

Case Study: Hens Bring Hope in Burkina Faso



Sami and Sié are brothers. They live with their family in Djarkadougou, a village of 1500 people in Burkina Faso, West Africa. The local people are small farmers, living in mud houses and using hand tools to work their land.

They grow crops called sorghum and millet to eat and they grow cotton and peanuts to sell. However, the price they get for these crops has fallen greatly. As a result, poverty is everywhere and families often don't have enough to eat.

Less than one child in four can go to school. For those that can go, they may be in a class of 100 children or more, with just one teacher. The children who cannot go to school stay at home and work in the fields to help their parents. It can be very hot, with the temperature often at 40 degrees.

Sami and Sié go to the local school. Bôthar has set up a poultry project there for the students. About 120 hens live in special hen-houses. They lay one egg each a day. The children have rotas for feeding and watering the birds, collecting the eggs and keeping the hen-houses clean.

When the older boys and girls become skilled at caring for the birds they can take some of them home and they train their own parents in looking after them. In this way, each family can build up a flock of poultry. The meat and eggs are very good for their families. They also earn an income from selling eggs in the market.

Activities:

- A. Find Burkina Faso on a map of Africa. What great desert is next to it?
- B. Name two hand tools that the farmers might use.
- C. For children who cannot go to school, how will this make their lives difficult?
- D. Can you say or write down the following in another way?
 - The temperature is often very high
 - The poultry are housed beside the school
 - The children have rotas for their jobs
 - The boys earn an income from selling eggs
- E. Draw pictures of Sami, Sié and their classmates helping to do the jobs needed to look after the hens.