



## SUCCESS STORY

# Local Governments Achieve Transparency

### A visionary prefect leads the way towards financial transparency



Photo: District of San/Moussa Doumbia

Sékou Coulibaly, left, explains the importance of financial management training for municipalities in his district.

***“The training has given us a better understanding of financial management. As mayor, I will see to it that we strictly apply proper financial and budgetary procedures in my municipality,” said one of the mayors who participated in the USAID-designed training workshop.***

It all began with a prefect who was simply doing his job. Sékou Coulibaly, the chief administrative officer of Mali’s San district, is responsible for monitoring legal compliance in his district, including laws and regulations on fiscal management. When he visited all 25 municipalities in his district, only one, Niamana, was in full compliance. He discovered that Niamana’s officials had been trained using a USAID program. The project seeks to improve local governance by equipping officials with the skills and knowledge they need to effectively and transparently manage local resources. Convinced that his other municipalities could reach the same level of competence as Niamana, Coulibaly began searching for a way to bring this training to all municipalities under his jurisdiction. He secured both international and local funding, and the workshop began.

All 24 municipalities benefited from the training designed for local accountants, mayors, sub-prefects, and secretaries general. Officials learned about financial management, accounting, budget planning, and fiscal tracking, and about how to follow financial and budgetary legal procedures described in the manuals. The training sessions improved tax collection, and people have gained confidence that taxes will be well spent. The sessions have also brought transparency to the use of public funds, checks and balances, better utilization of public resources, and improved budget planning for public services, like schools and health centers. Now it will be much more difficult for corruption to go unnoticed and unchallenged.

The effort serves as an excellent example of local and international collaboration. USAID identified the need and developed the approach for practical, hands-on training in partnership with a German organization. The workshops were funded by both international organizations and local governments. Now other districts are seeking funds for similar training — some have already secured grants from international groups to replicate the training. The success of this effort is generating interest among both local and international institutions, and USAID anticipates that the training will continue to be replicated throughout Mali.