using the well to promote good hygiene and prevent conflict
- Ensure regular maintenance of the well and undertake any repairs that may be required

Digging the wells: Sahel ECO signed contracts with beneficiary villages and their respective well diggers, defining the responsibilities of each party and the funds to be provided to cover the well diggers fees (as in their bid) and costs of purchase and delivery of materials to the village. An initial advance of 30% of the approved budget was then made to each Water and Sanitation committee and work started on 14th April in the villages of Dogoguilado and Dia, on 18th April in Guil peul and on 19th April in Daïmadian.

Supervision visits were made to each village during the construction period on at least five occasions by staff from Sahel ECO and three occasions by the Well Technician. Additional funding was made available in instalments on the basis of progress with the well and on condition that the Water and Sanitation committee provided an account of expenditure since the previous visit including all the relevant receipts.

Training on water related hygiene and public health issues was organised in each village during the construction period for the Water and Sanitation Committee members and was accompanied in the evenings by information sessions for the village as a whole, to raise awareness about water related illnesses and the need for good hygiene practices

Activities in 2008

Selecting Beneficiary villages: The 11 villages which had constructed successful wells with support from Sahel ECO in the period 2005 to 2007 were selected to benefit from additional support in 2008 on the basis of recommendations made during the participatory evaluation.

Deepening the wells: Work to deepen the wells in Djinadio and Ogossagou was carried out by locally recruited well diggers, in collaboration with the water and sanitation committee in each village and on the basis of technical advice from the project Technician

Fitting well covers: The well covers were made to a standard design by a metal workshop in Mopti and a builder was recruited to travel round to each village to fit them to the well heads.

Digging the Togouma pastoral well

Part way through 2007 Sahel ECO in collaboration with the Bankass District Council and the District Coordination of Herders Associations, requested that funds available in the project “Strengthening Capacity for Pastoral Participation” (SOS Sahel UK/Comic Relief) be used to dig a pastoral well in the grazing area known as Togouma in the commune of Ouenkoro

Work began in 2007 but unfortunately there was no water in the well at the depth specified in the contract and an additional 10 metres had to be dug in 2008 to ensure an adequate quantity of water all year round. Funds from Jiton and Jersey Overseas Aid were used in 2008 to ensure completion of the well and its surface protection structures (see Photo 2)

KEY PROJECT ACHIEVMENTS in 2007 and 2008

1. **48 members of the village Water and Sanitation committees from 4 villages (16 women and 32 men) were trained** in local language literacy, in managing a well digging project, in basic water related hygiene and public health ; and in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment
2. **Four concrete lined wells (diameter 1.8m) were successfully dug** by the village Water and Sanitation committees, with technical and financial support from the project. Details of each well are provided in Table 1. Each well contains a more than 2 metres standing depth of water, does not dry out under conditions of normal usage, is protected by a concrete wall and apron and has one or more concrete basins for watering livestock (See Photos 1, 3 and 4)

TABLE 1: Details of wells dug in 2007

Village	Commune	Depth of well (metres)	Height of water in well (metres)	Distance of well from village (kilometres)	Previous distance to nearest reliable well (kilometres)
Daïmadiame	Diallassagou	26 m	3.1 m	Less than 0.3 km	2.5 km
Dia	Diallassagou	29 m	2.5 m	Less than 0.3 km	2.0 km
Dogoguilado	Kani Bozon	33 m	5.0 m	Less than 0.3 km	8.0 km
Guilé Peul	Segue	47 m	4.0 m	Less than 0.3 km	4.0 km

3. **Wells in the villages of Djinadio and Ogossagou were cleaned out and deepened.** As a result the water supply is now adequate all year round
4. **Metal coverings were fitted on eleven wells dug in the period 2005-2007:** These can be closed when the wells are not in use to help to protect the water from contamination from the surface (see Photo 2 for an example of one of the covers fitted)
5. **A pastoral well was dug in the Togouma grazing area** (see Photo 2) providing long term access to clean water for pastoral families which move to the area during the rainy season with their livestock.

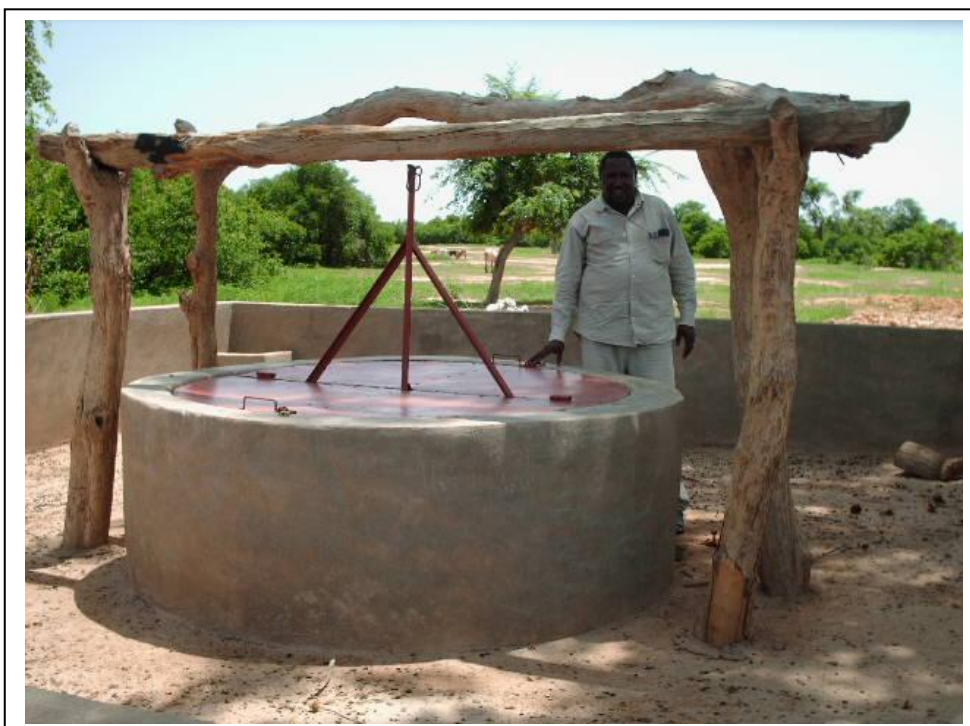


Photo 2: The Togouma pastoral well showing details of metal covering and the wall and concrete apron protecting the well surface from damage

TABLE 2 Summary of additional work carried out in 2008

Year Dug	Village	Commune	Work carried out in 2008	
2005	Bagourou	Kanibozon	Cover installed	
2005	Sokolo	Dimbal	Cover installed	
2005	Djinado	Lèssagou	Cover installed	& well deepened
2006	Ogossagou	Bankass	Cover installed	& well deepened
2006	Tianama	Soubala	Cover installed	
2006	Déna	Koulogo	Cover installed	
2006	Tissagou	Ségué	Cover installed	
2007	Dogouilado	Kanibozon	Cover installed	
2007	Guilé Peul	Ségué	Cover installed	
2007	Dia	Diallassagou	Cover installed	
2007	Daimaniame	Diallassagou	Cover installed	
2008	Togouma ¹	Ouenkoro	Cover installed	& well deepened

¹ A grazing area in the Ouenkoro commune

CHANGES TO LOCAL PEOPLE LIVES BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE PROJECT

Digging large diameter wells in four villages has enabled an estimated 1,900 men and 2,400 women to benefit from:

- a. A reduction in the distance travelled to collect safe water to less than 300 metres from the village, compared to previous distances of between 2km and 8 km (see Photo 3)
- b. A reduction of in the time required to travel to collect water from several hours to a matter of 5 to 10 minutes. Waiting times are also significantly reduced – especially for women.
- c. A reduction in tensions and conflict over access to water. Men reported that collecting water and watering livestock in neighbouring villages was previously a major cause of conflict and also created opportunities for cattle to be stolen. This source of conflict has now been eradicated. Women reported that they used to have to get up early (4am) to be sure of getting water from the traditional wells which quickly dried up. This source of tension between women has also been eradicated.



Photo 3: Before the villagers of Dogo Guilado dug this well, their nearest reliable water point was 8 kilometres away.

Improving access to water has enabled men and women in Bankass to develop a variety of productive activities including vegetable gardens, planting trees and raising small livestock for market. During an evaluation in 2007, a man in the village of Sokolo said he is now able to visit weekly markets in Mopti, Bandiagara, Koro and Bankass and as a result has increased his income from trade. He said that before the well was dug, he found it difficult even to visit the Bankass market, about 10 kilometres away, because of the time he had to spend fetching water.

Another man (from the village of Bagourou) evoked a similar effect, describing how he was now able to spend more of his time selling imported fabric and had earned an average profit of £5.50 per month. As a general rule men said they spent their extra income on agricultural equipment (carts, ploughs etc.) and on family health care.



Photo 4: The well and one of the watering troughs in Guilé Peul

This photograph, taken in January 2008 (Photo 4), shows the well dug in the village of Guilé Peul being used by men to water livestock. The round concrete structure in the foreground is one of the livestock watering troughs. It is filled by means of the pipe running from inside the well enclosure to the trough. This arrangement protects the well head itself from damage by herds of cattle. The water is being hauled up from a depth of over 40 metres using a rope and pulley arrangement. In the rainy season all

the area between the well and the hill in the background is used to grow finger millet – a staple cereal crop. Manure from livestock which spend part of the dry season on these fields, is an important source of organic fertiliser, helping to maintain soil fertility and increase crop yields.

Deepening the wells in the villages of Djinadio and Ogossagou, has ensured that the residents of these two villages have secure, year-round access to clean water from these wells and to other benefits, such as a reduction in the time required to collect water.

Fitting metal covers to eleven wells dug since 2005 has provided people living in these 11 villages with the means to improve protection of their water source from contamination from the surface. If the covers are correctly used and maintained in the long term, villagers can be expected to benefit from better quality water and a reduced incidence of water related diseases.

Digging the pastoral well in the Togouma grazing area has provided secure long term access to clean water for the herding families which move to this isolated area with their livestock during the rainy season to avoid conflict with farmers. The well is of strategic importance as it enables them to stay longer in the grazing area at the end of the agricultural season, after the rainwater ponds have dried up. Without the well the pastoralists must either take their herds to drink at wells in adjacent villages and risk being fined for causing damage to standing crops, or must travel prematurely to the dry season pastures of the River Niger Inland Delta and risk fines for arriving there too early or for crop damage caused on the way.

CONCLUSION

In 2007 and 2008 the Bankass Rural Water Supply Project has secured access to a safe and reliable source of water for over 4,000 of the most disadvantaged rural people living in Mali. The most immediate and direct benefits have been a reduction in the time that people need to spend collecting water and an easing of the tensions between different groups of water users in the pastoral and agricultural communities. Members of Water and Sanitation committees have benefited from basic literacy and technical skills and have also acquired a certain authority within their communities which will help to ensure that the wells are regularly maintained and repaired in the future.