

SDGs covered by this initiative: 1, 3, 8, 11

COMMUNITY-OWNED PROCESS

COMPLETION OF THE NEW FADOUGOU RESETTLEMENT

The resettlement of a community is a sensitive undertaking. The rebuilding or development of livelihoods as part of this process often determines whether a resettlement is an opportunity for community strengthening and leaving a lasting impact.

The original village of Fadougou was located adjacent to the main Fekola open pit. Although the relocation of the village was not a requirement of the Mine Construction Permit, extensive engagement with government and community stakeholders led to a decision to proceed with a resettlement project based on national law, cultural context, international standards and industry best practices. This decision was made due to the proximity of the village to the mine site, the potential for social risks, and the opportunity to improve the well-being of the community.

The construction of the new village was completed in January 2019, and provides improved well-being and housing with solar panels, a complete water distribution system (16 filling points), public lighting, and several community facilities such as schools, a mosque, soccer fields, health and maternity centre, and a community market.

On January 30, 2019, an inauguration ceremony was held at New Fadougou. The event was officiated by Lelenta Hawa Baba, the Malian Minister of Mines, and attended by local communities, local and regional government stakeholders, B2Gold Executives and B2Gold Mali management and employees.

It is evident that the new village and new infrastructure can improve the quality of life of the local residents. However, from the outset of the project B2Gold was focused on ensuring the results of the resettlement were not only focused on the new physical assets but also on the social aspects: "With a sensitive project such as the resettlement of an entire village, the process is as important as the outcomes," said Jean-Phylippe Santo, B2Gold Corporate Social Responsibility Manager. During construction of the new village, we aimed at maximizing local employment and procurement. Over 400 jobs were created during the construction, with more than

85% of the construction personnel recruited from neighbouring communities. Small local businesses have been created and supported through training and contracts during construction. Various livelihood projects have been ongoing throughout the resettlement project and continue to be ongoing post-resettlement.

The involvement of the community was crucial and maybe the most important ingredient for the success of a socially sensitive project: "The community residents are the ones moving from their place of origin, sometimes leaving behind decades of cultural traditions, putting at risk their economic and social ties. We must ensure they are fully empowered and involved in the key decisions of the process so that this transition can have a tangible positive impact to their lives," said Jean-Phylippe.

Key activities and decisions were discussed and agreed in the Multi-Stakeholder Resettlement Committee (CCR in its French acronym), created to inform the planning process with representation from a range of stakeholder groups. Representatives included original village members, youth, women, and in-migrants, along with the support and participation of local authorities. The village location, urban plan, house design, compensation rates, livelihood initiatives, move schedule and cultural heritage, among other issues, were discussed and agreed through this formal engagement forum.

Community assemblies were held to consult on important and sensitive topics. Regular visits were organized to the construction site to allow households to visit their homes while under construction and to ensure that they were being built according to their chosen requirements. Throughout the process, 39 formal CCR meetings and more than 2,000 informal and individual meetings were held.

From April to June 2019, 911 households (3,236 people) moved to New Fadougou through a process conducted in close collaboration between residents, authorities and B2Gold.

