

# Launching a project on the Baobab in the fight against malnutrition and in the local development in Mali



Figure 1: The logo of the project

Funded by the Tuscany Region and coordinated by the Department of Pharmacy of the University of Pisa, in partnership with the Malian NGO *Aidemet*, and the Department of Traditional Medicine of Bamako, the project “The fruit of Baobab as a source of nutrients and bioactive molecules” officially took off at the end of November 2017. The first phase of the project will last one year. The aim is to deepen the knowledge of the nutritional and pharmaceutical properties of baobab fruit pulp flour to help fight against malnutrition and local development.

The fruit of Baobab has an excellent nutritional value because it is rich in fibres, carbohydrates, minerals and vitamins, with a high content of vitamin C. In the rural areas of Mali, the Baobab’s fruit pulp is consumed both in solid form, and like a drink, as a food supplement, but is also used in traditional medicine as immunostimulant, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antipyretic, astringent, and especially in the treatment of childhood diarrhoea. The research activities of the Department of Pharmacy at the



Photo 1: The fruit of Baobab



Photo 2 : The Baobab - *Adansonia digitata* L.

University of Pisa will focus on in-depth phyto-chemical analysis, and research on bioactive molecules, while the Department of Traditional Medicine in Bamako will take care of collection and quality control of Baobab flour samples from different locations. *Aidemet* Ong will participate in the research for the development of improved forms of use and the logistical and administrative management of the project. However, the starting point of the various research activities will be to establish the state of knowledge on the Baobab fruit in its various aspects: agro-forestry, pharmacognosy, traditional medicine, galenics, nutrition and artisanal processing. All research will be conducted in a frame of complementarity, multidisciplinary, stakeholder participation, valorisation of local knowledge and attention to gender aspects.

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**Text of Sergio Giani and Rokia Sanogo - Photo © Archives of *Aidemet* Ong**

