



# FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

## NORMAN BORLAUG HIGHER EDUCATION FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Mali's economy is highly dependent on agriculture, with over 80 percent of the population supported at least partially by the sector. However, the field of agricultural science traditionally lags behind, with few students pursuing higher education in the sector. As the current cadre of researchers ages and retires, Mali risks falling further and further behind its agricultural goals. The Norman Borlaug Higher Education for Agricultural Research and Development (BHEARD) scholarship program's objective is to increase Mali's agricultural research and development capacity through supporting its top minds to achieve their higher education goals.

### Supporting US Presidential Initiatives

USAID/Mali's support focuses on areas of study which will be instrumental in supporting Mali's long-term growth and development, including biometrics/biostatistics, biotechnology, agricultural economics and agribusiness, management of agricultural projects, rural sociology, communication and agricultural extension, management of databases, and analysis of soil and plants. These subjects are part of USAID/Mali's commitment to the goals of the Feed the Future Presidential Initiative, which are to increase food security and decrease poverty worldwide. In addition, USAID/Mali has recently expanded the BHEARD program to also cover topics related to global climate change, which is a significant threat to Mali's economic growth, food security, and stability.

### Training Mali's Future

The BHEARD program has been active in Mali since 2012, and in that time has trained 20 students, including 12 masters' and 8 Ph.D. recipients. The most recent cadre of agriculture students includes 5 masters' and 4 Doctoral candidates, expected to receive their degrees from 2017 to 2019, respectively. Students are supported to either attend English-language universities, either in the region or in U.S. institutions of higher learning, and are provided with a small stipend as well as dedicated thesis advisors and opportunities to participate in university level teaching and research. These graduates trained both in their field of study and in the English language, will drive Mali's future successes, both through their contributions to science and their expanded relationships with the wider research and policy communities.



*Ms. Sidibe Thiam, a master's student in agricultural economics at Egerton University, receives a Certificate of Completion from Professor Alexander Kahi. Photo credit: BHEARD*

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Graduates are required to return to Mali and to permanent employment with the institution that sent them, ensuring that the BHEARD program contributes to Mali's development and prosperity, not to 'brain drain' or the exodus of Mali's highest potential researchers.

## Strengthening Mali's Institutions

In addition to supporting individual students, BHEARD also works to increase the agricultural research capacity of key Malian institutions, as their staff are trained to be better able to handle the challenges presented by a changing world and a changing climate. The *Institut d'Economie Rurale du Mali* (IER) (Rural Economy Institute of Mali) is the leading research institution in Mali for the implementation of the national agricultural research policy. The Rural Polytechnic Institute for Training and Applied Research (IPR/IFRA) is one of the oldest centers of professional agricultural training in West Africa and Mali's oldest center of agricultural higher education. The *Institut Africain de Management* (IAM) (African Institute of Management), trains 2,600 students from over 20 countries in Africa. With a campus in Dakar, Tambacounda (Senegal) and another in Bamako (Mali), IAM is at the forefront of the teaching of management throughout francophone Africa. BHEARD has also worked with *Mali Météo* and similar organizations in Mali that deal with issues related to climate change. Through funding from the Africa Rising project, employees of these organizations will receive master and doctoral degrees to strengthen the institutions' capacity to deal with the issues facing Mali's climate challenges.

### Snapshot

- Over the lifetime of the project, BHEARD/Mali has trained and supported 20 university students, 12 for master's degrees and 8 for doctorates;
- Students in the BHEARD/Mali program contribute to cutting edge science, and have published papers in internationally peer-reviewed journals;
- Having returned from the BHEARD/Mali program, students go on to successful careers in their fields, building capacity to develop agriculture and support Mali's continued economic growth.

## Contacting BHEARD

Mali's BHEARD program is implemented by Michigan State University. It can be reached at [BHEARD@anr.msu.edu](mailto:BHEARD@anr.msu.edu), as well as on the web at [www.bheard.anr.msu.edu](http://www.bheard.anr.msu.edu).