



SUCCESS STORY

WACIP Empowers Local Artisans in Mali with Product Marketing Skills

Marketing training brought new market leads, a strengthened value chain for artisanal textiles, and increased income for association members.



Photo: WACIP Mali

APROFEM members who have received the WACIP sponsored marketing training gather for a photograph after a follow-up meeting.

This training leads to the development of new market leads, new product lines, and stronger links in the artisan textile value chain for finished cotton craft products, and increased incomes for artisan entrepreneurs.

“After the training, in three months our group made more money than what we did before in six years,” said Mrs. Maiga Omaissa, President of the *Cooperative Promotion de Centre de Teinture*.

The cooperative, based in Bacodjicoroni, Mali, had been using the same methods of traditional business management for years to help provide for their families. Making ends meet was becoming increasingly difficult due to competition from cheaper Chinese products. The artisans quickly realized they had to improve their business management skills in order to survive. To turn this situation around, this group and others joined forces with the *Association Malienne pour la Promotion de la Femme et de l'Enfant* (APROFEM) to seek funds for a marketing training program.

In December 2007, APROFEM received a grant from WACIP to provide artisans with marketing tools and reinforced their skills to produce high-quality bogolan materials. Since then, revenues and average profits rose in the first quarter of 2008 for artisan groups who received the training.

Mrs. Omaissa explained the benefits clearly, saying, “we learned to efficiently project our needs, order materials, conducting inventories of stocks, use a balance sheet, manage our schedules to meet deadlines, and most importantly to attract and keep customers—working together has helped to increase the quantity and the quality of our products.”

Mr. Daou Ibrahima, one of two men who participated in the training, asserted, “the training permitted us to get an order of 1,000,000 million CFA!”

“Before the marketing training, everyone worked separately and didn’t really have a plan—we didn’t know how to manage the money or even maintain a balance sheet,” Mrs. Omaissa added. “Since joining APROFEM and receiving this marketing training, together we are now achieving more than we ever hoped for.”