



2024 Annual Report
Friends of the Dogon
Well on the way



Dear FOD supporter,

Despite the deteriorating political situation in Mali and the ongoing risk of violence throughout 2024, the villagers of Doundiourou continued in their tireless efforts to improve their situation, increasing their capacity to grow more fruit, vegetables and multipurpose shade trees. FOD was proud to be able to support the villagers in becoming more resilient in the face of climate change and in developing small-scale income-generating projects. This shift in our focus towards greening the village and combatting desertification is an exciting development in our work, and directs our help towards more projects that build a sustainable future for the village both environmentally and economically. We are excited to offer you this insight into our work during 2024 and hope you will enjoy discovering life in rural Mali.

The FOD Team (Audie, Craig, Henkka, Mamadou, Saakje, Serge)



<http://friendsofdogon.org/donate-now>

Facebook: [FriendsofDogon](#)

Vegetable garden and fruit trees fenced off from animals.



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The millet harvest in front of the granaries in Doundiourou.



OUR PURPOSE, VISION, MISSION, AND OBJECTIVES

Our purpose is to create a prosperous and inclusive Doundiourou, where girls and boys growing up have an equal opportunity to live happy and fulfilling lives. Our vision is that in the future, children in Doundiourou can pursue education beyond the minimum and the villagers run sustainable projects that generate income and provide environmental protection. To enable this vision, our mission is to support Mere-odjou, our partner cooperative in the village of Doundiourou, to combat poverty, malnutrition and desertification. The funds we raise for Mere-odjou aim to achieve three main objectives:

1. Address malnutrition and generate income-earning projects for the villagers to reduce poverty and to stop rural exodus in search of work.
2. Improve the opportunities of local children to receive education, particularly girls.
3. Combat desertification and improve climate resilience by planting multi-purpose trees.



Gombo (okra) seeds.



Mamadou harvesting vegetables in the thriving new garden.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

School meals: Moving forward

FOD continued to fund canteen meals for all the village schoolchildren for the January and April school terms of 2024. However, starting in the autumn and based on the recommendation of Mere-odjou and the villagers, we all decided that FOD support could better be redirected away from the school canteen towards other self-sustaining projects. While initially the meals were pivotal to achieving school attendance, the school is now an established part of the social fabric of Doundiourou and the number of pupils has not declined since the autumn of 2024.

Instead of continuous support of the canteen, FOD will now be able to move toward its primary goal of creating self-sustaining and income-generating projects for the villagers. Step-by-step, we hope that this redirection of aid will support the self-sufficiency of the villagers.



Rapidly growing moringa fruit in the shelterbelt tree plantation.

Lunch break at the school.



A new well

In early 2024, two travelers who had once visited Doundiourou gifted the village some money to start building a new well. Unfortunately, this donation fell 500,000 West African Francs short of the cost of the well, preventing the project from being completed. The decision to move beyond canteen funding in the autumn enabled FOD to help complete the well which now plays a key role in extending vegetable production in the village.



Removing the concrete mold from a section of the well.

Vegetable garden shed

After several weeks of very hard digging by hand to excavate the new well, the industrious villagers used the large quantities of earth they had removed to make mud bricks. FOD then provided a roof, windows and a door so they could use the bricks they had made to build a garden shed for storing the increasing number of tools and to take shelter from the rain. Little by little, we hope that these improvements in village infrastructure will not only provide for increased food production but also highlight the importance of fruit and vegetable gardening as important food sources for the villagers and potential future income-generation.

Chicken and sheep update

As in previous years, the sheep-rearing activity that started FOD has been on hold due to unrest across the country, as it is too dangerous for most regional markets to operate anymore. The presence of livestock can also be dangerous for villagers with the prevalence of banditry throughout the conflict, as animals are a prime target for bandits. Mere-odjou has the funds from the sold sheep waiting for the trade to restart, but we can only hope for a brighter future and the return of this income-generating trade. On a positive note, the roughly 100 chickens for which we donated the funds are a vital source of protein for the village, mostly through egg production but, to a small extent, also by being raised for meat production.



Building the tool shed.

FOD banking

As also noted in last year's report, FOD continued to suffer the effects of significantly costlier money transfers, with transaction costs reaching 10.2% of donations received in 2024. The bulk of these costs arise from the hypothetical difference between the exchange rate used by the money transfer company and the real exchange rate, and they are not thus incurred real costs. However, we feel that it is necessary to be transparent about the amount of money that does not reach Doundiourou due to reasons we have no control over. We reiterate the fact that FOD does not charge any administrative fees as we all work on a completely voluntary basis, and the costs related to having a bank account and sending money to Mali are the only part of donations that do not reach the village.

The garden produces a wide variety of vegetables while the tree plantation provides many types of fruit, including these colourful peppers, watermelons, jujube fruits and aubergines.



ACTION PLAN FOR 2025

New opportunities

As we move beyond the early years of dependency on ongoing funding for the school canteen, FOD is excited to support new opportunities for self-sustaining projects in Doundiourou in 2025. As always, the projects are initiated by the villagers to ensure that the money is spent in the most impactful manner possible.



Brick production.

A new well to transform the village

Our vision of a green Doundiourou, both in terms of increased vegetable production as well as expanding the green belt tree plantation that we started in 2023, will require more regular access to water. In 2025 we hope to advance this important goal of FOD that has so far been left in the shadow of more pressing needs in the village. Using available geological maps and discussions with the villagers, our technical advisor, Sebastien Soulier (hydrogeologist) has calculated that this will be feasible without exhausting ground water, as Doundiourou lies on an ancient riverbed and the flows required are well within the capacity of the aquifer to recharge.

Social media use

We have posted regular updates on Facebook with an average frequency of one post per week. This gives an excellent opportunity for followers to catch glimpses of day-to-day life in a Malian village. With a constant flow of pictures and short stories, we hope to build a credible social media presence that can attract more donors in the future.



Every plant starts as a seed or small sapling and has to survive the desert conditions, aided by the compost that the villagers produce in the gardens.

FOD IN FIGURES

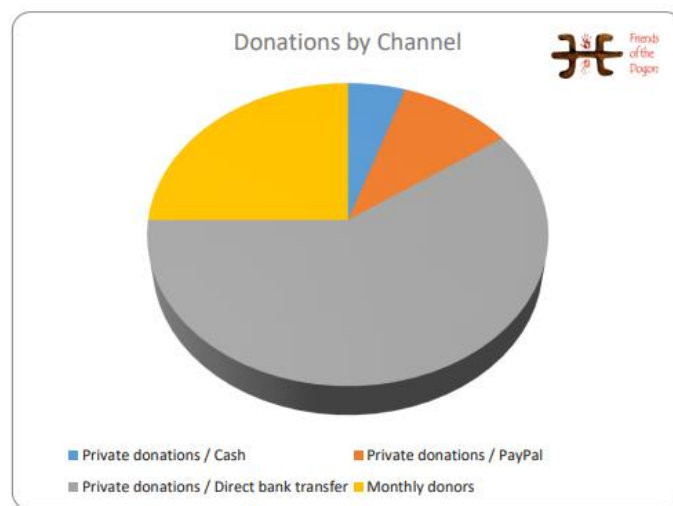
We do not charge any administrative expenses, and all the work done is on a volunteer basis.

Total donations received in 2024: 8,503 CHF* (2023: 9,596 CHF)
Percentage of donations reaching Mere-odjou: 89,8% (2022: 88,5%)
Donations and grants budgeted for 2025: 8,900 CHF

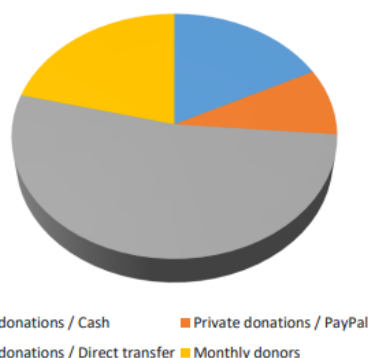
In 2024 FOD received 8,503 CHF in donations, a drop of roughly 12% from 2023. While we were hoping to reach about 10,000 CHF, the funds received still allowed us to finance several exciting projects in the village and toward the end of the year, our fundraising picked up again. The relatively large amount of funds on our balance sheet at the end of the year reflects the Christmas donation season, with the funds used for new projects in 2025.

In 2024, 89.8% of donations were spent on projects in Mali. The remaining 10.2% consists of fees for receiving donations online through PayPal along with banking charges in Switzerland and Mali for transferring money. As noted earlier, we recognize the real cost of money transfer by calculating the significant difference between the exchange rate used by the money transfer provider, and the real exchange rate, as a cost. This difference alone is roughly 10% of the amounts transferred.

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF). We receive donations in five currencies (Swiss Franc, Euro, Pound Sterling, US, and Canadian Dollars) from around the world. Online donations are continuously converted to the base currency (CHF) using the rates offered by PayPal, and cash donations based on the daily rates. We aim to keep foreign exchange conversion impact to a minimum by converting money as soon as received.



FOD Revenue Budget 2024



Donations to FOD are tax-deductible in Switzerland.

*1 CHF \approx 1.06 EUR and 1.11 USD

FOD 2024 Income Statement (pre-audit)



All amounts in CHF

Revenue	1.1.2024 - 31.12.2024	
Private donations / Cash	CHF	1,994.95
Private donations / PayPal	CHF	1,457.77
Private donations / Direct bank transfer	CHF	2,650.35
Monthly donors	CHF	2,400.00
Grants	CHF	-
Total revenue	CHF	8,503.07
Expenses		
Charitable spending		
Donations for garden project	CHF	1,081.29
Donations for school meals	CHF	5,225.15
Total charitable spending	CHF	6,306.44
Banking expenses		
Bank charges	CHF	121.00
Transfer + FX costs	CHF	668.51
PayPal fees	CHF	74.66
Total banking expenses	CHF	864.17
Total expenses	CHF	7,170.61
Financial gain	CHF	2.75
Net result	CHF	1,335.21

Balance Sheet (pre-audit)

Assets	31.12.2024	
Bank account balance 31.12.2024	CHF	1,739.21
Paypal account balance 31.12.2024	CHF	1,163.89
Total Assets	CHF	2,903.10
Liabilities & Capital		
Capital		
Remaining funds to donate in 2025	CHF	2,903.10
Total Liabilities & Capital	CHF	2,903.10

WHO WE ARE



Madame Atta Guindo

President of Mere-odjou

Madame Guindo was chosen by the women of Doundiourou for her seriousness and dedication and her ability to get along with everyone. Born in Toroli, a small Dogon village in the Seno plain, she married into Doundiourou where she farms millet, peanuts and beans and is the mother of 4 children. She never had the opportunity to go to school but is dedicated to helping all children have access to education as well as to the socio-economic development of the village.

Born in Doundiourou Seno, Mamadou had to walk 8km for primary school, then attend secondary school 20km away. He tried to continue his education in Bandiagara but could not afford to finish his studies, returning to the village to work as a tourist guide to support the education of his brothers and sisters. When tourism collapsed, he gathered the women of the village to form an association to try to address the crisis. He has CEAP training (Champs École Agro-Pastoral) given by the FAO, after which he organized a group of 25 households to train them in agricultural and pastoral techniques and village saving and credit associations. Mamadou speaks 5 languages, including Dogon, Bambara, French, English and Peulh.



Mamadou Guindo

*Field Coordinator of FOD and
General Secretary of Mere-
odjou*



Serge Pfister

President of FOD

Serge worked on seven missions for Médecins sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders), as a logistician, administrator and project coordinator, in Sudan, Ethiopia, Congo and Myanmar. Presently teaching, he is active in several associations, with a focus on promotion of solar energy and support to refugees newly arrived in Switzerland (MSc Environmental sciences, UNIL, MEd Haute Ecole Pédagogique, Lausanne).



Audie Hazenberg
Vice-President of FOD

Having lived in Tanzania for two years as a child, Audie has always been drawn to Africa. She studied lions for two years in the Serengeti before moving to humanitarian work for Doctors without Borders. She has worked as logistics coordinator for relief projects in the Republic of Congo and in Darfur, as well as in Myanmar. In between projects, she has guided bicycle and hiking trips around the world for Butterfield and Robinson, as well as pursuing personal bicycle adventures in central Asia. She currently lives in Switzerland where she teaches natural science at a post-secondary college. Audie is the Vice-president of Friends of the Dogon. (MSc Biodiversity Conservation, University of Leeds; BSc Zoology, University of Guelph; MEd Haute Ecole Pedagogique de Lausanne).

Henkka is an international educator and academic researcher who has been involved in sustainability and corporate social responsibility for the past 20 years. Prior to his academic career, he worked in multinational business finance which led him to become an entrepreneur in corporate social responsibility consulting. His key research and practical interest lies in transforming the often abstract concept of responsibility into practical projects that create significant impact to local livelihoods. He also has experience leading an international non-profit research organization. Henkka, a native Finn, is based in the Alps. He is the treasurer of Friends of the Dogon (PhD in Corporate Social Responsibility, Leeds Beckett University; MSc Economics, Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration). For his research, pls visit his [Google Scholar profile](#).



Dr. Henkka Kuokkanen
Treasurer of FOD



Saakje Hazenberg
Secretary of FOD

Saakje has worked in wildlife research for several conservation NGOs and now works in ecology monitoring in Jasper National Park in Canada. With her sister, Audie, she both lived in Tanzania as a child and worked guiding cycling trips for Butterfield and Robinson around the world. She has also travelled extensively on independent cycling epics, including a trip across Mali where she made friends with Mamadou and the villagers of Doundiourou. (MSc Forest and Nature Conservation, University of Wageningen; BSc Biology, University of British Columbia)

Craig is an entrepreneur from New Zealand, now based in Switzerland. His extensive world travels included a cycling trip across Mali with Saakje where they made friends with Mamadou and the villagers of Doundiourou. He is presently working on a new start-up company and is an advisor to Friends of the Dogon. (Bcomm Marketing, Auckland University).



Craig Stoddart
Adviser to FOD

Craig dancing in Doundiourou in 2002.



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of the
Dogon

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Facebook: [FriendsofDogon](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofDogon)

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