

Africa, Mali : news from the Commune of FALEA with its 21 villages

Our tomorrow is our concern !



The Tabalé to call for a meeting

After an improbable but successful resistance against the opening of a uranium mine on their communal territory, the inhabitants of Faléa independently invent their future in a Mali that seems to be going to waste water. "The country is in bad shape, very bad, and the horizon is getting darker every day... what will tomorrow be like? What will become of us?" To these daily questions, which express the distress and despair of the Malian people today, the inhabitants of Falea respond: "Our tomorrow is our concern ! » And they transform their position in collective actions.

Interventions, actions, partnerships and realizations since the end of 2016

- 1) For a rational, transparent, concerted, participatory, consensual, equitable and supportive management of the resources of the communal territory*
- 2) Embrace local democracy and fully exercise it*
- 3) Ensure food security, improve women's and youth's incomes and fight against poverty and child malnutrition*
- 4) General mobilization for the preservation of the global ecological framework and the development of an efficient, ecological and artisanal gold panning.*
- 5) Links to related documents in this text.*

1) For a rational, transparent, concerted, participatory, consensual, equitable and supportive management of the resources of the communal territory.

Facing the devastating effects of the project to exploit a uranium mine, concocted secretly and irresponsibly from 2007 by the Malian State and foreign mining companies, on their health, environment, agricultural land, water supply sources and rich cultural heritage, the inhabitants of Falea mobilized from 2010 to 2014 to prevent its realization. So, in January 2014, the mineral extraction equipment and materials of these companies were withdrawn.

This victory (perhaps temporary...), which gave them the opportunity to recover their human rights violated for several years and build their future, was also made possible thanks to the support and assistance of the local NGO *solidarity action in Falea ASFA 21* as well as the effectiveness of international solidarity, in particular European citizen organizations and institutions (scientific and municipal).

When the lethal threat of the uranium mine project was eliminated, the Falea communities immediately invested in the construction of an endogenous system of transparent and consensual management of the natural, agro-pastoral and mining resources of their rural commune.

Financial support from the [GIZ Mali](#) made it possible to carry out, between 2015 and 2016, the participatory territorial diagnosis and the elaboration of a rational development plan according to the vocations of the different areas.

This document was used by the Faléa Municipal Council to draw up the new 2017-2022 Social, Economic and Cultural Development program for its local authority.

Since then, it has also been the reference framework that all actors (public, private, Malian and foreign) in the municipal territory of Faléa are required to respect.

As part of a "democratic local governance programme" supported by [Helvetas-Suisse-Intercooperation](#), a local "Land Commission (COFO)" representing all social categories has been set up to ensure the right to land and forest tenure for all, particularly women, young people and other marginalized social groups.

In order to equip them to defend their rights, ASFA21 provided COFO, community leaders and even municipal elected officials with solid training on natural resource management texts and laws (Pastoral Charter, Forest Law, Agricultural Orientation Law and implementing decrees).

In addition, in 2017, the [Rosa Luxemburg Foundation's](#) support provided Falea residents with training in the creation of community protected areas and the Communal Council with the necessary knowledge and skills to develop environmental plans in consultation and close collaboration with grassroots community organizations, customary natural resource managers and traditional authorities.



Inter-village consultation meeting in Falea, picture 1

After these trainings, with the technical support of the [Mali-UNDP project "ERSAP](#) (Extension Strengthening the System of Protected Areas)", they were able to elaborate together a map of the development actions to be carried out in their commune.

These actions have contributed to the strengthening of the intervention of the structures for the protection of agricultural land, water points, the environment and natural resources that had previously been set up: village paralegal teams, local environmental and living environment monitoring and protection brigades.

Finally, the collective mobilization of the populations has increased and extended to the organization of traditional authorities in Coordination of the 21 villages "Wontofa siga djarénè". (trad: Forward Faléa!) to better contribute to local development and inter-municipality.



Inter-village consultation meeting in Faléa, picture 2

2) Embrace local democracy and fully exercise it

The inhabitants of Falea have built up effective collective monitoring as part of the decentralization policy undertaken by the Malian State.

Thus, in order to make the principle of « responsibility » of elected representatives a guarantee of transparency, inclusive participation and control of the management of communal resources, they have created a " *Citizen Committee to Monitor the Implementation and Control of the Municipal Budget of Falea* ".

This community body ensures the collective supervision of revenue and expenditure operations, the broad and efficient participation of the population in the public reporting sessions of the Municipal Council's Administrative Accounts and in the work of drawing up the PDSEC (Social, Economic and Cultural Development Programs) of their municipality.



Technical support mission of the medical ASFA21 volunteers team

3) Ensure food security, improve the incomes of women and young people, and fight against child malnutrition



Demonstration session on nutritional recovery of mal-nourished children with mothers in Falea

The use of local workforce by gold companies in their exploration operations and the development of artisan gold panning in recent years have led to the desertion of the agricultural sector by the able-bodied, chronic deficits in food production and a dramatic rise in food product prizes in the Rural Commune of Falea , in a word a state of food insecurity.

To face these challenges, the Faleans have opted for the diversification of food resources and sources of income.

In this way, with the help of young people, the women have created a a collective vegetable farm area and a one-hectare plot of [moringa olifeira](#) to improve their incomes and fight against child malnutrition.



Women's vegetable growing activities in Faléa

The Falean Solidarity Association ASFA21 fights against



- the desertion of the agricultural sector by the able-bodied, which creates a situation of food insecurity.



- the vertiginous increase in the price of food.



Vegetable growing in Falea

4) General strategic mobilization for the preservation of the global ecological framework and the development of an efficient and profitable ecological artisanal gold panning.

Among the most important achievements in the empowerment of the inhabitants of Faléa, it is important to underline the general awareness of the threat of an ecological disaster and the health risk posed by artisanal mining in the Commune of Faléa and the Kenieba District through the use of polluting chemicals such as mercury, cyanide and arsenic.

Also, following the awareness-raising campaign conducted by ASFA21, all local actors (gold panners, customary leaders, traditional authorities, elected officials, the Administration and Technical Services signed in 2018 a "*Local Convention on the Non-Use of Chemicals*" in order to implement in the field the [Minamata Convention](#) signed and ratified by Mali.

In order to give the best chances of success to the implementation of this collective commitment, ASFA21, in partnership with GIZ Mali, helped the gold panners (through technical support for organization and training) to set up three cooperatives in the main gold panning areas.



Assembly of the spiral concentrator by local craftsmen

In addition to grouping their offers to influence the gold sales market, these gold panner cooperatives have the ambition to carry out an ecological gold panning project supported by a bonus system of 10 to 15%.

To this end, a prototype of adapted technological equipment, the spiral concentrator, was imported and reproduced identically by local craftsmen (mechanical and welding) to ensure its appropriation by Malian actors and the development of an autonomous economic sector.

Demonstrations of the Mali-made spiral concentrator were held in Falea and Bamako. The initiative was the subject of a real plebiscite from gold panners, technical departments in charge of mining, industry and the environment, national elected officials and heads of local authorities, cooperation agencies interested in the mining sector and the environment. [TV ORTM Mali News.](#)

The process will have to be crowned by the establishment of an ecological gold buying and selling counter in Falea. In preparation for this goal, an ASFA21-mission went with gold panners and local elected officials and members of community organizations to discover a Gold Buying and Selling Counter in Papara, (Republic of Côte d'Ivoire) in 2018.

Other actions in the field of environmental and biodiversity protection have been carried out or are in progress:

- ASFA21 with the *Keniéba Pedagogical Animation Centre* implement a program for environmental education in schools in Falea and three other municipalities along the Falémé River: Keniéba, Faraba and Dabia;
- thanks to the Rosa-Luxemburg-Foundation a study on pollution of the river Falémé has been realised and presented to the public
- Start of cooperation with the NGO "La Lumière" of Kedougou (Senegal) for the protection of the Faleme.
- "First Environmental Days in Faléa" in 2018

5) Links to related documents only french

- 1) Cartes des actions d'aménagement - <https://cloud.oolsa.net/s/DwbzyHYFrN3sbfP>
- 2) Convention locale de non utilisation des produits chimiques. <https://cloud.oolsa.net/s/JxZYskDd99ep7XN>
- 3) Rapport du diagnostic participatif territorial de la Commune de Faléa <https://cloud.oolsa.net/s/g2Wk96fbPrMYC7e>
- 4) ORTM -Télévision nationale – ASFA21 : Orpaillage sans poison <https://cloud.oolsa.net/s/mQT9J7i94MZBiNt>
- 5) Rapport final : Plan d'aménagement de la Commune de Faléa <https://cloud.oolsa.net/s/PjeitMDBfzmFML>
- 6) Etude : Pollution de la rivière Falémé <https://cloud.oolsa.net/s/A5xfPzwoxoZnT3P>

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