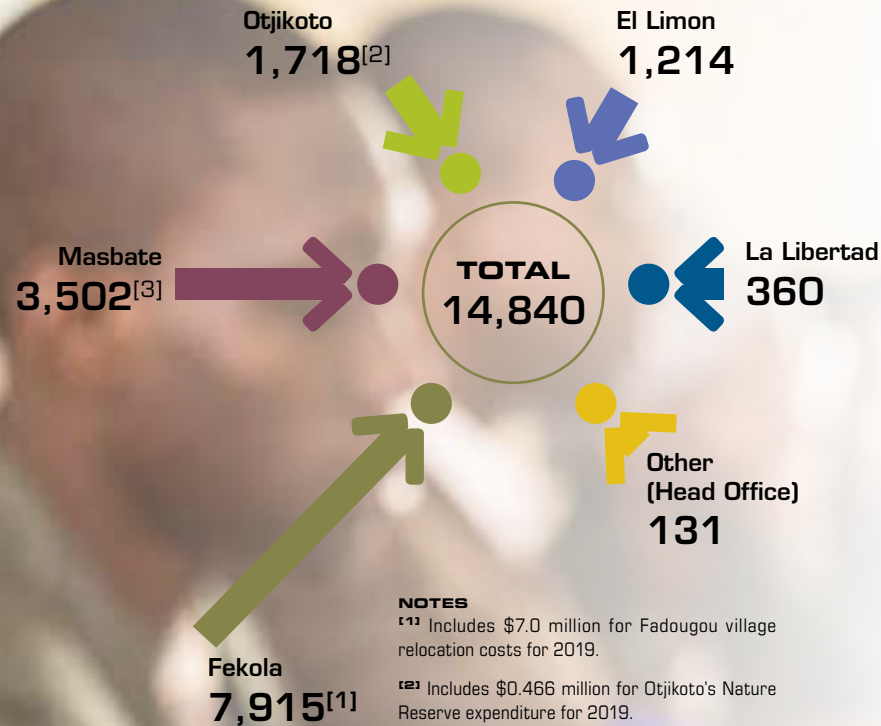


GRAPH 13 | Community Investment (\$ '000)**NOTES**

^[1] Includes \$7.0 million for Fadougou village relocation costs for 2019.

^[2] Includes \$0.466 million for Otjikoto's Nature Reserve expenditure for 2019.

^[3] Includes 2019 mandated Social Development and Management Program (SDMP) of \$2.8 million.

SDGs covered by this initiative: **1, 4, 5**

KEEPING KIDS IN SCHOOL**EDUCATION INITIATIVES FOR COMMUNITIES IN MALI**

School dropout is common within the communities surrounding the Fekola Mine. Fadougou and its three neighbouring villages are approximately 40 km from Kéniéba – the only town in the area with a secondary school. Students were obliged to board there if they wanted to continue their studies at the secondary level.

As a result, students faced obstacles such as limited accommodation, lack of supervision, and forced labour (household work at places of accommodation). Consequently, many students ended up not attending school and working in artisanal mining; early pregnancy and forced marriage were often reported. Many parents, unable to afford schooling in Kéniéba, preferred to pull their children out of school.

During the 2018-2019 school year, the Fadougou Primary School had 193 students, including 104 girls. Fadougou is surrounded by other villages – which had a total primary school student population of 395 (of which 176 were girls). Average enrolment was 30 pupils per classroom. However, enrolment for the sixth grade showed a sudden decline; for the final primary school year, only 10 learners were enrolled.

Against this background, B2Gold initiated a three-year project in 2018 to grant scholarships to 15 students from primary and secondary schools in neighbouring villages of the Fekola Mine. In addition, B2Gold supported the communities of Fadougou, Tintiba, Médinandi and Moussala by building three classrooms, a teacher's room, accommodation for a school guard and latrines. A "back to school" campaign was also implemented by the Company – donating 500 solar lamps for studying, 1,000 school backpacks, and 1,000 notebooks to these communities.

The largest impact was made, however, through a contribution by B2Gold to the Municipality of Kéniéba for the construction of the New Fadougou Secondary School – with the aim to improve access to secondary education. Various stakeholders were consulted during the planning phase, including the Fadougou Village Council, the Municipality of Kéniéba, the Pedagogical Animation Center (CAP), and the village councils of Médinandi, Tintiba and Moussala.

The new school was opened in October 2019, including 19 pupils (of which five are girls) from neighbouring villages. The impact of the school's inauguration was immediately felt. In the words of Assan N'Diaye, the leader of the female market gardeners: "The secondary school has been created at the right time because parents now provide close monitoring and supervision to their children. From now on, children can attend school under better conditions because they are less subject to abuse. These factors will reduce unwanted pregnancies and abandonment."