

MALI EDUCATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

MALI INITIATIVE, DECEMBER 2007

This document is written at the time of when the Mali Initiative (previously called the Mali Project) was about to expand its activities. The purpose of this document is to 1) assess the situation of Mali, with a focus on the education sector 2) outline the current needs of the education sector.

In the development of this needs assessment many people were interviewed including, community leaders, community elders, mayors, government officials, parents, teachers, students, women, children, CAP (district educational officers) and members of parliament.

For general information about Mali, various credible documents were used including Mali Poverty Reduction Strategy, World Bank and UN reports and other donor country reports.

1. Country Overview

1.1. Position and History

Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world due to its limited resource base, land-locked status, vulnerability to external shocks, poor infrastructure, low levels of human development and weak administrative capacity.

Mali is located in West Africa with a population of about 11,626,000 people living on 1,241,340 square meters of land. 80% of the territory is dry with rainfalls not exceeding 80-100 mm/a year in most part in fact it only rains three months in Mali (July –September).

Historically, Mali was aligned to the empires of Ghana, Manding and Songhai prior to being formed into an entity by the French when they began their colonial rule of Mali in 1880. The French occupation continued until 1960 when Mali was declared an independent nation. Political turmoil followed with 33 years of political dictatorship. The present democratically elected leader is President Toure.



Map 1: Position and Map of Mali

1.1. Economy and Poverty

Income per capita is US\$ 284 growing at 1.2% per year. Mali is still dependent on international aid and the agricultural sector, which is extremely vulnerable to climatic variations. The economy is driven by the private sector whose success is highly influenced by climate hazards and the international market. Agriculture which constitutes the livelihood for about 80% of the population, contributes to more than 40% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and constitutes more than the two third of export receipts. The main products are cotton, cereals, and cattle-breeding products. Fishing is also important namely in the Niger Delta.

63.8% of the population lives in poverty with around 21% of the population living in extreme poverty. 76% of Mali's poor live in

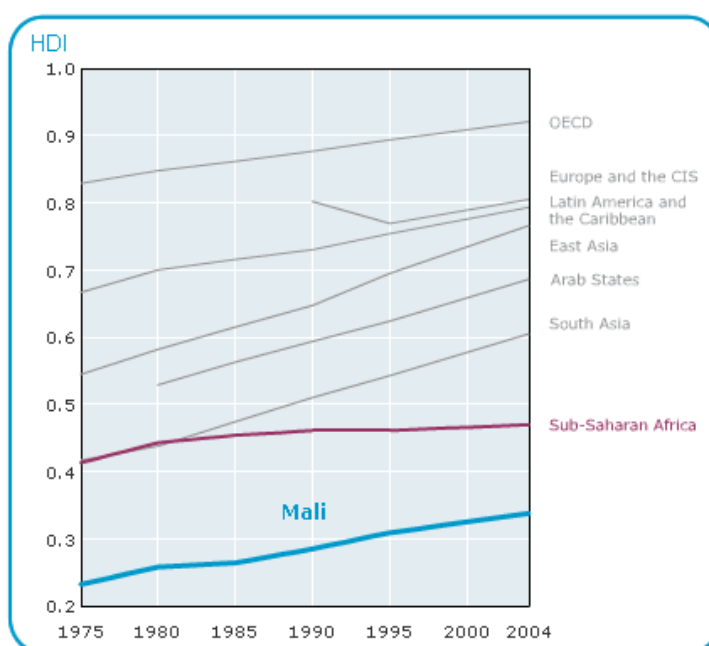


Figure 1: Human Development Index of Mali (UNDP, 2006)

the rural areas. The population is very young where 49% of the population are under the age of 15 years and this percentage is growing increasingly at a rate of 2.9% a year. What is more is that only 19% young people under 15 years can read or write.

Women make up 65% of the informal sector but only 32.75% of the formal sector. 40% of women (aged 15 to 49) work in agriculture, of whom only 58% are paid for their work. For the remaining 60% who do not work in agriculture, only 8% are not paid for their work. Health and education indicators in Mali, despite improvements, are among the lowest in the world with a significant disparity between rural and urban areas as demonstrated by the access-to-services index described above. Fewer rural children attend school, notably fewer girls, and rural infant and child mortality rates are significantly higher than in urban areas. The poor are less likely to use health services, particularly the rural poor, and tend to spend proportionately less on health care.

In this overall picture of poverty, women and youth are the most vulnerable due to their social conditions. Poverty and the inadequacies of the school system lie behind the phenomenon of child migration, which places them in situations of vulnerability involving child trafficking and child labour, economic exploitation and delinquency. In addition, the inadequate legal framework with regard as recommended by Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women means the risks of violence against women and abuse and exploitation of children continue.

Ranked 174th out of 177 countries according to the Human Development Index 2006 of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Mali has just adopted a strategic framework for combating poverty. As a result of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative, Mali has undertaken to increase the budget for essential social services, which still remains below the targets of 20/20 initiative.

1.3 Water, Sanitation and Living Conditions

1.3.1 Drinking Water

For a long time now, the Government has made access to drinking water a priority in both rural and urban areas and to this end has authorized enormous resources that have to date permitted 10,160 wells to be sunk equipped with manually-operated pumps, 4,498 large-diameter wells and 400 makeshift water supply conveyors. These efforts, which have been achieved with the help of external development partners, have permitted more than 50% of drinking water needs to be met by serving 57% of the 11,739 villages and sections of Mali.

1.3.2 Sanitation

Only 8% of households have suitable installations for the removal of excreta. For the removal of storm waters the district of Bamako is served by 20 main sewers, of which 2 are pumping stations, and 60 secondary sewers often in poor condition, while the other towns have less than 100 km of gutters. In terms of sewage disposal, nearly 95% of households employ unhygienic practices. With regard to management of household waste, a widespread unregulated dumping of waste is evident, as is the proliferation of vectors of illnesses.

	1997	2001
Life expectancy	50 yrs	51.5 yrs ^c
Gross primary enrollment rate	35%	59%
Student-to-teacher ratio	80 ^a	71
Access to health care (15 km)	49% ^b	66%
Utilization (assisted births)	37% ^b	41%
<u>Access to water</u>	<u>48%</u>	<u>51%</u>

a = 1999; b = 1998; c = 2002

Figure 2: Slowly improving Social Indicators (World Bank, 2003)

1.3.3 Living Conditions

Living conditions of the majority of Malians can be characterized by: i) difficulties of access to property ownership; ii) the high costs of construction materials; iii) the inadequacy of urban infrastructure and facilities; and v) the existence of shanty towns.

Factors that contribute to poor living conditions include; high demographic growth, the inadequacy of ownership structures and absence of town-planning policies explains the lower access to suitable housing experienced by the poor, and the chaotic development of towns.

1.4 Health Status

1.4.1 Child Mortality

The infant and child mortality rates went, respectively, from 238 per 1,000 live births in 1996 to 226 per 1,000 live births in 2001. A good start in life for children is also affected by the consequences of a very high maternal mortality rate (577 per 100,000 live births), which is linked to inadequate care in obstetrical emergencies, high fertility and a very low prevalence of modern contraception among sexually active women (5.9 per cent), which remains unchanged since 1996.

Nutritional vulnerability of young children is high where 40 per cent of children under the age of five are moderately or seriously underweight. Micro-nutrient deficiencies and infections arise from water supply or respiratory factors.

The launching in 1998 of the ten-year Health and Social Development Programme (PRODESS) has made it possible to step up the reform of the health system by allowing the establishment of community health centres. Community health centres are run by the communities and are supposed to be cost effective and closer to the community. However, the demand for use of health services is high by people who can't afford to pay for treatment. Thus, the percentage of children who received three doses of vaccine against diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus by their first birthday was only 34 per cent in 2000. Most people cannot get access to health services because they do not have money.

1.4.2 HIV/AIDS

Despite a prevalence estimated at 1.7%, Mali remains particularly vulnerable to a sudden rise of the HIV/AIDS epidemics because of many interdependent factors namely:

- Considerable migratory flows of the highly vulnerable populations having high-risk behaviours and high infection rates. HIV infection rates are particularly high among some vulnerable populations such as sex workers (31.9%), vendors (4.6%), (2.9) and truckers (3.9%) according to a survey carried out by the National Program of AIDS Control (PNLS).
- Sex-specific inequities (gender) and cultural traditional standards encouraging HIV dissemination. It is significant that infection rate remains higher among women than men at the national level (2%) as well as in all the regions of Mali, except for Bamako. What is more serious is that HIV positive rate is relatively higher among young girls and women from 15-19 years (1.1%) and from 20-24 years (1.6%) in comparison with young adolescents boys (0.3%) and young men (0.3%).

In light of all these issues, which are related to any developing country, Education is very important for addressing all of them or overcoming them. Education is essential for the development of any nation.

2. Education in Mali

2.1 Overview of Education

Education was severely neglected during the 33 (1968 – 1991) troubled years of dictatorship with the result that:

- No new schools were built
- Existing schools were not maintained or resourced
- Few teachers were trained
- Few young Malians attended school
- For those who did attend school, the class size was very large

	1999/2000	2001/2002	PRSP Goal for 2006	MDGs 2015
Gross enrollment, primary school (%)	39.5	58.7	70	100
Gross girls' enrollment, primary school (%)	44.5	49.1	58	100
Gross enrollment, secondary school (%)	24.6	26.2	Not Indicated	Not Indicated
Gross girls' enrollment, secondary school (%)	18.7	19.2	Not Indicated	Not Indicated
University enrollment	10,774 (1997)	29,482 (2002)	Not Indicated	Not Indicated
Student/teacher ratio, public primary schools	80.3	71.2	50	Not Indicated
Repeat rate, primary schools (%)	23 (1998)	18	13	Not Indicated
% Primary in education budget	57	61	61	
% Education in national budget (with social spending)	25	30	27	

Figure 3: Education Indicators (World Bank, 2003)

The legacy of dictatorship still continues today with the above list still very evident and quality education for all is still a major challenge, particularly education for girls. Early marriage, early and multiple pregnancies and the involvement of girls in the family economy are obstacles to the enrolment of girls in school and the acquisition of skills likely to protect them from all forms of exploitation, violence and HIV/AIDS.

Mali has one of the world's highest illiteracy rates with currently around 80% of the population not being able to read or write. The factors underlying the low education rates according to the Malian Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy (2003) include: the living conditions at home, the high cost of schooling, the distance from schools, the need for manpower at key times in the agricultural season, the negative perception of the usefulness of school, and public expenditure trends.

There is a major difference between rural and urban education levels. In terms of basic education, the attendance rate is between 3 and 4 times higher in urban areas than in rural areas and a child from a non-poor household has between two to three times the chance of attending elementary school than a child from a poor household.

The gross enrolment for the first cycle of basic education (primary school) was 55.6% in 1999, with a figure of 46% for girls. It is lower in rural areas than in urban areas and the differences between regions are considerable. In zone A (Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal), the rates are well below the average (between 26% and 36%) and are particularly low for girls (between 21% and 28%). In zone B (Kayes, Sikasso, Ségou, Koulikoro), the rates are slightly lower or equal to the average (between 42% and 56%), but remain low for girls (between 32% and 42%). In zone C (Bamako), the rates are high both for boys and girls (overall level: 140%; girls: 138%).

2.1.1 The Role of the Malian State in Education

The present democratically elected leader is President Toure has pledged to promote education and job creation following so many years of unrest when education was left to languish. Current statistics for education in Mali from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics show 74.4% of the population is illiterate and the average years of schooling for adults is now 0.9 years even though the duration of compulsory education is 9 years. A male child today has a school life expectancy of 2.7 years and a female 2.1 years. Most current students are aged between 10 and 14 years.

In acknowledgement of the dire educational standards within the country but lacking funds to ensure universal education is available, the Ministry of Education under Minister Mohamed Lamine Traore has expanded education services by decentralising and allowing privately operated/community schools to be established under the umbrella of the Ministry's authority and recognition. Decentralisation has also meant that public (government supports the operational costs¹) and community schools (costs are covered at a community level) are to be the responsibility of mayors and the town hall at the community level.

The government in their 2003 Poverty Reduction Strategy have outlined 4 major focus areas for education:

- *Improvement of access and of formal education:* reducing the number of villages without a school and emphasizing as a priority the most destitute and/or disadvantaged areas, raising the awareness of parents about formal education of their children (in particular daughters), introducing incentives (school stationery and canteens), increasing the number of Development Education Centres (Centres d'Education pour le Développement – CED) and Literacy Centres (Centres d'Alphabétisation – CAF).
- *Improving education quality:* development of a curriculum and teaching methods adapted to local circumstances, implementing a framework encouraging initial and continuing education, recruitment and management of teaching staff, increasing the amount of class time and reducing class sizes, increasing the availability of teaching materials, improving the quality of training in Koranic centres and creating boarding facilities for social dislocated children.
- *Implementing cross-cutting measures:* developing an education/gender policy and increasing involvement of women in education system management, promotion of health measures in the schools, and support to the private sector.
- *Changing the allocation and management of the human and financial resources of the education sector:* increase in primary education expenditures, increase in subsidies to disadvantaged regions and groups and to staff in difficult regions, and decentralization of management.

2.1.2. Structure of the Education System

Below is the official structure of the education system. Compulsory age of schooling is from 7 to 13 years old.

Stage	Year Level	Duration in years	Certificate/Diploma Awarded	Prerequisite
Basic First stage (Premier Cycle)	1-6	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of Completed Studies in the First • Cycle of Fundamental Instruction 	None
Basic Second stage (Second Cycle)	7-9	3	Diploma of Fundamental Studies	Premier Cycle
General Secondary	10-12	3	Baccalaureat General	Second Cycle
Higher Education	13+	3 - 7	Licence, Maitrise, DEA & Doctorate	General Secondary
OR				
Vocational 1 Secondary	10+	2	Certificate of Professional Aptitude	Second Cycle
Vocational 2 Secondary	10+	4	Brevet de Technicien	Second Cycle

This structure is undertaken as the first 6 years of primary education and the following 3 years of lower secondary education. Senior secondary education is undertaken in one of the two streams

- Baccalaureat and then onto Higher education, or
- Certificate of Professional Aptitude and then on to Brevet de Technicien.

¹ In the two communities visited for this needs assessment both stated that government support for public schools was insufficient and as a result the community needed to bear the costs.

With Mali average income at \$US200 – 270 per annum, most families cannot afford to send their children to school or if they do, it is not for the full years of compulsory schooling. Children are needed to contribute to the family income and not be a cost in school fees. They may send their children when they can afford to do so but this means the schooling is interrupted leading to slow progress through the education system. Up to 20% of students need to repeat schooling years. This explains the low level of literacy and educational skilling. The few Malians who do achieve a full secondary education are often not work-ready for nearby employment opportunities. There is therefore a major need for young people to receive vocational education.

Unfortunately, in many Malian communities, access to primary and secondary schools is restricted for young girls due to social, cultural, and financial constraints. Even still, maternal and child mortality rates significantly drop with the rise in the level of the mother's education; the more educated mother is also more aware of contraception possibilities.

2.2 Conventional schooling and Koranic teaching

Mali is predominantly a Muslim country. The teaching of the Koran is spread far and wide. Every year thousands of young kids are given to teachers of the Muslim Koran by their parents in the hope their children will receive a Koranic education.

A 2000 study showed that public and Koranic schools performed least well where private schools were of the highest standard in the country. Still, around 40% of students in Mali attend Koranic schools and it is a tradition for children from Koranic schools to go to the streets for charity (begging), to learn humility and modesty.

Exploitation of boys attending Koranic schools is also well documented. Some Koranic teachers use their students as means to improve their own wealth. They exploit them by making them beg off the streets where they live and the teacher takes all the money and materials they get for himself. Not only do these children do not get the education their parents were promised but their health and general well being is severely jeopardised being exposed to the harsh world on the streets.

There is a general feeling in the Mali community that students of the Koran are burdens of society. This is because after their teaching is finished they find it hard to get a job. They have no skills or general knowledge to go back into Malian society. Often they turn back to living on the streets.

2.3 Premier Cycle (Year Level 1-6)

The official age of starting primary school is around 7 years old. In Mali there are public primary schools operated by the government and private schools operated by NGOs and individuals. In Mali anyone can open up a primary school. In public schools the average class size is 100 students. Class sizes of private schools vary from anywhere between 30 students to over 100. There is no enforced policy to how private schools operate and so variations from school to school are great. For example, in a survey of private schools in Kalabankoro, private schools vary from a single room with the area of 5m by 8m for 40 students of the 6 levels taught at the same time to large institutions of quality education.

Since the government decided to decentralise education, schools are the responsibility of the local mayor and community. Many communities are very poor and so there are server shortages of educational infrastructure. Many NGOs have responded to this demand and have contributed to building, equipping and operating schools in Mali however the quality of education taught is still low because of inconsistencies in curriculum and teaching methods and abilities.

Typical studies taught a primary school can include mathematics, French, basic science, culture and morality, sport and music. Computer studies taught using actual computers are rare. For a student to move from premier cycle to the second cycle, they must pass their exam at the end of level 6. Poor students are less likely to pass their exam because they are often faced with constraints that inhibit them to learn such as being hungry, sick and being regularly taken out of class to look after the family.

The dropout and repetition rates are very high. Only 42% of those who enter the first year progress as far as Year 6 and, of these, 30% repeat.

2.4 Second Cycle (Year Level 7-9)

Secondary students are generally from the age of 15 – 18. Ages can vary because students can start their schooling very late, or have to repeat year levels several times until they pass their level 6 exam.

The number of secondary schools in Mali is less than Primary schools because most villages can't afford to run both. Most secondary schools are found in major cities and towns and therefore students may be required to travel far distances to attend secondary school. Because of this, students don't always get to attend secondary schools. Large costs for travelling and schools fees make it hard for rural families to support their children through the premier cycle.

This assessment also found that attendance of students at the secondary cycle is also based on parent's perception of the importance of education, particularly in the rural areas. Many families decide that the premier cycle is enough education for their child, particularly if they didn't do very well. The decision to have their children working at home can then be made.

Studies undertaken in the second cycle are the same as the premier cycle at a more advanced level. To pass second cycle you must pass the year 9 exam. Studies show that the inequalities between girls and boys increase as they progress toward the higher grades.

2.5 High school education (Year Level 10-12)

High school education is year level 10 – 12. Traditionally it is for students wanting to continue their academic studies and provides a direct pathway to university. Studies offered to students at this level include Biology, physics, history, geography, chemistry, English, German, French, maths, music, sport.

High school education is a financially intensive time for families, especially for quality education. For this reason, many young people don't make it to high school.

2.6 Vocational school education

Vocational schools are the alternative to High Schools for students with a level 9 pass. Parents interviewed for this assessment made it clear that they prefer to pay for vocational education over primary school education because they see vocational education as a tangible way of their child becoming someone in the way that they are learning skills that directly can get them employed.

There are 65 privately owned and run vocational schools in Bamako and 3 that belong to the state. However these schools are not sufficient to meet the demand from growing numbers of students and in 2006, 175 000 young people missed out on a place in a vocational school.

The government provides CFA80,000 (\$AU 200) per student at government schools and selected private schools but this very low amount is insufficient to provide quality vocational education as it is only offered to a select number of students. If applicants are either over 18 years or have failed their level 9 exam more than 3 times, the government does not support your place in vocational education and it must be self funded. The lack of student places means that it is extremely difficult for applicants to meet the entry criteria which primarily involve parental income. There has been the perception that the selection process is neither equitable nor transparent. Applicants who are orphans and from poor or middle income households are less likely to be at a level to be in the top percentage of places supported by the government. This is because poorer kids are less likely to do well in their studies due to a number of reasons such as regularly being taken out of class to help support the family, not having a nutritious diet to help them concentrate in class, not having access to additional learning and support materials.

There is only a limited number of vocational diplomas offered that are nationally recognised. Although industry has commented on the need for a more diverse range of diplomas at the vocational level, the government has not responded. These courses recognised by the government include:

- Secretary
- Accounting
- Mechanics
- Plumbing
- Electrical studies
- Drawing and building
- Masonry

In the vocational schools used in this assessment, it was clear that most young people want to study Secretary, Accounting, Electrical Studies and these are the classes there is most demand. Mechanics is the least popular course because it is stigmatised and seen as a dirty job only fit for poor or uneducated people.

Some private schools have introduced other courses inline with industry needs such as tourism; however these are not nationally recognised.

Even still, the Ministry of Labour confirms that there are good job prospects for skilled people in the Kalabankoro because:

- The New Code of Investment in Mali has made investment more attractive so companies are either being created or expanding in the private sector;
- The stability of the government is attractive to investment, especially now many nations in West Africa are experiencing conflict;
- Public servants are ageing and replacement staff is needed but there are so few new graduates available that the retirement age has been increased to meet the skill shortage;
- There is growth in population in this district, so there is employment growth in the areas of housing and amenities;
- Small businesses are flourishing. Graduating students with vocational skills will be in high demand in the workforce

2.7 University education

The only university in Mali is found in Bamako. The University of Bamako (French: Université de Bamako) is a public university in Bamako, the capital of Mali. It is also know as the University of Mali.

Opened in 2000, in has brought together nine campuses across the city. The institution created by Law 93-060 of September 1993, but only launched in November 1996. It was 2000 before the first campus wide structures were in place. Professor Ginette B. Siby is Recteur, the general administrator of the university. In 2000 there were 19714 students and 538 instructors on all nine campuses.

As of 2007, the university is divided into six Faculties: the Science and Technology faculty (Faculté des sciences et techniques or Fast), The Medical faculty (Faculté de Medecine Pharmacie d'Odonto-Stamologie or FMPOS), the Humanities, Arts, and Social Science faculty (Faculté des Lettres, Langues, Arts et Sciences Humaines or FLASH), the Law and Public Service faculty (Faculté des Sciences Juridiques et Politiques FSJP), the Education (teacher training) faculty (L'Ecole Normale Supérieure ENSUP), and the National Engineering School (L'Ecole Nationale d'Ingénieurs ENI).

There are also three applied sciences institutes at the university. The Institut Polytechnique Rural (IPR) specialises in agriculture, applied technology, and forestry outreach education. The Institut Supétieur de Formation et de Recherche Appliquée (ISFRA) for education and training in health, agriculture, literacy, and other public needs. The Institut Universitaire de Gestion (IUG) trains graduates in management for the public and private sector.

The University has developed an educational network with foreign universities, especially those in Francophone nations. One example is its co sponsorship with the University of Paris VIII of Five Continents Open University project in 2005.

Malian university classes are severely under-funded and are famous for their large class sizes. One teacher is responsible to teach over 1000 students. Lecture theatres are full and sometimes students attend lectures from standing outside and taking notes through the windows.

There have been reports of students paying bribes for their degrees in which they did no work for.

2.8 Teacher Education

The Malian education structure has been inherited from the time of the French colonial power and the curriculum was last revised in 1962. Primary, or Premier, teacher education is undertaken at regional Institute Pedagogiques d'Enseignement General and lasts for 4 years after completion of the Diploma of Fundamental Studies. Basic Second Stage, Second Cycle, teachers attend an Ecole Normales Secondaries and study for 2 years beyond their Baccalaureat Diploma or 4 years beyond their Diploma of Fundamental Studies.

Because of the extreme poverty and the lack of educational opportunities, there are insufficient graduates of teacher training colleges in Mali. Often people with significantly less than the official teacher training qualifications are employed as teachers.

2.9 Corruption in the Mali Education System

Although improvements have been made in recent years, corruption in the Malian Government is still evident. This includes the Ministry of Education. Corruption is a very complex issue in Mali but is mostly found in the form of bribing in the Education sector. At most stages of processing forms, reports, and licences bribes are not uncommon to get paperwork processed.

3. Educational NGOs in Mali

3.1 Major NGOs

3.1.1 Save the Children

Save the Children US (SC) had been providing community (or village) schools in Mali since 1992 however this program has since ceased. These schools provided relevant rural education in villages in Mali where no proximate schools existed. At the same time, this model was innovative, and challenged prevailing assumptions about what education works effectively.

Three years after its inception, the Save the Children US program was flourishing. In 1994-1995 there 36 village schools served 2160 children in which 72 teachers were teaching. In 1995-1996, 114 schools existed with 6840 children in 110 villages. In 2003, approximately 800 SC village schools serve nearly 50,000 children

3.1.2 Oxfam & Institute for Popular Education

At the centre of the campaign is Oxfam Novib's Mali counterpart IEP (Institute for Popular Education). What was once a small-scale initiative to teach youth school dropouts how to read and write, has grown into a professional organisation training teachers, supporting village councils, and advising the authorities on education reforms.

IEP has developed an alternative teaching method to teach children in the local language something that will serve them later. The method is implemented on a project-basis. The children learn to think for themselves and know their rights.

3.1.3. World Education Program & USAID

Ambassadors Girls Scholarship Program (AGSP)

Through schooling, children are equipped with skills that improve the quality of their lives. Skills such as reading and working with numbers as well as accurate information on health and science provide opportunities to students that would otherwise not exist.

A program of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the President's African Education Initiative (AEI)/Ambassadors Girls Scholarship Program (AGSP) is being implemented throughout Sub-Saharan Africa from 2004 - 2008. World Education manages the program in 12 West African countries in collaboration with local NGOs. The AEI-AGSP supports 80,000 girls across the continent each year (30,000 in West Africa alone) who are economically disadvantaged, handicapped, orphaned and/or affected or infected by HIV/AIDS each year in the form of scholarships to cover the costs of their education.

The girls will be sponsored over a period of 4-5 years, through mostly primary and some junior secondary schooling. In addition, each girl enrolled in the scholarship program is mentored and encouraged in her educational pursuits while participating in activities that will focus on HIV/AIDS mitigation and prevention, and community participation and democracy.

Batonga Girls' Education Program (Launched September 2007)

World Education is partnering with Batonga Foundation, founded by Angelique Kidjo, the West African singer, songwriter, and UNICEF International Goodwill Ambassador. The program aims to help girls stay in school and support their academic success. In its inaugural year, Batonga and World Education will support girls graduating from the Ambassadors' Girls' Scholarship Program in Benin and Mali to continue their education in secondary school. Girls are equipped with scholarship packages that cover the cost of tuition, uniforms, and school supplies, and partnered with mentors who support them academically and teach them about important health issues such as HIV and AIDS. The program is implemented by local nongovernmental organizations in partnership with parent groups and mothers in particular, as well as school administrators.

3.1.4. Building with Books

Building with Books helps to improve the educational situation in Mali by working with local communities to build new primary schools. BwB has been working in the region of Sikasso with communities near Bougouni and Kolondieba since 1998.

BwB methodology requires the local community to contribute land, local building materials and volunteer, unskilled labour; BwB provides construction materials, skilled labour and help with project management. In 2004, residents in local villages contributed more than 55,000 volunteer workdays to build their BwB schools.

Building with Books works closely with local offices (CAP-Centre d'Animation Pedagogique) of the Ministry of Education to insure that teachers at BwB schools are properly trained and that schools are appropriately equipped with furniture and learning materials. Through an agreement with Building with Books, the Ministry of Education has agreed to augment each BwB school with additional teachers and furniture once construction has been completed.

Adults also learn to read, write and do simple math through BwB's evening adult literacy courses, held within the walls of the new schools. The program builds the capacity of communities by training locally-based facilitators who then conduct literacy classes in their own communities.

3.1.5. UNICEF

UNICEF's educational programs include:

- * Creation or revitalization of 40 primary schools, benefiting 5,132 children. In the new schools in Kayes, the female enrolment rates, on average, were higher than the rest of the region.
- * Construction of 25 schools from 1999-2001. An additional 25 schools are scheduled for completion in 2003. In an agreement between the communities and the Academie d'Enseignement (AE), communities are taking responsibility for the construction and maintenance of the community schools as well as ensuring equal enrolment of girls and boys.
- * Construction of separate latrines for girls and the setting up of school canteens.
- * Development of child friendly, girl friendly and children's Governments in 70 communities or schools in 2002 and 240 in 2003.
- * Election and training of 40 school management committees, with female members.
- * Setting up of two teams of trainers in gender issues in Kayes and Mopti region.
- * Providing teaching materials and 43,245 textbooks in the two regions of Kayes and Mopti and in the District of Bamako.

3.2. Minor NGOs

There are over 1100 local NGOs working in Mali and it is hard to find specific NGOs that focus on education. This is because most NGOs in Mali have a very broad focus including education, healthcare, micro credit, and decentralisation. The broad focus interesting enough is a means for survival. NGOs that 'do everything' can then apply for funding when donor countries, multilaterals and international NGOs put out funding. Many NGOs believe that if they take a sectorial approach, they are doomed because funding will run out when the international development industry changes their focus to another sector.

This illustrates the mentality of development in Mali. Donor countries set the agenda for development in Mali and local NGOs implement their requests. Local NGOs existence is based on funding from larger bodies and therefore as a means of survival, will do what the larger bodies focus is. Donor countries and international NGOs set the rules and objectives for development and local NGOs follow.

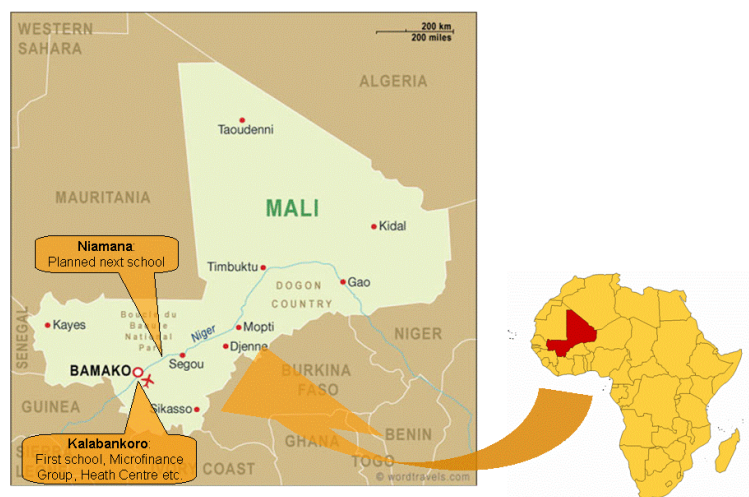
This approach means that local NGOs who are on the ground and operate at grass roots levels rarely get to set the development agenda simply because 'leadership' by local NGOs is a major risk when funding by donor government and international NGOs are only for their focus areas.

This doesn't mean there are no local NGO's choosing how they want to do development. Some local NGOs have sources of funding other than relying on Donor countries and international NGOs. For example, L.A.C.I.M. is a local NGO that gets its funds from private individuals in France. It takes an 'adopt a village' approach where groups in France can raise money to develop a village in Mali. 86 villages have been supported in this way. It is interesting that in this example, providing fresh water and building schools in villages is the first step taken in the development of each village followed by health and income generating activities.

4. Mali Initiative Intervention areas

The Mali Initiative has two intervention areas, Kalabankoro located in the outskirts of the capital Bamako and Niamana located in the Segou region.

The current projects are located in Kalabankoro, near the capital Bamako – the next project is planned in rural Niamana



- 3 -

4.1 Kalabankoro Community

Kalabankoro is situated 30 km to the south of the Mali's capital Bamako. Kalabankoro is home to 150,000 people. It is a very poor community and populated mostly with disadvantaged or vulnerable groups like seasonal workers, vendors, house workers, beggars and daily workers. Basic infrastructures are missing like paved roads, clean water, sanitation, health facilities and schools.

The community of Kalabankoro is underprivileged in two accounts. First, because of its proximity with the city, NGOs do not want to intervene thinking it is part of Bamako, the big city. Even if they intervene, it is very limited. On the other hand, it does not benefit central government investment because it is considered by the government as a separate and rural community (Commune). In 2007, the town hall received 5 000,000CFA (\$US 11, 235) from the government for development of all sectors including health, education, water and sanitation. In past years the money received was double the 2007 amount.

Kalabankoro is the home of the initial Mali Initiative. The Ecole Privee Youchaou (EPY) was founded in 2000 to provide education and capacity building to young people in Mali. Since then, achievements include the development of a primary school in 2004 and lower secondary school with additional facilities in 2006 and tuition for street children. Even in such a short time the EPY has been recognised as providing excellence in Malian education. At the heart of the management of these schools is the availability of quality education for the poorest of the poor. Around one half of the students at the schools are either orphaned or come from families living on less than \$US1.50 a day. Quality education is achieved through the ongoing professional development of the teachers and class sizes of around 30, compared with over 100 students in other schools.

While providing primary and lower secondary education, The Mali Initiative has also established a health care centre and a micro-credit initiative for local women. This envisages creating self-sustaining economic capital growth for the student's families and other members of the community. There is a large demand for a vocational school in the area that would follow in the tradition of quality education for the poorest of the poor.

Kalabankoro community is made up of 13 villages.

Village	Number of People	Educational Infrastructure
Kalabankoro Kabala		No school, students study under trees
Kalabankoro N'Gologougou		Community school
Kalabankoro Gouana		Community school grade 1-6. Over 100 students per class. Government promised three classrooms but were never built
Kalabankoro Missalabougou		
Kalabankoro Tabacoro		5 classrooms to teach 6 year levels
Kalabankoro Niamana		
Kalabankoro Kolaba		
Kalabankoro Kabala		
Kalabankoro Sabalibougou		
Kalabankoro Sirakoro		
Kalabankoro Diatoula		
Kalabankoro Miss		
Kalabankoro Dougoucoro		

Although there are many schools in the villages of Kalabankoro, the quality is severely depleted. In most villages surveyed for this assessment, their main problems were with excessive class sizes, poor school quality, the needs for school supplies, the lack of quality teaching and the high cost of school fees.

The CAP provides 4 trainers for 208 schools to conduct teacher training.

4.2. Niamana Community

Niamana community consists of 19 villages among which the remotest is at 20 km from the central village Niamana Bambara village. There are 8760 people living in Niamana community which is located at 50 km from the head district town of San and 7 km off road the main road.

The climate is Sahelian characterized by very low and irregular rainfalls. The main activity of the area is agriculture which depends on rainfalls. A few farmers have some cattle and quite a few people do small business by selling goods in weekly markets. After the rainy season and harvest, most youth migrate in big cities in order to make some money because there is no other income generating activity in villages.

Being a rural area where 80% of parents are not educated, girls schooling is not a priority in Niamana like in many other parts of Mali. Parents prefer keeping girls home to help their mothers in house works. Gender issue is still a big problem in Niamana although changes can be seen in many parts. For instance, women seat now in management bodies of the village council and the community health centre board which did not exist before. The Mayor of Niamana has requested that female students are given preference to places in schools over boys to increase the number of female students in Niamana.

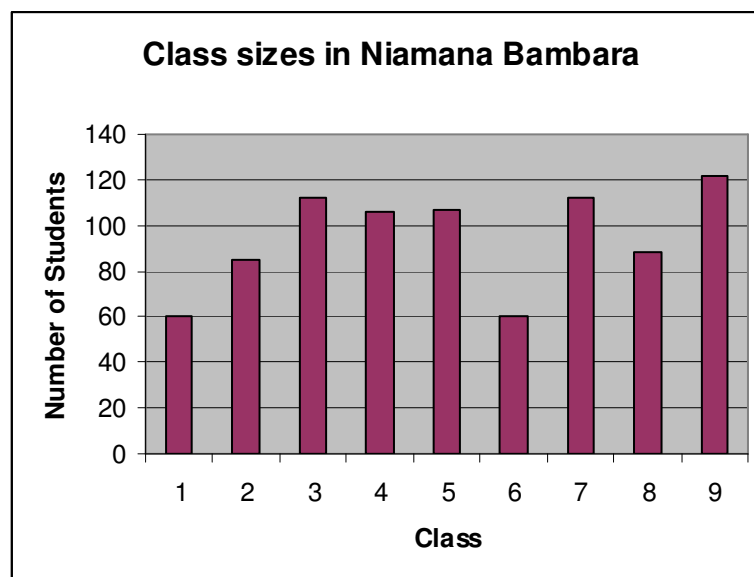
Village	Number of People	Educational Infrastructure
Niamana Sobala	898	-
Niamana Bambara (Bankuma)	914	2 public schools, 1-6 and 7-9. 1 private school, 1-2
Niamana Kafouke	302	-
Niamana Sokouamani	401	-

Niamana Mansomna	316	Early childhood centre for 50 3-5year olds.
Niamana Tiekesso	251	-
Niamana Beledala	351	-
Niamana Werebala	192	-
Niamana Tonfoso	146	-
Debenso Bambara	785	Pubic school 1-6
Debenso Kefoko	362	No school. Students have the longest walk to school in the area, 8km to the nearest village with a school
Fanso Bambara	466	Community school 1-6
Fanso Peul	320	-
Konosso Bambara	1288	Community school 1-4, Women's literacy learning centre.
Konosso Peul	223	-
Konforo	256	Community school 1-2
Niabougou	575	Community school 1-4
Togosso Were	428	-
Sissiguesso	428	-

Two villages in Niamana were used in this needs assessment, Niamana Bambara and Konosso Bambara. Niamana Bambara has three schools: two public schools 1-6 and 7-9 and one private school level 1-2. There are about 80 to 100 students per class. The private school was created to cope with the mass amounts of students in classrooms. Most students come from other villages in the nearby and stay during the day in Niamana Bambara as they come from distance. Some children walk 6 or 7 km every day to go to school and do the same thing to come back home. There is a health care centre, one borehole and a pond in the village.

Out of all the villages in Niamana, Niamana Bambara educates the most children. Many of the students in the schools come from villages in the community without students. It has 3 schools in total, 2 public schools for levels 1-6 and 7-9, and one private school for level 1-2. The private school was set up to cope with the enormous amounts of students in each classroom. Students of parents who pay their school fees are sent to the private school and the other students stay in the public school where the government through the mayor covers most costs.

The two public schools of Niamana Bambara are very over crowded. Class sizes of students regularly exceed 80 students. The mayor has capped the class sizes for grade 1 and 6 at 60 students maximum to help with the quality of learning.



Even though class sizes in Niamana Bambara are large, there are still a large number of the village's children not in school. This number could be a lot more when taking into consideration that most villages in Niamana community without a school rely on Niamana Bambara to educate their kids.

The quality of education in Niamana Bambara is an interesting one. The pass rate of level 6 is 99% approved by the government. However through discussions with the village chief and school director, a pass in the government's eyes is as low as a 3 or a 4. In past years a pass was anywhere from 5 with a maximum of 10. The chief and director believe this is because the government is under pressure to meet Millennium Development Goals and so the government has instructed schools to pass anyone from a 3 upwards. The school director was asked how many grade 6 students he thinks can actually read or write despite having a government pass to move to the second cycle, the answer was 5%.

The dream of Niamana Bambara is to rebuild the 2 classrooms of level 3 and level 4 that are falling down. In 2007 wet season, over 200 students were sent to other schools in the area in the worry that the building would fall on the students while in school. These two classrooms are made out of mud and were built around 1970.

Niamana would also like their teachers to have additional training, access to school supplies and tables and chairs for classrooms where currently students learn on the floor.

Konosso Bambara

Konosso Bambara is 14km from Niamana Bambara and is only accessible by 1 road that is often flooded in the rainy season. Most families in Konosso are rice farmers using the nearby wetlands to cultivate their crops. Konosso Bambara suffered severely in the 2004 famine where drought and locust plagues ruined their crops and created a scarcity of food. Families share their stories of this time, having to watch people die from starvation and out of desperation, selling children for food.

Konosso is the biggest village in regards to number of people and land area in the Niamana community. This means most of the people live some distance from the centre of Konosso. Of the 600+ young people in Konosso, only 100 get to go to school.

Konosso built its community school in 1997. It consists of 2 mud rooms of around 5m x 5m each. Grade 1 and 2 are taught in 1 room comprising of 48 students. Grade 3 and 4 are taught in the other room totalling 51 students. Obviously the rooms are extremely squashing and when it comes to learning, many students can't see the black board. No students have books to take notes. Learning is purely done through watching.

The 3 teachers in Konosso have no formal teacher training. The director of the school finished his schooling to level 12 however couldn't go further into university. The grade 3 and 4 teacher has a year 9 pass and the grade 1 and 2 teacher has a grade 4 pass.

The dream of Konosso Bambara is to have at least 6 classrooms made of concrete for students. This would allow more students to come to school and the existing ones to have a better learning environment. They would also like training for their teachers as well as access to school supplies such as writing books, pens, paper, text books and pencils.

5. Needs Assessment of Niamana and Kalabankoro

From the above detailed analysis of the Malian Education Sector urgent needs can be seen. Needs of the Mali Educational Sector include:

4.1 Quality Education

In Mali nearly every NGO is building schools and is 'doing' education. The first Millennium Development Goal to achieve universal primary education has got everyone (government and NGOs) setting up schools for the primary cycle. Unfortunately, not many schools boast quality education. Still schools have large class sizes and lack resources. There is a need to develop and improve current schools in Mali by equipping them with resources that are equal to a learning environment. Books, pens, colours, teaching aids, desks, blackboards story books and computers are all resources needed in Malian Schools. This includes primary, secondary, high schools.

The curriculum taught in schools is inconsistent and hence is a major reason of why children can't read and write. It should be known that just because students are in schools, doesn't mean they can read or write. The quality of teaching varies as well as what is actually taught to the students.

Inconsistencies between techniques and curriculum taught at various times in teacher colleges and universities means there is confusion on what should be taught in the classroom.

Kalabankoro

In the majority of villages in Kalabankoro there is a school. The problem is that there is a massive lack of appropriate infrastructure to provide for the students

Niamana:

There is a great need to upgrade the schools in Niamana and Konosso because there are not enough class rooms and equipment. The reason why there are not enough facilities for education keeps girls home. If there were enough class rooms or more schools in the area this will give a chance to more children to attend school especially girls. If more girls are educated, they are likely to take responsibility, leading roles and bring about changes.

The community has requested a project that aims to build two class rooms in Niamana because the current ones are in mud bricks and are falling down. By building these two class rooms in cement, they will be more convenient, more secure, more sustainable and more aerated. Also it will give a chance to more kids to go school and seat on tables instead of sitting right on the floor. The most important is with 160 students studying in these classrooms every year can rapidly help increase the rough schooling rate of the area.

The idea of building two class rooms in Niamana and three class rooms in Konosso was first discussed in general assemblies in the commune. Secondly, all the villages sent two counsellors in meeting to prioritize projects. Third, a final discussion was conducted at the level of the Social and Economic Development Plan of Niamana, adopted by the Community Council and approved by the Prefect of the District of San. In attendance were all the stakeholders of the commune, the state technical agents, financial and technical partners of the commune, NGOs and the District Communal Council. In total 48 participants among which 11 women. The objective of the SEDP 2006-2010 is to improve the living conditions of the populations, promoting education by building more class rooms, training teachers, etc.

4.2 Quality Teaching

Most teachers in Mali do not have extended formal training to be employed as a teacher. Therefore, many teachers teach students with no background knowledge, skills or techniques let alone completion of the schooling cycle themselves. In Niamana community we found teachers teaching grade 1 level only with themselves achieving grade 6 level.

This coupled with the government decentralised education system means there is a high demand for teachers and the cost of running a school is born by the community. Of course this means that the poorest villages suffer most because they find whoever they can to teach. It is therefore imperative to train teachers to ensure quality education.

4.3 Access to Quality Education by the poorest of the poor and girls

While providing quality education and building the capacity of teachers is a great need for Malian education, it must be accessible to the poorest of the poor. In Mali quality education is often only to those that can afford it and this is definitely not the poor. Low quality education makes it harder for students to pass their exams and therefore make them less employable in the formal sector let alone undertake tertiary education.

Along with providing education for the poor, girls are also need to have equal access to quality education. Girls are the life line of Mali where when you educate a boy you educate an individual, when you educate girl, you educate the country. The focus on having more girls receiving quality education is vital.

Opportunity to vocational education: There are not enough places for students who pass their year 9 exams to get into vocational school. Quality vocational schools are needed as it is a direct pathway for young people to get jobs in the formal sector. It skills young people with knowledge and technical ability to work in growing formal sectors in Mali.

Income generating activities for families: Although quality education is vital for the development of Mali, it should be coupled with income generating activities for families to ensure school fees are paid, students health is looked after and any other support can be given. Such activities include micro-credit organisations, grain banks, community gardens, small agricultural projects such as the use of donkeys, ploughs and other agro equipment.

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