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ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RIGHTS REPORT MALI



- 3** GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
- 4** QUALITY EDUCATION
- 8** DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
- 16** PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
- 17** PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

SUMMARY

How can the European Union (EU) better contribute to building an enabling space for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Mali? How can the EU support the progressive realization of Economic and Social Rights - that is to say Freedom of Association and the Right to Organise, Decent Work and the Right to Social Protection for all - in connection with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The SOLIDAR Network is active on these themes in Mali through its member and partner organisations. During a process led by Movimiento por la Paz (MPDL), our Network has held several meetings aimed at discussing the current situation of Economic and Social Rights in Mali, as well as define the modalities of a solid partnership between the EU and CSOs in the promotion of these rights.

This publication presents the main results of these exchanges and is structured around two priority axes:

1. Building an Enabling Space for Civil Society Organizations and Human Rights Defenders (SDGs 16 and 17)



2. Promoting Decent Work and Social Protection for all (SDGs 3, 4 and 8)



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1. ABOUT THE SOLIDAR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS MONITOR

In 2015, all United Nations member states signed up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a global commitment to transform our current model of economic development into one based on respect for human rights and the environment. In 2017 - with the aim of promoting policy coherence for development - the new European Consensus on Development announced the alignment of the development activities of the EU and its member states with the 2030 Agenda.

According to SOLIDAR, the 2030 Agenda constitutes a powerful framework to:

- Promote a model of sustainable development at the service of the greatest number and not of the few, making the full realization of human and environmental rights its main objective;
- Ensure the progressive realization of economic and social rights, namely decent work, social protection and freedom of association.

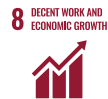
The Economic and Social Rights Monitoring Report (ESRM) is a tool developed by SOLIDAR members and partners within the framework of the EU-funded program “Organizing International Solidarity” (OIS).¹ It aims to collect the views and recommendations of civil society organizations (CSOs) on the contribution of national and European policies and programs to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal, and especially of:



SDG 3: Good health and Wellbeing



SDG 4: Quality Education



SDG 8: Decent Work and economic growth



SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions



SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals

The ESRM aims to engage in a structured dialogue with the EU over the progressive realization of economic and social rights and the Agenda 2030, and to contribute to the EU Programming for the period 2021-2027, by paying special attention to EU and national contributions to the promotion of (1) an enabling environment for CSOs and Human Rights Defenders and (2) Decent Work and Social Protection for all.

¹ A presentation of the OIS programme is available at: <https://prezi.com/view/9zuxuivqUSD3w1pGJSz>



2. MALI - COUNTRY BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Population ²	19,658,031 million (2019)
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ³	€16 billion (2019)
Human Development Index (HDI) and rank ⁴	0.427 (184th on 189 countries)
Total public spending on social protection, including health (percentage of GDP) ⁵	4.9% (2010)
Indicative total budget of the Malian NIP ⁶	€615 million
Sustainable Development Score (current) ⁷	51.39/100 (156th on 193 countries)

² <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=ML>

³ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/isdb_results/factsheets/country/overview_mali_en.pdf

⁴ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/MLI>

⁵ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_604882.pdf

⁶ [https://www.oecd.org/fr/cad/BD4.%20PIN%2011%C3%A8me%20FED%20MALI%20\(FR\).pdf](https://www.oecd.org/fr/cad/BD4.%20PIN%2011%C3%A8me%20FED%20MALI%20(FR).pdf)

⁷ <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/MLI>

The Human Development Index ranks Mali as one of the least developed countries in the world. Mali is characterised by an undiversified, low-income economy based primarily on the exports of raw materials like gold and cotton (86% of exports), and is thus dependent on commodity prices fluctuations.⁸ Extreme poverty currently affects 42.7% of the population, and is concentrated in the rural areas of southern Mali (90%), where the population density is the highest. High population growth (5.9 children per woman as of 2019) also poses a major challenge for the country - together with climate change - in terms of food security and the country's agricultural sector.⁹

During the 2012-2013 period, Mali experienced the worst political and institutional crisis of its history, linked to the occupation of the northern region of the country by Islamist armed groups.¹⁰ During the second half of the year 2013, a new president and parliament were elected, and peace negotiations were concluded with the two rebel coalitions in 2015. Nonetheless, security today remains fragile and continuous attacks by armed groups take place on UN peacekeepers, the Malian army and civilians, mainly in the north and central regions of Mali.¹¹

In December 2011, the government adopted the national development strategy 'Stratégie du Croissance et de Réduction de la Pauvreté' (CSCR),¹² updated after the post-crisis elections held in 2013, with the adoption by the new government of the 2013-2014 'Plan pour

la Relance Durable du Mali' (PRED)¹³ aimed at helping mitigate the consequences of the crisis, and the 2013-2018 Government Action Plan (PAG).¹⁴

The EU-Mali 2014-2020 National Indicative Plan (NIP) - financed within the context of the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) - builds on the objectives of the CSCR and was agreed parallelly to and in view of the national development analysis and priorities for cooperation outlined by the EU development partners in the 2014-2018 document on EU Joint Programming in Mali.¹⁵ In particular, the NIP, with an indicative budget of €615 million, defined what would be the sectors of cooperation with Mali and their related objectives (see table below).

In addition, the NIP also dedicated €25 million (4% of the total budget) to supporting civil society, based on the priorities defined within the 2018-2020 EU Roadmap for Civil Society Engagement in Mali.¹⁶

In April 2016, the Malian government adopted an updated and unifying framework of national policies and strategies for development, namely the 2016-2018 'Cadre Stratégique pour la Relance Économique et le Développement Durable' (CREDD),¹⁷ formulated in collaboration with the EU development partners, and expressing the country's 2025 objectives. Concomitantly, the EU Technical and Financial Partners (TFP) launched the 2016-2018 Mali 'Country Joint Assistance

8 <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/west-africa/mali/mali-economic-outlook>

9 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/mali/overview>

10 <https://www.maliapd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Programmation-Conjointe-de-IUE-au-Mali-oct14.pdf>

11 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/mali/overview>

12 <http://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC147141/>

13 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---program/documents/genericdocument/wcms_561057.pdf

14 <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5b3f413b4.pdf>

15 <https://www.maliapd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Programmation-Conjointe-de-IUE-au-Mali-oct14.pdf>

16 <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/joint-programming-tracker/mali>

17 <https://www.maliapd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/CREDD-2016-2018.pdf>

COOPERATION SECTOR	OBJECTIVE	BUDGET (€615 million total)
1. State reform and consolidation of rule of law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce the efficacy, the credibility and the legitimacy of the institutions in order to consolidate the rule of law Reinforce the reforms that allow for the relaunch of the Malian economy (including improving the management of public finances and the investment and business environment) 	€280 Million (46%)
2. Rural development and food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intensify production in a sustainable way and valorise agricultural products Structurally and permanently reduce food insecurity and malnutrition Reinforce the governance of the agricultural sector and of food and nutritional security 	€100 Million (16%)
3. Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the improvement of the learning of young Malian and reinforce the efficacy of the education system. 	€100 Million (16%)
5. Road Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the opening up of the Northern regions Preserve the road infrastructure patrimony while creating employment 	€110 Million (18%)

Strategy' (JAS II)¹⁸ - which followed and drew from the lessons of the pre-crisis JAS I (2008-2011), and which was aimed at improving the effectiveness of aid, rebuilding the state and helping Mali recover from the crisis by supporting the priorities identified within CREDD.

Last year, CREDD 2019-2023 was adopted by the government,¹⁹ detailing Mali's long term vision for 2040 and aligning the country to the Sustainable Development Goal Agenda and the ambitions of the African Union's Agenda 2063. It specifies five specific axes on which Mali will seek to concentrate its work on in the next twenty years:

1. Consolidation of democracy and improvement of governance;
2. Restoration of peace, security and reinforcing of 'living together';
3. Inclusive growth and structural transformation of the economy;
4. Environmental protection and reinforcing of resilience to climate change;
5. Development of human capital.

In light of this context and the new development objectives defined by Mali, SOLIDAR's members and partners in the field highlight the following themes to be prioritised in the next EU Geographical Programming priorities (2021-2027) in Mali:

- Keep strengthening Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), building on the past and current positive work done;
- Promoting Decent Work and Social Protection for all.

¹⁸ https://www.maliapd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/SCAP-II-2016-2018_Version-Anglaise.pdf

¹⁹ <https://www.maliapd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Version-Finale-CREDD-2019-2023.pdf>



3. BUILDING AN ENABLING SPACE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOs) AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS (HRDs)

An ‘enabling space for CSOs’ is the set of conditions that allows civil society and individuals to organize, participate and communicate freely and without discrimination, and in so doing, influence the political and social structures around them (CIVICUS).²⁰ The rights essential to civic space - the rights to freedom of association, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression - must be respected both in the context of the values, norms and attitudes of society, as well as in the legal framework, regulatory environment, access to finance and meaningful participation in decision-making of states and other relevant entities.

The 2012 EU Communication entitled ‘The Roots of Democracy and Sustainable Development: Europe’s Engagement with Civil Society in External Relations’²¹ confirmed the EU’s desire to establish a stronger and more strategic dialogue with civil society organizations and to involve EU delegations in determining the path for CSOs’ participation in policy-making processes.

Moreover, Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) as individuals must also be able to accomplish their mission safely and with integrity.

²⁰ <https://monitor.civicus.org/FAQs/>

²¹ https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/burundi/5969/roots-democracy-and-sustainable-development-europes-engagement-civil-society-external-relations_en



Repression, censorship, threats or defamation against HRDs, whether they come from states or private actors, must be abolished.²² Support for HRDs is thus also an integral part of the European Union's external human rights policy. In situations where the state cannot guarantee the protection of HRDs, or when the state is the oppressor, the international community must intervene through powerful mechanisms of protection for HRDs.

The existence of an environment conducive to CSOs and HRDs is, finally, also a necessary condition for the achievement of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely Goal 16 - 'Promote the advent of peaceful and inclusive societies for the purposes of sustainable development' - and 17 - 'Partnerships for the achievement of the goals.'

3.1 Building a favourable environment for CSOs and Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in Mali: an overview of the existing provisions

Fundamental freedoms and protection of HRDs

As a member of the United Nations, Mali has ratified several UN conventions on the protection of human and fundamental rights, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.²³ Mali is also a member of the African Union and has ratified the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. At the national level, organizations for the defense of human rights exist, such as the 'Association Malienne des Droits de l'Homme' (AMDH) and the 'Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme' (CNDH), although their effectiveness remains limited due to the influence of public authorities on the functioning of these structures as well as their lack of sufficient human and material resources.

With the promulgation by the President of the Republic of Mali of Law 2018-003 'on human rights defenders' in January 2018,²⁴ Mali became the third African country to strengthen its legal framework protecting Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), after the Ivory Coast in June 2014 and Burkina Faso in June 2017. The law adopts, in its article 2, a broad definition of HRDs as enshrined in the United Nations declaration on defenders.²⁵ Also, the law enshrines in its article 16 the principle of non-refoulement of any defender to a country where they risk torture and inhuman and degrading treatment.²⁶

In regards to freedom of thought, expression and assembly, these are guaranteed by the Malian Constitution.²⁷ Nonetheless, there have been sporadic reports of censorship, self-censorship, and threats against journalists, especially during election times. As detailed by Freedom House, "in January 2018, for example, a number of journalists were

²² The Declaration on Human Rights Defenders adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution A / RES / 53/144 recognizes the "valuable work of individuals, groups and associations in contributing to the effective elimination of all violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of peoples and individuals", without discriminating between paid or voluntary work, or between professional and non-professional activity. Available at: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/53/144>

²³ <http://www.claiminghumanrights.org/mali.html>

²⁴ https://www.ishr.ch/sites/default/files/documents/mali_loi_relative_aux_ddh.pdf

²⁵ <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/53/144>

²⁶ <https://www.ishr.ch/news/mali-le-mali-devient-le-3eme-etat-africain-se-doter-dune-loi-de-protection-pour-les-defenseurs>

²⁷ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Mali_1992.pdf?lang=en



chased off by police as they attempted to cover a banned opposition demonstration. The following month, three journalists with France's TV Monde were arrested and interrogated upon their arrival at the Bamako airport, though they were released without charge. In August, Bamako authorities unilaterally closed Radio Renouveau FM, citing allegations of inciting hatred, after the host of one of its programs alleged that Keïta and his allies had committed electoral fraud and had engaged in vote-buying.²⁸ Moreover, opinion leaders and CSO members are also often victims of mistreatment due to their work, an illustrative example of this being the arrest of Clement Dembele, leader of an anti-corruption movement in Mali, for having publicly denounced the system of governance of public funds.²⁹

Legislative, regulatory and participatory framework for CSOs

The SOLIDAR Network in Mali reports that the country continues to **experience progress in terms of the role and legislative framework for operation of civil society organisations**. In 2004, Law 04-038 was passed, which protects and promotes the work of CSOs.³⁰ In recent years, moreover, CSOs have enjoyed equal opportunities when it comes to calls for project proposals, as well as they have improved their compliance with partners' provisions and they have adopted internal guidelines to improve their own functioning. While CSOs remain exempt from taxes due to the non-profit nature of their work, new regulations have been adopted which prevent CSOs from accessing EU funding or claim tax benefits if they are not registered and recognised by the state. Finally, the administrative process to acquire funding for civil society organisations has been simplified, which has favoured the creation of a multitude of CSOs in Mali.

²⁸ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/mali/freedom-world/2019>

²⁹ <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20200511-mali-arrestation-cl%C3%A9ment-demb%C3%A9le-%C3%A9-lutte-anticorruption>

³⁰ <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/97007/114925/F-1897106720/MLI-97007.pdf>

As for CSOs' political participation, it should be noted that with the support of the PAOSC program (Support Program for Civil Society Organizations) funded by the EU in 2007, Malian CSOs have also been able to set up forums and platforms for public consultation and debate. Today, civil society is structured based on three levels, the first one comprising grassroots associations, the second one NGOs, and the third one platforms. The consequences of this is that civil society is now better organised and able to pursue advocacy actions and get itself heard. In fact, our Network reports that political participation of CSOs has substantially improved over the years, with more organisations involved in the fight against bad governance and corruption in the country. However, the SOLIDAR Network in Mali underlines that **better coordination and work plans are still needed by CSOs in order for their actions and efforts to become more effective**.

3.2 Capacity Building Opportunities for Malian CSOs

The right of CSOs to seek out and secure all types of resources is a necessary condition for the full exercise of freedom of association. This primarily involves access to funding, public and private, from national or international sources, in a way that ensures the sustainability of the organization; moreover, it requires the existence of tax legislation adapted to the constraints of CSOs and access to adequate training for CSO staff. Combined, these elements allow CSOs to fully fulfill their role as independent agents of progress.



The SOLIDAR Network in Mali reports that local and national public funding mechanisms for CSOs do exist in the country, with ministerial departments periodically launching calls for proposals for civil society organisations. They point out, however, that the funding opportunities available are often not up to expectations, due to them being opened very frequently and being of a short-term nature. Appropriate government training opportunities also exist through the FAFPA program ('Fonds d' appui à la formation professionnelle et à l'apprentissage')³¹ operated by the Ministry of Employment and Professional Training, which can be accessed at the request of CSOs who express training needs in specific areas.

Nonetheless, the majority of funding and support for CSOs comes from international donors, such as USAID, Canada, Switzerland and EU countries, who provide resources to CSOs for rapid-impact projects in different sectors of activity, such as market gardening, hiring of small and large ruminants, development of hotels and small businesses. In addition, the SOLIDAR Network highlights that some EU countries and especially Sweden and Norway are also providing extensive support to CSOs.

Of all international actors, the EU continues to be the main provider of funding and training for CSOs in Mali. In 2017, the EU signed a roadmap for engagement with civil society in the country, covering the 2018-2020 period,³² and establishing the main priorities for cooperation in this realm, which include:

- Developing CSOs capacities, by supporting the efforts of CSOs to reinforce their independence, internal governance, transparency and accountability;

³¹ <http://www.fafpa-mali.org/index.php/fr/>

³² <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/joint-programming-tracker/mali>



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- Ensuring the political participation of CSOs, through the creation of national institutional spaces for political dialogue in the different sectors covered by the national development strategy (CREDD) and through CSOs' participation in the implementation of the Peace Treaty;
- Creating a support fund for CSOs;
- Supporting new civil society actors, such as bloggers and social networks.

In recent years, the EU has operated mainly through the PASOC I and PASOC II programs, which have now been replaced by the HIBISCUS program ('Harmonisation et innovation au bénéfice des initiatives de la société civile d'utilité sociale') financed through the 11th EDF.³³

Our Network welcomes EU and member states' efforts in this realm and confirms that their initiatives and programs are increasingly strengthening Malian CSOs and promoting their work. However, our members and partners underline that the conditions of access to funding remain challenging, and the same is true for the time period in which the programs are expected to be implemented and executed, that is often quite limited. Moreover, they also point out a lack of human resources for projects implemented by the various partners, as well as they highlight that it would be desirable that funding be granted directly to beneficiary CSOs in order to ensure them autonomy in the management of their own project.

³³ <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/3/2017/FR/C-2017-8450-F1-FR-ANNEX-2-PART-1.PDF>

3.3 Promoting an enabling environment and a strong civil society in Mali: SOLIDAR Network's recommendations

The SOLIDAR Network in Mali reports of good steps forward having been made by the EU towards ensuring a truly inclusive and participatory political consultation process with civil society, for example through the organisation, by the EUD, of meetings on the availability of trust funds and workshops to present EU programs and projects. Nonetheless, our Network also signals the necessity to improve the publicity of these activities as well as conditions of access. Drawing on the elements reviewed so far in regard to Mali's provisions on the protection and promotion of an enabling environment for HRDs and CSOs and citizens' participation to public decision making, and in line with the Von der Leyen's Commission geopolitical priorities³⁴ - especially its commitment to supporting civil society around the world by guaranteeing its involvement in decision-making processes, as well as its commitment to safeguarding fundamental rights - SOLIDAR recommends the EU to dedicate special efforts to the following issues within the context of its development cooperation work in Mali: Improve the accessibility and efficacy of the HIBISCUS program³⁵ by:

- simplifying funding application procedures;
 1. increasing the duration and easing timing requirements for implementation and execution of projects, tailoring them to the different areas of intervention;
 2. increasing the volume of funding and offering human resources support to project partners;

3. strengthening the capacity building component of the program;
 4. assigning funding directly to beneficiary CSOs in order to ensure them autonomy in the management of their own project;
- Support the government of Mali by providing advice and funding to improve the length and ambition of programs and projects for CSOs;
 - Ease conditions of access to EUD events aimed at CSOs.



³⁴ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/policy-forum-development/wiki/virtual-regional-meetings-july>

³⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/3/2017/FR/C-2017-8450-F1-FR-ANNEX-2-PART-1.PDF>



4. PROMOTING DECENT WORK AND SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR ALL

According to the definition of the International Labor Organization (ILO), Decent Work consists of the combination of four elements: the free choice of work, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue.

As for the right to social protection, this is a necessary precondition not only for the achievement of Decent Work but also for development more generally. Indeed, social protection is an essential tool to reduce and prevent poverty, social inequality, exclusion and insecurity, to promote equality of opportunity and outcomes, as well as to support the transition from informal to formal employment. By adopting Recommendation No. 202 on social protection floors (2012),³⁶ the member states of the ILO have committed to guaranteeing every human being's access to:

- The security of an income throughout life, in the form of various social transfers (in cash or in kind);
- The availability, affordability and quality of a set of essential services, including health care and education.

- All these commitments have been upheld by the UN 2030 Agenda, and namely by SDG 1.3 'nationally appropriate social protection systems for all, including floors', SDG 3 'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages', SDG 4 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' and SDG 8 'Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all'.

In Mali, a declaration on the national social protection policy was adopted by the government in 2002, which recognised social protection as a right for all citizens and presented as its objective that of gradually building a system of protection against socio-economic risks for all citizens, and especially for disadvantaged groups. This policy was implemented through the National Action Plan for the Extension of Social Protection of 2004-2009 and 2011-2015 respectively. More recently, the Ten-Year Health and Social Development Plan (PDDSS) for the period 2014-2023 - operationalised through the two quinquennial plans PRODESS III and IV (Programme de Développement Socio-Sanitaire) - was adopted, whose aim is that of developing solidarity and

³⁶ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_165750.pdf

social protection through the strengthening of social assistance, the promotion of social businesses, and the creation of wealth and income for poor and vulnerable populations, especially those living from agricultural activities.³⁷

4.1 Rights at work in Mali

As a member of the ILO, Mali has ratified 34 International Labour Conventions, including the 7 fundamental ones³⁸. Some of the most recent ratifications include C183 on Maternity Protection (2008) and C44 on Tripartite Consultations Relating to International Labor Standards (2016).³⁹

Workers-employers relations in the country are governed by Law No. 92-020 of September 23, 1992,⁴⁰ which explains the nature of the labour code, and gives provisions for worker's rights and different forms of contracting. This legislation was amended and updated in 2017 by Law No. 2017/021, containing new regulations relating to the principle of non-discrimination and equal remuneration, the prohibition of forced labor, apprenticeship, suspension and termination of the employment contract, weekly rest and negotiation and conclusion of a collective agreement.⁴¹

Malian labour law also guarantees interprofessional minimum wages for workers, which can be established through collective agreement, or, in the absence of the latter, can be fixed by professional categories.



Since 2016, the minimum monthly salary has been fixed at 40,000 CFA Francs (about €61).⁴² Labour inspectors - which operate on behalf of the Ministry of Labour - ensure compliance with labour law and minimum wages provisions, whose violations can result in a fine of 10,000 to 18,000 CFA Francs (approx. €15 to €27). For repeat offenders, the penalty is 20,000 to 50,000 CFA Francs (approx. €30 to €76), and/or imprisonment for a period of six to ten days.⁴³



³⁷ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---ilo-brasilia/documents/publication/wcms_709907.pdf

³⁸ ILO fundamental labour standards: freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining (Conventions Nos. 87 and 98); elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor (Conventions Nos. 29 and 105); effective abolition of child labor (Conventions Nos. 138 and 182); elimination of discrimination in respect to employment and occupation (Conventions Nos. 100 and 111).

³⁹ https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11200:0::NO::P11200_INSTRUMENT_SORT,P11200_COUNTRY_ID:2,103081

⁴⁰ <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WEBTEXT/32274/64878/F92MLI01.htm>

⁴¹ https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=104701&p_count=11&p_classification=01

⁴² <https://votresalaire.org/mali/salaire/salaire-minimum>

⁴³ <https://wageindicator.org/labour-laws/labour-law-around-the-world/minimum-wages-regulations/minimum-wages-regulations-mali>

As reported by the SOLIDAR Network on the ground, to date, four main trade union centers exist in the country - the National Union of Workers of Mali (UNTM), the Trade Union Confederation of Workers of Mali (CSTM), the Malian Confederation of Workers (CMT) and the Democratic Trade Union Center of Workers of Mali (CDTM). Particularly in the field of agriculture, the actors and professionals of the sector have come together in different organizations called 'interprofessions' (e.g. of Rice, Cotton, Mango, Cashew Nut) which defend workers' rights and interests with the authorities.

Despite the existence of legal provisions for minimum salary and of trade unions, the majority of Malian workers nonetheless continues to lack the security of a stable income and the guarantee of decent employment. The reason for this is that most of the workforce is employed in the informal economy: based on 2010 statistics, 88% of workers operate in the **informal economy** (86.4% of men and 90.6% of women), the bulk of which in agriculture.⁴⁴ The Malian economy remains in fact largely dominated by the primary sector, with agriculture (especially millet and sorghum cultivation, followed by rice, maize and cotton) and livestock corresponding to more than 40% of GDP in 2013-14. The secondary sector is instead mostly underdeveloped, accounting for only 17% of GDP in the same period, and mainly including products from mining, construction and public works, textile industries, food processing and electricity and water. The tertiary sector, on the other hand, contributed 35% of GDP in 2013-14, and is dominated by the sub-sectors of commerce, transport and telecommunications, and public administration.⁴⁵

In recent years, frequent episodes of drought combined with rising food prices and the instability that followed the 2012 conflicts have caused great difficulty in accessing food for Malian populations and a reduction in their purchasing power. Chronic food and nutrition insecurity interests especially the southern regions, where its prevalence affects up to 40% of the population, although the rest of the country also remains a victim of the phenomenon.⁴⁶

In light of this, the SOLIDAR Network highlights the need to put in place social protection policies to support and protect people and workers in the informal economy from insecurity, while also encouraging employers to declare and regularize the work of their employees.

This is especially important as not only is the lack of regularisation harmful to workers, but also to the revenues of the state: as reported by the 2020 African Economic Outlook, Mali's tax revenue is in fact very weak (14.3% of GDP), below the ECOWAS' (Economic Community of West African States) standard of 20%,⁴⁷ one of the main reasons for this being "the existence of an underground economy that remains outside the government's control and whose cash flows are barely or inefficiently accounted for," as well as "difficulty raising revenues (sales and other taxes, including income tax) among a mostly illiterate population" and "a low proportion of educated and employed individuals able to file computerized tax returns."⁴⁸ A reform of the informal economy is thus overdue in Mali, and a more efficient operationalization of the tax and contribution collection system is desirable to guarantee the provision of public services.

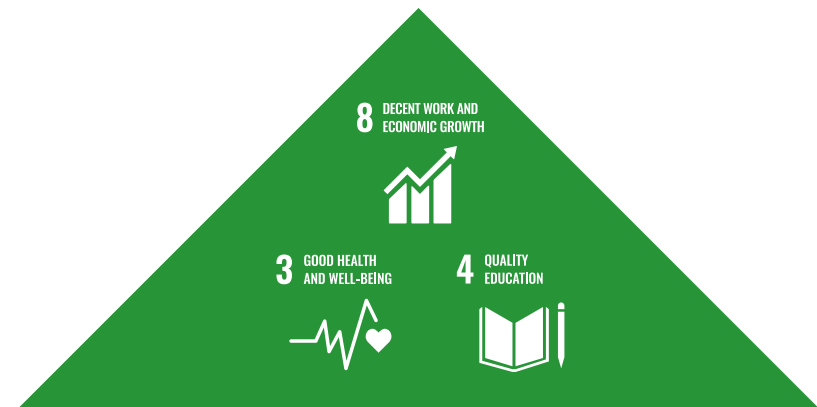
44 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---ilo-brasilvia/documents/publication/wcms_709907.pdf

45 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---ilo-brasilvia/documents/publication/wcms_709907.pdf

46 <https://www.maliapd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Programmation-Conjointe-de-IUE-au-Mali-oct14.pdf>

47 <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/west-africa/mali/mali-economic-outlook>

48 <https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/stories-histoires/2019/mali-sigtas.aspx?lang=eng>



CASE STUDY: Building a micro-dam to improve food security and agricultural production

Frequent drought, armed violence and widespread insecurity have contributed to a progressive deterioration of livelihoods in Mali. Poverty is on the rise and smallholder farmers suffer from higher-than-average poverty rates due and degradation, lack of fertilizers, and post-harvest losses.⁴⁹

SOLIDAR member Movimento por la Paz (MPDL), in collaboration with the World Food Program (WFP), participated in the realisation of a successful initiative to increase agricultural production and improve the food security of vulnerable agro-pastoral households in Mali.

The initiative consisted in the realisation of a micro-dam in the village of Diéoura in the south western part of the Circle of Diéma in the Kayes region of Mali. The beneficiaries were selected based on a targeting approach carried out according to the HEA (Household Economy Analysis), which allowed to identify the poorest households. In total, 1,877 poor and very poor households - a population of 11,259 inhabitants - will benefit from the project.

A concerted approach was taken to realise the initiative, with the strong involvement of all stakeholders. A land agreement was signed between the parties involved to define the optimal conditions for valorising the lowland after development, and the management committee ensured strong community mobilization.

⁴⁹ <https://www.wfp.org/countries/mali>



View of a NERICA L1 rice plot on site. Source: MPDL



NERICA L1 rice plot on the site. Source: MPDL

The project was facilitated by WFP's support in cash and food and its success was possible thanks to the expertise of MPDL, which intervened through a synergic approach allowing to take into account a variety of issues - such as food security, health, nutrition, monitoring and evaluation, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) - in the context of its realisation.

In order to optimise people's capacity to benefit from the initiative, a series of trainings was given to beneficiaries on different themes, including on technical issues - itinerary of rice cultivation, composting, reforestation, food hygiene and the environment, technical maintenance and monitoring of facilities - as well as on techniques of prevention and detection of malnourishment, nutritional education and demonstrations based on local products.

The construction of the dam and the realisation of the project have allowed for the exploitation of about 7 hectares of land by women's groups in Diéoura and the cultivation of four different varieties of rice in the first year alone. The final objective will be to achieve the exploitation of 70 hectares of land for rice production, market gardening and fishing, for the benefit of the most vulnerable households.

In addition to rice production, the site was also stocked with fish, allowing communities to produce large quantities of carps and catfish.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH





Discrimination and women's rights at work

The principle of non-discrimination is entrenched within Mali's Constitution, which also guarantees the right of every individual to choose freely their profession. The labour code explicitly prohibits discrimination at work based on race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national discendance, social origin or disability.

If such laws exist on one side, on the other the labour code still contains provisions that state that women cannot perform the same work or tasks as men. In this regard, the Women's Employment Act presents many restrictions: for example "women may not be employed in any night work in factories, mines and quarries, construction sites, especially on roads and in buildings and workshops and their outbuildings." It is also "forbidden to employ women to visit, lubricate, clean or repair machines or mechanisms in operation, or in rooms where there are machines operated by hand or by a mechanical motor, the dangerous parts of which are not covered with a suitable protective device." Finally, women can not be employed for transport on tricycles with pedals.⁵⁰

Beside exclusions from a range of professions and limitations imposed on their ability to work, women, who mostly work already in precarious jobs in the informal sector, also remain subject to pay discrimination: 70% of them earn a salary below the minimum wage, while only 30% of men is in the same condition.⁵¹

Furthermore, women's access to land and property remains under the control of men, especially in rural areas.⁵²

⁵⁰ <https://votresalaire.org/mali/droit-du-travail/traitement-equitable>

⁵¹ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/MLI/INT_CEDAW_IFN_MLI_24204_F.pdf

⁵² *Ibidem*

⁵³ <https://www.antislavery.org/slavery-mali-current-unrest/>

⁵⁴ <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1105216/download>

⁵⁵ https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/WCMS_486616/lang--en/index.htm

⁵⁶ https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child_labor_reports/tda2018/Mali.pdf

Slavery, Forced and Child Labour

Slavery was abolished in Mali in the 1960s and is prohibited by the Constitution.⁵³ Forced and child labour are also prohibited by Malian labour law, which sets the minimum working age at 15 (since 2017) - although the Labor Code allows children between the ages of 12 and 14 to perform domestic or light seasonal work, as long as it does not impede school attendance and it does not exceed 4.5 hours of work per day - and at 18 for hazardous work.⁵⁴ Mali is also an under-signatory of the ILO Conventions on forced labour (C029 and C105) and the elimination of child labour and protection of children and young persons (C138 and C182), and in 2016 it became the third African country to ratify the ILO Protocol of 2014 on forced labour.⁵⁵

Despite the existence of these provisions, slavery, forced and child labour remain a major problem in the country. When it comes to child labour, it was estimated, as of 2018, that about 1 in 4 children between 4 and 15 are at work in Mali, and that 13.4% of children aged 7 to 14 are both working and attending school.⁵⁶

As reported by the Malian anti-slavery organisation Gambana, moreover, in parts of the country, feudal societies – like the Soninké, Malinké and Fulani – are traditionally divided into social castes. In this system, some are born to be nobles, chiefs, artisans or storytellers, while others – an estimated 200,000 people – are born to be slaves. The NGO also reports that "in some Soninké villages, the lives of enslaved people are tightly restricted.





Source: MPDL



They are not permitted to become mayor, participate in village meetings, own land or marry outside their caste. During celebrations such as weddings or births, they're expected to fetch wood and water, and slaughter the animals.”⁵⁷

In northern Mali, a large number of children, especially of the Bellah community (also known as black Tuaregs), are subject to hereditary slavery - which is not criminalised in cases which do not involve the recruitment, transport, transfer, harboring, or receipt of a person. While some are born into slavery, others are born free, but remain “in dependent status through which they are forced to work with their parents for their former masters in exchange for food, money, and lodging.” Child slaves perform agricultural or domestic labor and are often sexually abused, and some, particularly those of Songhai ethnicity, work in debt bondage in the northern salt mines of Taoudenni. In western and southern Mali, moreover, children are involved in artisanal gold mining and are “exposed to toxic substances and extreme temperatures, transport heavy loads, and work long hours.”⁵⁸

Furthermore, while begging is officially banned in Mali, more than 6,000 child beggars have been identified in the streets of Bamako alone. Usually, these children are exploited by adults, including Koranic school teachers, who force them to go begging or to work in the fields and bring back some money, under threat of being violently punished if they do not succeed. “More than 90% of street children are boys, who usually live in gangs, sleeping in public buildings or under bridges. Many of them come from large families who have come to try their luck in the city, or are orphans, and are often victims of violence and drug addicts.”⁵⁹

Despite the international and regional agreements signed by Mali, child trafficking also remains a problem in the country: thousands of Malian children are sold and exploited in the cotton, coffee and cocoa fields of neighboring countries such as the Ivory Coast and Ghana, while at the same time boys from Guinea and Burkina Faso are subjected to forced labor in artisanal gold mines, and women and girls from other West African countries, particularly Nigeria, are exploited in prostitution and sex trafficking throughout Mali (according to

57 <https://africanarguments.org/2020/04/08/in-fighting-slavery-in-mali-some-favour-dialogue-others-confrontation/>
58 https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child_labor_reports/tda2018/Mali.pdf
59 <https://www.humanium.org/fr/mali/>

estimates, 5000 Nigerian girls are victims of this trade).⁶⁰ In 2018, the Malian government took some steps to combat human trafficking, and finalized the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking of Persons, allocating a budget of \$10 million over 5 years for its implementation.⁶¹

Finally, although the incidence of child soldiers has decreased in recent years, children continue to be forcibly recruited and trained by non-state armed groups. In 2018, the Directorate for the Promotion of Children and Family (DPCF) within the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children, and Family (MPFEF) reported identifying 53 cases of children used by armed groups, as well as it reported of cases of children who previously returned to their families but were then recruited again.⁶²

4.1.1 Promoting Decent Work in Mali: SOLIDAR Network's recommendations

The guarantee of Decent Work and the protection of workers rights is a sine qua non for the realization of Economic and Social Rights, and is integral part of Goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

For this reason, and based on the evidence provided in regard to Mali's protection of rights at work and the challenges still faced by the country in this realm, the SOLIDAR network calls for the EU to:

- Support and advise the government in transforming and regularising the informal economy, by ensuring access to national social protection floors;
- Continue to raise awareness and campaign for women's empowerment and gender equality both in society and at the workplace, advocating for a change in existing legislation in favour of full equality between men and women when it comes to choice of profession and salary;

⁶⁰ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2017-trafficking-in-persons-report/mali/>; <https://www.humanium.org/fr/mali/>

⁶¹ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2017-trafficking-in-persons-report/mali/>

⁶² https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child_labor_reports/tda2018/Mali.pdf

⁶³ <https://www.reseau-far.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Rapport-Global-Analyse-secto-Mali-Version-0-4.pdf>

- Combat forced and child labour by setting up control mechanisms such as multi-partner observatories (institutions, CSOs, cooperation agencies) to monitor and report of cases of violation of children, human and labour rights and keep institutions and employers accountable. Moreover, the EU should pressure the government to amend existing legislation which allows for the practice of hereditary slavery.

4.2 Universal Access to Education

Education - including lifelong learning - reduces inequalities and promotes gender equality. Everyone should have the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning, in order to maintain and acquire the skills necessary to participate fully in society and successfully manage transitions in the labor market.

The education system in Mali aims to enable each citizen to achieve at least a basic quality education, in order to provide the country with essential skills to contribute to its socio-economic and inclusive development. It is in view of this aim that the government adopted, in 1998, its education development strategy called 'Programme décennal de développement de l'éducation' (PRODEC), which was later updated to last until 2010. While the efforts to achieve the objectives set by PRODEC were interrupted by the 2012 crisis, the government today remains committed to ensuring quality education to Malian citizens, with education being one of the strategic priorities identified within the new national development plan CREDD.⁶³

The effects of the 2012 security crisis on the education sector in Mali can still be felt today. Not only has school infrastructure been destroyed during conflicts in the most affected regions, but also in the north and centre of the country many schools never reopened after the crisis due to lack of teachers. Schools whose principals had the courage to open classes despite the existing insecurity in order





to give children an opportunity for learning are currently at great risk of closure for lack of school supplies, lack of water (especially in the nomadic zones) and lack of interest and/or motivation of parents to send their children to school, which results in critically low enrollment rates (especially of girls). In general, it is estimated that more than 1100 schools have been closed around the country due to insecurity, and that more than two million children between the ages of 5 and 17 are outside the school system for the same reason, as well as due to household poverty, child labor, child marriage and the lack of safe, quality schools close to their homes.⁶⁴

According to the 2007 'Loi d'orientation de l'éducation', moreover, basic public education in Mali for anyone aged 6 to 16 should be free and financed by the state.⁶⁵ Despite the existence of this policy, however, households continue to contribute significantly to the financing of education by paying school fees and assuming the cost of school supplies. In 2015, Malian households spent about 72.4 billion FCFA on teaching their children at different levels of education. This amount corresponds to about 20.7 percent of all combined government and household spending on education. The burden of school fees for households is thus another major obstacle to access quality education for children.⁶⁶

Based on the most recent data (2018), the gross enrollment rate (GER) in the country currently stands at 75.6% for primary education and 41.03% for secondary, with about an 8 percentage point disparity in favour of boys compared to girls for both cycles - numbers that, except for the gender inequality, have worsened compared to the pre-crisis years. Mali also registers a very high level of illiteracy, with 64.6%

of the population being illiterate, 41% of which being males compared to about 59% of females.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the country has high school repetition rates, with children undernutrition playing a significant role in this phenomenon: in fact, undernutrition causes a repetition rate of 38.7%, lower than the 22.9% for those who do not suffer from this condition.⁶⁸ Finally, the strong annual demographic growth of the school-aged population, consequence of the overall country demographic growth of around 3% annually in recent years,⁶⁹ has also created a stronger demand for investment in education which has not been met with an adequate increase in investment of resources in this sector.

4.2.1 Ensuring quality education in Mali: SOLIDAR Network's recommendations

The achievement of an inclusive and equitable quality education is an integral part of Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Agenda. There are many challenges in Mali which still require attention in this sector in order for the country to achieve this Goal.

Especially, the SOLIDAR Network highlights the following areas of improvement, which should receive special attention by the EU in its cooperation with Mali in the context of the 2021-2027 EU Programming, and which would contribute to the achievement of the Commission's priorities of increasing human capital through the promotion of education and skills, as well as of safeguarding fundamental rights, gender equality and women empowerment.⁷⁰

64 <https://www.unicef.org/mali/les-enfants-au-mali>

65 <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/77498/82167/F578256246/BFA-77498.pdf>

66 <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/document/file/2020-05-evaluation-prospective-de-appui-pme-au-mali-rapport-final.pdf>

67 <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ml>

68 https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/le_cout_de_la_faim_en_afrique_coha_mali.pdf

69 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW?display=graph&locations=M>

70 https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/our-work_en

The EU should:

- Collaborate with and support the Malian government in improving the management and resources of public education services, directing special attention to rebuilding schools, training and employing new teachers, providing adequate school equipment, so as to guarantee a quality education to children whose studies have been affected by the 2012 crisis, including children of displaced populations;
- Encourage a participatory management of the education system, favouring dialogue between actors both at the local and national level, and including women in management bodies;
- Support and finance school feeding programs to fight children undernutrition, to encourage their enrollment and improve their learning;
- Promote campaigns and programs against gender-based violence and in favour of girls empowerment in schools from an early age;
- Promote the social integration and empowerment of school drop-outs by financing school reintegration and professional training programs, paying particular attention to the needs of children from Koranic schools and madrassas.

4.3 Universal Access to Health

The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and wellbeing is one of the fundamental rights of every human being. Good health enhances quality of life, increases capacity for learning, strengthens families and communities and improves workforce productivity. Governments have a responsibility for the health of their people, and guaranteeing them access to quality and affordable healthcare is an expression of social justice.



Mali's national health policy has been under development since 1998. The government - with the support of external donors, such as USAID, UNICEF, Canada and the Netherlands, which contribute to 6% of current healthcare expenditure -⁷¹ provides health services to the population via a network of community health centers, referral health centers and hospitals. Some services are free to all, such as caesarean sections, tuberculosis and leprosy services. All services for the indigent population are free, as is malaria treatment for children under age 5. These free services are provided alongside three other health-financing mechanisms: Compulsory health insurance (AMO) and the 'Régime d'Assistance Médicale' (RAMED), both introduced in 2009, and Community-based health insurance (CBHI), which has existed since 2002.⁷²

The AMO covers civil servants, members of parliament, the army, retirees, and their family members. The scheme is financed by employee/retiree contributions and employer contributions. RAMED, on the other hand, provides fully subsidized health care to the poorest population. The scheme is financed entirely by the government (approximately 65%) and local authorities (35%), although the latter's contribution is expected to increase as the country is fully decentralized. Members need to be certified with indigent status by their mayor. RAMED also covers the member's spouse, children under age 14, students aged 14-21, and children with disabilities, prisoners, and residents of charitable institutes and orphanages. Finally, CBHI, which was initially developed for civil servants in the education sector, railway staff, military, and police, has now been expanded to provide financial risk protection to informal sector households, too - that is, those not covered by AMO or RAMED. CBHI is less comprehensive than the other two schemes, as it only covers basic health services

such as preventive care, essential curative care, and patient transportation. CBHI is financed by member contributions and (for some members) government subsidies. The government pays 60% of outpatient care costs and 75% of inpatient care costs for all members; members pay the remainder at the time of care.⁷³

Despite these schemes representing a good first step for the achievement of universal health coverage in Mali, their success has been modest, especially when it comes to the number of people covered: in 2014, AMO covered 3.4% of the population, compared with its target of 17%; similarly, RAMED covered only 0.5% of individuals, compared to a target of 5%, while CBHI only reached 4.1% of the target population - vs 78% of people belonging to the informal sector.

This is due, among others, to the inadequate communication and information provided to Malians about the existence and eligibility requirements of these programs. Moreover, insufficient funding has also been reported as affecting these schemes, both from the central government and local communities, as well as delays in healthcare fees reimbursement. When it comes to the CBHI, furthermore, the distance of facilities that adhere to the scheme and the costs associated with reaching them in case of need make many refrain from signing up to it. Additionally, in regard to the RAMED, some local authorities seem to be unwilling to issue indigent cards, because they worry the community will have to pay any unpaid bills.⁷⁴

In general, thus, in Mali there is still a significant deficit in the coverage of health needs, with 54% of total health spending still coming from household out-of-pocket spending.⁷⁵ Moreover, 25% of health structures (i.e. 1 in 4) are not operational in the 5 northern regions.⁷⁶

71 <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/929821547659438840/pdf/Project-Information-Documents-Integrated-Safeguards-Data-Sheet-Mali-Accelerating-Progress-Towards-Universal-Health-Coverage-P165534.pdf>

72 <https://www.hfgproject.org/financing-universal-health-coverage-family-planning-multi-regional-landscape-study-analysis-select-west-african-countries-togo/>

73 *Ibidem*

74 *Ibidem*

75 *Ibidem*

76 <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/mali-bulletin-humanitaire-janvier-fvrier-2019>



For some of these, the Malian state decreed total free health care in December 2012. This decree, initially planned for 6 months, is still ongoing, following citizens' requests and NGO advocacy. As a result, total free healthcare access in the north is now organised by NGOs, that deliver 80 to 90 percent of health services,⁷⁷ and financed by the technical and financial partners, with around half of the health facilities managed by humanitarian organisations being EU-funded.⁷⁸ As signalled by the SOLIDAR Network in Mali, moreover, another major issue within the healthcare sector is the cost recovery mechanism applied in some parts of the country - also called 'Bamako initiative'. According to this mechanism, patients partially reimburse the healthcare facilities for their operating costs, including the purchase of sanitary products, payment of water bills and electricity, and the remuneration of locally recruited staff who are not paid by the state. While this mechanism, by allowing health facilities to recover some costs, should in theory allow these to increase their financial resources and in turn reinvest to improve the quality of healthcare services they provide, in practice it results in creating income barriers for access to healthcare, with poor people either not using the facilities in case of sickness, or being forced to sell their assets, or take out loans in order to pay for healthcare costs.

Although a long way lies ahead for the achievement of universal free healthcare, a new reform adopted by the government of Mali in July 2018 sets the country on a hopeful path: the new law consolidates the existing health schemes under a unique 'Régime d'Assurance Maladie Universelle' (RAMU) to be managed by the 'Caisse Nationale D'assurance Maladie' (CANAM). This newly established universal health insurance regime covers the provisions for a basic benefit package for the Malian resident population, and affiliation to it is partly contributory and partly non-contributory, as well as it includes full coverage for RAMED beneficiaries. Moreover, a further improvement in the healthcare sector was achieved in 2019, when the President of Mali announced the scrapping of healthcare user fees for children under five, pregnant women and elderly people over 70.⁷⁹

77 <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/929821547659438840/pdf/Project-Information-Document-Integrated-Safeguards-Data-Sheet-Mali-Accelerating-Progress-Towards-Universal-Health-Coverage-P165534.pdf>

78 https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/africa/mali_en

79 <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/mali-scraps-healthcare-fees-it-time-bury-bamako-initiative>

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



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Women with their malnourished children in the FARN of Santié, Municipality of Madiga Sacko, Cercle de Diéma. Source: MPDL



Mothers with their children in the FARN of Kourgué, Cercle de Diéma. Source: MPDL

CASE STUDY: Addressing malnutrition in children under 5 through community- based nutritional rehabilitation homes

MPDL Mali contributes to the fight against malnutrition in children under 5 years old through the establishment of Centers for Learning and Nutritional Rehabilitation (FARN). The FARNs are opened in villages after malnutrition-screening activities have been carried out, and they only treat moderately malnourished children (MAM cases) for 12 days. Cases of severe acute malnutrition are referred to health centers for treatment. The weighings of the children are done at the beginning, at mid-term (the 6th day) and at the end (the 12th day) of their stay at the FARN, in order to assess the evolution of their condition.

Awareness of malnutrition, educational talks, nutritional or culinary demonstrations (ND or CD) based on local products easily accessible in the villages are developed throughout the process. Community agents are chosen on the basis of well-defined criteria and they support the project staff in the various awareness-raising and ND activities. At the end of 12 days, the children come out of their malnourished state and this is tested through the child's weight and MUAC measurements.

After the closure of the FARN, the community agents - Mamans Lumières (ML), the Support Groups for Actions in Nutrition (GSAN), the community relays - continue the activities of sensitization, NDs and Home Visits (VAD), ensuring the sustainability of the FARN actions in the villages.

So far, the MPDL Mali has set up more than 50 FARNs which have cured more than 1000 children of their state of malnutrition.



Consultation of children by the health worker of the CSCom de Santié, as part of FARN activities

4.3.1 Ensuring quality healthcare in Mali: SOLIDAR Network's recommendations

Goal 3 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda consists in ensuring healthy lives and promoting people's well-being at all ages. The achievement of this goal is a fundamental precondition for the achievement of full Economic and Social Rights and of Decent Work. Ensuring the provision of good quality and accessible healthcare is also part of the European Commission's current priorities, being considered as one of the main prerequisites necessary to increase countries' human capital and thus their capacity for development, as well as guarantee the respect of individuals' fundamental rights.⁸⁰

In light of this context, the SOLIDAR Network recommends the EU to support Malian citizens' access to healthcare by implementing the following actions:

- Continuing to provide and increase emergency funding to guarantee healthcare services to residents in the northern, central and southern regions of the country, which have been most severely affected by the 2012 crisis and its aftermath;
- Supporting the Malian government in increasing the reach of its social protection programs, by dedicating more funding to the financing of the healthcare sector as well as improving communication strategies on the eligibility requirements and benefits of the existing health insurance schemes.

The SOLIDAR Network in Mali reports that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial impact on the work of CSOs and on Social and Economic Rights in the country.

⁸⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/our-work_en



5. THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Limitations on freedom of movement and assembly (meetings of more than 10 people have been prohibited), as well as of working hours - adopted as containment measures to prevent the spread of the virus - have made it difficult for CSOs to carry out their work effectively and according to set plans and timings. Moreover, loss of fundings has also been reported.

Nonetheless, SOLIDAR's member and partner CSOs have been playing a fundamental role in raising awareness about the virus as well as distributing hygiene kits in community schools and mosques, and as such **they ask for the EU's support in being recognised as fundamental actors in the fight against COVID-19.**

From a socio-economic point of view, our Network reports of increased insecurity, with more people facing unemployment, as well as vulnerable groups such as women and children facing increased risks. For example, as women, especially in rural areas, play the role of caregivers and perform all the domestic tasks, they tend to be particularly at risk of catching the virus.

Moreover, the SOLIDAR Network highlights that the current health crisis is impoverishing the economic fabric of the country and has exacerbated the frustrations of many communities, a development which in turn might lead to increased competition for the management and control of economic resources, both in urban and rural areas. Our Network is especially concerned that COVID-19 restrictive measures may provoke a halt in the actions of peacebuilding being carried out in

Mali, which will worsen latent conflicts, aggravating lack of confidence in institutions, and causing a drawback in the progress achieved so far.

For these reasons, the SOLIDAR Network calls for the EU to not prioritise the COVID-19 pandemic at the expense of other crises that Mali is facing - including economic and food insecurity, and the security and political crisis. Instead, the EU should ensure continued support to guarantee the country's economic resilience as well as it the country - also called 'Bamako initiative'. According to this mechanism, patients partially reimburse the healthcare facilities for their operating costs, including the purchase of sanitary products, payment of water bills and electricity, and the remuneration of locally recruited staff who are not paid by the state. While this mechanism, by allowing health facilities to recover some costs, should in theory allow these to increase their financial resources and in turn reinvest to improve the quality of healthcare services they provide, in practice it results in creating income barriers for access to healthcare, with poor people either not using the facilities in case of sickness, or being forced to sell their assets, or take out loans in order to pay for healthcare costs.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The promotion of Economic and Social Rights and of a favourable and enabling environment for CSOs and Human Rights Defenders is an essential prerequisite for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and its SDGs.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its response policies, and the hardship that these have and will continue to cause on people's lives, especially when it comes to their ability to work, to access public services such as health and education, not to mention their ability to exercise fundamental freedoms such as freedom of assembly, make the promotion of economic and social rights and the strengthening of countries' civil society fabric all the more urgent. In a country like Mali, moreover, the pandemic risks to exacerbate existing conflicts and struggles for the control of economic resources, putting citizens and residents at an even greater risk of poverty and insecurity.

The ongoing EU Programming process represents a true opportunity to address these issues and make sure that economic and social rights and the achievement of the SDGs will be the backbone of future EU work with partner countries, a work that SOLIDAR is ready to support. More particularly, and in line with the European Consensus and the 2019 Von der Leyen Commission priorities, the SOLIDAR network makes the following recommendations to the EU, in regard to (1) building of an enabling environment for CSOs and (2) promoting decent work and social protection in Mali:



BUILDING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CSOS AND HRDs

- Improve the accessibility and efficacy of the HIBISCUS program, among others by simplifying funding application procedures and increasing the duration and easing timing requirements for implementation and execution of projects, tailoring them to the different areas of intervention. The capacity building component of the program should also be strengthened.

PROMOTION OF DECENT WORK AND SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR ALL

Decent work

- Support and advise the government in transforming and regularising the informal economy, by ensuring access to a social protection floor to all;
- Continue to raise awareness and campaign for women's empowerment and gender equality both in society and at the workplace, advocating for a change in existing legislation in favour of full equality between men and women;
- Combat forced and child labour by setting up control mechanisms such as multi-partner observatories (institutions, CSOs, cooperation agencies) to monitor and report of cases of violation of children, human and labour rights and keep institutions and employers accountable. Moreover, the EU should pressure the government to amend existing legislation which allows for the practice of hereditary slavery.



PROMOTION OF DECENT WORK AND SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR ALL

Access to education

- Collaborate with and support the Malian government in improving the management and resources of public education services, directing special attention to rebuilding schools, training and employing new teachers, providing adequate school equipment, so as to guarantee a quality education to children whose studies have been affected by the 2012 crisis, including children of displaced populations;
 - Encourage a participatory management of the education system, favouring dialogue between actors both at the local and national level, and including women in management bodies;
 - Support and finance school feeding programs to fight children undernutrition, to encourage their enrollment and improve their learning;
 - Promote campaigns and programs against gender-based violence and in favour of girls empowerment in schools from an early age;
 - Promote the social integration and empowerment of school drop-outs by financing school reintegration and professional training programs, paying particular attention to the needs of children from Koranic schools and madrassas.
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Access to healthcare

- Continue to provide and increase emergency funding to guarantee healthcare services to residents in the northern, central and southern regions of the country, which have been most severely affected by the 2012 crisis and its aftermath;
 - Support the Malian government in increasing the reach of its social protection programs, by dedicating more funding to the financing of the healthcare sector as well as improving communication strategies on the eligibility requirements and benefits of the existing health insurance schemes.
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EU COMMISSION's Priorities and SOLIDAR Members Work in Mali



GROWTH AND LASTING EMPLOYMENT, INCLUSION OF WOMEN

Movimento por la Paz - MPDL contributes to rural development and the inclusion of women and young people.

Solidarité Laique (SL) works on capacity building for young people in the social and solidary economy; it supports young entrepreneurs with innovative projects and provides funding as well as does advocacy work for their access to quality funding.

GOVERNANCE, PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY



Istituto Sindacale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo - ISCOS works on emergency response and capacity building in regard to food safety.

Movimento por la Paz - MPDL fights against child malnutrition in the region of Kayes.



PARTNERSHIP ON MIGRATIONS

Movimento por la Paz - MPDL fights against irregular migration in the Kayes region.

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International Alert
Médecins du Monde
World Vision International - Mali
Mujeres en Zona de Conflicto - Mali
Solidarité Laique (SL)
Réseau des Associations Migration et Développement (RAMDEL)
Union pour un Avenir Ecologique et Solidaire (UAVES)



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SOLIDAR is a European network of 60 NGOs working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR voices the concerns of its member organisations to the EU and international institutions across the policy sectors social affairs, international cooperation and lifelong learning.
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A presentation of the OIS programme can be found at the following link:
<https://prezi.com/view/9zuxuivoqUSD3w1pGJSz/>