



# 2025 Annual Report

## *Friends of the Dogon*

Pumping it up!

Dear FOD supporter,

We are pleased to report on developments in Doundiourou village, where with your help, as well as a generous donation from the thoughtful owners of [Lumiversumi](#), we funded the installation of 2 solar water pumps and reservoir towers in 2025. These have saved the villagers countless hours of back-breaking work hauling water by hand, provided easy access to clean drinking water for the village school and enabled the development of more vegetable gardens and multi-purpose tree plantations, addressing malnutrition, providing food, fodder, medicinal plants and oils, as well as providing shade and improving soils and water retention. This greening of the village helps to combat desertification and promote resiliency in the face of a changing climate. Thank you so much for your support for these projects, and we are excited to present to you details of our collective efforts in 2025.

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



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

Facebook: [Friends of Dogon](#)

Mamadou, our FOD Field Coordinator, adding compost to lettuces in front of the new solar-powered water tower in the vegetable garden.



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Women and children enjoying access to tap water rather than hauling water from the well by hand, from the new solar water tower next to the school.



## 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



Harvesting moringa pods, a nutritional superfood

Banana tree growing quickly and getting ready to produce fruit 1 year after planting.



## ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2025

### First solar pump project

In 2024, we had funded the digging of a much-needed new well in the village and then fenced an area beside it for another vegetable garden and tree plantation. However, all the water for the villagers living near the well, and for the vegetables and young tree saplings in the new plantation, had to be hauled up by hand, which is very strenuous and time-consuming, severely limiting the number of seedlings and vegetables that could be grown. So, our first big project in 2025 was to add a solar-powered pump and a water reservoir tower to this well; this was completed in February. The ability to water the seedlings and gardens by hose enabled the vegetable gardens to be expanded, and the young plants thrived and became extremely productive.



Pouring concrete into metal molds to build the support pillars to hold up the water reservoir beside the well we funded the year before.

With the first water tower and reservoir ready, the villagers prepare to connect the solar panels and water pump in the plantation-garden from the year before.



## Second solar pump project

The success of the first solar pump impressed the villagers enormously and liberated them from many hours of heavy water hauling, so the next project proposed by Mere-Odjou, the women's cooperative, was to install a second solar pump on an existing well by the village school. This would again enable more vegetable gardens and tree plantations in that part of the village later when we can provide fencing, but in the near-term would provide easy access to clean drinking water for the children at the school and for the households living near the well. In October, we were extremely grateful to receive a generous donation for this project from [Lumiversumi](#) – a Finnish travel company wanting to give back to meaningful projects around the world - and the villagers immediately started constructing the water tower; the final wiring for the pump was completed in early December.



Digging the ditch for a hose from the water tower to the taps beside the school.



Building the platform for the second water tower near the school.

## Tree plantations and vegetable gardens update

Boosted enormously by the easier access to water, fruit, vegetable and tree growth were all impressive in 2025. Trees that were only seedlings at the start of the first village plantation in June 2023 were already producing large quantities of fruits and seeds, particularly the moringa (seed pods and nutritious leaves), papayas and jujube fruits, as well as guava, lemon and custard apples. Even the banana trees, which were only planted at the start of 2024, started providing bananas. The villagers continued to plant and nurse slower-growing trees such as baobab and shea, neither of which will produce fruit for 20 years, but will continue to grow for hundreds of years and play important roles in the ecology, culture and livelihoods of the region; there has been very limited natural recruitment of these species locally and they are hoping that with careful nurturing within the plantations they can re-establish the next generation of these iconic trees.



Young papayas producing fruit in their first year.

The villagers started making compost as soon as they started the first gardens and are using both composting and mulching to nourish the tree seedlings and gardens. The gardens produced large quantities of peanuts as an important local protein source, as well as beans, and onions, greens, tomatoes, aubergines, okra, melons, cucumbers, peppers and sweet potatoes. Growing most of these vegetables is new to the village and this marks a very big step towards addressing malnutrition.

Straw mulching around the growing plants to help retain moisture and build soil.



With this boost to local nutrition and a shared goal to move towards self-sustaining projects, in mid-2024 we stopped funding the school meals that we had been providing for 8 years. Our goal of increasing school attendance, particularly for girls, has been achieved, and now educating children is considered an expectation in the village. After one complete school year without the canteen, none of the students have dropped out.



Young papaya seedlings growing quickly.

Attendance is now 402 students, and the school has just added a second cycle to their program, expanding from the primary classes (grades 1-6) to also offer the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> years of study. This means that students progressing beyond primary school no longer have to leave the village. This is a huge leap forward from a decade ago when many of the village children didn't go to school at all.

### Chicken and sheep update

The chicken coop that we started in 2019 continues to thrive, and the flock has grown to 190 birds. The community sells eggs and in 2025, also sold 92 meat chickens, with the income going to a community credit fund that provides micro-credit to villagers in need. Sadly though, the original sheep-rearing project remains on hold as the danger of attacks in the region continues to make attending markets too risky, and the presence of livestock would also risk drawing bandits to the village. After several months of calm, tragically, there were 2 more attacks in the area in recent weeks, and the dream of peace and security remains distant.

Happy chickens in their spacious enclosure.





The incredible growth rate of young trees near the water tower.

Harvesting onions.



### FOD banking

As also noted in the previous 2 years' reports, FOD continued to suffer the effects of significantly costlier money transfers, with transaction costs reaching 9.5% of donations received in 2025. 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.

# ACTION PLAN FOR 2026

## Fenced garden and plantation

The first project will be to fence in an area beside the new solar pump beside the school to enable the planting of more multi-purpose trees and vegetable gardens. We already have funds collected for this project, which is planned to start in January, continuing our efforts towards improving nutrition and combating desertification in Doundiourou.



Camel cart delivering construction material for the solar pump system

## Maternal and infant care

The women of Mere-Odjou, our partner cooperative in Doundiourou, have expressed a great interest in improving maternal and infant health. Being a multi-hour, bumpy donkey-cart ride across the sands to get to the nearest town means that if there are any complications with childbirth, many babies do not survive, and so they have requested a little birthing and maternal health clinic in the village. There are already 2 traditional midwives, 1 woman trained as a community nurse and 2 trained as public health care workers in the village, and the request is for a clean, hygienic space to give birth and provide medical assistance. The

Making shea butter from nuts from older trees.



proposal includes more medical equipment, supplies and medicines, as well as a centre for follow-ups, infant health, family planning and other counselling for mothers and young women.

Planning out details and budgets are currently in discussion, but we see this as a positive step towards improving the lives, health and choices of the women of Doundiourou.

# 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: 10,339 CHF\* (2023: 8,503 CHF)**  
**Donations and grants budgeted for 2026: 6,600 CHF**

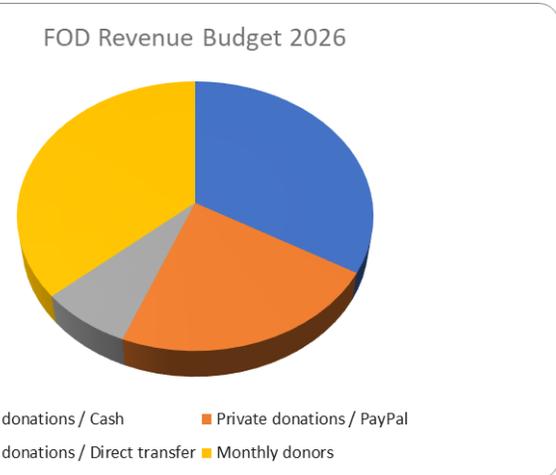
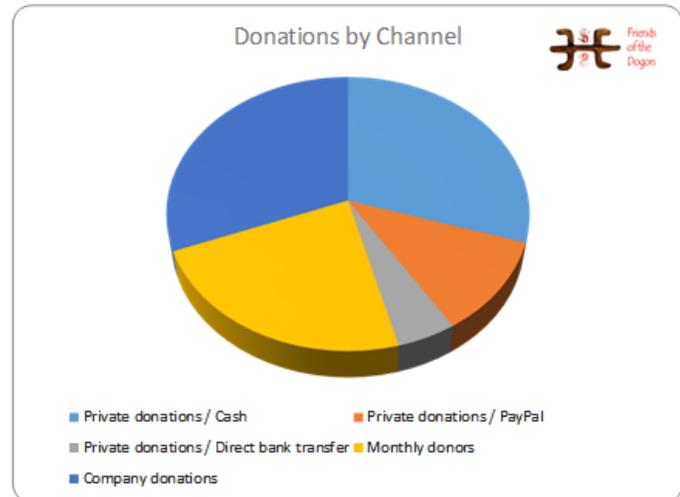
In 2025 FOD received 10,339 CHF in donations, an increase of roughly 22% from 2024. The funds received allowed us to finance the two solar pump projects in the village, and the Christmas season was successful for fundraising. The relatively large amount of funds on our balance sheet at the end of the year reflects this season and the remaining 25.8% of funds raised during the year will be used for new projects in 2026, giving us the opportunity for more real impact in the new year.

The 985 CHF of banking expenses consist of receiving donations online through PayPal and 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 amounts to about 9.5% of the amounts transferred and it is unavoidable.

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 bank rates. We aim to keep foreign exchange conversion impact to a minimum by converting money as soon as received.

Donations to FOD are tax-deductible in Switzerland.

\*1 CHF ≈ 1.075 EUR and 1.26 USD



## FOD 2025 Income Statement (pre-audit)



All amounts in CHF

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>1.1.2025 - 31.12.2025</b>	
Private donations / Cash	CHF	3,089.11
Private donations / PayPal	CHF	1,156.32
Private donations / Direct bank transfer	CHF	500.00
Monthly donors	CHF	2,400.00
Company donations	CHF	3,193.30
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>CHF</b>	<b>10,338.73</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Charitable spending		
First solar pump	CHF	4,000.10
Second solar pump	CHF	3,674.33
<b>Total charitable spending</b>	<b>CHF</b>	<b>7,674.42</b>
Banking expenses		
Bank charges	CHF	120.40
Transfer + FX costs	CHF	803.42
PayPal fees	CHF	60.65
<b>Total banking expenses</b>	<b>CHF</b>	<b>984.47</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>CHF</b>	<b>8,658.89</b>
Financial gain	CHF	1.10
<b>Net result</b>	<b>CHF</b>	<b>1,680.94</b>

## Balance Sheet (pre-audit)

<b>Assets</b>	<b>31.12.2025</b>	
Bank account balance 31.12.2025	CHF	4,013.48
Paypal account balance 31.12.2025	CHF	570.56
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>CHF</b>	<b>4,584.04</b>
<b>Liabilities &amp; Capital</b>		
		<b>31.12.2025</b>

## 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 Pedagogique, 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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