COUNTRY PROGRAMME OF COOPERATION
2020-2024
GOVERNMENT OF MALI – UNICEF
BUILDING THE MALI CHILDREN DREAM OF

Undeniable progress has been made in the thirty years since Mali ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children are now half as likely to die before reaching the age of 5 as they were in 1989; children are increasingly attending primary school; and more and more children are being vaccinated against deadly diseases.

Nevertheless, the situation facing many girls and boys in Mali, especially those living in crisis-affected areas, remains serious. Children in Mali are being exposed to violence, including sexual violence, are at risk of recruitment by armed groups, and their access to education and healthcare is increasingly hampered.

UNICEF works closely with the Government of Mali, United Nations agencies, NGOs, the private sector and children and young people themselves to ensure they receive the support they need, through both development and humanitarian interventions.

Our joint programme aims to provide girls and boys with a complete package of services at each stage of their development: from birth to their entry into the workforce, supporting children and young people to become actors who can contribute positively to creating the Mali of tomorrow. UNICEF will continue to support government and partners to ensure that children and youth can fulfil their true potential, focusing on four key results for children: improving immunization coverage, reducing child malnutrition, improving the quality of education and reducing child marriage. It is an ambitious agenda for gender equality and positive transformation for children, which we will achieve together.

Children are Mali’s greatest resource.

Let’s be bold and creative in building the Mali they dream of.

Lucia Elmi, UNICEF Representative in Mali

Mali is home to an estimated 19.8 million people, more than half of whom are CHILDREN.1 Despite recent economic growth, it remains one of the poorest countries in the world.2

Mali is frequently affected by FLOODS AND DROUGHTS and has been affected by ARMED CONFLICT since 2012. Together, these crises are having an impact on the lives of 2 million children.3

IN THE EARLY YEARS (0 to 5 years), children in Mali are exposed to malnutrition and diseases stemming from lack of IMMUNIZATION and limited access to clean water. MALNUTRITION AND ILLNESS impact the mental, physical, social and emotional development of young children and can affect their ability to do well in school. Despite some progress in reducing child mortality, one in ten children never sees their fifth birthday.4

In 2018, 29 per cent of children under the age of 1 had not received their third dose of DPT3, while only 40 per cent of infants were exclusively breastfed during their first six months.

Many young children, particularly those in rural areas, also do not benefit from their very first right: that to an IDENTITY.5

Far too few children in Mali benefit from EARLY LEARNING: only 7 per cent of children aged 3 to 5 were enrolled in preschool in 2018.6 Meanwhile, 89 per cent of girls undergo female genital mutilation (FGM), with many undergoing the practice before age 5.7

AS CHILDREN GROW, they face numerous other challenges, including ACCESS TO SCHOOL. Around 1.2 million children of primary-school age (63 per cent girls) are out of school. The situation is aggravated by insecurity: in January 2020, over 1,100 schools were closed.
Even when children go to school, *quality of education* remains problematic and dropout rates are high, particularly among girls. Less than half of all school-going children complete primary school, and this number drops to only 44 per cent for girls.\(^8\)

**ADOLESCENTS** aged 13–18 also suffer from limited access to education and vocational learning opportunities which would increase their employability. Less than half of all adolescents are enrolled in lower secondary school (49 per cent), and even fewer girls. Fewer than half of secondary schools have improved drinking water, and only one in five have usable, separated latrines. The lack of separate facilities particularly impacts teenage girls, whose school attendance suffers, especially during menstruation.\(^9\)

**ONE IN TWO GIRLS IN MALI IS MARRIED WHILE STILL A CHILD.** Girls who marry before they turn 18 are less likely to remain in school, more likely to experience violence, and are at greater risk of death due to complications in pregnancy and childbirth. Child marriage also impacts girls’ mental well-being and their ability to fulfil their potential.

In addition, one out of three girls aged 15 to 19 reports having experienced *physical violence* and 10 per cent report having experienced *sexual violence*.\(^10\) Armed conflict has contributed to these worrying statistics.

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8 Ministry of Education, 2019 (2018 data)  
9 JMP, 2018 (2016 data)  
10 DHS, 2018

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**AZAHARA’S STORY**

Azahara, 4, attends a community preschool in Timbuktu supported by UNICEF.

Her mother, Fata, noticed a significant difference between Azahara and her older brother, who never attended preschool.

“Azahara, on the other hand, wants hygiene measures to be scrupulously observed at home. Azahara forced us to buy a handwashing device for the whole family!”

Early learning not only makes children curious and eager to learn, it prepares them for primary school later on. Children who benefit from early childhood education stay in school up to 1.8 years longer than children who do not.

Source: UNICEF, *A world ready to learn*, 2019

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**DJOULDE’S STORY**

“We girls were embarrassed when we needed to go to the toilet,” Djoulde, 14, from Mopti says. “Luckily, today there are separate latrines for boys and girls!” In Wédié, the lack of separate latrines had a severe impact on keeping children - especially girls - in school.

But thanks to UNICEF support, Djoulde’s school now has a new water point, separate latrines, and a hygiene club, of which Djoulde is president. Every Friday, she chairs a meeting of the club: 12 boys and girls whose role is to promote community awareness on the importance of good hygiene.

“Since then, children in the village are getting sick less often.

Every dollar invested in water and sanitation services procures USD 4.30 in return, thanks to reduced health care costs and increased productivity.

Source: WHO

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**RAMATA’S STORY**

Ramata works on an informal gold mine in Kayes region which is tens of kilometres away from the nearest health centre. Ever since measles cases sprang up in her community, she began feeling uneasy.

“A friend’s son suffered from measles. The mother almost lost her child.”

Fortunately for Ramata and her son Hachime, 11 months, mobile healthcare workers are bringing vaccines directly to mining areas, with support from UNICEF and partners.

“I am really happy to see vaccinators come find us on the gold mine sites. Today I found a little gold, but the biggest treasure of all was being able to vaccinate my child.”

Immunisation not only saves as many as three million lives every year, it returns 37 dollars for every dollar invested.

Source: UNICEF, WHO

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**FIND OUT MORE about AZAHARA here.**

**FIND OUT MORE about DJOULDE here.**

**FIND OUT MORE about RAMATA here.**
For the 2020-2024 country programme, the Government of Mali and UNICEF are adopting a LIFE-CYCLE APPROACH, which recognises the need to provide a comprehensive package of services that is gender-responsive and tailored to each stage of a child’s life. The new approach puts a strong emphasis on the SECOND DECADE OF LIFE and the EMPOWERMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE; strengthens the link between humanitarian and development work; reinforces systems at the community level and recognises ADOLESCENT GIRLS as key agents of transformation.

The programme is structured around five pillars:

1. The EARLY YEARS (0-5 years), which focuses on health, nutrition, birth registration, water and sanitation, protection, gender positive socialisation and early learning for school readiness;
2. The FORMATIVE YEARS (6-12 years), which focuses on safe, inclusive quality education, promoting positive gender norms and the prevention of violence and exploitation;
3. The SECOND DECADE (13-18 years), which focuses on adolescent empowerment, skills development, well-being, the promotion of child-friendly behaviours and positive gender norms, and the prevention of violence and exploitation;
4. An ENABLING ENVIRONMENT for promoting community resilience and gender equality;
5. PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS.

UNICEF in Mali also focuses on four KEY RESULTS FOR CHILDREN (KRCs) that can achieve real, long-lasting impact: immunization, the prevention of stunting, improved learning outcomes and ending child marriage.

The fruit of youth consultations, the country programme aligns with priorities identified by girls, boys and young people themselves. It contributes to the CREDD, the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union Agenda 2063. It is fully aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020–2024, the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018–2021, and the UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2018–2021. UNICEF also contributes to the common chapter of the strategic plans of UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women.

Vision of the 2020–2024

All girls and boys in Mali, particularly the most vulnerable and those affected by crisis, live and participate in resilient communities, enjoying a protective, nurturing and supportive environment that allows them to unlock their full potential.

Country Programme
The early years
0–5 years

BY 2024

- 3.5 MILLION GIRLS AND BOYS benefit from improved social services
- 80% OF CHILDREN <1 are REGISTERED within 30 days of birth
- 80% OF CHILDREN <1 are vaccinated with DPT3
- STUNTING is reduced by 3%

UNICEF supports the strengthening of national systems to deliver gender-responsive, quality HEALTH, NUTRITION, AND BIRTH REGISTRATION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AGED 0 TO 5.

By the end of 2024, UNICEF will have contributed to expanding access to and use of social services to at least 3.5 million girls and boys aged 0 to 5 years, including in humanitarian situations.

At least 80 per cent of children under 1 will have their birth registered and 80 per cent will receive DPT3 vaccination before their first birthday. Stunting will be reduced by 3 percentage points through the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding, improved infant and young child feeding practices, and improved access to water and sanitation services.

UNICEF will also strengthen existing community groups and ENGAGING COMMUNITIES AND PARENTS around early childhood education, positive gender socialisation and the prevention of FGM.

KEY PARTNERS are social sector ministries, United Nations agencies, bilateral and multilateral partners, the Global Partnership for Education, Gavi, the Global Fund, the Global Financing Facility, civil society organisations, training institutions and health professional associations. UNICEF will continue to work closely with WFP and the FAO to strengthen nutrition, food security and resilience, and with WHO on health system reform.

BOURELE’S STORY
Bourele Seyba, 26, is the proud mother of three young children in Kendie, Mopti. Alongside other mothers, Bourele attended parental education assemblies, where she learned positive practices such as exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, preparing nutrient-rich complementary foods starting at six months, and the importance of early learning, play, proper health and hygiene.

Parenting in Kendie village has now changed. “I learned about exclusive breastfeeding for the first time,” says Bourele. “It’s a new habit because before, right after birth, we would give children water to drink. We would also throw away the first milk, because we believed it wasn’t good for children.”

Every dollar invested in preventing malnutrition procures 16 dollars of return later on.

Source: Global Nutrition Report 2016

FIND OUT MORE about BOURELE here.
A prosperous farming village in Sikasso, Siéla’s strong economy had a negative impact on the schooling of children. Only 49 per cent of children were enrolled in school, with many children instead helping out on the family farm and tending livestock. Seven-year-old Oumou was never enrolled in school. But thanks to the school reinsertion strategy developed by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF, Oumou’s father participated in community sessions that helped him better appreciate the importance of sending Oumou to school. She’s now enrolled.

“I’m happy to be able to send Oumou to school,” he says. “And it’s out of the question to marry my daughter before she completes school.”

Providing girls with an extra year of schooling can increase individual wages by up to 20 per cent.

Source: Gender Equality and Development, World Development Report 2012

By the end of 2024, UNICEF will have contributed to increasing access to gender-responsive and comprehensive QUALITY BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES that are delivered in a protective, safe and clean environment, including in humanitarian situations, for at least 1.5 MILLION CHILDREN AGED 6 TO 12.

The programme will support the integration of more than 750,000 primary school age out-of-school children into formal education and provide alternative education opportunities where relevant. Approximately 1.5 million girls and boys will COMPLETE PRIMARY EDUCATION.

Every year, 500,000 crisis-affected children, including children on the move, will receive psychosocial support and/or access to quality education.

Provincial and district level systems will be strengthened to MAKE SCHOOLS SAFE and improve pupil retention, PREVENT PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE and exploitation and protect children on the move.

School-based WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE interventions will improve health and hygiene, promote equity and enable boys and girls to become agents of change for improving hygiene practices in homes and communities.

KEY PARTNERS include social sector ministries, CSOs, the Global Partnership for Education, WFP, UNESCO, bilateral and multilateral partners, communities, international and local NGOs, as well as members of the Education Partner Group.

By 2024
- 1.5 MILLION girls and boys have completed PRIMARY EDUCATION
- 750,000 out-of-school children are REINTEGRATED into school or alternative education
- 6,000 children affected by violence reached by SOCIAL SERVICES

The formative years
6–12 years

OUMOU’S STORY

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FIND OUT MORE about OUMOU here.
Tenin’s Story

15-year-old Tenin from Segou still remembers the day she bravely asked her school principal to convince her parents to not pursue an arranged marriage for her.

“TENIN’S STORY”

In Mali, early marriage is often seen as preventing pregnancy outside of wedlock and guaranteeing a girl a secure place in society. “I didn’t want to get married. I wanted to continue going to school,” says Tenin. That evening, the school principal spoke to Tenin’s parents. The marriage was cancelled and Tenin is still at school, dreaming of becoming a teacher.

By 2024, Universal secondary education for girls could virtually eliminate child marriage and substantially reduce the risk of early pregnancy. Source: Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls, World Bank 2018

By 2024, at least 850,000 ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND BOYS AGED 13 TO 18 will have accessed social services adapted to their needs and will have effectively participated in socioeconomic life. The programme will contribute to PREVENTING THE MARRIAGE of more than 115,000 girls, and approximately 850,000 girls and boys will COMPLETE LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION.

Basic health, education, and child protection services, as well as the judicial system, will have strengthened capacity to prevent and respond to harmful practices and improve learning outcomes and employability for young people. VOCATIONAL TRAINING and alternative learning opportunities will be scaled up for out-of-school adolescents.

Communities and adolescent boys and girls will have increased skills to protect children and themselves against violence, engage in child-friendly behaviours, and promote SOCIAL COHESION and POSITIVE GENDER NORMS. Adolescents will be empowered through a gender transformative approach to implement solutions to problems that affect them.

UNICEF will work with key ministries, community-based actors, youth organizations, UN agencies and bilateral and multilateral partners to develop innovative programmes to address the issue of YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY. Adolescents will be a special focus of collaboration with UNFPA and UN Women through the joint programmes to address child marriage and FGM, as well as the Spotlight Initiative to end all forms of violence against women and girls. UNICEF will continue to support the protection of children affected by armed conflict through co-leadership of the monitoring and reporting mechanism.

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Enabling environment for community resilience

By 2024, more girls and boys of all ages will live in INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES with strong systems that deliver equitable chances in life. The programme will contribute to reaching at least 650,000 children living in the most deprived households with a responsive social protection system.

In support of government decentralisation, UNICEF will strengthen local policies and foster GENDER-RESPONSIVE and CHILD-CENTRED PLANNING, budgeting and monitoring of social services.

The resilience of vulnerable communities will be reinforced through SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES, and decentralised services will be better equipped to respond rapidly to, and aid recovery from, natural disasters and other crises.

BASSAN’S STORY

In Mali, more than one child in four suffers from chronic malnutrition. Sikasso region has an even higher rate, despite being one of Mali’s most fertile regions. The district of Yorosso, however, became a stunning success story when it managed to halve chronic malnutrition in only two years. Yorosso’s success can be attributed to local leadership and a community-led approach involving all sectors – health, agriculture, education, water and sanitation.

“It’s not easy to promote behaviour change,” says Bassan, a role model mother who spreads knowledge of key nutrition, health and hygiene practices. “It takes time. But now, when I talk to mothers, I really feel they know that what I’m saying is true.”

Recognizing that malnutrition prevention is one of the best investments a country can make, the Government of Mali announced the doubling of its nutrition budget in 2019.

Source: Media reports

Programme effectiveness

Programme effectiveness supports the effective and efficient design, planning, management and coordination of the country programme at the central level and across UNICEF field offices.

FATOUMATA’S STORY

Fatoumata Touré was born and raised in Timbuktu, the ancient city in northern Mali once renowned as a centre of culture and scholarship. In 2018, she became a Back-to-School Child Ambassador for UNICEF, going door-to-door in her community to speak to parents about the importance of sending their children to school. She also went on partner radio stations, talking about the value of education, and participated in community meetings. Fatoumata estimates she visited around 50 families before the 2018/19 school year began.

“I think I was successful with 20 of them, but there are a lot of obstacles,” she says. “If I show a good example, I hope others will follow me.”

Investment in youth engagement, participation and advocacy not only helps young people reach their full potential, it accelerates global progress through improved standards of living and increased human capital.

Source: Generation Unlimited

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Inclusive and Resilient Communities

This pillar includes:

- programme coordination;
- management for results, including planning, monitoring and evaluation, improved information management and innovation;
- communication, advocacy and partnerships;
- coordination of subnational operations and humanitarian action;
- supporting programmes in the areas of gender, communication for development and operations.

Inclusive and Resilient Communities

Member States, international financial institutions and UN agencies will remain key strategic partners. South-South and triangular cooperation, partnerships at national and subnational levels and innovative financing will be explored to take results to scale, foster sustainability and unlock new resources. Strategic partnerships with the private sector will be expanded.

Using its role as the global voice for children, UNICEF will continue to position children and adolescents at the heart of national agenda through engagement with influential media. DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA will engage adolescent audiences and strengthen public support for children. Child-led advocacy will be amplified by scaling up child journalism and U-Report, a free messaging tool for youth participation.

UNICEF will support national and decentralised monitoring and evaluation systems, with a focus on making QUALITY DATA available to facilitate monitoring progress towards the realization of child rights.

Source: Generation Unlimited

FIND OUT MORE about BASSAN here.

FIND OUT MORE about FATOUMATA here.
MESSAGE FROM THE CHILDREN OF MALI

We, the children of Mali want to live in a country where all children benefit from all their rights. In our futures, we want to see a woman president, more trees, schools with toilets, safe spaces to play, computer rooms, food, safe travel and clean water. We wish to see a Mali where children's opinions are considered. We ask that in 30 years, when we celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, that the children of Mali no longer have to tell stories of friends suffering from disabilities, friends unable to go to school because of insecurity and violence, and friends being married off at 15 years old.

Declaration of children in Mali on World Children's Day 2019

THANK YOU

UNICEF would like to thank all partners that work in favour of a better future for children in Mali.

CREDITS

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