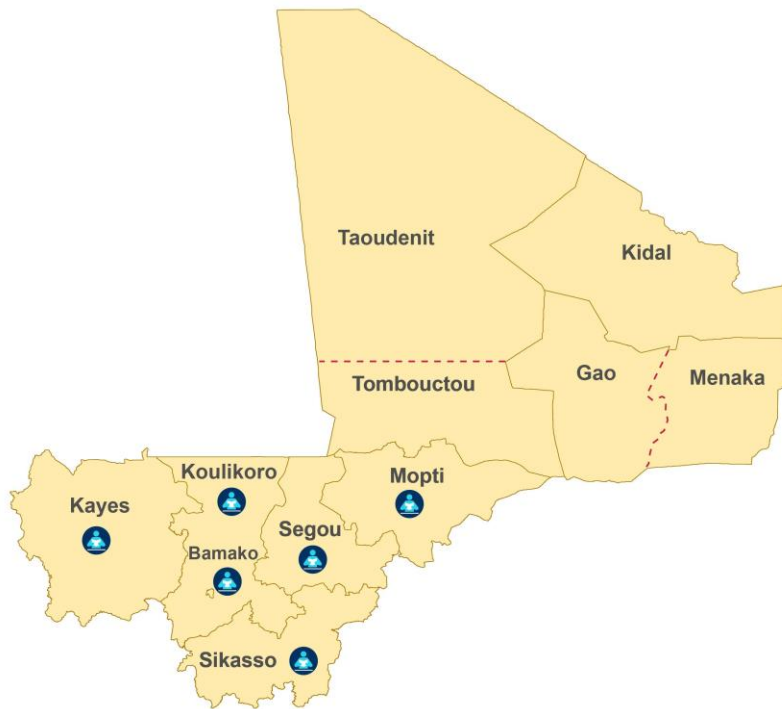




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USAID MALI EDUCATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Education in Mali is challenged by recurring and prolonged teachers' strikes, outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, and conflict resulting in frequent school closures throughout the country. With \$21 million in 2020 funding, USAID's education portfolio works to provide children and youth with equitable access to quality, relevant education. Priority goals include: 1) improved early grade reading outcomes for primary grades;

2) increased community engagement for more accountability and better learning outcomes; and 3) increased equitable access to relevant education services for under-served children and youth.

FUNDAMENTAL READING

Reading skills are fundamental for successful learning, but a 2015 early grade reading assessment reported that only two percent of second grade students in Mali could read at their grade level. Moreover, many primary schools don't have quality textbooks and learning materials. Teachers lack training in instructional reading practices. To address these challenges, USAID implements an early grade reading intervention in the Segou, Koulikoro, Bamako and Sikasso regions. The Selective Integrated Reading Activity (SIRA) focuses on improving the reading skills of over 295,327 students and 11,442 teachers in 5,691 schools. SIRA implements a range of interventions such as: training teachers in reading and writing instructional practices in mother tongue language (Bamanankan); use of classroom-based assessments, and; engaging parents, communities and private sector businesses to support early grade reading. The culture of reading is further encouraged through distribution of home reading kits, establishment of community libraries, and local radio campaigns. This initiative contributes to the Malian government's ability to expand and sustain reforms to improve quality in the education sector.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

USAID efforts to support Mali's decentralization process include a focus on public financial management, local governance, and improving the delivery of basic services in education. Technical assistance is provided at the national, regional, and local levels to improve the operational efficiency and management of financial resources. Training at the commune level on school management in a decentralized system reinforces the management capacity of local actors and increases children's access to education. Women receive training that builds their leadership capacity to participate in school management committees and local branches of the Association of Students' Mothers.

EDUCATION RECOVERY AND RETENTION

Through Girls Leadership and Empowerment through Education (GLEE), USAID supports the retention and transition of girls aged 10-18 years from primary to lower secondary school. Interventions include paying school fees, distributing uniforms, community mentorship, menstrual hygiene and building female-friendly latrines. With a regional focus in Mopti and Kayes, GLEE supports accelerated learning centers in places without formal classrooms and targets financial and socio-cultural barriers to safety in schools and communities. The primary goal is to reduce barriers to girls' access to school, improve knowledge of reproductive health, address issues of female genital mutilation, sexual violence, early/child marriage and pregnancy by stressing the overall importance of girls' education.

Prolonged conflict in Northern Mali, and increasingly in central and southern Mali, has weakened the educational system. Schools and educational equipment have been damaged or destroyed. Teachers and school administrators have abandoned their posts due to insecurity. To date, more than 1,200 schools in Northern Mali remain closed due to insecurity. USAID continues to seek the appropriate mix of interventions that expand education services in the north and other conflict affected areas.

EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Persons with disabilities often live on the margins of society, deprived of access to public services including education. USAID has worked to remove barriers to education for children with disabilities including improving accessibility of school environments, training teachers, providing assistive devices and medical care, and training family members to ensure that children with disabilities will enroll and stay in school.