Enhancing the Utility and Efficacy of USAID/Mali's 2003–2012 Country Strategic Plan through Gender Analyses and an Action Plan

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WID TECH

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by

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PREFACE

For more than five years now, USAID missions have asked the Women in Development Technical Assistance (WIDTECH) Project[1] for technical assistance to conduct gender assessments and make recommendations for actions addressing gender-based obstacles and opportunities as a means of improving results. In the early part of the WIDTECH project, missions asked for a "gender management strategy." They now ask for a "gender plan of action." In the course of responding to such requests, WIDTECH staff and consultants have learned from these experiences and are improving approaches to gender analysis and capacity-building.

The current WIDTECH consulting team would like to begin this report by expressing appreciation to USAID/Mali for a gender assessment process that proved enriching and inspiring for the consultancy team, and hopefully for the mission's staff. USAID/Mali has an extraordinary opportunity ahead for a number of reasons.

First, if the mission values gender assessment as a critical element in developing its country strategic plan (CSP), it can ensure that the gender dimension is included from the very start—from the moment of defining the current issues in Mali to setting the agenda for the next decade and identifying USAID's role. Having included attention to gender at this early stage, there will be many opportunities to incorporate gender analysis into the next stages of developing programs and performance monitoring plans, designing activities and implementing them, and monitoring impact.

Second, the context within the mission is an unusually positive one—with strong and sincere commitment from the front office, as well as genuine experience and concern from the strategic objective teams. Third, the context in Mali encourages attention to gender and to women's participation. Both on the government side and within civil society (and even at the village level), there is a Mali-based and -compatible commitment to ensuring that policy and programs for sustainable development take account of the roles, responsibilities, power, contributions, and aspirations of men and women, young and old.

Lastly, through their collaboration with the WIDTECH staff and participation in briefings and workshops, the USAID/Mali staff demonstrated their interest in improving attention to gender in their work. Following a participatory session on the purpose and content of a gender plan of action, the WIDTECH team is confident that USAID/Mali will put in place a plan that is realistic and effective—and carry it out as planned.

The WIDTECH team would like to thank all the USAID staff who supported the team's work. Special thanks go to Rokia Dante for keeping up with requests to schedule more and more meetings. Charles Morgan and Timm Harris are thanked for ensuring that the team benefited from the excellent contributions of a local expert, Assitan Diallo. The team's work was all the more fruitful and pleasant thanks to the cooperation of and contributions from all

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[1] WIDTECH is supported by the Office of Women in Development, USAID/Washington.

strategic objective teams. Finally, thanks are given to all with the sincere hope that these efforts will lead to a strong and effective strategic framework and to significant development achievements for the people of Mali.

This report begins with an introduction that includes a summary of the scope of work and methodology and an overview of gender analysis and gender mainstreaming. The second chapter presents four sector analyses—education, economic growth, health care, and democracy and governance, including key gender issues and opportunities, along with an analysis of USAID's past practice in each sector and recommendations for the new country strategic plan. The third chapter suggests cross-cutting themes that apply to all sectors within which USAID/Mali intends to work. The fourth and last chapter proposes the Gender Plan of Action—both its content and the next steps for finalizing and implementing the plan. It includes discussion of gender mainstreaming within USAID, current usage within Mali (in the government and civil society), and some discussion of other donors' work in Mali.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AED	Academy for Educational Development
AJM	Association des Juristes Maliennes
ANICT	Agence Nationale des Investissements des Collectivites Territoriales
APDF	Association pour le Progrès et la Défense des Droits des Femmes
APE	Association des Parents d'Elèves
ASACO	Association de Santé Communautaire (Community Health Association)
CAFO	Coordination des Associations et ONG Feminines du Mali
CSCOM	Centres de Santé Communautaires (Community Health Centers)
CECI	Centre Canadien d'Etude et de Coopération Internationale
CED	Centre d'Education pour le Développement
CEDREF	Centre d'Etudes, de Documentation, de Recherche et de Formation
CERCA	Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches pour le Renforcement des Capacités en Afrique
CMDT	Compagnie Malienne pour le Développement des Textiles
CO	Community organization
COFEM	Collectif des Femmes du Mali
CSP	Country strategic plan
DCF	Droits et Citoyenneté des Femmes en Afrique Francophone
DG	Democracy and governance
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West Africa States
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FGC	Female genital cutting (cf FGM)
FP	Family planning
GAD	Gender and development
GRM	Government of the Republic of Mali
IEP	Institut pour l'Education Populaire
IR	Intermediate result
MOE	Ministry of Education
MPFEF	Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NRM	Natural resources management
OHVN	Office de la Haute Vallée du Niger
PRODEC	Programme Décennal pour le Développement de l'Education
PVO	Private voluntary organization
R2	Results review
SAGE	Strategies for Advancing Girls' Education
SEG	Sustainable economic growth
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
SO	Strategic objective
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFM	Union Nationale des Femmes du Mali
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities

UPE	Universal private education
WARP	West Africa Regional Program
WID	Women in development
WIDTECH	Women in Development Technical Assistance Project

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) mission in Mali asked USAID's Office of Women in Development for a gender study and a proposed gender plan of action in anticipation of its new country strategic plan (CSP) for the years 2003–2012. The mission's request complies with recent amendments to USAID's rules that require that new CSPs include gender analyses (ADS 201.3.4.11). More important, however, the request reflects genuine concern for addressing gender issues for efficacy; that is, to deliver effective assistance, and for equity reasons. Further, the study should enhance USAID/Mali's capacity to collaborate within an environment (for the government, civil society, and other donors) that is increasingly conscious of gender issues and of women's participation.

Two specialists from USAID's Women in Development Technical Assistance (WIDTECH) Project provided assistance through three tasks:

(1) An analysis of four sectors—education, sustainable economic growth, health care, and democracy and governance—assessing gender issues within USAID/Mali's current work and raising key issues for the new CSP;

(2) Training and gender awareness for USAID staff; and

(3) A participatory process for developing a gender plan of action.

This report represents the final step in that process, and is intended primarily for the use of USAID/Mali staff.

The WIDTECH team was in Mali from October 24 to November 9, 2001. The methodology consisted of a broad-based consultation within USAID, including meetings with members of strategic objective teams in youth (health and education), democratic governance, sustainable economic growth, the Special Objective North and InfoCom teams, and the West Africa Regional Program (WARP). The team also conducted interviews with some implementing partners of each special objective, such as World Education, Care, Save the Children, and AMEX. Meetings with selected Government of the Republic of Mali (GRM) ministries and agencies included *Agence Nationale des Investissements des Collectivites Territoriales* (ANICT), *Office de la Haute Vallée du Niger* (OHVN), the ministries of education, of social development, of economy and finance, and of crafts and tourism.

The team also sought input from representatives of a variety of interest groups, professional organizations, and associations, including *Association des Juristes Maliennes* (AJM), *Coordination des Associations et ONG Feminines du Mali (*CAFO), *Collectif des Femmes du Mali* (COFEM), *Centre d'Etudes, de Documentation, de Recherche et de Formation* (CEDREF-GED), *Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches pour le Renforcement des Capacités en Afrique* (CERCA), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), G-Force, *Institut pour l'Education Populaire* (IEP), Muslim Women's Association, *Tahint* (Tuareg), and

Teinturières et Vendeuses de Sable. To ensure awareness of other donors' approaches to gender issues in Mali, the team met with the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), Winrock, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the European Union, and Canada/DCF-CECI.

To be informed of the wide spectrum of perceptions, approaches, and strategic priorities about gender and development, the WIDTECH team conducted field visits in Jalakoroba and Ouelessobougou, Sekoura, Mopti, Sevare, Fatoma, Diodiori, Banankoro, and Koursale.

Gender Issues within USAID/Mali's Four Sector Areas

Education

The analysis of the education outcome and efficiency in Mali reveals regional disparities, together with pervasive gender inequalities and overall low performance and attainment. Through its "youth" program in the CSP for 1996–2002, USAID addresses significant issues regarding access to quality education and enhancement of equity in the supply of and demand for basic education. The focus on basic education, particularly girls' access to education in targeted areas in Mali, is a strategy to curtail the persistent gender gap in education access and completion. Similar strategies in curriculum development, institutional support for the Ministry of Education for teacher training in girl-friendly practices, and the establishment of community schools in underserved areas reinforce USAID programs' attention to gender concerns. The current program draws upon sex-disaggregated data to monitor results and record trends and changes in boys' and girls' educational outcomes and status.

Although significant improvements are noticeable in girls' access to basic education in Mali, the gender gap in retention, completion, and performance requires sustained efforts and commitment to target girls and improve their educational outcomes. The goal of access is a first step that needs to be reinforced by effective strategies for retention and improved performance to ensure a greater rate of return and equal chances for women in the labor force and for social mobility.

The CSP 2003–2012 focuses on expanded and improved basic education. It also outlines substantive intermediate results, activities, and performance measures regarding (1) policy reform; (2) student achievement; (3) teacher training; (4) community schools; and (5) HIV/AIDS prevention through community education. These offer substantial opportunities to narrow the gender gap in education and to reinforce the role of education as an instrument to right social inequalities and equalize life chances for boys and girls in Mali.

However, without a critical assessment and questioning of the premise for action, reforms, existing conditions, and future challenges, USAID's intended policy reform and programs may bear little relevance to improving the gender disparities and distributional inequalities in educational outcomes. Expanding access to education is important but may be insufficient if

not reinforced by a commitment to gender equity. In this vein, some contentious issues need to be addressed: (1) What are the sociocultural, economic, and institutional barriers that inhibit girls' access to education? (2) What kind of gender-sensitive, girl-friendly reform will be effective in eliciting positive gender-related outcomes? (3) What are the sociocultural, institutional, and structural impediments to attaining gender equity in education in Mali? (4) How will expanding education enhance women's status?

Based on an analysis of the constraints and challenges involved in addressing the gender dimension in education, this report outlines the following recommendations:

- Build and support more schools in rural underserved communities.
- Place more emphasis on retention.
- Recruit and train more female teachers, and provide incentives that will motivate them to work in rural areas and be mentors for girls.
- Consider the opportunity costs of educating girls.
- Strengthen parents' involvement in education.
- Build girls' interest in education through peer emulation.
- Emphasize the importance of follow-up mechanisms for teacher training.
- Integrate core curriculum and national standards in school models.
- Improve curricula with gender-sensitive instructional support and learning strategies.
- Scale up the SAGE project approach.
- Monitor student achievements and create incentives to stimulate good performance.
- Set high expectations for girls and provide support to ensure that they can be met.
- Hold implementing partners accountable for results.
- Conduct systematic gender audits, asset mapping, and community profiles.
- Empower female parents for participation in Associations des Parents d'Elèves (APEs).
- Address concerns regarding sustainability.
- Focus on women's associations as strategic partners.
- Connect APE leadership training with effective management skills.
- Create a task force to ensure that women serve in leadership roles.

Sustainable Economic Growth

The sustainable economic growth (SEG) program focuses on increasing the value added to national income from specific economic subsectors, particularly agricultural commodities such as cereals, livestock, and nontraditional alternatives. Its goals are important for economic recovery, and are essential to enhancing men's and women's well-being and improving household incomes and food security.

The goal to increase savings and credit provided by nonbank institutions in targeted areas is the intermediate result that clearly reflects an integration of gender concerns, especially in microfinance, where 95 percent of beneficiaries are women. Although this represents a significant achievement, the absence of specific information on the beneficiaries' profiles, the credit scale, and the impact of microcredit at the household or community level precludes the ability to determine whether there is equitable access to and benefits from credit and

savings. Nor can it be inferred that microfinance has improved gender relations and women's status in Mali. Drawing a customer profile could ensure that women are not confined merely to small loans. To meet development goals, microfinance performance indicators should encompass more than repayment rates. They should also include socioeconomic-impact and capacity-building information to maximize the success rate for women and prevent unintended negative consequences. The negative consequences, encompassing women's loss of dignity, self-worth, and confidence in their abilities, have a profound impact on household poverty.

Although the program works with women in the field, the strategic objective and intermediate results do not significantly reflect gender considerations in their results. The gender-neutral approach does not elucidate the respective roles of women and men, their contributions to economic growth, and the intended or unintended effects and outcomes of such a program. For example, the performance indicators emphasize total cattle off-take and the absolute value added of cereals. The inclusion of socioeconomic indicators would better elucidate the program's impact on people in the targeted areas. As it now stands, the program is missing an opportunity to ensure that women are taken into account in the growth distributional pattern, which is critical to lowering socioeconomic inequalities.

In the 2003–2012 CSP, the accelerated growth program focuses on selected economic subsectors in Mali. It highlights (1) policy reforms, (2) finance, (3) agro-processing, (4) market development, and (5) environment and natural resources management.

The proposed framework and strategic objectives raise critical gender issues. "Accelerated growth" tends to suggest pace rather than depth or growth distributed in all sectors and strata of Malian society. The mechanisms for accelerated growth may be biased against the poor, thus leading to deeper inequality. Moreover, they can bypass women and result in a missed opportunity to redress unequal access to economic opportunities and resources, and eventually exacerbate the feminization of poverty in Mali. One alternative might be "expanded growth." Expanded growth could enhance equitable growth beneficial to vulnerable groups such as women.

To the extent that USAID supports economic growth in Mali, placing stronger emphasis on women in prominent sectors of economic production could yield a greater rate of socioeconomic return and enhance program efficacy. A priority focus entails addressing women's access to factors of production, such as labor and capital. In agriculture, women need to access inputs such as seeds, production technologies, agricultural extension services, and markets. Given that the Government of Mali is pursuing poverty alleviation as a long-term strategy to create the condition for growth, it is imperative to design pro-poor, pro-women programs to contribute to that goal. One cannot address poverty without addressing social and economic conditions at the local level, and, in rural areas, the location of women in the formal and informal economies.

Based on the program assessment and suggestions from various informants, the WIDTECH team makes the following recommendations:

- **Take an asset-based approach.** Support women in mobilizing capacities and solidarity, and women's organizations as a form of social capital serving as a foundation to invest in women and promote their economic empowerment.

- **Conduct a situation analysis** to assess gender roles and constraints in NRM and farming practices in the zones of intervention. This analysis will allow the definition of priorities responsive to clients.

- **Support established local networks and associations** to provide opportunities to reach out to women, assess how they operate, and identify factors that impede their access to and control of resources.

- **Provide capacity-building for marketing, market development, and business skills** by linking rural women with urban-based women's groups, such as lawyers, professional groups, and the chamber of commerce. These linkages will allow women to share information about legal frameworks, trade barriers and regulations, and market opportunities in urban or even regional markets.

- **Identify investment opportunities** for women as traders and producers.

- **Focus on building strategic competencies** in market analysis, microcredit management, activity diversification, and niche building, to avert unintended consequences (such as loan delinquency and default; loss of hard-earned assets; and loss of collateral, which can compromise household health, nutrition, and children's education).

- **Consolidate the mushrooming of *"caisse de credit solidaire,"* which may not have the capacity for long-term sustainability,** and provide appropriate training to women about what microcredit can or cannot do for them. Do not provide credit without technical assistance or baseline studies on growth opportunities; conduct impact studies, and draw up and monitor borrower profiles.

- **Disseminate information to women** about market opportunities, prices, and trade barriers.

- **Maintain a database** of women entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses in Mali (a knowledge base of women in economic sectors).

- **Focus more attention on gender roles in agriculture and natural resources management.** Given that women rarely put forward their own interests and needs, it is incumbent upon implementing agents to reach out to women farmers, using participatory rural appraisal techniques and gender audits.

- **Assess women's roles in land use and natural resources management.** Ensure better access to appropriate extension services and agricultural inputs, including timesaving technologies. New land development linked with microcredit can facilitate women's access to land when they cannot own land due to customary land tenure practices.

- **Identify women as intended beneficiaries, and listen to them.** Address impediments to women's access to strategic inputs such as land and capital, production technologies, and product markets. It is critical to build partnerships with a core component of the population, who, along with men, mediate the complex demand for food production, community welfare, household livelihood security, and economic development.

- **Use sex-disaggregated indicators.** Monitor the program's impact on its various categories of beneficiaries, including women.

Health Care

Despite efforts by the government and development partners to address child mortality, maternal health care and family planning, and malaria and HIV/AIDS, health-care indicators in Mali are still very low. Gender analysis offers an opportunity to examine why this might be by exploring some assumptions and some standard approaches. USAID's current program has focused on health care within the context of a youth strategic objective. An analysis of the existing program raises three issues: (1) the importance of understanding the varying roles of different women and men in families and communities; (2) the relevance of such analyses for information dissemination, as in ensuring that messages reach all target populations and that they are framed in ways that enable each population group to use the information; and (3) the importance of anticipating how people may or should apply the information.

Some existing indicators illustrate how changes in indicators can be positive without benefiting women's and children's health, or how increases may fall short of expectations. Other indicators track the number of people (children, mothers, and so on) reached, thereby measuring the size and direction of change in numbers reached. Additional data could be collected to explore the influence of gender-related (and other) factors on expected results. For example, immunization coverage now measures how many children are reached. Implementing partners could also ask, however, whether people understand the rationale for immunizations, and inquire about (1) cost constraints, (2) transportation problems, (3) the time and timing involved in bringing children in for immunizations, and (4) people's fears and doubts.

The new country strategic plan focuses on increased use of health services and products. Though USAID's program will address access, availability, and quality, the WIDTECH gender analysis underscores the importance of the promotion component as well. Although the supply side of health care—increasing the amount and quality of services—is important, it is insufficient without considering impediments to women's demand for health care. This means identifying the actual impediments, such as cost, clinic distance, and lack of decision-making power. This area also highlights the importance of understanding gender roles—not just in terms of men versus women, but also regarding different ages and statuses—and then providing information to the right people and with the right "spin" to ensure that decisions are made to use increasingly available health-care resources.

The report offers six guidelines for the future health-care program:

(1) View women as partners, not targets;
(2) Build on traditional advisors, knowledge, and relations;
(3) Develop more gender-informed information dissemination;
(4) Work with men as well as women;
(5) Take advantage of and strengthen local capacity; and
(6) Capitalize on cross-sectoral opportunities.

Democracy and Governance

For a decade now, democracy has been evolving in Mali—including the improved capacity to govern and the decentralization of power. Since 1991, women have been active and increasingly effective at the national level. The challenge now is to ensure women's ongoing and growing participation, along with attention to gender-related impediments and opportunities, at the local level.

There have been several key areas for attention to gender in USAID's current program. With regard to its work with community organizations, USAID has purposefully aimed to work with women's organizations. Moreover, the democracy and governance (DG) team has used sex-disaggregated data to track disparate impacts and to identify and redress gender-related impediments. For example, the DG team sought to understand why women's organizations have been less effective in influencing decisions than have mixed organizations but have scored higher in democratic self-governance. It was not only a question of whether women's organizations do better or worse, but whether some technical assistance is more or less helpful to them.

The focus on decentralization has raised questions of how to enhance women's political participation at the local level. The DG team commissioned a concept paper to help identify entry points for strengthening women's influence over decision-making. The paper began by suggesting that "women's political participation" be defined as "women playing a role, whether formal or informal, in influencing decisions regarding the policies, priorities, and resources that affect their lives, those of their families, and their communities." The study recommended focusing on eight elements: sensitization of men, timesaving technologies, channels of communication for women, substantive and relevant information for women, building hope and a sense of possibility, strengthening women's groups, technical skills training, and identification of issues that motivate women to action. USAID's DG team is now ready to design and launch its own pilot program. Because several initiatives have already been undertaken to work with women (through ANICT, COFEM, and Winrock/MPFEF), it is important that USAID learn from their experiences.

USAID has also focused on the enabling environment for advocacy in Mali. Here, the experience of women's groups and the gender "tensions" regarding issues of importance to women offer lessons that may be broadly applicable to the enabling environment. Women

and gender advocates in Mali have learned some important lessons from campaigns to stop female genital cutting and to pass a new family code:

(1) Understand the gaps between educated, urban advocates and the constituent base.

(2) Carefully assess the opposition and develop a strategy for responding. Anticipate and address fears, reactions, and misunderstandings.

(3) Develop carefully targeted information campaigns—including attention to preventing and responding to misinformation.

(4) Develop a broad-based, sophisticated advocacy strategy before launching lobbying.

The new DG strategy will focus on "shared governance through decentralization." The DG team is committed to ensuring that gender issues are addressed, and that women are fully incorporated—including an intermediate result that focuses particularly on women's participation. The WIDTECH team encourages that approach, both to maximize results regarding decentralization and consolidating democracy, and to ensure equitable roles and benefits. The coming program highlights four primary areas, with attendant gender-related challenges and implications:

(1) **Decentralization.** Success depends on building the capacity of local citizens to set priorities and allocate resources, thus calling for women's access to capacity-building and the inclusion of their concerns in setting new priorities.

(2) **Civil society and community organizations.** Efforts to balance the government's power and ensure good governance should include women through attention to *groupements de femmes* and to women as consumers of local government services.

(3) **Rule of law and anticorruption program.** Programs must begin with attention to which laws apply (secular and constitutional, allegedly traditional, religious), bridging the gap between laws and practice (for example, regarding land tenure and some family law provisions) and enlisting women as watchdogs against corruption.

(4) **Upcoming elections.** Free and fair elections depend on well-informed, independent voters (including rural women and men) having reliable and relevant information about candidates and voting according to their own minds and needs. Campaign information should focus on issues and commitments to platforms and policies that meet citizens' needs, including those of women.

Cross-cutting Issues and Opportunities

The WIDTECH team suggests the following principles regarding women's participation in and awareness of the gender dimensions of socioeconomic change:

(1) Men and women are not homogenous groups. Gender relations differ according to culture, economic class and social status, location, education, and other factors. It is important not only to disaggregate data and analyze results by sex, but also to look at subgroups. This is one reason for doing gender audits when working at the community level.

(2) Development is all about change, and both Mali and the world around it are changing quickly and in many ways. Gender roles and responsibilities can change as well. To the extent that the gender dimension is socially determined and the social context is in flux, it will be important to revisit gender-related assumptions, policies, and approaches throughout the new CSP's implementation.

(3) In all Malian sectors, there exist vast gaps between policies or laws and actual practice, as well as differences among practices in different households, communities, and regions in Mali. For example, certain modern laws address women's rights, family relations, and land ownership, but to the extent that people living in isolated rural villages do not know about them, they have no impact. The success of new laws and policies intended to redress gender inequalities or ensure equitable access to resources depends on them being widely known and used.

The WIDTECH team recommends paying attention to three gender-related implementation opportunities that cut across all sectors:

(1) **Information, learning, and changing practice.** Because much of USAID's development assistance includes communication components and results often depend on influencing women's behavior—either as women, as citizens, or as members of a community—implementing partners must identify methods of communicating meaningful information to women effectively. Issues to address regarding how men and women (and older or younger men and women) receive information include the following:

- The channels of communication to which women have access and that would be the most effective—such as traditional theater, song, audio cassettes, or video cassettes;
- Whether information content is relevant to women's lives; and
- Whether information is presented in ways that are appropriate for uneducated adult learners; for example, line-by-line reading and memorization of facts may be less appropriate than the use of rhyme, rhythm, repetition, metaphor, and visual pictures.

(2) **Use of effective agents at the local level.** While it is important to heed gender disparities in government and policymaking, gender issues are different at the local level. It will be important to work with people who are familiar with and effective at working in rural villages. While educated, urban women may be able to benefit from assistance offered by men, it is more complicated at the local level. The challenge is to identify women who can be effective intermediaries; that is, those who are comfortable in local settings and who are willing to spend time building relationships there.

(3) **Using a gender perspective to rethink decision-making.** In the context of Mali's decentralization program, citizens at the local level are learning the rights and responsibilities associated with devolved power, yet are accustomed to traditional mechanisms for decision-making and the use of a centrally controlled socialist system. This is a historic moment for defining and training new decision-makers. Rather than pushing women to participate openly, there may be more incremental and sustainable ways to enhance women's influence while preparing communities for women's more-public roles.

The fact that women are typically excluded from public spaces where decisions *appear to be made* does not mean they are not part of the decision-making process. In fact, many informants report that men frequently postpone making a decision to "sleep on it"—which means consulting their wives, mothers, or others. Understanding this process focuses technical assistance more on the capacity of women to know about, understand, and influence issues than on their ability to perform publicly. The better women are informed, the more likely they are to bring others around to their positions. Further, because men and women often make decisions together, men need information about women's reproductive health, parents must understand the importance of their children's education, and constituents need information about decisions their elected representatives are making on their behalf.

The WIDTECH team recommends two cross-cutting programmatic approaches:

▪ The team strongly recommends that the mission establish a cross-cutting program to find and disseminate "success stories" among Malian women through media (modern and traditional) and to foster the sharing of successes among Malian women through a study-tour exchange program within Mali. Such a program would (1) counteract verbal and habitual messages that restrict what women can or should do; (2) provide ideas for women searching for new coping strategies; (3) give examples that are culturally close from other women in Mali; and (4) share information in ways that are effective. A system of internal "visits" would be an effective way to build on women's natural networking skills, reward successes, and launch accessible peer support.

▪ Literacy programs could be used as a tactical approach across sectors. They are a means of educating, informing, and organizing. The content of adult literacy programs (many for women, but not solely) could relate to health, democracy, nutrition, agriculture, or other economic activities. They are ways to reach people in a group, often mobilizing them for joint action.

The Gender Plan of Action

Reasons for a Gender Plan of Action

The WIDTECH team suggests four basic reasons to establish a gender plan of action (GPA): (1) to comply with USAID's ADS (Automated Directive System) on gender; (2) to be

consistent with the interests and practices of the government and development specialists in Mali; (3) to stay in step with other donors working in Mali; and (4) to enhance the effectiveness of USAID's assistance to Mali. In the end, however, USAID/Mali's staff must decide the purpose of its GPA, and then ensure that the content and mechanisms for implementation will achieve that goal.

Key Components of the GPA

The team recommends three categories of action steps—institutional mechanisms and artifacts, capacity-building, and cross-cutting programs—including the following:

(1) Begin the program planning and project development cycle with a **gender audit** and needs assessments.

(2) Within the **country strategic plan development process,** include a gender dimension by:

- Discussing the **sector-focused portions of the WIDTECH report** and recommendations within SO team meetings;
- Within the process of elaborating strategic frameworks, **identifying any gender-related intermediate results** that are necessary for achieving the objective and any gender-related impediments that will preclude success (ensure that IRs or sub-IRs explicitly articulate what is needed to address them);
- **Strategically defining sectors or activities** that will be of greatest value to men or women, and then identifying assistance (technical, financial, and operational strategies) that will ensure equity and efficiency (each SO team may invite Mali-based gender specialists to suggest programmatic mechanisms for achieving IRs or sub-IRs); and
- Including **monitoring and evaluation of gender impacts** within USAID's new performance monitoring plan by ensuring a people-focused impact analysis that:
  — Starts with a gender audit as a baseline,
  — Tracks distribution of benefits,
  — Identifies any disadvantages or negative consequences, and
  — Requests specific gender impact assessments in implementing partners reports.

(3) Take **active measures to identify partners** (PVOs, NGOs, institutes, or individuals) who have the capacity and experience to address gender issues and to work with women in rural areas.

(4) Establish **procedures to ensure the inclusion of clear, purposeful language in all terms of reference (TORs) and scopes of work (SOWs)** of temporary-duty workers and consultants that require collection of sex-disaggregated data and analyses of gender dynamics. The same should be true for all procurement documents, such as requests for proposal. One possibility would be to set up a committee to review and comment on TORs and SOWs before sending them out.

(5) State USAID's expectation that all implementing partners should **report on gender impacts** with verifiable gender indicators.

(6) Include a **budget line** in each grant or contract for gender audits (including analysis of implications), evaluations, and reporting.

(7) Establish a **gender working group** that:
— Contains members from each SO team and addresses relevant special objectives or cross-cutting themes,
— Includes a coordinator to be selected by application to the front office,
— Reports quarterly to the front office on the action plan and related activities, and
— Subscribes to gender information listservs and distributes them to the staff.

(8) Establish an **annual prize** to commemorate a USAID "gender champion."

(9) Develop targeted **communication strategies** to capitalize on, share, and learn from the successes of Malian women and men.

(10) Establish a **research fund for gender audits and studies** collecting data and information regarding gender at the local level.

(11) Sponsor two **gender-related trainings** per year for USAID staff.

(12) Reinforce and share gender-related lessons learned. Collect information regarding the gender-related experience of implementing partners, PVOs, NGOs, and government departments in research, analysis, partnerships, training, and technical assistance in rural areas—including both what has worked and what has been problematic. Share information among donors, gender specialists, and the GRM through a development-partners and gender newsletter (and contribute to electronic information-gathering and dissemination services).

(13) Reinvigorate the **donors' gender working group** as a mechanism for sharing information about WID activities, experiences working with different sectors of the population, and best practices for addressing gender-related obstacles.

Before the team shared the proposed plan with USAID/Mali, mission staff members were asked to suggest action steps. Their ideas not only anticipated and reinforced those prepared by WIDTECH, but also added several excellent steps:

General
- Strengthen the capacity of staff regarding gender analysis and awareness, and
- Facilitate implementation of policies into action.

Institutional Mechanisms
- Establish a gender committee,

- Create a gender officer position at a higher level,
- Require sex-disaggregated data in monitoring and reporting results,
- Build a relationship with the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family,
- Ensure that each SO team has a budget line for gender,
- Use the gender action plan as a basis for a mission order,
- Ensure that requests for proposal encourage the participation and involvement of women, and
- Identify guiding principles for each sector reintegrating and monitoring gender.

Capacity-Building
- Include gender within all USAID trainings,
- Sponsor mission exchanges and communication with women's organizations, NGOs, and partners, and
- Increase resources (human and financial) and information to encourage model behavior.

Cross-cutting Programmatic Interventions
- Identify and implement specific interventions targeting women and men to ensure gender equity,
- Include training for USAID partners on DG, HIV/AIDS, and income-generating activities that raise gender issues and approaches for addressing them,
- Establish a budget for gender activities,
- Establish sector representatives for gender—also to be members of the gender working group,
- Use adult literacy training for women as a means of linking all interventions, and
- Focus on local-level partners and associations.

Next Steps

USAID/Mali leadership and staff now have the report and proposed gender plan of action. Implementation, however, will require agreement on their content and the assignment of responsibilities. In the report's annexes, the WIDTECH team offers a preliminary matrix for making decisions regarding actions, responsibilities, timing, and impact.

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) mission in Mali asked USAID's Office of Women in Development for a gender study and a proposed gender plan of action in anticipation of its new country strategic plan (CSP) for the years 2003–2012. The mission's request complies with recent amendments to USAID's rules that require that new CSPs include gender analyses (ADS 201.3.4.11). More important, however, the request reflects genuine concern for addressing gender issues for efficacy; that is, to deliver effective assistance, and for equity reasons. Further, the study should enhance USAID/Mali's capacity to collaborate within an environment (for the government, civil society, and other donors) that is increasingly conscious of gender issues and of women's participation.

SCOPE OF WORK

The WIDTECH two-person team's scope of work (Annex A) called for three tasks:

(4) Conduct a gender assessment of the current situation, looking at the "existing and proposed development program, outlining the main areas where gender issues are of greatest essence, and examining Mali's institutional, legal, and regulatory environment to determine to what extent they incorporate and promote gender considerations";

(5) Design a gender action plan that "lays out the steps for mainstreaming gender in USAID's development policies and activities"; and

(6) Organize a briefing session to present and receive feedback on the assessment findings and action plan.

Before launching its fieldwork, the team met with Pamela White and Timm Harris, USAID/Mali. In the course of those discussions, several concerns emerged. First, it was clear that USAID/Mali has a genuine commitment to ensuring that the gender dimension is included throughout the country strategic framework, as an integral and organic part. Second, it was emphasized that USAID would carry out certain elements of all programs nationwide, especially those concerning policies, national norms, and procedures, whereas activities that are community-specific will be more targeted. Third, the team was encouraged to focus more on the current situation and future opportunities than on reviewing USAID/Mali's current program.

A third factor mobilized and directed the WIDTECH team's approach: The team was asked to look at what truly appears to work and whether technical assistance has been useful, and, where there are doubts, to suggest how attention to gender might lead to more effective programs. The team was given license to look for new ways to conceptualize the challenges and to structure development actions. Because a gender analysis often requires that people take a step back to recognize what works and what does not, and agree to try some new

approaches, the interests of USAID/Mali at this juncture provided an ideally hospitable environment for an honest and innovative gender assessment.

Finally, the deliverables section of the scope of work called for one or two gender briefings for mission staff and implementing partners. Based on further discussion of needs, and an assessment of the opportunities within the mission, the WIDTECH team provided three briefings—a general introduction to gender analysis, the ADS, and gender and performance monitoring, on November 1, 2001; a participatory workshop for accepting a gender plan of action, on November 7; and a debriefing for the "front office," on November 9.

The WIDTECH team was in Mali from October 24 to November 9, 2001. The methodology consisted of a broad-based consultation within USAID, including meetings with members of strategic objective teams in youth (health and education), democratic governance, sustainable economic growth, the Special Objective North and InfoCom teams, and the West Africa Regional Program (WARP). The team also conducted interviews with some implementing partners of each special objective, such as World Education, Care, Save the Children, and AMEX. Meetings with selected Government of the Republic of Mali (GRM) ministries and agencies included *Agence Nationale des Investissements des Collectivites Territoriales* (ANICT), *Office de la Haute Vallée du Niger* (OHVN), the ministries of education, of social development, of economy and finance, and of crafts and tourism.

The team also sought input from representatives of a variety of interest groups, professional organizations, and associations, including *Association des Juristes Maliennes* (AJM), *Coordination des Associations et ONG Feminines du Mali (*CAFO), *Collectif des Femmes du Mali* (COFEM), *Centre d'Etudes, de Documentation, de Recherche et de Formation* (CEDREF-GED), *Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches pour le Renforcement des Capacités en Afrique* (CERCA), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), G-Force, *Institut pour l'Education Populaire* (IEP), Muslim Women's Association, *Tahint* (Tuareg), and *Teinturières et Vendeuses de Sable*. To ensure awareness of other donors' approaches to gender issues in Mali, the team met with the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), Winrock, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the European Union, and Canada/DCF-CECI.

To be informed of the wide spectrum of perceptions, approaches, and strategic priorities about gender and development, the WIDTECH team conducted field visits in Jalakoroba and Ouelessobougou, Sekoura, Mopti, Sevare, Fatoma, Diodiori, Banankoro, and Koursale.

Intent upon developing a gender action plan that would be implemented, the WIDTECH team proposed a participatory workshop as a means of building interest, ownership, and commitment. The process was interactive and dynamic, aimed at building a common understanding about the relevance and strategic purpose of gender mainstreaming, and achieving agreement regarding the content and process of the gender action plan. The plan proposed in this report draws upon the input of the front office and each strategic objective (SO) team.

The assessment also includes a document review, beginning with USAID/Mali's concept paper, the current country strategic plan, and the recent results review (R2), as well as a wide range of documents obtained from ministries and other organizations (Annex G).

The WIDTECH team's findings have been validated through interviews, community interviews, focus group data, and the document review.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Gender Analysis, Gender Mainstreaming, and Gender-Sensitive Indicators

Women and men play critical roles in all development sectors in Mali. Although they participate in productive, reproductive, and community management activities at the macro, local, and household levels, they play different roles, have different needs, and face different constraints. Gender roles are context-specific and are defined at the household and societal levels.

The gender roles are reflected in social interactions, political processes, household dynamics, and participation in community decision-making. In specific areas where the team conducted its investigation, men and women described their respective roles as complementary. No reference was made to subordination, although social roles and functions follow a set hierarchy of decision-making, power, authority, and leadership. For example, in community meetings, it was not surprising to see women seated behind men and on separate sides, and engage in the discussion only when they were offered the opportunity to participate.

Gender roles and differences reflect asymmetric and differential access to economic and productive resources, decision-making, control, and allocation of resources. It is interesting to note that, despite what may seem like a lack of voice and power in the public sphere, women exert a critical and influential power in the private sphere. One metaphor, "the football team," captures this dual facet of gendered roles. As team players, placed in strategic locations on the field and entrusted with specific goals and roles, team members negotiate and collaborate to meet a common goal—score goals and win the game. Transcribed at the societal or household level, the common goal is to enhance the welfare of the household as a unit. However, given the scarcity of resources in the household and competing needs for intrahousehold resource allocation and control, tension often prevails over rational and equitable allocation and control of resources.

On the other hand, gender-neutral policies and practices have resulted in the invisibility of women's central contributions to development. The structural differences have implications for development-program efficiency, and the program's effect on household behavior. Awareness of these inequalities provides a rationale to integrate the gender dimension in all development programs in order to be responsive to men's and women's constraints, interests, needs, and assets. An in-depth understanding of these gender differences is critical to

designing more gender-sensitive programs that add to the overall efficacy of development programs and practices and yield better results and outcomes for both men and women.

Considering gender as a social indicator in socioeconomic analysis is a premise for assessing the relative positions of men and women in the economy; identifying their respective needs, assets, and constraints; and paying adequate attention to their contributions and roles to allocate appropriate resources to enhance their contributions. Understanding that gender-differentiated incentives yield different results is key to ensuring better delivery mechanisms and strategic orientation among development programs.

Many international development organizations are recognizing the importance and relevance of addressing the gender dimension of development. One tool to capture the gender dimension is gender analysis. This should be an integral part of program planning and design. According to the World Bank, "Gender analysis must be an integral part of design of policies and programs aimed at promoting economic growth."[2] As alluded to above, it is a mechanism to assess differences in roles, responsibilities, constraints, and assets between men and women in a given context, for better programmatic targeting, relevance, and impact. It also provides socioeconomic indicators on attributes, opportunities, and constraints for both men and women.

Gender mainstreaming is critical for addressing women's and men's needs, constraints, and assets, and for mapping out resources for both sexes. The premise of gender mainstreaming is to make the focus on both men and women explicit in all program strategic objectives, specific objectives, procedures, and language. It is informed by the following:

- Awareness of the differential access to and benefits of development programs for men and women, and their differential social status;

- Recognition that rural women have less access to productive resources, land, education, capital, and credit and need to be targeted; and

- The institutional integration of these dimensions in program practice, procedures, and approach.

Programmatic Implications

Gender mainstreaming has substantial programmatic implications. Each SO can encompass specific gender objectives and strategically assess the importance of gender to its program focus, stakeholders, target populations, and intended impacts and results. Inequalities in access to education, information about health-related issues, participation in decision-making at the household and community levels, as well as in credit and economic resources, are deterrents to development and economic efficiency.

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[2] Blackden, et al., 1993, p. 30.

Illustrative Entry Points for Gender Mainstreaming

When development practitioners are concerned about improving results and equity, their identification of entry points for gender mainstreaming should be informed by a critical assessment and questioning of sector-based target populations and beneficiaries, as well as by the desired and expected outcomes of the program. Some examples follow.

Education

What is the actual change in boys' and girls' access to education, and in their retention or completion rates? What are the other socioeconomic factors that explain the attrition, performance, and access rates for girls and boys over time?

Systemic collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data on:
- Baseline school-age population,
- Gross access rates,
- Gross enrollment rates,
- Retention rates,
- Attrition rates, and
- Repetition rates.

Teacher Training
- Ratio of female and male teachers trained over time, and
- Analysis of teachers' effective implementation of girl-friendly practices post-training.

Community Schools
- Number of trainees from the Parents' Association (APE), and
- Assessment of the effective participation of female parents in community school management and decision-making.

Curriculum
- Identification of positive examples of women as illustrations in textbooks,
- Content teaching girls and boys about roles and responsibilities without gender stereotypes, and
- Assessment of efforts to reinforce women's opportunities in all occupations, including those in which women are less present, such as science and technology.

Health Care

Health-care interventions should begin with community diagnoses asking:
- What are men's and women's health-related issues?
- What is the degree of prevalence of certain diseases? Who is vulnerable?
- What are the local practices?
- What is the actual change in men's and women's conditions?
- Who is responsible for the health care of children?
- Who is responsible for health-care costs?
- How do men and women, old and young, obtain information regarding their health and the health needs of family members?
- Based on the program objectives, is there a change of perception and practices?

Democratic Governance

Democratic governance must focus on women in government and civil society, at national and local levels, and on gender-related roles and responsibilities:

- What are the numbers, positions, responsibilities, and effects of women in government, as well as in community-based decision-making groups, such as health committees and Parents' Associations?
- How do women and men in leadership positions exercise their power vis-à-vis female and male constituents?
- What is the level or quality of involvement by women's groups? Is there an effective participation of women's groups in civil society, such as advocacy groups, in relation to local government?
- Are both men and women participating in and benefiting from resource allocations?
- How do men and women benefit from democratic governance technical assistance? How has the program improved women's relative status and participation in decision-making and local governance?
- Do men and women participate actively or vocally in town meetings or other public forums?
- To what extent do new laws or policies anticipate the differential needs and priorities of men and women—as well as different effects on them?
- How do relations between men and women affect their access to information and their independence in voting?

Sustainable Economic Growth

Improving the economic well-being of families, communities, and the nation depends on supporting the economic and income-generating activities of all people. It is important to determine and track where women are in the economy, what they are doing, and what the impediments are to their economic success.

- How large is the role of women in the economy—both the informal and formal sectors?
- Where are they placed in the economy—in which sectors?
- What are men's and women's assets in a given community and sector?
- What are women's productive roles; in, for example, agricultural production, processing, and trade?
- What are the differential opportunities for and constraints to women's and men's access to capital? How does ownership of collateral or land, or literacy affect access?
- What capacities do men and women have in a given sector? Where do they need greater capacity?
- How much has been invested in women per sector, and what have been the effects?

SECTOR ANALYSIS

This section provides a situation analysis of four sectors in Mali—education, economic growth, health care, and democracy and governance. It also includes a discussion of the gender issues and opportunities for each sector and recommendations for action.

EDUCATION

Context and Background

The education sector in Mali is undergoing major changes and reforms to meet the goals of equity in access, quality, performance, achievement, and retention. These goals are of particular importance for basic formal education. Regional disparities, together with gender disparities and overall low performance, provide impetus to reform the education sector and make it more responsive to the social and economic imperatives in Mali.

In Mali, more than 60 percent of the population is under 25 years of age. Although there is extended access to educational opportunities and significant access to primary education, primary education still reaches only 58 percent of Mali's children at the primary-school level and reaches even fewer girls (48 percent). The adult literacy rate is roughly 30 percent[3] and is much lower for women. Despite incremental increases in gross enrollment and literacy rates in Mali, substantial inequalities persist among regions, urban and rural areas, and male and female access to quality education. Although access has improved, repetition rates remain very high for girls. Likewise, retention and completion are particularly problematic for girls.[4] Ensuring equal access is the first step that needs to be reinforced by effective strategies for retention, thus ensuring a greater rate of return on investments in girls' and boys' education. Additionally, although regional disparities can be addressed through policies and technical interventions, more concerted and targeted efforts will be required to overcome the gender gap.

It is argued that "inequality in educational opportunities between girls and boys results in lower economic growth. Further, an exogenous increase in girls' access to education creates a better environment for economic growth."[5] Consequently, the cost of not creating the opportunity for girls' equal access and retention is a loss in overall economic growth and socioeconomic development. Thus, efforts must enhance equal life chances in adulthood, not

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[3]   Source: USAID: Mali FY 2002 Congressional Budget Justification.

[4]   World Bank, 2001, "Mali at a Glance." Project Appraisal Document suggests that "in 1998 in Mali the retention rate in primary school was 55 percent, and only 26 percent of the students entering primary school reached the last year of the cycle […] in addition large disparities can be observed between sexes and between urban and rural areas with particularly high repetition and drop out rates for girls and children living in rural areas." (p. 41).

[5]   UNDP, 2000. Dollar, D., and Gatti, R., "Gender Inequality, Income and Growth," p. 35.

only as an imperative for equity and social justice, but also as an economic imperative and a strategy to slow population growth.

Conscious of this challenge, the Government of Mali has committed not only to basic education but to girls' education, and is reforming its education system to better meet that goal by implementing the *Programme Décennal pour le Développement de l'Education* (PRODEC). USAID is a major partner in moving the PRODEC agenda forward, by "moving Mali's gross primary enrollment from about 56 percent in 1999–2000 to 95 percent in 2009–2010, while simultaneously improving learning levels."[6] USAID has placed a strategic value on the education of young men and women to contribute to the human capital of Mali, and to develop their potential as effective partners in the social, economic, and political realms.

Assessment of the Existing Strategic Objective

Strategic Objective: Improve social and economic behaviors among youths

- IR 2: Improve basic education (5 to 15 years)

USAID's focus on youths was a strategic response to population growth and demographic changes, taking into account the fact that "the passage of these young people and subsequent cohorts into adulthood will be the most influential factor in determining Mali's future."[7] This was a critical insight into the concerns of young men and women, particularly:

- To address the needs, interests, and constraints they face,
- To assess and possibly change their perceptions and behaviors regarding critical health issues and education,
- To better address their felt and perceived needs, and
- To promote their social mobility and contribution to national development.

Despite the strong focus on girls' education, it is interesting to note that the reference to youths in the strategic objective may indicate gender neutrality that undermines the education program's strong emphasis on gender in performance indicators and results. The program's stated objective "to improve [education-] related behaviors of youth through providing increased access to quality primary education and strengthened institutional capacity to provide services"[8] raises several questions: (1) Whose behaviors were improved? (2) What is the measure of that improvement, if any? (3) How did the changes in young males' and females' behavior influence their perceptions of education, performance in school, retention, and completion?

Through focus on basic education, particularly girls' access to education in targeted areas in Mali, the program addressed gender concerns in education. The education strategies in curriculum development, institutional support for the Ministry of Education on teacher

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[6] World Bank Project Appraisal Document, Mali Education Sector Expenditure Program.
[7] USAID/Mali Strategic Plan, 1996–2002, August 1995, p. 14.
[8] USAID/Mali Results Review and Resources Request, March 2001, p. 13.

training, and establishment of community schools in rural areas are consistent with the GRM goal of achieving universal primary education (UPE) by 2015. Increasing girls' enrollment, especially in targeted rural areas, and reducing the gender gap in access to basic education are two critical steps to address the disparities and unequal access to education among boys and girls, and the economic, social, and cultural deterrents to girls' education. The education program responded to the need to create the enabling environment for girls' access to basic education by promoting community involvement, improving the quality of teacher training, and developing innovative curricula. The emphasis on basic education and especially girls' education builds the human capital of youths, who will later contribute to economic growth and social mobility.

Key Results

Improved quality of basic education. The Strategies for Advancing Girls' Education (SAGE) Project, designed and implemented by the Academy for Educational Development (AED), a USAID contractor, embodies many of the USAID strategies to promote girls' education and enhance the quality and efficiency of educational delivery mechanisms. It seeks to address structural and exogenous factors that constrain girls' education. Specific to this goal are engendering a curriculum that emphasizes life skills that can add value to girls' competencies. The life skills' approach seeks to enhance the relevance of the curriculum to the students' social reality and needs, to draw the school closer to the community, and to add value to the social skills that parents provide through socialization and education in the household and at the community level. Teacher training in girl-friendly practices builds the teachers' awareness of gender-sensitive classroom dynamics and seeks to reinforce a better understanding of girls as learners and their needs. After teachers receive training in girl-sensitive classroom practices, it is hoped that they can effectively respond to girls' needs and foster a classroom environment conducive to learning, nurturing, and improved performance and achievements. Additionally, the SAGE project provides leadership training to women members of Associations des Parents d'Elèves (APEs) to enhance their decision-making and bargaining power to support their children's education. It is an attempt to enhance girls' mentoring, and to stimulate strong female participation in the decision-making processes and management of community schools.

In addition to the results of the SAGE project, the *pédagogie convergente* piloted by Save the Children has been taken up by the Ministry of Education as a strategy to make learning and teaching more relevant to the Malian sociocultural reality. Expanding the language of instruction to the local language and integrating core traditional values that are commonly held are critical to overcoming the fear of alienation and loss of traditional values—reasons why parents are skeptical about the benefits of education for girls. The *pédagogie convergente* also enhances girls' and boys' capacities to engage with their environment and connect the classroom to their community.

Increased access to basic education. The education program places a strong emphasis on girls' access to education to redress the gender gap in access and enrollment. Given that in rural areas one impediments to girls' access to education is the lack of schools,

building and equipping schools along with targeting girls for enrollment create a condition for access. The establishment of community schools is an innovative mechanism that democratizes access to basic education, contributing to the GRM's goal of "one village, one school, or CED."[9] The establishment of the APE and the subsequent targeted training of APE members to promote parents' and community involvement in schools are effective strategies to contribute to the ambitious goal of basic education for all by 2015.

The SAGE leadership training for women members of the APE contributes to the enhancement of women's decision-making and bargaining power to support girls' education, and to play a more active role in the decision-making processes and management of community schools. It is worth noting that female parents, although present in the APE in community schools, still fulfill the role of caretaker of the group. Their typical responsibilities encompass cooking for the bureau, but not actively participating in decision-making for community schools. They are not always solicited, or even present, when decisions are being made. Thus, these women's voices are not often heard. Given that the gendered social structure does not allow them to take leadership roles in community affairs, the inclusion of women in these discussions may offer each woman the leverage to negotiate her own effective participation.

Community schools. In response to the imperative to enhance the supply of and demand for girls' education, the community schools recorded a significant growth rate of 1,542 in 2000, for a total enrollment of 114,162 students, out of which 42 percent were girls (2001 data). (These figures are for USAID-funded schools only.) It is estimated that 133,000 students in 1,658 community schools are supported by USAID. Enhancing the delivery capacity of these community schools is critical to providing quality education to girls and boys.

The success recorded in the community schools under USAID sponsorship should not mask the many challenges that preclude better performance, quality, and sustainability of the community schools. The schools face many impediments, particularly sustainability, quality of education, and costs accrued by their communities. The rates of success and sustainability of community schools vary according to community endowment, capacities, and resources.[10] Each school's performance is usually highly dependent on the level of community contribution and resources, and whether there are supportive income-generating sources in the community. Because the schools exist in unequally endowed communities, it is not

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[9] Centre d'Education pour le Développement.

[10] It was reported that while cotton-growing communities in the Compagnie Malienne pour le Développement des Textiles (CMDT) areas of Sikasso, Koulikoro, and Segou are performing well, other, less-endowed community schools are facing difficulties. The enthusiasm triggered by decentralization and devolution to local communities created enthusiasm for local community initiatives such as the community schools. However, many communities did not foresee and plan for the recurrent and hidden costs involved, such as the enrollment of students every year and the hiring of a new teacher every other year. It was also reported "due to management difficulties, a growing number of community schools are asking the Ministry of Education to be integrated in the public school system." This can be indicative of a substantive problem that may affect long-term results. If one of the strategies to expand girls' education is through the community schools in rural areas, their lack of sustainability can strongly undermine opportunities for expanded access to girls' basic education, especially in rural areas.

unexpected that they will have unequal chances of sustainability. Therefore, they can yield differential success in performance among girls and boys. Close monitoring of the sustainability and performance of community schools is recommended as a means to consolidate the gains and incremental changes in reducing the gender gap in education.

Improved retention of girls in primary school. A critical factor in reinforcing educational access is girls' retention in schools. Although significant changes have occurred, a differential retention rate still persists, divided along gender lines. Policy reforms and sensibilization campaigns targeted especially to girls, parents, and teachers can be envisioned to narrow the gap and address the major social, cultural, and economic deterrents to girls' retention. The provision of sex-disaggregated data can target strategies to enhance girls' retention rates at specific grade levels. For instance, Save the Children reported a dropout rate of 21 percent for girls (out of a total enrollment of 1,253) in 6th grade, versus 17 percent for boys (out of a total enrollment of 1,768),[11] and noted that at each grade level, girls had higher dropout rates than boys. In addition, as students advance, a higher percentage of girls drop out. Such data should lead to action that addresses deterrents to girls' retention at each grade, thereby reducing the significant gender gap and consolidating the initial gain in access. Girls' retention becomes a contentious issue that will imply concerted and multipronged strategies to keep girls in school and narrow the gender gap. It also proves a justification to target girls as a population at risk, and to devise specific strategies to enhance their retention rates.

The following text box summarizes the major constraints recorded during the team's assessment.

Issues to Consider for Education in the CSP, 2003–2012

Strategic Objective: Expand and Improve Basic Education

The education strategic objective to expand and improve basic education in Mali supports USAID's contribution to attaining the educational goals of the GRM. The CSP parameters paper outlines five strategic focus areas, activities, and performance measures: (1) policy reform; (2) student achievement; (3) teacher training; (4) community schools; and (5) HIV/AIDS prevention through community education. Each of these focus areas offers

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Constraints to Girls' Access to and Retention in School

- Direct and indirect cost of education,
- Lack of school or nonexistence of secondary school,
- Distance of school from community,
- Burden of household chores and work in the fields,
- Lack of incentives and role models,
- Lack of relevance of school to everyday, immediate problems and future goals,
- Early marriage,
- Parents' resistance,
- Opportunity to earn income as a household helper *(aide ménagère)* in urban areas such as Bamako,
- Negative influence of dropout teenagers, and
- Attitudes and behaviors of teachers, including use of corporal punishment.

—*Source: Focus group discussions in Diondiori, Fatome, Association des Artisans in Mopti.*

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[11] Save the Children, 2001. Community Schools, Semi-Annual Report, p. 5.

significant opportunities to address the gender disparity in access, quality, efficiency, and capacity. They can also reflect cross-cutting gender-related initiatives of significant policy, institutional, and programmatic relevance. In order to address the gender inequality in education, there must be a strong emphasis on not only girls' access, but also their retention, completion, and achievement through improved quality of education.

Policy Reform

Policy reform is a key strategic focus, given the many institutional and socioeconomic factors that have policy relevance and preclude girls' educational access, retention, and achievement. It is therefore important to pursue policy reform, not only to create a favorable environment for innovation, but also to address existing impediments and enhance opportunities to bridge the gender gap in access, retention, and achievement.

Despite the political will and declarations of intentions to deal with gender inequality and disparities in access, retention, and quality, in practice, many institutional obstacles preclude conscious attention to gender. The team found that citizens are skeptical of whether the gender-related reforms can be effectively implemented. This was particularly the case for women. They argue that the reforms will be limited as serious mechanisms of structural change if they are not fully integrated into the system or accepted by the end users.

Conversely, without a critical assessment of existing conditions and questioning the premise for action, reforms, and future challenges, intended policy reform may bear little relevance to improving gender disparities. Thus, there are many fundamental questions that should be asked. For example, What are the sociocultural, economic, and institutional barriers that inhibit girls' access to education? Is policy reform the answer? What kind of gender-sensitive, girl-friendly reforms[12] can yield positive outcomes for girls? What strategies are needed to overcome the social determinants that are not addressed by a normative policy reform?

At the same time, although decentralization encourages community participation and citizens' involvement in decision-making processes, it is not certain that policy reform reflects the interests and needs of women and girls. How is it to bridge the gender gap? Is the commitment to education and girls' education reflected in the national budget and expenditures? Are women and girls adequately informed about and sensitized to the opportunities and implications of this reform? Have their interests, as participants, been taken into account, and what is their leverage in implementation at the local level? What are the intended benefits of and potential backlash surrounding proposed reforms? What are the costs and benefits of the policy reform from a gender perspective?

USAID's education program can use decentralization of the Ministry of Education as an opportunity to support the devolution of power, capacities, and resources to the local level, and women's organizations and associations at the village, communal, and national levels.

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[12] In Kenya, the government has conducted policy reviews and made decisions with regard to girls' education, including approving the reentry of teenage mothers to school. Source: World Education Forum, Dakar, 2000. UNICEF Global Girls' Education Programme: country highlights.

Through USAID's democratic governance program and InfoCom, the education program could launch an awareness and information campaign to reach local communities. In the context of gender mainstreaming at USAID, the education program can take the lead with the donor community to fulfill the role of strategic information desk. This can occur on several levels—policy reform, organizing, briefing, and networking among local women's interest groups on specific aspects of this reform—to instill a conscious and sustained commitment to gender equity in education.

Girls' access to schools, particularly in rural areas, can be facilitated by the following strategies:

- Building and maintaining more schools, particularly community schools,
- Providing the logistical support for these schools, and
- Hiring more female teachers, who may serve as role models for girls.

One possible intermediate request (IR) could focus on the representation and effective participation of women's organizations at the local level in implementing education reforms and programs to ensure that agendas include women's concerns.

An effective strategy to put women's concerns in the policy agenda would be to support the establishment of a broad-based consultative group on girls' education. This group could consist of a wide spectrum of women representatives, from the local to national levels, and have a mandate and commitment to put forward gender concerns and women's interests in the planning, design, and implementation of policies. The group could also ensure that girls' education is not neglected in policy development.

Student Achievement

The focus on student achievement offers an opportunity to assess, consolidate, and readjust new curricula, and provide teacher training and institutional and instructional support. Student achievement is a measure of the quality of the education. In order to address gender disparities, both girls' and boys' performances should be closely monitored, especially in specific subject areas, such as math, science, and reading. Parity in the distribution of pedagogical materials, taking into account regional disparities and direct opportunity costs, can ensure equity in access to learning materials that influence student achievement. Mentoring girls and placing high expectations on them can stimulate their sense of self-worth, self-confidence, and desire for high achievement.

> **Lesson Learned from Learning Materials and School-Supply Distribution in the Mopti Region**
>
> The month of October is devoted to national solidarity and fighting social exclusion. To support disadvantaged students' access to learning materials and school supplies, the Division of Social Protection targeted 1,600 students in the Mopti Region. The selection criteria were need-based. When asked how many girls and boys were beneficiaries, the answer was that it had not been taken into account; parity or equity concerns were overlooked. The realization of the potential implications for girls' and boys' achievement has prompted the decision to pay more attention to gender in the future distribution of school supplies and learning materials.
>
> —*Source: Interview with la "Direction de la Protection Sociale (Sévaré)."*

The measure of quality entails more than traditional measures of student achievement. Other achievements should be emphasized in addition to exam scores and pass rates. Behavioral and cognitive skills are critical, especially for girls to become self-confident and aware of their own potential and role as equal citizens who can contribute significantly to the well-being of their communities and families and, consequently, to the development of their country.

School curriculum can also convey social values and culture. The social and cultural content of curriculum can reinforce or challenge gender-based stereotypes. Unfavorable stereotypes of girls and women can discourage them from learning particular subjects and affect their performance. Curriculum content and teaching processes can be used to address and balance regional, ethnic, and gender disparities. For example, conscious efforts should be made to choose gender-related illustrations in textbooks that do not perpetuate gender bias or reinforce gender stereotypes. Similarly, if the material supports the entrepreneurial spirit of both women and men in Mali, it can have a positive effect on students' expectations regarding their participation in economic activities.

Teacher Training

Teacher training is fundamental to enhancing the quality of education, and greatly influences student achievement. Therefore, the successful integration of girl-friendly practices and learning strategies into teacher training modules, during preservice and in-service training, is critical. In addition, the recruitment of female teachers and the promotion of female administrators can positively influence a school and classroom environment that is favorable to girls' achievement.

With regard to the teaching process, the emphasis on the teacher–learner relationship and interaction is critical to instilling confidence and creating the conditions necessary to enhance girls' achievement. The current WIDTECH two-pronged intervention to design a process for engendering public education curriculum, and training the Ministry of Education staff and teachers in that process, is a major step. Bringing the stakeholders together, and reinforcing the capacities of the ministry, its staff, and teachers can ensure the successful implementation and delivery of a gender-sensitive curriculum.

Teacher preparation can be an entry point for gender mainstreaming, especially by highlighting the role of women teachers in the process of educational change. Targeting both male and female teachers in training is key to fostering new practices and the understanding of the many constraints to girls' retention and performance. However, training of teachers should be a cumulative and iterative process, reinforced by monitoring and follow-up mechanisms to ensure that the new curriculum and girl-friendly practices are fully integrated into the classroom.

Possible IR: More male and female teachers trained in girl-friendly practices and gender-sensitive classroom management and instruction.

Enhanced Capacity for Delivery

One strategy lies in the expansion and improvement of community schools in underserved regions, such as Kayes, Mopti, and the North. This plan is rooted in USAID's previous success in establishing community schools in other regions of the country. Not only is it expected to address regional disparity, but also to reduce gender gaps in access and enrollment. The performance, quality, and sustainability of community schools depend very much on community endowment, community ownership, mobilization, and local capacities. Therefore, multifaceted strategies, such as income-generating activities channeled through women's associations and cooperatives, can enhance the sustainability of community schools.

From a gender perspective, one strategic factor is the location of the community schools. Worldwide, the distance between school and community has been a factor in girls' low attendance rates. Conducting a community mapping of resources as well as a gender audit can determine the strategic location of the school that can best serve both men's and women's interests. Another important approach is to strengthen the capacities of women's associations and professional organizations as a means of enhancing their roles in the planning, establishment, and management of community schools.

Synergies between the democracy and governance, sustainable economic growth, health-care, and education sectors will be instrumental in the success of community schools in Mali.

Possible IR: Greater involvement, through participation and consultation, of female parents in the establishment and management of community schools.

Community Health Education

Community health education encompassing nutrition, sanitation, and HIV/AIDS prevention is a critical nexus between education and health. Healthy students will learn and perform better in school than will unhealthy individuals. If the knowledge boys and girls acquire is transferred at the family level, it will create an invaluable chain of information dissemination that will benefit not only the entire family, but also the community. There are opportunities to address gender concerns related to channels of information, awareness about the incidence of malnutrition, and health risks that impinge upon girls' and boys' performance in school; and to foster active preventive behaviors among men and women. To ensure that this supply and demand for information and interventions reaches women, specific gender roles, power bases, interests, and impediments to women's access to information and services must be taken into account.

Community-based activities, such as promoting functional literacy and targeting men's and women's roles and responsibilities regarding specific health issues, can trigger better

awareness. Given that teenagers and women are vulnerable to health risks that men are not, it would be advantageous to encourage activities and develop culturally sensitive messages that foster more assertive decision-making roles for women in reproductive health. Decision-making power and bargaining power increase proportionately with income and financial contribution in the household. This offers a venue to link community-based income-generating activities with functional literacy and community nutrition. Similarly, activities that encourage responsible behavior in reproductive health, nutrition, and sanitation will be of greatest value to both girls and boys.

An activity fulfilling these goals could be the creation of a community canteen to feed students, provide a hands-on learning experience for community nutrition, and generate income for vendors. Multipronged strategies involving learning in social interactions such as the *Jembe*[13] can draw public attention and promote in community schools discussion and learning about HIV/AIDS, health, and nutrition.

A gender assessment of men's and women's perceptions and knowledge about HIV/AIDS and its prevalence in a given community could be used to better inform them of ways to prevent the disease and change their behaviors. Drawing on community assets such as women's associations and power brokers such as traditional healers in outreach programs can be effective.

Cross-cutting Opportunities

Although women have received leadership training through the APE to support girls' education and community initiatives, they are also a target population that can benefit from literacy training. Women need functional literacy, with relevant skills, to build a sense of self-worth. Literate women may see schooling as useful for boys and girls. Moreover, women's competency-based literacy can be a building block for health, income-generating activities, and participation in civic and democratic governance (see "Democracy and Governance" below). With resources at their disposal, women have bargaining power and means to support their children's education. Parents constitute a strong opinion leader to champion the cause of girls' education.

To consolidate the gains in improved access to education, especially for girls, it is critical that girls be provided with opportunities to pursue their education. USAID has a competitive advantage in basic education and as such can suggest and stimulate other partners' contributions to education as a strategic investment in economic growth and poverty alleviation.

Enhancing the skills of young adult men and women is critical to building Mali's human resources, and to enhancing the quality of the country's labor force. Educating women is critical to ensuring that they are not marginalized in the formal economy. It is essential to relate education more effectively to employment opportunities and labor force qualifications.

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[13] The *Jembe* is a community dialogue facilitated by a griot who engages the audience's participation in a discussion on specific issues. The griot typically asks questions and rewards correct answers with prizes and praise.

In fact, a qualified work force is fundamental to economic development strategies, resource utilization, and internal efficiency. With the formidable pressure on girls' basic education, it is imperative to think proactively about where the young girls today will be in the future. Will they end up as household helpers (*aide ménagères*), or will they have better future prospects? Will they have the basic skills to enter the work force and paid labor? Will they become role models to encourage other girls' achievement and retention in school?

Given the changes in information technology and the global economy, students, especially girls, need to take science and technology classes. If not, chances are they will be invisible in science and technology-related professions. At the macro level, Mali's potential to meet the demands of a competitive global market will be significantly undermined if it cannot provide a healthy, well-trained labor force to support the private sector.

Indicators

Setting gender-parity goals at 50 percent girls and 50 percent boys in educational access and enrollment is an effective mechanism for setting target goals. It may be a good condition for the establishment of community schools. However, it may be unrealistic if concerted and multipronged efforts are not taken to minimize the gender gap in completion rates. Sex-disaggregated data are needed to track changes in boys' and girls' enrollment rates. These quantitative data should be complemented by qualitative data to capture other sociocultural deterrents to education.

> **Indicators**
>
> - Use sex-disaggregated data to track the retention and attrition rates of boys and girls.
> - Use sex-disaggregated data on the gross school-age population to set targets.
> - Use gender analyses to identify social factors that influence girls' and boys' education.
> - Collect and analyze information to identify the factors that influence attrition at a given age and grade; for example, the onset of puberty and early marriages.
> - Be aware of the limitations of sex-disaggregated data, and include qualitative analyses of all data.

Recommendations

Expand Access

- **Build and support more schools** in rural underserved communities.

- **Place more emphasis on retention.** Despite the significant gain in access, especially in rural areas, the gender gap still prevails. Keeping girls in school is crucial to maximizing the initial input and ensuring a better outcome.

- **Recruit and train more female teachers, and provide incentives** that will motivate them to work in rural areas and be mentors for girls.

- **Consider the opportunity costs for girls' education.** Given most rural households' level of income, the decision to send girls to school and the costs incurred are weighed against competing needs and survival priorities. Many parents in rural areas wonder especially whether school is worth the loss of girls' labor.[15] Although parents can foresee the long-term return on their potential investment in girls' education, they consider the tradeoff and the constraints they face in the present, when family resources are limited.

> Strategies to improve retention might consist of:
>
> - Mentoring girls and providing remedial classes to low-performing girls;
> - Designing awareness campaigns geared toward parents and girls; and
> - Holding open-house and career days on which girls and women can share their experiences and aspirations to stimulate girls' interest and performance in school.

- **Strengthen parents' involvement.** One way to increase women's involvement is to link strategies for girls' education with women's literacy programs. Another method would be to organize task groups and community initiatives in favor of girls' education that would stimulate women's participation beyond their traditional care-taking capacity. These groups can engage women and men in dialogue about the relevance and many benefits of girls' education.

- **Build girls' interest in education through peer emulation.** Use positive peer pressure and role-modeling. Talk to girls about how they can be effective ambassadors for girls' education.

> Strategies to minimize opportunity costs associated with girls' education:
>
> - Help school administrators, teachers, and parents to organize fund-raising events to support needy children.[14]
> - Provide textbooks and school supplies.
> - Support income-generating activities among local community groups.
> - Sponsor a national sponsorship program, linking a village to a commune (sister–sister program/ brother–brother program) or connecting a school with professional associations and civil society, especially women's professional organizations. For instance, a girl in the village of Diondiori could be sponsored by a family in Sévaré, a neighboring community, to tap into the social capital and legendary hospitality of Malians.

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[14] For example, October is National Solidarity Month in Mali. It presents an opportunity to launch a national solidarity movement in support of girls' education.

[15] In Diondiori, in the region of Mopti, one informant reflected on her daughter's saga: The girl's grandmother had forced her to leave school to help out in the house. The other group members reinforced her story with similar dilemmas. Although anecdotal, these accounts amply illustrate the many competing demands for a schoolgirl's contribution and the pressure of these demands on her ability to manage both school and household responsibilities.

Ensure Quality

- **Emphasize the importance of follow-up mechanisms to teacher training.** Assess the contribution teacher training makes to responsiveness to girls' needs. Evaluate how well teachers integrate girl-friendly practices into their pedagogy and interactions with students. Additional teacher training should encompass more discussion on gender.

- **Integrate core curricula and national standards** in the four school models.[16] This integration will ensure better chances of high performance and achievement in secondary school.

- **Improve the curriculum** with gender-sensitive instructional support and learning strategies.

- **Scale up the SAGE project approach.** Given that the SAGE project has recorded many successes, the program could suggest how other schools could benefit from its innovative approach. Its life skills training and teacher training, for example, fit well into the PRODEC guidelines. The Ministry of Education's collaboration and teachers' adherence will be critical in that respect. WIDTECH's support to the ministry to engender the public-school curriculum, drawing on lessons learned from SAGE, will be a significant contribution that can yield better outcomes for girls.

- **Monitor student achievement.** Closely monitor girls' performance at each grade level and in specific subjects, such as math and science; integrate remedial tutoring where need be; and create a stimulus and trigger girls' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for learning (science in particular) through hands-on experimentation, field visits, and positive models. Insisting on developing behavioral and cognitive skills is critical, especially for girls, to promoting self-confidence and awareness of one's potential and one's role as an equal citizen who can contribute significantly to the well-being of her community, family, and country.

- **Place high expectations on girls.** Provide positive reinforcement through rewards and prizes to motivate high achievement among both girls and boys, and set up special prizes for excellence in overall achievement.

Improve Delivery Capacities

- **Hold implementing partners accountable for results.** Given that the programs are implemented by various private voluntary organizations (PVOs), such as Care, Save the Children, and World Education, it is critical to assess the capacity-building efforts vested in local partners and communities. Evaluation of results can entail more than the number of schools built and enrollment rates. It should also include the level and type of capacities built (or not built) in a given community, both during and after the

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[16] In addition to private schools, the existing model of primary-school delivery consists of the Medersa schools, community schools, formal public schools, and *pédagogie convergente* schools.

implementation. This type of evaluation will capture the sustainability of results. USAID should request that implementers establish follow-up mechanisms and performance monitoring plans for the local partners, communities, and women's associations involved in community schools.

- **Conduct systematic gender audits, asset mapping, and community profiles.** These are useful tools to map communities, their resources, and their capacities to support a community school. These tools should be implemented before setting up community schools.

- **Empower female parents for participation in APE.**[17] SAGE currently addresses female empowerment. Similarly, the education program should continue to monitor female parents in the APE, thereby assessing the effectiveness of the training they receive. The program should test whether these women can exercise more decision-making power and assume effective participation or leadership roles in the APE as a result of their APE training and compared with nonparticipants.

- **Address concerns for sustainability** that could undermine the incremental gains in girls' access to education, performance, and completion, and engage and sustain parents' involvement in schools, to instill favorable perceptions of schools as a complementary form of socialization and enhancement of girls' well-being and future prospects.

- **Focus on women's associations as strategic partners.** Diagnose local partners' capacities and target women's associations. Identify what capacities are necessary in a given community for sustainability.

- **Connect APE leadership training with effective management skills.** A deliberate effort must be made to seek and encourage women's participation at all levels of planning and managing community schools. The mere fact that women are present does not imply that they are speaking up or, for that matter, actively participating. Likewise, when they are speaking, the men are not necessarily listening.

- **Create a task force with specific responsibilities, on a rotating basis, to ensure that women serve in leadership roles.** Leadership training can encompass competency-based literacy to empower women for active participation that can transcend the community school to different sectors, such as governance, health, and income-generating activities. The social determinants that inhibit women's full participation can be eliminated by establishing women's power based on sound economic assets.

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[17] It is worth noting that female parents, although present in the APE bureau in community schools, still end up fulfilling the role of caretaker of the group—cooking for the bureau and not actively participating in decision-making regarding community schools—as they are not always solicited or present when decisions are being made. Their voices are often not heard. Targeting training in effective communication that will involve men as well can reinforce leadership training. Bringing men into the discussion can win their support and offer women leverage to negotiate their effective participation, especially when gender-related social roles do not allow them to take leadership roles in community affairs.

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Context and Background

Women in Mali are involved in all economic sectors in urban and rural areas. Village after village, women are growing, processing, and transforming cereals, using basic tools, without technological or capital inputs. Typical cereals they process are maize, millet, sorghum, and rice, as well as agricultural products such as *karaté*, hibiscus, vegetables, and fruit. They also process and sell fish. In urban areas, women are visible in the markets, small trade, retail, textiles, and services arenas, where they demonstrate their know-how and creative capacities. Their dynamism is inspirational, as they strive to meet the needs of their households, ensure household and community food security, and care for their families and communities.

Despite women's pivotal contributions to Mali's formal and informal economies, and their labor force participation, they do not benefit from many investments that could enhance their access to productive assets and resources.

Assessment of the Existing Strategic Objective

Strategic Objective: Increase the Value-Added Aspect of Specific Economic Subsectors to the National Income

- IR 1: Increased production of cereals, livestock, and alternative-commodities subsectors in targeted areas;
- IR 2: Increased trade in cereals, livestock, and alternative-commodities subsectors in targeted areas;
- IR 3: Increased savings mobilized and credit provided by nonbank institutions in targeted areas; and
- IR 4: Increased dryland agriculture and natural resources management.

The sustainable economic growth (SEG) program addresses critical obstacles to increasing the value added at each stage of production in important economic sectors in Mali, such as cereals, livestock, and alternative commodities. The goals are important to pursue, especially for economic recovery. However, including socioeconomic indicators would better elucidate the program's impact on people in targeted areas. Doing so could enable one to assess how resources and economic inputs are maximized and reinvested at the local and national levels, thus ensuring more equitable distribution of opportunities for access to resources and wealth. Ensuring that women are taken into account in the growth distributional pattern is critical to lowering socioeconomic inequalities.

The SEG results framework and strategic objective raise critical gender issues. In the effort to pursue and meet the goal of economic growth through enhanced production, the program tended to overlook the people-centered dimension of development. The human capital input

to production is the men and women who produce, process, and transform tradable goods, commodities, and food staples. Questions that relate to increased production, trade, and savings include:

- Have the development interventions led to more inequality?
- What were the socioeconomic impacts?
- Were resources and inputs extended to women as producers to enhance growth?

The strategic objective and intermediate results do not significantly reflect gender considerations in their focus, approach, or results. The gender-neutral approach does not elucidate the respective roles of women and men, their contributions to economic growth, and the intended or unintended effects and outcomes of such a program. Men and women play different, yet complementary, roles in agricultural production. It is essential to understand their specific roles and responsibilities before addressing their constraints and priorities. The lack of assessment of both men's and women's respective roles has biased the outcomes of development, and perhaps yielded detrimental effects. Taking into account the division of labor and sectors of production can inform the development of more-efficient interventions and guide the effective and equitable allocation of resources.

In IR 1, increased production of cereals, livestock, and alternative-commodities subsectors in targeted areas, what is the impact of the record rice harvest during 2000? What are the socioeconomic impacts at the household, local, and national levels? Did this harvest improve household food security, household resources, and livelihood security, and did that lead to improvements in nutrition, health, or education in the targeted areas? The focus on formal production only, particularly cereals production, reinforces the pattern of the invisibility of women farmers in agricultural production, as women tend to be more involved as smallholders in informal production of other crops, especially roots and tubers.

Similarly, IR 2, increased trade in cereals, livestock, and alternative-commodities subsectors in targeted areas, does not explicitly reflect a gender dimension. Indicators focus on total livestock off-take, exports increase, market infrastructure, and regional trade opportunities for Malian exporters. There is no clear indication of who benefited from the program, what the intended socioeconomic impacts were, or how the intended socioeconomic impacts affect men's and women's income levels and well-being.

IR 3, increased savings mobilized and credit provided by nonbank institutions in targeted areas, reflects attention to gender, especially in microfinance, where 95 percent of beneficiaries are women. However, the absence of specific information on the beneficiaries' profiles and the credit scale make it difficult to know whether equitable access to credit exists in significant amounts. Drawing a customer profile could ensure that women are not confined merely to small loans. Small loans can limit the range of profitable income-generating activities that women can perform and, hence, their level of income.

Moreover, this indicator does not capture the intended or unintended, direct or indirect, impacts of microfinance on women and their communities. It is essential that assessments of microfinance link use of loans to changes in household income, access to other resources,

and changes in nutrition, health, and education, as well as the development of new income-generating activities. Results monitoring should also look at the opportunity costs for women. Do microfinance services meet the needs of entrepreneurs or the survivalists? These contentious issues need to be addressed to better inform populations of what microfinance can or cannot do for them and to make clear the difference between the business imperative and the development objectives.

To meet development goals, microfinance schemes' measurements of success should encompass more than repayment rates. They should include social impacts and capacity-building to maximize the success rate for women and prevent the unintended negative consequences. These negative effects, encompassing women's loss of dignity, self-worth, and confidence in their capabilities, have a profound impact on household poverty.

Table 1: Microfinance Impacts: Summary Findings from Focus Group Interview with the Association Kawral (Entente) in Fatoma

Intended Positive Consequences	Unintended Negative Effects
▪ Increases income for women to contribute to the household (condiments), ▪ Improves household nutrition and health, ▪ Improves women's decision-making in the household and community, ▪ Stimulates other women to be entrepreneurial, ▪ Supports husbands to enhance household resources, and ▪ Provides women with resources to generate more income.	▪ Loss of collateral and assets (goats, sheep, jewelry), ▪ Loss of dignity (in case of delinquency), ▪ Violence against women (over control of income), ▪ Pressure to repay loan regardless of contingencies, ▪ Competition with vital needs (medication, food, school costs), and ▪ Vulnerability to usury.

IR 4, increased dryland agriculture and natural resources management (NRM), is a gender-neutral objective and does not indicate whether the gender dimension was fully taken into account. Were women farmers targeted in the OHVN in the training to adopt improved natural resources management techniques? Was the training responsive to their needs? Were women extension agents trained? There is no indication of whether the program, and its implementing partners, took into account women's contributions, roles, expertise, knowledge, and practices. Moreover, there was a failure to disaggregate the gender impacts of the new NRM practices on men and women.

Women farmers are not only users, but also protectors of the environment, the source of their livelihood. They employ traditional farming practices to preserve ecosystems, manage natural resources, and use alternative energy sources. Recognizing the prominent role that women play in agricultural production and land-use management is critical to enhancing their capacities and knowledge base, and to reverse the trend of decline in production levels.

Considerations for the New CSP Accelerated Economic Growth

Accelerated economic growth is a worthy and noble cause. Yet why "*accelerated growth*"? "Accelerated growth" suggests pace rather than depth or growth distributed in all sectors and strata of the Malian society. One alternative might be "expanded growth"—especially if growth is inscribed within a poverty-alleviation dynamic. Expanded growth could enhance equitable growth beneficial to vulnerable groups such as women, and generate the means for social mobility and release from the trap of poverty. The mechanisms for accelerated growth may be biased against the poor, thus leading to more inequality. The mechanisms for accelerated growth also can bypass women, becoming a missed opportunity to address factors that impede women's participation in the economic sector and tap their productive potential.

There is consensus and recognition, among Malians, that women are assets and provide substantial economic resources at the micro, meso, and macro levels. Among the development community in Mali, organizations such as the World Bank and UNDP are investing in women and targeting them for poverty alleviation. UNDP's Multifunctional Platform for poverty alleviation targets women in rural areas and builds their capacities to manage the multiple components of projects, including microcredit, food processing, and alternative energy. The *Association des Femmes Vendeuses de Sable* epitomizes the entrepreneurial spirit of Malian women and their potential for investment (see box).

To the extent that USAID supports economic growth in Mali, giving equal attention to women in economic production can yield a greater rate of socioeconomic return. A priority focus entails addressing women's access to factors of production, including labor and capital. In agriculture, women need to access inputs such as seeds, production technologies, agricultural extension services, and output markets. Given that the Government of Mali is pursuing poverty alleviation as a long-term strategy to create the condition for growth, it is imperative to design pro-poor, pro-women programs to contribute to that goal. Poverty cannot be reduced without assessing the socioeconomic conditions at the local level, and in rural areas, assessing the location of women in the formal and informal economies.

> **Successful women in a non-traditional sector: *Association des Femmes Vendeuses de Sable*, GIE WASA**
>
> The women organized in an economic interest group to enter a competitive market in which women were invisible. They entered the sector with significant disadvantages, yet they survived and expanded their economic base.
>
> At first they obtained tools from men, hired men as laborers for sand extraction, and relied on men for transportation. As they realized that to be competitive they needed to have control over tools and transportation, they invested their profit in their own tools, set up flexible contracts with men workers, and invested in transportation. They asserted their control from the production to sale stages. Through past mistakes, such as not having contracts or invoices, they learned to bond together against usury, create their own mutual loans and savings, provide references on potential clients, assess clients' risks, and assist other members in basic accounting and record keeping (through functional literacy). When they cannot meet the demand of their clients, they refer customers or markets to one another.
>
> —*Source: Focus group interview with GIE WASA.*

The formulation of program objectives, results, and impacts needs to account for the gender dimension of development. Integrating a gender dimension will address equity concerns, as well as efficacy. Women's work is not limited to household and community maintenance; on the contrary, it encompasses the physical labor of agriculture, food processing, trade, and services. Their full range of responsibilities includes ensuring the adequate nutrition of the household and community, and they have combined their roles as caretakers, producers, and resources managers. Their contributions do not derive from a discrete, separate system of production, but reflect a pattern of labor allocation and resources that programs seeking to enhance production and sustainable development must address.

Women, as users and managers of natural resources, should be targeted with training that is responsive to the activities and practices in which they predominate, and in ways that cater to their specific needs and impediments. The strategic mix of assets and inputs—including land, labor, technology, and financial services—that responds to women's needs is critical to ensuring that women play a pivotal role in economic development.

The pressing issues with respect to women's multiple roles, productive and reproductive, compared with those of men suggest recommendations for raising the status and productivity of women.

In light of the many recommendations from informants in ministries and development agencies, and among ordinary citizens, it is critical to place a strategic focus on women, not only as a social category, but also as an asset. From a programmatic perspective, assessing the situation of women in the formal and informal economies will be instrumental in catering to their needs, investing in women, and creating economic opportunities to unleash their potential.

With regard to the CSP, USAID's SEG team has outlined five areas of focus, each of which offers substantial opportunities to work with women and to enhance results:

1) Policy Reform

The attention to policy reform is critical to create the enabling environment for economic development. More important, questioning which policies will be meaningful, for addressing impediments men and women face as producers, consumers, and labor force members, will improve the relevance of given polices. It is critical to ensure that end users are informed of the opportunities and constraints associated with new policies.

Major Impediments to Women's Productivity

- Lack appropriate timesaving technology, inputs, and finance to enhance their capabilities as producers,
- Manage multiple household responsibilities without labor-saving technology,
- Carry on their multiple roles with capacities weakened by poor health and nutritional status,
- Function with low levels of literacy,
- Lack information on market opportunities, trade, and customs,
- Lack transport to access markets,
- Lack access to water (for agricultural production),
- Lack access to and ownership of land, and
- Lack recognition as heads of households.

On the other hand, to the extent that USAID supports studies on policy impacts, gender impact assessments should be included. This is particularly important, as investment and trade policies directly affect land use and access and natural resources management. Such policies and practices can have significant effects on household livelihood security.

Possible IR: Formulation and effective implementation of pro-women economic policies supporting economic producers and businesses.

Indicator: Opportunities created and supported for women producers and businesses; and their participation in policy dialogue and implementation.

2) Finance

Finance is a strategic, albeit often unfriendly, sector for women entrepreneurs, who face many bottlenecks to access substantial credit beyond seed money. It is an opportunity to connect competitive businesses owned or operated by women with financial institutions, by making information about legal frameworks and bank lending procedures available to them. Taking an active stand, the program can target the "borrower group" to ensure that women are among the beneficiaries. Mobilizing financial resources to businesses will not be sufficient to meet women's needs unless they are channeled to reach women when and where they need them most.

> **Illustration of Women in Cross-Border Trade**
>
> Malian women are heavily involved in cross-border trade for textiles and processed agricultural products. However, their lack of information about new ECOWAS customs regulations subjects them to abuse. This problem undermines their potential earnings and income, resulting in significant transaction costs and financial losses for women in cross-border trade.
>
> *—Source: WIDTECH, "Women's Business Links: A Preliminary Assessment of Women Cross-Border Traders in West Africa.*"

Concerning microfinance, the program outlines a positive and much needed strategy to professionalize the microfinance sector. In light of the mushrooming of *caisse de credit* in Mali, and their acute lack of capacity, building women's associations' business and managerial capacities will be critical to averting unintended negative consequences and to ensuring the sustainability of microfinance schemes.

Potential IR: Improved access to finance and the professionalization of receivers.

3) Agro-Processing

This is a strategic entry point for the promotion of women entrepreneurs. Women are present, visible, and competitive in agro-processing: in hibiscus, local juices, and sun-dried agricultural products, for example. They process food for household consumption and commercial markets, particularly in the informal sector. The promotion of female entrepreneurship can be effective to scale up small enterprises, reinforce their capacities, and enhance their competitive advantage in local, regional, and international markets.

Karité is a good example. Mali is a major producer of this vegetable-based butter in West Africa. In its production, women have the know-how to manage the entire production and transformation chain. It is a niche market favorable to women as producers and traders. To reinforce the competitiveness of the private sector, scaling up small *artisanal* food-processing businesses into medium-sized or even large businesses, and linking producers with bigger markets, will be determinant. To this end, the professionalization of women in the agro-processing sector can yield high socioeconomic returns.

Possible IR: Improved capacity and market potential of locally based and locally owned small and medium-sized agro-processing businesses.

Indicator: Number and market share of trained women agro-processing businesses.

4) Market Development

Women in rural areas want to know what other women in Mali are doing and are eager to learn from them. Market development can benefit women if their need for market information, price, trends, and regulatory frameworks is assessed and addressed. However, women need the tools to access profitable market and trading opportunities. As small producers, their transaction costs can be great, given their illiteracy rate, reliance on unprofessional middlemen, lack of marketing skills, and imperfect knowledge of market opportunities.

Possible IR: Enhanced linkages between local/rural producers and urban/regional markets.

Indicator: Number and types of producers linked, sex-disaggregated.

The story of the *Ouagabiyakin Groupement de Femmes* (see box) illustrates the many constraints women face as producers; namely, their vulnerability to abuse due to their low bargaining and coercive power to preserve their interests and livelihood. They have overcome major barriers to own land, yet they have neither control of the inputs nor assurance of the return on their investment. This story also illustrates women's vulnerability to poverty. As they venture into income-generating activities as a major source of income and livelihood, they invest collateral and lack secure fallback positions to deal with shocks. It is important to question agribusiness practices, which involve women as producers, and the social accountability that should sustain such practices. What can be women's fallback position? What can be done to ensure that market opportunities bring fair benefits to small producers, such as women?

A visioning and problem-solving brainstorming session was held with women association members, in which the women identified constraints and devised solutions. The following matrix summarizes the constraints and potential solutions the women proposed.

A Story of Resilience:
The *Ouagabiyakin, Groupement de Femmes* in Oulessobougou

In 1984, the women in Oulessobougou (OHVN zone) formed an economic interest association with 60 members, all women, many of whom were heads of households. They began by selling dry wood, then decided to start vegetable gardens. They started the new venture with the support of a local nongovernmental organization, VTA Alliance, that bought them a piece of land. They now grow green beans, one of their main commodities for income and livelihood.

One of the association's main clients is Mali Premiere, which provides them with seeds. They adjust their production to meet the client's demand. However, these women face many constraints. When middlemen decide to honor the women's verbal contracts, they often set prices that are far below market prices. Other obstacles they face are the lack of follow-up and compliance among *opérateurs economiques* regarding their initial commitments and orders; the lack of binding contracts between them as producers and clients; and, consequently, no recourse in cases of delinquency.

—Source: Focus group with the Ouagabiyakin Groupement de Femmes in Oulessobougou.

Problem Identification and Solution Development

Current Situation	Assets	Problems	Vision for the Future	Solutions
The association has 60	▪ Owner-ship of	▪ Cannot control sale of	▪ Negotiating favorable prices with a diversity of	▪ Training ▪ More extension

| members, many of whom are heads of households | land
▪ Solidar-ity, trust, and mutual support | production
▪ Unable to negotiate favorable prices (for example, for green beans)
▪ Unable to ensure that clients meet commitments
▪ Lack transport

▪ Illiteracy | *opérateurs economiques*
▪ Targeting urban markets
▪ Making more profits to invest in other lucrative activities
▪ Growing a variety of products that can be processed and transformed for household consumption when they are not sold
▪ Making enough profit to support their children's education, and to provide household commodities | agents for women
▪ Assess the *opérateurs economiques'* reputations and keep a listing of them
▪ Link with Bamako women's associations
▪ Organize to send selected women to sell products in urban markets |

5) Environment and Natural Resources Management

To include women purposefully and explicitly in natural resources management, the program must address gender differences with respect to forestry use, farming practices, water access, and usage. Women are not only users but are also protectors of the environment. Thus, this dimension must be taken into account in NRM, in order to enhance women's capacities in using innovative practices, and accessing extension outreach and technical inputs. Resource access and control have direct implications for investment decisions at the micro, meso, and macro levels. In fact, economic empowerment leads to better women's participation in household decision-making, which can expand to the community level, as well.

During the team's inquiry, women were asked about the allocation of their earned income. The dominant responses were that they use their income to (1) provide household supplies and condiments; (2) leverage the opportunity costs for school; (3) ensure food security and nutrition for their families; and (4) provide for social events such as marriages and baptisms.

Rural women in Mali draw many of their livelihoods from the collection, transformation, processing, and sale of forestry products. Therefore, any effort to implement sustainable and sound environmental practices should target these women as end users and stakeholders. To be effective, initiatives to improve and implement community-based NRM practices should ensure the full participation of women in the planning and decision-making processes.

Possible IR: Increased participation of women in decision-making, training, and implementation regarding NRM and farming practices.

Recommendations

Based on the program assessment and suggestions from various sources, the team proposes the following recommendations:

- **Take an asset-based approach.** Support women in mobilizing capacities and solidarity, and women's organizations as a form of social capital serving as a foundation to invest in women and promote their economic empowerment.

- **Conduct a situation analysis** to assess gender roles and constraints in NRM and farming practices in the zones of intervention. This analysis will allow the definition of priorities responsive to clients.

- **Support established local networks and associations** to provide opportunities to reach out to women, assess how they operate, and identify factors that impede their access to and control of resources.

- **Provide capacity-building for marketing, market development, and business skills** by linking rural women with urban-based women's groups, such as lawyers, professional groups, and the chamber of commerce. These linkages will allow women to share information about legal frameworks, trade barriers and regulations, and market opportunities in urban or even regional markets.

- **Identify investment opportunities** for women as traders and producers.

- **Focus on building strategic competencies** in market analysis, microcredit management, activity diversification, and niche building, to avert unintended consequences (such as loan delinquency and default; loss of hard-earned assets; and loss of collateral, which can compromise household health, nutrition, and children's education).

- **Consolidate the mushrooming of** *"caisse de credit solidaire,"* **which may not have the capacity for long-term sustainability,** and provide appropriate training to women about what microcredit can or cannot do for them. Do not provide credit without technical assistance or baseline studies on growth opportunities; conduct impact studies, and draw up and monitor borrower profiles.

- **Disseminate information to women** about market opportunities, prices, and trade barriers.

- **Maintain a database** of women entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses in Mali (a knowledge base of women in economic sectors).

- **Focus more attention on gender roles in agriculture and natural resources management.** Given that women rarely put forward their own interests and needs, it is incumbent upon implementing agents to reach out to women farmers, using participatory rural appraisal techniques and gender audits.

- **Assess women's roles in land use and natural resources management.** Ensure better access to appropriate extension services and agricultural inputs, including timesaving technologies. New land development linked with microcredit can facilitate women's access to land when they cannot own land due to customary land tenure practices.

- **Identify women as intended beneficiaries, and listen to them.** Address impediments to women's access to strategic inputs such as land and capital, production technologies, and product markets. It is critical to build partnerships with a core component of the population, who, along with men, mediate the complex demand for food production, community welfare, household livelihood security, and economic development.

- **Use sex-disaggregated indicators.** Monitor the program's impact on its various categories of beneficiaries, including women.

HEALTH CARE

Context and Background

Mali is an extremely poor country, ranked 153 of 162 on the UNDP's Human Development Index. It has been among the countries with the highest levels of infant mortality and maternal mortality in the world.

In 1991, the Government of Mali designed and launched the Sectoral Policy for Health and Population, which addressed constructing maternity wards within certain health centers; training *matrons*, nurses, and midwives; creating *caisses de santé* in some villages; and attending to family planning. USAID and other donors and partners have been working with the government to address health-care needs throughout the past decade.

According to DHS Data from 2001	
Infant mortality	113/1,000
Under 5 years of age mortality	229/1,000
Births per women ages 15 to 49	6.8
Measles immunization	48.7%
DPT3 immunization	39.6%
Only 5.8 percent of females and 11.6 percent of males reported use of modern contraception.[18]	

There have been some improvements.
The under-five mortality rate dropped from 252.2 per 1,000 (1995–1996, Demographics and Health Surveys [DHS]) to 229 per 1,000 in 2001. According to the UNDP's most recent Human Development Index and DHS figures, infant mortality improved from 221 per 1,000 in 1970 to 113 per 1,000 in 2001. Measles immunization had risen to 57 percent.[19] Life expectancy has increased from 42.9 years (1970–1975) to 50.9 years (1995–2000).

By some accounts, the improvements have been disappointing given the resources invested. Perhaps it is just a matter of time, given where Mali began. Perhaps the resources have been

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[18] This is an increase from 4.5 percent and 8.4 percent, respectively (1995–1996, DHS), yet births per women ages 15 to 49 have remained virtually unchanged (6.7 in 1995–1996 and 6.8 in 2001).
[19] Unfortunately, measles immunization slipped from 50.8 percent (1995–1996, DHS) to 48.7 percent (2001).

insufficient for the degree of need. It is also possible that the slow and uneven improvements reflect the influence of underlying factors that have not yet been fully addressed. To explore this last supposition, gender analysis provides a means to determine whether increasing attention to gender constraints and opportunities might improve the rate and extent of change in health indicators.

Gender plays a significant role in relation to three of the most serious health problems in Mali:

- **HIV/AIDS:** Women are vulnerable to the extent that their husbands make decisions; polygamy increases risk; women have less access to information and lack the economic means to purchase condoms; and traditional practices may involve health risks.

- **Malaria:** Women lack the financial means to use health-care services, and often cannot make decisions regarding their children's health care (also because of a lack of economic power) and must follow the directives of their husbands or mothers-in-law.

- **Family planning:** Because men are often the ones to make family planning decisions, information and sensitization must target them. It would be even better to approach couples, giving both partners family planning information and encouraging discussion.

Gender and the Existing Health Program within the Youth Strategic Objective

Youth SO: Improve Social and Economic Behaviors among Youths

- IR 1: Improved child survival services;
- IR 2: Improved basic education; and
- IR 3: Improved reproductive health services.

During the past five years, USAID's work in health has focused on "improved social and economic behavior among youth," particularly through better access to and quality of service, service-use promotion, and strengthened institutional capacity to provide services. There has been a recent focus on transferring technical or system improvements from the Ministry of Health to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other implementers for dissemination and use, including service norms and procedures; information, education, and communication (IEC); supervision guides; and peer educator curricula. There also is enhanced attention to HIV/AIDS through Mali's new HIV/AIDS strategy.

The existing program raises several questions regarding gender-related impacts and potential entry points for improved technical assistance through greater attention to gender. First, the term "youth" illustrates the issue of gender-neutral language; that is, it is a collective term for all youths. Yet, youths are not all the same, and do not have the same issues, needs, and opportunities. Using a collective term masks those distinctions. Although this is not necessarily biased, it is important to note subsets of youths, taking into account gender-based

roles and responsibilities, when designing programs and activities. The value of gender audits is to identify various responsibilities, such as:

- Young women are mothers responsible for children (up to a point);

- Young husbands or male partners, or their mothers, may be the "decision-makers" regarding when to access health care;

- Older women may become the caretakers for those ill with AIDS and the parents for the children of those who die;

- Young women may be the target population for reproductive health care, but young husbands may be the target population for IEC to encourage use of condoms; and

- Young peer counselors may be the trainees for health messages targeting urban youths, but grandmothers or midwives may be more effective in influencing changes in health-related behaviors among young couples in rural areas.

Second, much of USAID's work, and that of its partners, depends on training, or IEC. These mechanisms are used to raise awareness of health symptoms and solutions, to encourage use of new services, and to change unhealthful behaviors. For example, "IEC activities are the essence of efforts to promote responsible health behaviors" through a catalogue of more than 100 "messages." Typically, the development of IEC messages rests on analysis of how best to reach a target population, and on pretesting how messages are received and used.

It is important, therefore, to ensure that those who develop dissemination strategies or those who train service providers use gender analysis to inform their activities. For instance, they should identify gender-based obstacles to the use of services and ways to overcome them, as well as gender-related opportunities and ways to exploit them. Although there is often clear awareness of reaching women as mothers versus reaching men, differentiating the target population by gender is only the very first step. The second step is to define "target populations" not only as sex-disaggregated groups, but also according to such factors as age, community position, and education or literacy level.

The third step is more complicated and requires looking beyond whether certain messages will reach the intended target population to how different target populations may receive and utilize them. Much of USAID's technical assistance has either targeted women as beneficiaries or linked with women as agents or partners for protecting the health of their families and communities. From a women in development perspective, this has been approached well but also illustrates the difference between a WID-focused approach and a gender and development (GAD) analysis. Gender analysis aims to identify factors that influence access and quality as well as use. Gender analysis looks at who has the power to make and act upon decisions in different domains, including health-care utilization. "Power" can be defined in terms of economic, social, and political assets or resources. Because women are key to ensuring their children's growth and development, it is important to take into consideration women's different levels of knowledge, fear, power, and determination.

To achieve results regarding use of health-care services, USAID and its partners could increase the use of gender audits as ways to understand gender-related roles, responsibilities, and decision-making power. Project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation should then build upon the lessons learned from such audits.

Because gender is context-specific, it is essential that gender be a factor not only for defining target populations and considering how, where, and when messages are received, but also for determining the extent to which gender determines whether messages may or may not be effectively utilized. The success of health-related advocacy activities depends on careful understanding of gender-based roles and expectations. The messages, the approaches, and the timing should take account of (1) who, among men and women, older and younger, is socially or culturally positioned to utilize the information; that is, to change his or her behavior or that of others; and (2) how such changes must be supported.

USAID has reported that many of its recent successes are attributable to PVOs' "village-level interventions," and to "linking traditional birth attendants with Community Health Centers" (CSCOM) training and supervision. Such approaches demand familiarity with community norms, roles, and practices. Consequently, successes and "best practices" in community interventions (such as nutrition-positive deviance and community and ASACO management) are ideal sources for gender-related information.[20]

Identifying Lessons Learned and Using Experience to Improve Results

Two reported indicators[21] for this SO—immunization coverage and the number of "accessible clinics" (defined as at most 15 kilometers away)—illustrate how gender analysis can contribute to understanding factors that impede or potentially enhance results. USAID's indicators capture a certain level of change in demand (number of clients accessing a particular service) and supply (number of clinics within 15 kilometers of clients' residences). Such indicators suggest a level of success but also can signal the need to explore why the expected results are not forthcoming.

In general, much of the maternal and child health-care assistance focuses on improving supply—either increasing the quantity of services or supplies, or enhancing the quality of supply systems. Often, however, equally significant impediments to health-care utilization exist on the side of the consumer or those who create the demand for such services. From the perspective of the female consumer, issues may relate to (1) whether they actually want the supply or in what form and at what cost, and (2) whether the costs (transaction costs, including transportation and purchase of services, and opportunity costs, such as time lost to productive activities) outweigh the perceived and actual benefits.

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[20] UNFPA reports that it works with the *Association de Sante Communautaire* (ASACO), which manages the *Centres de Sante Communautaires* (CSCOM) . As the participants are typically men, UNFPA sensitizes the men to the importance of including women, and then trains women who are already there. In their four regions (Kayes, Sikasso, Timbuktu, and Gao), UNFPA requires the presence of women in the ASACO. Thus far, after two years, the group does not have sufficient experience from which to draw lessons learned.

[21] These indicators are not impact indicators, such as measurements of health status. It is expected that if there is improvement in the intermediate indicators, there will be improvements in impact, as well.

The purpose of monitoring is twofold: to measure and report results (to Washington and other interested parties), and to determine whether USAID assistance is having the desired impact. Indicators are needed for both these purposes. Some of the necessary reporting data are collected by USAID projects, and other data by implementing partners. Because USAID's indicators do not identify underlying obstacles, it would be helpful to ensure that implementing partners have monitoring systems (indicators, focus groups, and so on) that can reveal gender-related (and other) obstacles. For example, immunization coverage measures how many children are reached by USAID-provided resources. If implementing partners were to ask whether people understand the rationale for immunizations, and also the cost constraints, transportation problems, time, and timing involved in bringing children into the clinic, and their fears and doubts, there would be a richer information base for knowing "why" coverage rates might not be as good as expected.[22] Information should be collected not only from mothers, but also from fathers, grandmothers, and others—with an eye toward each respondent's role in decision-making relative to the intended result.

Similarly, an increase in access to health care that is 15 kilometers away[23] may have little or no impact on the health of many Malians who need it most. Because Mali is both extremely large and poor, it will take a long time to provide enough clinics to meet the above criterion. For women in many rural communities—poor and without regular transportation—access that is 15 kilometers away means access only in the most severe circumstances. Often, that is too late. Moreover, women often must ask for and obtain assistance from a man—a husband, a husband's older brother, or the village chief who owns the only means of transportation— before they can go to the clinic. Therefore, the team recommends the use of additional indicators at the implementation level to track access to and use of health services by poor, rural women.

Gender and Health within the CSP Parameters Paper for FY 2003–2012

With the division of the youth SO into distinct health and education strategic objectives, USAID's health work will continue to focus on reproductive health and child survival, with increased emphasis on HIV/AIDS and malaria prevention. According to the CSP parameters paper, the stated purpose of the SO will be to "increase the use of selected health services." The activities and performance measures refer to improving access, increasing availability, improving quality, and promoting targeted health services.[24]

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[22] Of course, some implementing partners may already be monitoring this—and it is quite possible that USAID could know more about what is happening regarding implementation if it were to ask these questions of its partners.

[23] This is a Ministry of Health indicator that USAID uses to assess contributions to the MOH's objectives.

[24] The four areas noted in the CSP parameters paper are (1) established policy environment for improving access to quality products and services; (2) increased availability of RH and CS services and products; (3) improved quality of health-care management and services; and (4) promotion of CS and FP and STI/HIV/AIDS services.

USAID's health team recognized that increased supply and quality of health-care services are not sufficient to increase their use, and have proposed an IR that relates to promotion in the mission's parameters paper. Gender analysis underscores the importance of such an IR, "promotion of CS [child survival] and FP [family planning] and STI/HIV/AIDS services," and the gender assessment team encourages the mission to take steps that ensure that promotion is effective. This would include measures to identify gender-defined roles, responsibilities, and decision-making power. Gender analysis reminds program planners and implementers of the need to identify gender-related obstacles to achieving results. Increasing the use of health-care services and practices by addressing availability, quality, and promotion requires information regarding impediments to use and practice. Such limitations may vary among potential users, depending on a variety of factors, including sex, age, status, economic assets, and education.

Thus, as USAID health specialists pointed out, it is important to know what women think and to know what men are encouraging. It also is imperative to understand decision-making in the context of extreme poverty—that if a mother takes time to take one child to a clinic, the whole family and economic unit loses her time that would have been used to perform other tasks, and that a lack of money may preclude the purchase of contraceptives.

The Dual-Dimension of Gender: Remembering Generational Factors

Who has primary responsibility for child survival? Is it the mother, and does she have the power to decide to access and pay for appropriate services? Or is it the father who decides whether and when (in the course of an illness) the child should be taken to a clinic? Maybe it is the grandmother. Older women, grandmothers and mothers-in-law, often exercise decision-making authority in health-care and health-seeking behavior. In such cases, health-care utilization is not just a man/woman issue, but also demands attention to intergenerational power. A gender audit can identify and help practitioners and planners understand these roles, and inform decisions regarding the targets of information, technical assistance, or training.

Further, there are women in villages who are held in high regard and exercise power that can be utilized for improved health care: grandmothers, midwives, and nurses, or *matronnes*. A gender audit may also identify those who have health expertise or who are consulted for health-care decisions.

Younger women could be empowered to make or influence decisions regarding their own health care and that of their children if they had information and power. Access to information requires careful targeting of messages and delivery in ways that are effectively persuasive—perhaps through literacy training, women's groups, or older women. Power requires some economic activities, social capital, and other resources.

Thus, the eventual design, positioning, and manner of providing health services will determine whether the services will be meaningful, useful, and accessible to rural women in Mali (or, even more problematic, to nomadic women in the North). Insofar as "target populations will be identified by the nature of the problems being addressed," there is ample room to identify, discuss, and address gender issues in a strategic way. For example, a focus on "adolescents within the general population" must draw distinctions between young women and men, and between urban and village-based youths. Similarly, reference to child survival activities targeting the "individuals and systems responsible for ensuring appropriate child care" leaves room to discuss *who* within a family or community actually is "responsible"—that is, has the decision-making power or the duty of caregiver, and so on.

Lastly, the parameters paper refers to interventions addressing the policy environment and "policy dialogue." Again, gender roles—this time in terms of participation in community or national decision-making rather than family-based decision-making— are critical. Who will be the key players, and whose voices or needs will be represented most effectively in the policy dialogue? If there is a debate over using resources for clinics in Sikasso or Segou versus more basic health care accessible to villages, who will be heard—and whose interests will prevail? These issues may dovetail with the democracy and governance team's focus on decentralization. Who will participate in policy dialogues addressing local interests in water, education, health care, transportation, or electricity? Further, private-sector and civil society organizational roles in and contributions to health-care services will be better defined—making reference to "policy dialogue supported by the development and use of advocacy materials."

> **Lessons Learned for Health-care Advocacy: Anti-excision Campaigns**
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> Malians have learned quite a bit about the gender dimensions of health-care advocacy through experiences with trying to reduce the practice of female genital cutting (FGC), or excision. Not long ago, advocacy and lobbying consisted of information campaigns decrying violence against girls, violations of their rights, and the families that subjected their daughters to such practices. Advocacy reached to the highest levels of government, seeking the passage of laws forbidding the practice.
>
> However, this approach has not succeeded in Mali any more than it has in other countries, such as Egypt.[25] In fact, many of the strongest opponents of excision now call for different approaches. They suggest that women need economic power at the local level; that village-level counselors need training; that the midwives or *matronnes* who perform FGC need information and training related to excision, health risks, and women's health more broadly, as well as access to literacy and alternative ways to earn income. Further, they recognize that men must be involved in the dialogue as well, to provide a common base of information and beliefs regarding the practice.

To the extent that the new plan focuses on "community-based outreach programs," "community-based support groups," or "community resources, including trained traditional birth attendants," USAID has the opportunity to ensure that implementing partners take stock by performing gender audits before designing their programs. With regard to norms and procedures, and to counseling skills, it is important to integrate attention to gender into both content and procedures for use.

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[25] UNFPA reports that it has provided advocacy support in the fight against traditional practices such as excision. For example, it used strategies for changing such behavior in a pilot project in 40 villages of Boguniye. In the end, 70 percent wanted to continue and 94 percent were still practicing FGC.

With regard to the promotion of child survival, family planning, and STI (sexually transmitted infections)/HIV/AIDS services, there is already reference to "operations research on such issues as mothers' perceptions of health services, equity considerations and determinants of behavior" as the basis for developing the content and selecting media for target populations. These first steps are good ones, already anticipating some of the key players, their respective needs, and how to influence their health-related practices. Here, it is important to recall the multiple differences in gender roles, depending on such factors as location, literacy, and lifestyle (settled versus nomadic).

With reference to synergies and linkages, "good governance," information, the media, and education frameworks each offer opportunities and lessons to focus on demand. To the extent that Mali is undergoing decentralization, that women yearn for literacy training, and that girls and boys are getting basic educations,[26] there may be opportunities to work on the demand side—so that the men and women of Mali provide the energy leading to better provision of health care by Malians themselves. To strengthen that potential, it is important to look at women's participation in Community Health Centers and Health Associations, in which women now make up only a very small minority of participants. This is an example of where women may be regarded as "assets."

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[26] Note that UNFPA has developed an "Education de la Vie Familiale" for school curricula. The pilot has been completed and UNFPA is at the point of "generalisation" (along with discussion of HIV/AIDS, gender themes, family planning, and health). The person to consult (the team did not have time to see him) is Weliba Bagayogo, telephone: 23-18-46.

There was no time to discuss how these roles affect development issues such as delivering technical assistance, disseminating information, increasing household income, increasing girls' education, or developing communal plans in decentralization. These are questions, however, that USAID and its partners should consider when identifying problems and designing activities to address them.

Recommendations

The team recommends the following fundamental principles, many of which are either explicitly or implicitly part of the USAID health team's approach and could serve as guidelines for the CSP.

1. **View women as partners, not targets.** See women as more than simply instruments or agents for reaching, producing, and caring for children. Work with them as partners, and consult them about what they want and need.

2. **Build on traditional advisors, knowledge, and relations.** Build upon existing, traditional health-care approaches that people trust and that work. Before "modern medicine," there were people in the community who kept the knowledge regarding herbs, injuries, and sickness. To some extent, those traditional practices may be forgotten, but in isolated rural villages and among nomadic people, they remain the trusted systems. Whether the specialists are men or women, people turn to those who are culturally appropriate to consult. Women may turn to women for the specifics of a health problem, but they may turn to their husband's best friend, brother, or peers for financial assistance or guidance. These relationships must be understood and new health information and resources fed through them.

3. **Develop more gender-informed information dissemination.** Create demand and real interest before providing assistance. Encourage increased demand for quality health-care services through more, better, and accessible information to women. Go beyond the information or message itself to what will make it real, reliable, and trustworthy. One approach that met with widespread support was to

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Gender Analysis and the Role of Men

There continues to be significant uncertainty about the difference between a women in development (WID) approach and a gender and development (GAD) approach. The simplest response is often: Gender means looking at men as well as women. Yet, that explanation fails to address the attributes of women and men that are the foundations of gender audits, analyses, and mainstreaming: roles, responsibilities, interests, access to resources, assets, and contributions.

In the course of the recent gender assessment for USAID/Mali, there was discussion of how Mali NGOs or USAID PVOs have paid attention to the roles of men in development issues. Is it now regular practice to talk to a village chief before talking to women? Are men included in the discussions with women? Is sensitizing and informing men seen as a key step in achieving better health care for their wives and children, as well as in generating greater support for women's economic activities?

In an interview with a woman from the Sikasso Health Center, it was noted that some of the most successful work with women has occurred when husbands begin bringing their wives in for care—noting that healthy women seemed to be happier and better partners!

During a women's roundtable at USAID/Mali on November 8, the facilitator asked participants what they saw as the "role of men." Their answers included the following: chiefs, religious leaders, protectors, landowners, decision-makers, fishermen, and controllers of information.

support exchange visits so that women in one community could learn from the examples and experiences of women elsewhere in Mali.

4. **Work with men as well as women.** Whether for the sake of women's reproductive health, child survival, or preventing the spread of AIDS, it is important to work with men as well as women, and with older women as well as women of childbearing age. Men need to understand reproductive health needs and the advantages of family planning; men and their mothers need to support child health care; and men need to understand and use their power to protect themselves and their families from AIDS and other STIs. Understanding the impediments (or opportunities) stemming from men's roles, power, and responsibilities is important to ensuring sustainable changes.

5. **Take advantage of and strengthen local capacity.** There are several good opportunities to work with effective intermediaries in health care. First, there are *animatrices*—some have lived at the village level, while others have worked there, and many have had IEC training. Second, there are nurses. Third, the *relais communautaires* have learned animation techniques to address all sorts of health questions. Given the focus on building local NGO capacity and Mali-based assets, it should be possible to increase the number of women working at the village level and improve the quality of their work.

6. **Capitalize on cross-sectoral opportunities.** Successful health care requires multisectoral approaches—such as attention to water, women's economic resources, and local governance. Decentralization in Mali presents opportunities to strengthen local capacity, as well as to work with and through women's groups and associations.

Many of the investments and partnerships among bilateral and multilateral donors in Mali over the past decade have focused on policies and systems. This work has been good, and has produced many laudable results. Yet, Mali's health indicators remain discouragingly low. USAID will be directing more attention toward turning policy into practice, and toward extending systems to the day-to-day lives of average Malians. This offers a need and an opportunity to use gender analysis in the search for next steps.

Although the goals of USAID's health SO in the next 10 years are to increase health-care access, availability, and quality, a gender analysis of impediments and opportunities suggests that the means of achieving those goals may not entail only increases on the supply side. It is also important to look at demand—from parents, grandparents, and other community members—and how to increase that demand. This points to the SO focus on promotion, calling for careful emphasis on communicating the right messages *and examples* to the right people in a position to take advantage of improved access to and availability of quality services.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Context and Background

Over the past decade, the GRM has increasingly developed and consolidated its democratic institutions. Until the 1992 presidential election, Malians had never experienced a change in government by means other than a coup d'état.

Since 1992, President Alpha Oumar Konaré and his party, the *Alliance pour la Démocratie au Mali-Parti Africain pour la Solidarité et la Justice* (ADEMA-PASJ), have controlled the government. Two focuses stand out from among the Konaré government's priorities: improving the quality of governance and ensuring national unity (overcoming efforts by the North to secede). The cornerstone of recent efforts to consolidate democracy in Mali has been decentralization. The 2002 presidential elections will be an important moment in Mali's political history.[27]

Women's participation in government and in civil society in Mali has been mixed. At the 1991 National Conference that marked the country's transition toward democracy, only 52 of the total 1,034 registered participants were women. Despite their small numbers, those few women managed to achieve the protection of equal rights for women in the Constitution.

The participation and influence of women in Malian politics has increased over the past decade. From 1992 to 1997, female representation in the National Assembly increased from 2 percent to 12 percent, while the number of female ministers in the president's cabinet rose from 2 to 6 (of 22). Further, since the launch of the annual *Espace d'interpellation démocratique* in 1994, women have used it to demand respect for the Constitution and for women's rights. By 1998, women's rights were on the agenda of the *concertations régionales* for PRODEJ (*Projet d'Appui à la Réforme de la Justice*), and were discussed in each of Mali's eight regions. By 1997, the *Secretariat d'Etat Charge de l'Action Social et de la Promotion de la Femme*, created in 1991 and attached to the Ministry for Public Health, Social Action and the Promotion of Women, became the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family.

Women in Decision-Making Positions

Decision-Making Positions[28]	1992	2000 (for Beijing +5)
Municipal counselors	42 of 172 (24.4%)	Urban: 89 of 666 (13.4%) Rural: 1,281 of 8,134 (15.7%)
Deputies	3 of 116 (2.6%)	18 of 147 (12.2%)
Members of new assembly	N/A	4 of 75 (5.3%)
Ministers	4 of 18 (22.2%)	7 of 22 (31.8%)
Ambassadors, consuls	2 of 17 (11.8%)	2 of 26 (7.7%)
Mayors	N/A	12[29]

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[27] Wing, S., 2000, introduction, draft thesis.

[28] Information taken from "Situation des Femmes au Mali Cinq Ans après la Conference Mondiale de Beijing, Rapport National," New York, June 2000, pp. 24, 46–47.

Several issues stand out for women in Mali's evolving democracy:

- Increasing women's representation in national decision-making;
- Enhancing the effectiveness of women in civil society—in NGOs and in advocacy;
- Improving attention to gender issues in policymaking and implementation;
- Expanding the protection of women's rights from *de jure* to *de facto*, from cities to the vast variety of villages in Mali; and
- Ensuring women's participation in decision-making at the local level.

USAID's Existing Democracy and Governance Program

Strategic Objective: Community Organizations in Target Communities Are Effective Partners in Democratic Governance, Including Development Decision-Making and Planning

- IR 1: Target community organizations are engaged in democratic self-governance and civic action;
- IR 2: Effective decentralization implemented; and
- IR 3: Enabling environment empowers target community organizations, intermediary NGOs, and federations.

Gender and the Effectiveness of Community Organizations (COs)

When linking gender to the effectiveness of COs within USAID's democracy program, it is important to know how the team has defined "community organization" and to what extent measures or assessments of whether a CO is an "effective partner in democratic governance" have taken account of gender issues. There are three general types of organizations: (1) those predominantly led by men, with little or no focus on women or gender; (2) those led by women and focused on women's rights, needs, and issues; and (3) those with mixed leadership, and perhaps some attention to women's rights or gender.

Putting aside women's organizations themselves, the question is whether USAID and its partners have paid attention to gender with regard to COs in the first and third categories— looking not only to women's participation, but also to gender issues regarding the membership, functioning, and interests represented by a CO. Thus, it would be helpful to know how a community organization defines itself. Does it represent all members of a community? Does it allow for diverse participation, by which different segments of the community, such as women, can express their interests effectively? Through a gender "optic," one may enrich the definition of community organization, or of "effective partners in democratic governance."

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[29] Including Diabigue, N'Gabakoro, Diombila, Yognogo, Baye, and Koussane (information from DCF-CECI).

To the democratic and governance (DG) team's credit, there was a concerted and monitored effort to focus on women's community organizations and on keeping disaggregated results. Reporting on indicators that tracked the performance of women's groups is compared with others in order to ensure that differential performance of women's groups is accounted for, explained, and addressed to improve the delivery of technical assistance. The team sought to understand why women's organizations were not influencing decisions at the local level and beyond, and why they scored higher in democratic self-governance than did mixed COs. It was not only a question of whether women's organizations did better or worse, but whether it could be explained: Was some technical assistance more or less helpful to them? Did women organize or operate in ways that differed from the other groups?

Similar questions could be posed with regard to the statement in the results review that USAID's partnerships were "instrumental in facilitating workshops and conferences that led to the adoption of new institutions, policies, processes, and recommendations." Although it may not be included in this report, it would be helpful to know whether partners took account of gender-based roles, responsibilities, impediments, and opportunities—as a means of ensuring the most effective use of resources.

Gender and Decentralization

The decentralization process has involved work at the national level on defining rules and processes, and at the local level preparing citizens to participate. In thinking about participation in this new system, USAID's DG team thoughtfully anticipated issues of women's participation. The team recognized that existing gender roles were likely to affect participation in this new system. New systems should provide opportunities for new, equal roles. Absent careful attention, however, new systems can replicate or perpetuate old, gender-based roles. USAID wanted to ensure that its technical assistance, capacity-building, and institution building would not introduce new or replicate existing gender inequities, while also ensuring that women's perspectives and contributions would contribute to the success of decentralization. To that end, the DG team asked for assistance in thinking about how to encourage women's involvement in ways that would be culturally acceptable and developmentally sustainable. The resulting research, concept paper, and discussions have led to strategic discussions about next steps and how to launch a pilot project to strengthen women's engagement in the process.

At the same time, there have been opportunities to address gender issues within the decentralization program. For example, the 1999 elections resulted in new municipal councils, mayors, and communal boards. Working with them, with the women and men within them, and with the women and men who are their constituents offers ongoing opportunities to address gender-based obstacles to effective analysis, discussion, decision-making, allocation of resources, and so on. Thus, it will be important to identify and address gender issues within the counseling, design, implementation, and follow-up of communal projects

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Four Approaches Used by Groups in Mali to Strengthen Women's Participation in Decentralization[30]

1. **ANICT:** Focusing primarily on translating the decentralization laws into local languages, and disseminating the texts. Also, there were five days of *d'animation* to raise awareness of the benefits of decentralization; for example, women learned that if they each pay taxes, the commune will have funds for common projects.

2. **INAGEF:** In the course of facilitating local community meetings to identify priorities and develop local action plans, it insisted on women being present during the process.

3. **WINROCK/MPFEF:** This entailed a multistep process that involved nine women facilitators over three months: (a) intensive training for various groups—elected leaders, women, the elderly, and youths; (b) facilitating their joint elaboration of a plan, along with setting priorities for what should be achieved with local funds; (c) literacy training and timesaving technologies (mill or cart) to enhance women's capacity and free time for participation; and (d) submission of proposals to donors for projects not covered by decentralization funding.[31]

4. **COFEM/DCF-CECI:** These groups work with communities on developing communal plans, focusing on women's participation but including men. They then undertake efforts to find funding for their projects.

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[30] There has been some significant experimentation, but it has been scattershot and without the benefit of evaluation and further application. Several of these projects included some evaluation. It would be very helpful to determine what has truly worked, with what sort of resources—and then to scale up in a meaningful way. Otherwise, some villages obtain a little assistance, but without any real learning or broadening.

[31] For further information, see reports relating to Diago and Dialokoroba; consult Winrock; and contact Mme. So Oumo Bagayoko in ANICT.

provided by the GRM's new Centers for Technical Assistance to Communes.

Gender and the Enabling Environment for Collaborative Advocacy

This is a critical, but also highly sensitive area in which paying attention to gender issues may make the difference between short-term success and sustainable success. Addressing women's or gender-related advocacy issues sometimes yields instructive, if not painful, lessons regarding effective advocacy. The experience with the family code in Mali is such an example.

What were the gender issues within the program providing grants to NGOs and CO federations for advocacy initiatives? Which NGOs or federations were selected, and why? What advocacy initiatives were undertaken, and how? If USAID's partners were involved in advocacy campaigns related to the new family code or to eradicating excision, were gender issues addressed effectively—or were any lessons learned?

In its R2 report, the DG team notes that there will be a "fully expanded set of activities supporting *authentic decentralization and the principle of 'shared' governance*." Here, the key words "authentic" and "shared" invite attention to gender issues—as the DG team has anticipated. Thus, it can be expected that when USAID supports training in financial management and transparency for newly elected leaders, gender may be addressed. For example, might there be special training for women leaders? Perhaps not, but it may still be important to ensure that women leaders are full and effective participants in training—using their voices and perspectives to alert their fellow leaders to how women may or may not relate to them as constituents.

More important, the curriculum content should ensure attention to gender; for example, noting that financial management may depend on citizens paying taxes, and noting successes in which women have recognized that their receipt of services requires that all pay, and in which they have served as leaders in their community to encourage all to pay. Similarly, training regarding transparency should include ways to ensure that all citizens have access to information—and that all will be empowered to serve as watchdogs for their interests.

Lessons Learned from Passing a New Family Code

Reportedly, much of the technical assistance focused on drafting legislation and lobbying within national government structures. There were then efforts to have *concertations* or discussions of the code with and among various interest groups. Though the proponents of the new code expected opposition, they did not expect the depth of anger. A number of women who were involved in the process then engaged in soul-searching, eager to know what went wrong, and what to do next.

If reviewed thoughtfully and honestly, this experience may be a valuable one not only for women leaders in Mali, but for everyone. It may be a stark reminder of the gap between urban, educated citizens and "the base." The underlying conflict may effectively illustrate a serious limitation in the USAID analysis of "rule of law"—the failure to define *which law* rules. The reaction of the opposition reminds those training new advocates of the importance of assessing opposition (as well as allies), and of developing a well-honed strategy for overcoming it.[32] The extent to which the process brought together different interests to "debate" the issues may suggest a need for more behind-the-scenes, private discussion before public encounters. Additionally, the level of misinformation and misunderstanding highlights the importance of having information campaigns that carefully identify target groups and how to reach them effectively.

According to several women who were part of the process, they now wish that they had had more technical assistance in "strategic planning." From this, it would seem that they would have liked (and now need) the skills to think through the timing and approach; that is, to develop a gradual, sophisticated plan.[33]

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[32] It was noted that perhaps there was insufficient reading of the emotional charge of the issues and of the personal stakes involved; namely, that men felt threatened that women seemed to want their places. This is not just a gender issue, however. In the course of advocacy that involves different interest groups, each group must anticipate what the others fear in anticipation of "winners and losers."

[33] It was suggested that the donors/partners might also learn some lessons, such as (1) not to push too fast and (2) not to be too visible, such that the agenda appears to be managed by outsiders, and (3) to provide more assistance with generating debate *at all levels*, including among villages (not just at the national level, in Bamako, or with lawyers and experts), and (4) to strengthen women's capacity to truly lobby—not just push.

Lastly, as a predominantly male and public organization, the new Association of Municipalities (AMM) is unlikely to pay attention to the roles of women, and to women as assets for municipalities, absent purposeful efforts to engage them in knowing and representing women's interests.[34] In the course of the DG team's meetings with the AMM regarding a concept paper, have discussions addressed the importance of including some gender analysis within it?

The DG Policy Reform Diagnosis

USAID's DG team has implemented an advocacy program in three areas: the Cooperative Law, PRODEC policy, and decentralization reform. These examples illustrate some gender-related opportunities—or potential obstacles. Before launching each campaign, it would be helpful to consider gender within the following advocacy strategy: To what extent are women important allies? Are there women's organizations or constituents who would have an interest in the passage of the legislation? Is their input effectively incorporated? Looking at the proposed laws or policies, how will they impact women? Do they include measures to ensure that women are aware of the laws? (See, for example, customs duties and the WARP program's study of women and cross-border trade.)

According to the R2, "After developing an advocacy action plan, rural civil society organizations and lead NGOs are facilitating the aggregation of rural interests to influence the implementation of the [PRODEC] policy." Who participated in developing the advocacy action plan, to what extent are *groupements de femmes* included among "rural civil society organizations," and what does the "aggregation of rural interests" mean for women's involvement and perspectives?[35]

Similarly, USAID sponsored a June 2000 national workshop on the transfer of competencies in education, health, and water. To what extent did "bringing all the stakeholder and actors together" result in full articulation of the interests of women in those three areas? To what extent did the recommendations both incorporate the needs and interests of women and take account of how they can participate? For example, will efforts to insert traditional leaders into local government processes include efforts to sensitize those leaders to the importance of including women's perspectives and contributions in these new systems? Does the interministerial committee that is to monitor implementation of the recommendations include the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family? On the implementation side, will a USAID-sponsored tool for commune analysis incorporate steps for conducting gender audits, or for identifying gender roles and responsibilities as communal assets?

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[34] The R2 refers to a number of studies undertaken in the last year. If the terms of reference for those studies specifically asked the teams to look at gender, the DG team should have flagged some of these issues already. If they did not, it could be a reminder that *all* future studies should expressly ask the teams to identify gender-related obstacles and opportunities!

[35] The DG team has noted that most advocacy groups have women as constituent members, which is good, and that "group interests must be self-generated." It is certainly true that USAID and its partners should not be pushing or promoting women's issues for civil society group partners—but there should still be efforts to ensure that voices (both male and female) that represent gender perspectives or women's interests are effectively heard and incorporated.

The DG Team's Women-Focused Activities

The DG team has taken thoughtful and strategic steps toward paying attention to women's participation, identifying gender issues, and monitoring disparate impacts. The concept paper on "Women's Influence on Decision-making at the Local Level" has helped to explain gender issues within existing programming and is the basis for current efforts to design a new pilot project. The EDDI Young Women's Leadership Project has been an excellent effort to prepare talented young women for leadership, and to introduce them to institutions, policies, and communities for future professional opportunities. The Profile of Women Elected Leaders, and its use in a civic education campaign, has strategic value in terms of upcoming elections, encouraging women to run for office, and demonstrating to the electorate that there are already elected women who are capable.

With current experience as a beginning, the team is ready to deepen its attention to gender within the new CSP. As noted below, two shifts can be anticipated: from quantitative to qualitative monitoring and analysis, and expanding ways to complement women-focused activities through stronger incorporation of gender into mainstream activities.

> **The EDDI Young Women's Leadership Project**
>
> This small project focused on identifying young women who are interested in women's rights or community development, providing them with training, placing them in internships in which they could test and apply their training, and generating research papers capturing some of the lessons learned. The pilot was successful in two ways: lessons learned through implementation, and initiation of a cadre of young women who are eager to continue in leadership positions.

Democracy and Governance in USAID's Concept Paper: The Future Program

According to the CSP parameters paper, USAID's work will focus on "shared governance through decentralization." The idea of "shared" is a useful basis for considering gender issues— "shared" meaning different groups or interests are involved, and implying some give-and-take or accommodation of multiple interests. This parallels some of the issues regarding gender: differentiated roles and responsibilities, different access to resources, and variations in knowledge, expertise, and means of contributing. USAID's work to build the capacity of civil society to participate in sustainable development through local democratic governance is an ideal illustration of how gender analysis may enrich the approach and strengthen the results.

The first opportunity lies with attention to "participatory mechanisms." Mechanisms such as "systems that incorporate citizens' and communities' inputs in the decision-making processes" must be genuinely participatory—inviting the input of different interests, irrespective of whether they have been traditionally or publicly involved. Processes that include public budget vetting structures, media dissemination of relevant information, and public access to documents, as well as "direct face-to-face contacts between citizens and local officials" must take account of existing traditions, such as gender-based roles, at the

local level. They should seek opportunities to engage women (particularly young women) or nontraditional public participants in meaningful ways leading to increased comfort with overt contributions.

The elaboration of a "communal code of conduct" may present the greatest gender-related challenge. The DG team has noted that while these institutional codes of conduct must include traditional and informal norms and practices, they focus primarily on the roles and responsibilities of civil society, the private sector, and local government. The gender assessment team's limited gender analyses of local community life raises two concerns: First, as was quickly observed by the DG team, "Because communes are at a very rudimentary level of institutional development, it is important to be careful not to reproduce negative traditional roles and norms that discriminate against women." Indeed, new systems may be fresh starts or—depending on who is involved and how new roles and responsibilities are defined—they may launch brand new patterns of exclusion.

Second, traditionally in Mali, most norms regarding conduct are more "understood" than codified. People do things "as they have always been done" or, as one person noted, based on both custom and conformity. Thus, the idea of a written, codified code of conduct may be quite unfamiliar. Further, there are few who can read— and this puts the power of knowledge, interpretation, and application in the hands of the literate few. There are many examples of "positive" laws and policies in Mali that are not known or applied. Thus, it is important that the codification and the entrusting of knowledge regarding rights and responsibilities are entrusted to, familiar to, and accessible to all.

The issues of traditional roles and conduct lead to USAID's attention to women's participation in local governance. This emphasis is to be commended and reinforced. It is not merely a matter of equity, but of effective local governance, enlisting the contributions of all local citizens in ensuring self-determination at the local level.

Developing Codes of Conduct in Women's Credit Groups

(The following presents a cross-sectoral experience from a CARE project that uses savings groups to improve economic well-being and to enhance women's participation in local development.)

Preparatory Steps
- Do an inventory of women's groups in a community—their *affinités, capacités,* and *connaissances sociales*.
- Discuss with men and sensitize them to the idea and purpose.

Participants
- Groups of 30 to 35 women who are capable of organization and have social cohesion.

Governance Process
- The women hold a general assembly where *they define all their internal rules*: they decide the rules, so they know them and own them, and then they apply them.
- The women then form a "management committee" and define each member's role.
- Each woman gives money to the group publicly to ensure transparency.

Follow-up and Impact
- After savings, introduce information about health, education, and so on.
- The women increase their capacity to communicate among themselves, but also seek more information from the outside.
- The women feel capable and proud and have enhanced their self-confidence.
- Sixty groups have been formed already, 20 want to do the same, and others have already begun to replicate themselves!
- Those who have money begin to participate more in family and community decisions.

Summary of Key Gender Issues for DG in the New CSP

In summary, the people of Mali and USAID are poised to focus on four key dimensions of democracy. In each, gender analysis can raise issues of focus and approach:

Focus Area	Challenges	Key Gender Issues
Decentralization	To devolve power and resources, along with increased capacity of local citizens to set priorities and allocate resources.	• Will women be among those obtaining new powers? • Will capacities for participation reach women? ▪ Will women's priorities and needs be addressed in the allocation of resources?
Civil society: community organizations, associations, and federations	To engage with national and local government, balancing the power of government while encouraging good governance.	• What will be the mechanisms for rural women to engage with government? • Do definitions of "civil society" extend to working with informal *"groupements de femmes",* other ways in which citizens may combine their interests for a unified voice? ▪ To what extent may women be assets for ensuring effective service delivery?
Rule of Law and Corruption	To establish the application of law to all, regulating government actors and combating corruption, but also defining which laws apply.	• Can women be involved in opposing corruption? ▪ Issues such as land tenure and parts of the proposed family code illustrate conflicts between "positive," traditional, and Islamic law—which must be addressed by all Malians before the "rule of [one] law" prevails.
Upcoming elections	To ensure genuinely "free and fair elections," meaning that the citizens of Mali vote in an informed and purposeful way representative of their interests and concerns.	• Will rural women, and/or men, vote with information regarding candidates—or according to the directions of chiefs, *marabouts*, or husbands? ▪ To what extent will the parties and candidates differentiate themselves on issues and capabilities?

Recommendations

There are three key points to consider throughout the process of articulating the new DG strategic framework and defining performance monitoring and indicators.

(1) **Information and Media:** Strong democracies require not only active citizens, but well-informed citizens. Where are average Malians getting information for making decisions—on topics from local governance to upcoming elections? Modern media are of limited use for rural, illiterate populations. Radio is sometimes useful but not always—and has to be used in strategic, thoughtful ways that focus as much on how and when the information is received as how it is broadcast. Alternatives exist, such as providing televisions with generators to local meeting rooms to show video cassettes, or using traditional media, such as theater and song.

(2) **Participation:** Once people have information, they need to participate—as civil society members, as voters, as advocates, and as watchdogs. Where, however, do people acquire the culture, habit, and comfort to participate? In the context of Mali's traditions, it may be helpful to note the difference between participation in public realms and private areas, between open confrontation and debate versus influence and input. To support gradual and, therefore, meaningful, sustainable, democracy building, USAID's programs need to recognize and take account of democratic mechanisms and processes already encompassed within traditional leadership and decision-making processes.

One other factor is critical for the average Mali woman: Because their time is so precious, women will participate in democratic institutions and processes only if they hold some meaning in their lives. They will *not* participate just for democracy's sake. If the processes and institutions address women's daily practical needs—water, food, education—they will motivate women to use their scarce time to participate in such activities. That mobilization is more likely to come from groups (a key asset in Mali is women's groups and associations) than from individuals. Therefore, democracy is cross-cutting with health, economic growth, poverty alleviation, and education.

(3) **The Rule of LawS:**[36] Any program that focuses on rule of law, corruption, regulatory environments, social change, and so on must acknowledge the conflicting norms and laws in Mali. If the question regarding "rule of law" is whether it applies to all—leaders, elites, rich, as well as others—then there also must be some questions about "which laws." In Mali today (as in many other countries where the issue is similarly ignored), multiple versions of "law" compete for respect and control.

Once there is agreement that "law" should stand above persons and position, and about when a particular version of law or code should apply, there arises the further issue of application and enforcement—requiring attention to legal literacy. Land tenure is a very, very important example of this—along with several issues included in the family code.

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[36] The capital "S" is used purposefully to make the point that there are multiple systems of law in Mali, not a single law.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FOUR CROSS-CUTTING PRINCIPLES

Though the following principles may seem simple and obvious, remembering them may provide the foundations for good practice regarding women's participation in and awareness of gender dimensions of socioeconomic change.

1) **Heterogeneity.** When discussing and analyzing gender issues, men and women are often referred to as if they were homogenous groups with consistent characteristics. Yet it is important that USAID and its partners recall the heterogeneity of men, women, and gender relations. Just as not all women are illiterate, many men remain uneducated; while not all men are leaders, not all women are disempowered. Gender relations differ according to culture, economic class and social status, age, location, education, and other factors. Thus, it is important not only to disaggregate data and analyze results by sex, but also to look at subgroups. This is one reason for recommending gender audits when working at the community level.

2) **Development is about change.** Yet the context in Mali and the world around it is changing quickly and in many ways. To the extent that USAID is developing a 10-year program, it is important to consider how the context may (should) change in the course of implementation. Moreover, gender roles and responsibilities change. (Consider the impact the Fourth World Conference on Women has had since 1995!) Further, some of the investments in Mali will begin to show results—such as increased girls' education and new economic activities. To the extent that the gender dimension is socially determined, and to the extent that the social context is in flux, it will be important to constantly revisit gender-related assumptions, policies, and approaches throughout the CSP's implementation.

3) **Policy versus practice.** In all sectors, there are vast gaps between policies or laws and practice as well as differences among practices in different households, communities, and regions of Mali. This is true not only within democracy and governance work, with regard to new laws, but is also important to remember with regard to economic, education, and health policies. Moreover, the gaps between written policy or rules and peoples' actual behavior tend to be larger for populations that lack knowledge of policies and laws or the institutions enforcing them. For example, certain modern laws address women's rights, family relations, and land ownership. To the extent that people living in isolated rural villages do not know about them, however, they lack impact. Although new laws and policies generated in Bamako are key instruments for redressing gender inequality or ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities, they will not effect broad-based social change if they are not known and widely used.

4) **Respect for women.** When addressing gender-based inequity, analyzing gender-related factors, and incorporating women as assets in development, the starting point must be a

fundamental respect for women. No matter how uneducated they may be, it is important to begin with the assumption that many women are capable and that they recognize tradeoffs and apply reason when making judgments. With such basic respect as the beginning, it becomes evident why—in the course of needs assessments or project design or monitoring—development partners must talk to women and ask them what they think and why they do what they do. Moreover, such discussions provide critical information regarding women as valuable resources, and as assets for achieving socioeconomic development goals.

CROSS-CUTTING IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

The current gender analysis in Mali revealed three gender-related implementation opportunities that cut across all sectors: (1) information, learning, and changing practices; (2) the use of effective intermediaries at the local level; and (3) the use of a gender perspective to rethink decision-making. It is important to begin by considering gender issues in the early planning phases of defining problems and setting programmatic agendas (at the strategic objective level). If done well, that analysis should lead to accounting for gender when designing interventions—both in defining the intermediate results that are necessary for achieving an objective and in identifying activities for achieving results. Sometimes, however, the link is unclear—and the implementation issues need to be addressed even when not flagged at the strategy level. Thus, the following are some cross-cutting implementation issues that may affect several or all sectors.

Information, Learning, and Changing Practices

Much of USAID's development assistance includes communication components—whether it is IEC in health care, voter and civic education, or market information for economic activities. Questioning whether men and women (and older or younger men and women) receive information differently forces some thinking about appropriate communication media. If results depend on influencing women's behavior—either as women, or simply as citizens or members of a community—then implementing partners must identify methods of getting information to women effectively. There are several questions to ask:

- **Channels of Communication:** Do women have access to a particular medium—television, newspapers, or radio? If they have access, do they control the use? Do they have time to receive the information? Are there alternative means of disseminating information that would be more effective—such as traditional theater and song, audio cassettes, or video cassettes? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each—such as whether the message is "fleeting" or women can go back and review it again?

- **Information Content:** Are women aware that the information is available and, if so, are they interested in it? Is the information relevant to their lives? Is it in a form that is applicable to their lives?

- **Information Format:** To what extent are the chosen channels and form of messages effective vis-à-vis women, particularly rural, illiterate, uneducated women? It may be helpful to think about how these women are accustomed to learning. Just as literacy classes now have different approaches for adults than children—based on what is known of adult learning processes—do messages have to be formulated or presented differently for people who are illiterate and who have little, if any, familiarity with schooling? For example, to what extent do messages assume a thinking process developed in school—such as line-by-line reading, memorization of facts, and so on? How might that compare with traditional means of transmitting information or practice, such as the oral tradition? If information is to be not only heard but also integrated into practice, what mechanisms are available to reinforce, help retain, persuade, and integrate? For example, the "oral tradition," by which many rural women have learned much of what they know about their environment and their roles, uses several techniques, including rhyme, rhythm, repetition, metaphor, and painting visual pictures that could help with retention of new information. These same questions maybe useful for the dissemination of information.

- **Information Impact:** The purpose of disseminating information is not just to reach people, but to affect how they think and act. To the extent that results-based programming has shifted attention from inputs and outputs to outcomes and impacts, it is important in all instances to think about the recipients of messages, and how effective IEC strategies may be. Receiving information generally is not enough to stimulate sustainable changes in attitudes and behaviors. Impact requires additional steps, such as discussion, demonstrations, and examples, or practicing and using the information.

Using Effective Intermediaries or Agents at the Local Level

In the coming decade, USAID will be working at both the local and national levels. Although it has been important to heed gender disparities in national government and policymaking, gender issues will be different at the local level. Whether a matter of health care, income-generating activities, or participation in local decision-making, relations and responsibilities are more gender-specific locally. It will be important to identify and collaborate with people who are familiar with life in villages in rural areas. Following are some of the challenges this approach presents:

- Often women in villages need to receive information, training, and technical assistance from women—whether they are women extension agents for agriculture, women health specialists for maternal and child health care, or legal professionals for legal rights. Who can be effective intermediaries, and who has the necessary expertise and can relate to women (and men) in rural areas effectively?

- Sometimes the people with expertise are not the most effective trainers or communicators among village people. Highly trained nurses will not spend extensive time in villages, and are unlikely to live there. Women lawyers are fully informed on women's legal rights, but cannot always communicate these concepts to nonlawyers (not to mention to

women without formal educations). How can USAID help link such expertise with local populations?

- Several people have experience in rural areas or villages, and have some basic expertise that can be enhanced through additional training. They include the G-Force for agriculture and health agents, *agents de relais, animatrices* from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Rural Development, graduates of the *Corps de Voluntaires du Mali*, women who work for CAFO, perhaps the new graduates of USAID's recent women's leadership program, and some Malian women working for PVOs in the field (such as CARE or Save the Children).

Using a Gender Perspective to Rethink Decision-Making

In the context of Mali's decentralization program, many development partners are looking at how to build management and decision-making capacity at the local level. Accustomed to traditional mechanisms for decision-making, as well as to legacies of a centrally controlled socialist system, citizens at the local level are learning the rights and responsibilities of devolved power. This is a historic moment for defining and training new decision-makers.

It is in this context that USAID/Mali's DG team asked the WIDTECH project last year to develop a concept paper regarding women's influence on decision-making at the local level. Although the authors addressed the constraints to women's participation in decision-making, they also suggested that women may exercise more "influence over decision-making" than initially meets the eye. Recognizing what is not visible—because it is rarely public—leads to somewhat different views of power and even of decision-making.

- Does the fact that women are typically excluded from public spaces where decisions *appear to be made* mean that they are not part of the decision-making process? In fact, many women report that men frequently postpone making a decision to "sleep on it"— which means consulting their wives, mothers, or others. Thus, the fact that women are not present in public decision-making arenas does not mean that they wield no power. The reverse may also be true—the extent to which women may now be visible and vocal in national political arenas does not mean they have necessarily persuaded their colleagues or constituents to accept their points of view (concerning, for example, the family code or FGC).

- Similarly, there is much discussion about whether women have authority or knowledge to make decisions regarding their children's health or their daughters' education. Even if young mothers lack that authority, are they necessarily unable to influence the "decisions" of their husbands or mothers-in-law? Perhaps they are not acknowledged as decision-makers, but still serve as decision-determiners. "Who makes a decision is not who has power. Executing the decision, that is power," said one informant.

- To the extent that women either make decisions or influence them, they need information. Information provides the tools with which they may first make up their own

minds, and then persuade others. The more well-informed women are, the more likely they are to bring others around to their positions.

- To the extent that decisions are not made by one person, it is important that information be available to all who play "some role" in decision-making. Thus, men must have information about women's reproductive health, both parents should understand the importance of their children's education, and all constituents need information about the decisions that their elected representatives are making on their behalf.

CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS: TWO PROGRAMMATIC APPROACHES

The WIDTECH team recommends two programmatic approaches, both of which have been vetted with other development partners and USAID staff.

A Program to Find and Disseminate "Success Stories" among Malian Women

Donors often talk about "success stories" among their partner organizations, PVOs, NGOs, and others. In fact, the successes in Mali are often those of the people themselves—of hardworking, courageous women who are stepping somewhat outside the bounds of tradition and having a positive effect on the lives of their families and communities.

Although the dissemination of success stories may be an important means of sharing new messages and encouraging new behavior for all Malians, it has particular significance for women for three reasons:

(1) There is a need to counteract the messages—verbal and habitual, old and new—that do more to restrict what women can or should do than to encourage them to innovate and try new activities.

(2) In their efforts to meet their families' needs, women are searching for new coping strategies, new ways to care for their children, and new ways of generating resources.

(3) To the extent that women do not gain access to information through standard channels, there is a need to be strategic and purposeful in ensuring that critical information reaches them in ways that are effective.

These "success stories" can be very powerful mechanisms for change in Mali for several reasons:

- **Inspirational:** They may inspire the women of Mali to take new approaches. They will be more effective than stories or examples of women in France or the United States, for example. "If women in…can do it, then so can we!"

- **Programmatically Feasible:** Having worked somewhere in Mali, the stories have proven to be feasible in the cultural, social, and economic context of the country.

- **Culturally Acceptable:** An approach that comes from elsewhere in Mali is less susceptible to opposition claiming outside influence, an American agenda, or Western, feminist ideology.

- **"Emulatable":** Development partners may build on these success stories. Little is exactly replicated, as the context and factors are rarely the same, but the lessons and experiences may serve as a basis for conceptualizing and designing activities that engage and involve women and men more effectively than do established approaches.

- **Revealing:** Some successes are examples of "positive deviation"—instances in which, contrary to expectations and without intent, good results have occurred. These can be invaluable sources of ideas for new approaches.

A Missionwide Policy of Adult Literacy Programs within Activities

Literacy programs may be used as a tactical approach across sectors. They are a means of educating, informing, and organizing. The content of adult literacy programs (many for women, but not solely) can relate to health, democracy, nutrition, agriculture, or other economic activities. The programs represent ways to reach people in a group, often mobilizing them for joint action. The benefits can range from better understanding the reasons for children's education, to obtaining substantive information needed for economic activities or health care, to developing confidence-building, which in turn can lead to more-assertive participation in making community or household decisions.

If USAID were to launch a "success story" program, it would entail several steps:

1. Collect stories from the GRM, donors, PVOs, NGOs, and fieldwork.
2. Elaborate on a plan to share among communities—to inspire, mobilize, and show possibilities and changes that people like and bring about. One approach that has met with *substantial enthusiasm* among development partners in Mali is to establish an intra-Mali exchange program—taking women from one area to another where they can meet others and share experiences. Another approach would be to include them in USAID's community radio program.
3. Formulate the stories in ways that will communicate them effectively to other Malian women—including theater sketches, videos, and songs.
4. Monitor carefully. The whole purpose of such information exchanges is to have an impact and influence people to take new actions. It is therefore important to monitor impact carefully, such as with small, participatory baselines, and then with follow-up observation and interviews.

GENDER PLAN OF ACTION

WHY A GENDER PLAN OF ACTION?

There are several reasons why USAID/Mali may establish a gender plan of action, but in the end it will depend on the mission's leadership and staff. Four basic reasons should be considered: (1) as a means of complying with USAID's ADS (Automated Directive System) on gender—part of the agency's own Gender Plan of Action; (2) to be consistent with the interests and practices of the Malian government and development specialists in Mali; (3) to stay in step with many donors working in Mali, such as UNDP, the World Bank, UNFPA, and the Pays-Bas; and (4) to enhance the effectiveness of USAID's assistance to Mali. Each of these considerations is addressed individually below.

Gender Analysis and Complying with USAID's ADS

The WIDTECH team introduced staff at USAID/Mali to USAID/Washington directives regarding gender mainstreaming. These included ADS sections 201.3.4.11 (Technical Analysis for Strategic Plans), 201.3.4.13 (Planning for Performance Management), 201.3.6.2 (Determine Major Outputs Necessary to Achieve Each Intermediate Step), and 201.3.6.3 (Pre-Obligation Requirements). (See Annex D for a handout distributed at the November 1 mini-workshop.)

The Gender Interests and Practices of Government and Development Specialists in Mali

There is widespread awareness and use of gender analysis by Malians. Moreover, contrary to initial concerns, it appears that much of the gender analysis is done for reasons and in ways that are consistent with Malian culture and current socioeconomic circumstances. From the Malian perspective, social and economic development requires the involvement of both men and women, given their particular roles and responsibilities. Malians recognize that whether one works in a village or in a government ministry, the effectiveness of capacity-building, collaborative work, analysis, or decision-making depends on an awareness of gender roles. In addition, the policies and institutions promoting women in Mali have evolved over the past decade, along with Mali's transition from a one-party state to a multiparty democracy.

Institutionalization of the Promotion of Women in Mali

- **1974:** Creation of Union Nationale des Femmes du Mali (UNFM), an organ of the one ruling party, the UDPM. Until the events of March 1991, this was the only organization of Malian women, and it lacked coherent strategies and dispersion of efforts.

- **1986:** UNFM creates a "Centre de Promotion Feminine."

- **1991:** "Forum National des Femmes," October 17–19.

- **1991:** The Malian government creates a "Secretariat d'Etat charge de l'Action Sociale et de la Promotion Feminine" attached to the Ministry for Public Health, Social Action and the Promotion of Women.

- **1992:** "Atelier sur la Definition d'une Politique Feminine," January 23–31.

- **1993:** Creation of a "Commissariat a la Promotion des Femmes," directly attached to the "Primature," with the mission to "coordinate the actions of all actors, develop policies to promote women and create a data bank on women." This resulted in the elaboration of "Strategies Nationales d'Intervention pour la Promotion des Femmes."

- **1994:** National Report on the Situation of Women in Mali.

- **1997:** On September 16, the GRM created the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family.

- **1999:** Creation of the Direction Nationale de la Promotion de la Femme, responsible for developing "components of policies for the promotion of women to improve women's economic, social and cultural roles."

- **2000:** Issuance of Mali's report reviewing progress since the Beijing Conference in 1995.

- **2001–2002:** Currently completing evaluation of the Mali action plan and preparing for a new one.

The Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family now has several key projects:

(1) Projet d'Appui a la Promotion des Femmes et a l'Allègement de la Pauvreté (the African Development Bank).

(2) Fonds d'Appui aux Activités des Femmes, with 1,602,845,000 Fcfa to 4,481 groups and 36,324 beneficiaries (GRM).

(3) Projet Développement de l'Entreprenariat Féminin dans le Secteur Agroalimentaire au Mali (ONUDI).

(4) Programme d'Appui au Renforcement de l'Equité Hommes/Femmes (UNDP).

(5) Le Projet Appui a la Promotion de Femmes (Pays-Bas), to develop a plan of action.

(6) Développement Institutionnel pour la Promotion de la Femme (World Bank/GRM).

(7) Projet Promotion du Statut de la Femme et de l'Equite du Genre (UNFPA/GRM).

(8) Fonds Genre et Développement (Canada).

(9) Centre Aoua Keita, to "reach out to school dropouts and provide them with new strategies for leading an active life and employment options" through training for hotels and tailoring.

Staying in Step with Other Donors in Mali

Regarding gender analyses, it is interesting to note that UNDP has undertaken socioeconomic gender audits in Mopti (December 2000), Timbuktu (August 2001), and Kayes (in process in the context of its project "Programme d'Appui au Renforcement de l'Equite Hommes/Femmes" with the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family). Through its gender specialist in its regional office in Dakar, UNFPA has provided gender training through a three-year project for representatives in the ministries of health, education, rural development, youth, justice, and others. The project started with a 10-day workshop, followed by each trainee's developing and implementing his or her own action plan, and training of trainers. Several organizations specialize in gender audits, gender analysis, or gender training. One is CEDREF-GED, which has written a small book, *"Analyse Sociale et Concepts Genre dans Quatre Aires Socio-Culturelles et Linguistiques du Mali,"* covering the Songhay, Bamanan, Tamasheq, and Peul. The organization is also in the process of developing a French-language, Mali-oriented version of a well-known SNV gender audit.

Enhancing the Effectiveness of USAID's Assistance in Mali

Much of USAID's work relates to formulating new policies and laws, introducing new systems, and promoting new practices or behavior. Yet, with regard to the legal and regulatory environment, Mali illustrates the great divide between policies and laws and real-life practice. According to a woman lawyer who is a leader in the Association of Malian Women Lawyers and who has worked on the family code, the law of Mali is "paradise" in its wording. This is yet another case of a constitution and legal code that provide women with equal rights. Mali has also ratified many significant international treaties that protect women and girls. The problems, however, are twofold: First, there is widespread ignorance of the

law, among both men and women. Second, there are three systems of laws and norms in Mali—"positive, or modern," Islam, and custom. These systems do not have to conflict with each other, however, and many who adhere to Islamic and traditional practices have demonstrated a practical and knowledgeable respect for gender analysis.

GENDER PLAN OF ACTION DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY

Though its scope of work required that the WIDTECH team develop a gender plan of action for USAID/Mali, the team was reluctant to develop and deliver a plan if doing so would not be broadly welcomed and implemented. A gender plan of action is no different from a country strategic plan in that it requires some intermediate steps, ways to define implementation, and means of measuring impact. To engage USAID/Mali staff in thinking about a gender plan of action, recognizing its utility, and feeling some ownership over its content and implementation, the WIDTECH team took three steps:

- Held discussions with individuals at USAID.

- Performed a diagnostic of key institutional issues, including:
  - Identifying issues that are based on criteria such as whether they are critical, strategic, desirable, or feasible; and
  - Focusing on discrete actions (more than general ones such as "encourage" or "raise awareness") that can be tracked or monitored so one can determine whether they have been accomplished.

- Hosted a participatory workshop to build USAID involvement, solicit USAID staff ideas, and gain feedback on WIDTECH suggestions.

That process resulted in the following proposed gender plan of action.

DRAFT GENDER PLAN OF ACTION

Institutional Mechanisms and Artifacts

(14) Begin the program planning and project development cycle with a **gender audit** and needs assessments.

(15) Within the **country strategic plan development process,** include a gender dimension by:

- Discussing the **sector-focused portions of the WIDTECH report** and recommendations within SO team meetings;
- Within the process of elaborating strategic frameworks, **identifying any gender-related intermediate results** that are necessary for achieving the objective and any

gender-related impediments that will preclude success (ensure that IRs or sub-IRs explicitly articulate what is needed to address them);

- **Strategically defining sectors or activities** that will be of greatest value to men or women, and then identifying assistance (technical, financial, and operational strategies) that will ensure equity and efficiency (each SO team may invite Mali-based gender specialists to suggest programmatic mechanisms for achieving IRs or sub-IRs); and

- Including **monitoring and evaluation of gender impacts** within USAID's new performance monitoring plan by ensuring a people-focused impact analysis that:
  — Starts with a gender audit as a baseline,
  — Tracks distribution of benefits,
  — Identifies any disadvantages or negative consequences, and
  — Requests specific gender impact assessments in implementing partners reports.

(16)   Take **active measures to identify partners** (PVOs, NGOs, institutes, or individuals) who have the capacity and experience to address gender issues and to work with women in rural areas.

(17)   Establish **procedures to ensure the inclusion of clear, purposeful language in all TORs and scopes of work (SOWs)** of TDYers and consultants that require collection of sex-disaggregated data and analyses of gender dynamics. The same should be true for all procurement documents, such as requests for proposal. One possibility would be to set up a committee to review and comment on TORs and SOWs before sending them out.

(18)   State USAID's expectation that all implementing partners should **report on gender impacts** with verifiable gender indicators.

(19)   Include a **budget line** in each grant or contract for gender audits (including analysis of implications), evaluations, and reporting.

(20)   Establish a **gender working group** that:
  — Contains members from each SO team and addresses relevant special objectives or cross-cutting themes,
  — Includes a coordinator to be selected by application to the front office,
  — Reports quarterly to the front office on the action plan and related activities, and
  — Subscribes to gender information listservs and distributes them to the staff.

(21)   Establish an **annual prize** to commemorate a USAID "gender champion."

Cross-cutting Programmatic Approaches

(22)   Develop targeted **communication strategies** to capitalize on, share, and learn from the successes of Malian women and men.

(23)   Establish a **research fund for gender audits and studies** collecting data and information regarding gender at the local level.

Capacity-Building Regarding Gender

(24)   Sponsor two **gender-related trainings** per year for USAID staff.

(25)   Reinforce and share gender-related lessons learned. Collect information regarding the gender-related experience of implementing partners, PVOs, NGOs, and government departments in research, analysis, partnerships, training, and technical assistance in rural areas—including both what has worked and what has been problematic. Share information among donors, gender specialists, and the GRM through a development-partners and gender newsletter (and contribute to electronic information-gathering and dissemination services).

(26)   Reinvigorate the **donors' gender working group** as a mechanism for sharing information about WID activities, experiences working with different sectors of the population, and best practices for addressing gender-related obstacles.

Points mentioned by USAID staff during the participatory workshop:

General
- Strengthen the capacity of staff regarding gender analysis and awareness, and
- Facilitate implementation of policies into action.

Institutional Mechanisms
- Establish a gender committee,
- Create a gender officer position at a higher level,
- Require sex-disaggregated data in monitoring and reporting results,
- Build a relationship with the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family,
- Ensure that each SO team has a budget line for gender,
- Use the gender action plan as a basis for a mission order,
- Ensure that requests for proposal encourage the participation and involvement of women, and
- Identify guiding principles for each sector reintegrating and monitoring gender.

Capacity-Building
- Include gender within all USAID trainings,
- Sponsor mission exchanges and communication with women's organizations, NGOs, and partners, and
- Increase resources (human and financial) and information to encourage model behavior.

Cross-cutting Programmatic Interventions
- Identify and implement specific interventions targeting women and men to ensure gender equity,
- Include training for USAID partners on DG, HIV/AIDS, and income-generating activities that raise gender issues and approaches for addressing them,
- Establish a budget for gender activities,
- Establish sector representatives for gender—also to be members of the gender working group,
- Use adult literacy training for women as a means of linking all interventions, and
- Focus on local-level partners and associations.

NEXT STEPS AND FOLLOW-UP

Neither the WIDTECH proposed gender plan of action nor the USAID/Mali workshop to identify the purpose of such a plan and possible action steps will be of any utility or have any impact without follow-up steps. To achieve attention to gender within USAID, both in process and substance, the WIDTECH team notes that USAID/Mali must:

- Continue an honest discussion of what is critical, including the front office's commitment to making that happen;

- Determine those useful, helpful, but optional steps that USAID staff want to see—with some relating to capacity-building;

- Come up with a final gender plan of action to which (1) USAID staff agree and (2) the front office pledges its support;

- Agree to a performance monitoring plan as a means of determining what actions will be taken in the next year and of determining impact; and

- Establish a unit to manage and monitor implementation (such as a gender working group with a coordinator).

CONCLUSIONS

USAID/Mali is in an unusual position to use genuine and institutionalized commitment to gender analysis and mainstreaming as a way of strengthening its new country strategic plan and program for the next 10 years. The conditions are right: a strong commitment from the front office, interest from strategic objective teams, and a Malian context that is receptive to gender audits, analyses, and increased participation among women. The WIDTECH team is hopeful that the mission will use the draft gender plan of action to arrive at a plan to which all are committed—and then set in place mechanisms for implementing and monitoring it.

ANNEX A
SCOPE OF WORK

SCOPE OF WORK

**Integrating Gender into USAID/Mali's
FY 2003 - 2012 Country Strategic Plan**

State of Work

I. BACKGROUND. USAID/Mali is currently developing a new Country Strategic Plan (CSP) that will cover fiscal years 2003-2012. The new strategy will be designed to continue our strategic focus in the sectors of health, education, economic growth, and democratic governance. While significant development results have been achieved, continuing to build on these successes will result in a much greater development impact and a far greater return on our investment in Mali's development. Due to the long-term development process required for achieving significant results in the health, education, economic growth, and democracy sectors in Mali, we are proposing a ten-year period for implementing the strategy. This encompasses Mali's own ten-year Education and Health Plans, as well as the Government of Mali's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), which (with USAID participation) is now being formulated. USAID/Mali's proposed strategy contributes and complements these plans.

In order to focus our efforts over the next strategy period, we are proposing to divide our current Youth Strategic Objective (SO) into a new Education SO and a Health SO, and are proposing a more targeted approach through our SO in Economic Growth. The Democratic Governance SO will largely focus on the commune and will now include capacity development of both government and civil society organizations. The two special objectives, Information Technologies and North Integration are narrower in scope with measurable accomplishments proposed over a five-year timeframe. Thereafter, key elements of these special objectives will be incorporated into the strategic objectives.

Women in Mali contribute substantially to economic development and to the support of their families. They often contribute more than half of the total household income. They face numerous constraints, including greater poverty, more limited access to resources such as land and capital, and lack of political and decision-making power. The Automated Directives System (ADS) 201 requires that CSPs must reflect attention to gender concerns. Unlike other technical analyses, gender is not a separate topic to be analyzed and reported on in isolation. Instead, USAID's gender mainstreaming approach requires that appropriate gender analysis be applied to the range of technical issues that are considered in the development of the Mission's Strategic Plan. Analytical work performed in the planning and development of Results Frameworks should address at least two questions: (1) how will gender relations affect the achievement of sustainable results; and (2) how will proposed results affect the relative status of women. Addressing these questions involves taking into account not only the different roles of men and women, but also the relationship and balance between them and the institutional structures that support them.

II. PURPOSE. The purpose of this Statement of Work is to obtain the services of a team of two consultants to develop a Mission-wide, cross-sectoral strategy on gender and development, to increase women's participation in the country development process.

III. TASKS. In order to assist USAID/Mali in developing and incorporating gender concerns into its new CSP in a manner that will effectively enhance the role of women in Mali's economic, social, and political development, the team's primary tasks are to:

A. Conduct A Gender Assessment of the Current Situation: The team shall conduct an assessment of USAID/Mali's existing and proposed development program, outlining the main areas where gender issues are of greatest essence, and examine Mali's institutional, legal and regularly environment to determine to what extent they incorporate and promote gender considerations. The tasks are given a level of effort based on a team of two. Each team member will be responsible for two of the identified themes under the strategic objectives of USAID: education, democracy and governance, health, economic growth.

Review of Documents

Before arriving in Mali the team shall review relevant documents to be forwarded to them by the Mission prior to their departure for Mali. These will include Mission's CSP policy and planning documents, such as the CSP Parameters Paper, the current Country Strategic Plan and R4s; background information available on gender issues in Mali and other in-country data; gender assessments reports and action plans from other partners or countries, which can be used by the team.

Assessment of USAID/Mali's Existing and Proposed development Program

1. Assess USAID/Mali's present Strategy and Results Frameworks, program and activities to identify possible links with regards to women's issues in each SO and SpO and to determine whether the role of gender in development is outlined in each proposed strategic and special objective;

2. Identify possible entry-points for the incorporation of gender considerations into ongoing and future activities;

3. Verify whether the women's component in USAID/Mali's Strategy and Results Framework reflects the key role of gender considerations in the achievement of USAID goals;

Examination of the institutional, legal and regulatory environment for gender considerations of key governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations.

1. Analyze the extent to which the Government of Mali integrates gender issues into the development strategies of key Ministries and other appropriate agencies within the identified themes of education, health, democracy and governance, economic growth

2. Working with a local consultant and building on previous organizational assessments, identify key non-governmental organizations and public institutions and identify women's professional organizations, interest groups and community-based organizations working with gender issues within the identified themes

B. Design A Gender Action Plan. Based on the gender assessment and the CSP recommendations, the team shall design a Gender Action plan that lays out the steps for mainstreaming gender in USAID's development policies and activities. The Gender Action Plan shall:

1. Provide technical advice on the development of Mission's the new Results Frameworks to reflect the key role of gender considerations within the CSP's goals and objectives;

2. Provide guidance to develop intermediate results (IR) that incorporate gender considerations and suggest gender indicators for program impact and approaches for the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data.

3. Address how best to operationalize gender within the technical offices and Mission management, in accordance with the requirements of the ADS;

4. Identify and share the assessment and action plan with major donors or other international organizations

C. Assessment and Action Plan Briefing. The team shall organize a briefing session to present and receive feedback of the assessment findings and action plan to USAID staff and implementing partners.

D. Travel and Follow-up. Four days LOE travel and 8 days Follow-up (5 days for Senior position and 3 for Junior)

IV. METHODOLOGY. In carrying out the above tasks, the team shall gather information through:

A. Document Review. Review of relevant documents to include Mission's CSP policy and planning documents, such as the CSP Parameters Paper, the current Country Strategic Plan and R4s; background information available on gender issues in Mali and other in-country data; gender assessments reports and action plans from other partners or countries, which can be used by the team.

B. Interviews. Interview the following and collect related information: (a) members of the Missions' SO Teams and Support Offices; (b) selected USAID implementing partners, as identified by the Mission in advance; (c) selected GRM ministries and agencies, including the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family; (d) a wide range of women professional NGOs and grassroots interest groups, as identified by the

Mission in advance; and (e) major donors or other international organizations which have important gender programs in Mali.

V. DELIVERABLES.

A. **Gender Assessment & Action Plan.** The Gender Assessment and Action Plan will use the data from interviews and secondary sources to assess the appropriate technical areas for gender emphasis and make recommendations for future actions for gender integration, described above.

A preliminary draft shall be submitted to the Mission upon completion of fieldwork, with an electronic copy in MS-Word and Excel forwarded to the Mission. Written comments will be provided to the team electronically within 5 working days of receipt. A revised draft Gender Assessment & Action Plan, incorporating those comments shall be submitted to the Mission not later than 5 working days after receiving the aforementioned comments. The Final Gender Assessment & Action Plan will be submitted within 10 working days after receiving comments on the revised draft.

B. **Gender Briefings.** Organize and facilitate 1 or 2 sessions for Mission staff and implementing partners. Each session will be from 1 to 2 hours. Topics covered will include, but will not be limited to: a background to the Agency (ADS) guidelines on gender integration and why integrating gender results in more effective results.

**ANNEX B
PERSONS CONTACTED**

PERSONS CONTACTED

Mme. Hadja Assa Diallo, Présidente, CADEF
Mesky Brhane, Chief of Party, AMEX International, Mali
Mme. Sow Oumou Bagayoko, ANICT
Mme. Diallo Maimouna, Controleur Financier, ANICT
Mme. Sow Assa Doucouré, Principal Coordinator, Projet Appui au Renforcement de l'Equité Hommes/Femmes (PAREHF), UNDP
Mme. Fatoumata Siré Diakité, Founding President, APDF
Mme. Koné Saoudatou, Gender Specialist, formerly with Save the Children USA
Mme. Coumaré Fily Diallo, Gender Coordinator, Save the Children USA
Mme. Fatou Soucko Tall, Présidente Association, Femme-Islam et Développement au Mali (FIDAMA)
Mme. Sy Kadiatou Sow, Director, Projet de Réduction de la Pauvreté, Unité de Gestion du Fonds
Richard Toe
Mamadou Diallo CEDREF-GED
Me Fatimata Dicko Zouboye, D.E.S.S. Droit Notarial, Notaire
Mme. Rokia Bah, Présidente, COFEM
Mme. Alima Konaté Sylla, Program Administrator and Gender Focal Point, UNDP
Kadiatou Diallo, Directrice, G-Force
Dr. K. Edmond Dembélé, Consultant, Trainer, Researcher, CERCA
Mme. Hamedi Nina Walet, Conseillère Municipale, Kidal
Mme. Dadia Walet Mossa, Présidente de l'Association des Mères Seules Chargées de Famille, Kidal
Mme. Habi, CAFO
Mme. Traoré Oumou Touré, Executive Secretary, CAFO
M. Boubacar Monzon Traoré, Assistant de Représentant, UNFPA
Mme. Ly Rokiatou Traoré, Assistante au Programme, UNFPA
M. Zoughlami, Country Representative, UNFPA
Christy Collins, Assistant Country Director, CARE
Mme. Karagodio Fadimata Mahamane, Chef du Projet ROCAM, CARE-Macina
Mme. Hazara Maiga Ouédraogo, ROCAM, CARE-Diré
Mme. Fatimata Guindo Sidibé, Technical Advisor, Partnership & Capacity-Building, CARE
Mme. Emma Atchrimi Agounke, Directrice, Projet Droits et Citoyenété des femmes en Afrique francophone (DCF), CECI
Mme. Lillianne Cote, Agent de Programme, Projet Droits et citoyennété des femmes en Afrique fancophone (DCF), CECI
Mme. Sidibé Fatoumata Dicko, Ingénieur Statisticienne Démographe, Directrice Nationale de la Statistique et de l'Informatique (DNSI)
Mme. Diallo Mah Koné, OHVN
M. Oumar Farouk Diaby, Economiste, Islamologue et Consultant, Kati
Mme. Mirka Mouwes, Attachée Développement, Délégation de la Commission Européenne au Mali (and young man)
M. Modibo Maiga, Coordinator, Groupe Pivot/Santé Population

M. Fodé Traoré, Chargé de Personnel, Logistique & Informatique, Groupe Pivot

Mme. Assitan Diallo, Socio Demographe & Consultante Internationale

M. Thiam Youssouf, économiste , World Bank / Mali

Mme. Touré Oumou Camara, Conseiller Technique. Ministère du Développement Social de la Solidarité et des Personnes Agées

Mme. Niang Emma Kourouma, Directrice Nationale du Projet "Plates-formes Multifonctionnelles pour la Lutte Contre la Pauvreté", Ministère de L'Industrie, du Commerce et des Transports

Mme. Fatoumata Camara Diallo, Directrice du Projet D'Appui à la Promotion des Femmes et à l'Allègement de la Pauvreté, Directrice de FAWE/ Mali

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Mme. Zakiatou Wallet, Ministre du Tourisme et de l'Artisinat

Mme. Diakité Fatoumata N'Diaye, Ministre du Développement Social de la Solidarité et des Personnes Agées

Mme. Diakité Fatoumata N'Diaye, Ministre du Développement Social

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Mme. Dougou Barka Sylla, Conseiller Technique. Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances

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Mme. Keita Maria Diarra, Institut d'Education Populaire

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Mme. Djéneba Cissé, National Coordinator for Mali, Winrock International

M. Youssouf Diagne, Directeur de la Direction Régionale du Développement Social et de l'Economie Solidaire, Sévaré

M. Mama Traoré, Directeur de l'école communautaire de Diondiori

Mme. Diarra Aminata Maïga, Présidente, Association Bamika

Noury N'Dyne Sanogo, Directeur Jigiyaso Ba (Union des Caisses d'Epargne et de Crédit)

Mme. Nana Doucouré, Mme. Sombe Nacorian Doumbia, Association des Vendeuses de Sable (WASA)

Mme. Fatimata Traoré, M. Moussa Keïta, Secrétaire Général. Association Avril Wyk Laabal. Fatoma.

Mme. Tembély Fanta Ouologuem, Directrice d'école, Membre de la section Scolarisation et Formation des Filles. Sévaré/Mopti, member of the Association Giina Dogon

Communities, Leaders and Organizations

Association des Artisanes (Mopti)
Association des Artisans (Mopti)
Association des Parents d'élèves (Diondiori)
La Section Scolarisation et Formation des Filles (Sévaré)
Association des Parents d'Elèves (APE) Diondiori Village.
La Communauté de Diondiori
Association des Femmes de Fatoma (AFF Koural Weli)
Chef de Village et Communauté, Koursalé
Association des Femmes, Koursalé
Association Giina Dogon (La grande famille Dogon) Sévaré

USAID

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Dennis Bilodeau, Information Team
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Sidiki Traoré, D&G Team
Pamela White, Deputy Director, USAID/Mali

**ANNEX C
GENDER ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK, GENDER
MAINSTREAMING, AND INDICATORS**

GENDER ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK, GENDER MAINSTREAMING, AND INDICATORS

GENDER ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

A mechanism for organizing and assessing socioeconomic data related to gender specific target populations, it can be broadly divided into five distinct categories:

1. Activity profile—Collection of gender/age specific data related to labor involved in household production as well as production of goods and services.
2. Access and control profile—What accesses do individuals have to resources and what control do they have over the benefits? These are key areas, particularly with regard to women, since the resources and control aspects are usually disproportionate to the labor inputs.
3. Cultural determinants -Many social, economic, cultural and political factors determine gender roles. A clear understanding of these variables is crucial to program-planning, design and monitoring.
4. Implications for project design - This involves analyzing what the above findings may mean for the project in terms of barriers, intended and unintended outcomes, impacts, and strategies to reorient program to meet target goals and populations better.
5. Monitoring—Project impact on women is measured separately from the impact on men. An attempt is made to assess whether or not women participate equitably in project activities and benefits, whether investments in women have, or have not, improved their relative status and condition.

Considering gender as a social indicator in socio—economic analysis is a premise to assess the relative position of both men and women in the economy, identify their respective needs, assets and constraints then pay adequate attention to their contribution and role to allocate appropriate resources to enhance their contribution. Understanding that gender differentiated incentives yield different results is key to ensuring better delivery mechanisms and strategic orientation of development programs.

One tool to capture the gender dimension is gender analysis that should be an integral part of program planning and design. Many international organizations are recognizing the importance and relevance of addressing the gender dimension of development. According to the World Bank, "Gender analysis must be an integral part of design of policies and programs aimed at promoting economic growth".[1] It is a mechanism to assess the differences in role, responsibility, constraints, assets of both men and women in a given context, for better programmatic targeting, relevance and impacts. It provides socioeconomic indicators on attributes, opportunity and constraints for both men and women.

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender Mainstreaming is the institutional response and mandate to pursue an agenda across programs to make practices and procedures more responsive to both men's and women's needs and interests. It attempts to systematize procedures and practices in organizational culture, practices and artifacts. It should not be considered a one-time exercise during the project or program-planning phase; rather, it should be an integral part of the entire planning and implementation process and continue throughout the program cycle and assessments.

Gender Sensitive Indicators

Systematic collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data, gender audits, and community mapping as part of project planning, are mechanism for mainstreaming gender. Understanding gender relationships is essential for interventions to address gender-based inequalities, as well as impediments in health, education, democratic governance and economic growth. Gender sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data enable us to assess program impacts and distribution of benefits—and then retrofit programs to better meet our targets. The process of identifying these indicators must not only also take into account age, wealth, locality, but also other social factors and cultural determinants that establish the roles of women and men in the targeted sectors.

Other Donors' Gender Mainstreaming Approaches

FAO: Gender Mainstreaming affirms that attention to gender equality is a central part of all agricultural and rural development interventions, including analysis, policy advice, advocacy, legislation, research, and the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluations of programs and projects.

World Bank: Gender analysis must take into account, and seek to redress, the imbalances in the gender division of labor (including rigidities in labor allocation), the diversity and asymmetry of households and intra-household relationships, gender-based differentials in incentive capacity resulting from differential access to, and especially control over economically productive resources, and the implications of the invisibility of women's work in the economic paradigm for economic choices and strategies, and for evaluation of outcomes. Source: Blackden, 1993

UNDP Institutional Response: UNDP financial commitment to gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women, as outlined in the Administrator's Direct Line 11 includes the goal that at least 20 per cent of its global budget be allocated and disbursed to promote the advancement of women. […] Gender equality and empowerment of women serve as the overall cross-sectoral theme cross-cutting all others.[1]

—Source: UNDP Assessment of Gender Mainstreaming in Sub-Saharan Africa.2000

ANNEX D
MATERIALS FROM WORKSHOPS AND BRIEFINGS

MATERIALS FROM WORKSHOPS AND BRIEFINGS

GENDER AND USAID'S AUTOMATED DIRECTIVE SYSTEM, THE "ADS"

The ADS establishes key points in the planning process when gender issues should be considered to ensure equitable access to and benefit from USAID interventions. These requirements stipulate consideration of gender in:

- Technical Analyses for Strategic Plans
- Development of Performance Monitoring Plans and Indicators
- Activity Design
- Pre-Obligation Requirements for Competitive Solicitations

From the ADS:

The requirements are premised on evidence that USAID programs are most effective when a gender perspective is fully incorporated into all steps of the planning process beginning with customer needs' assessments prior to developing the results framework.

Gender refers to "the economic, social, political and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female." (DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Co-operation. OECD: Paris. 1998). Gender is a socially defined category that is an expression of particular characteristics and roles that are associated with certain groups of people with reference to their sex and sexuality.

> Gender policy in the ADS 200 series may be found in the following locations:
>
> 201.3.4.11   Technical Analysis for Strategic Plans
> 201.3.4.13   Planning for Performance Management
> 201.3.6.2   Ten Steps in Activity Design
> 201.3.6.3   Pre-Obligation Requirements
> 201.5B   Model Checklist for Pre-obligation requirements

Gender roles and identities vary among cultures and change over time. Men and women often differ in the activities they undertake, in access and control of resources, in participation in decision-making, and in the power they have to manage their lives. The social positions ascribed to men and women are defined relative to one another. In most societies, women have less access than men do to resources, opportunities and decision-making. The social, political, and economic institutions of a society—family, schools, industries, religious organizations, and governments—are also gendered. They tend to incorporate and reinforce the unequal gender relations and values of a society.

Gender analysis refers to the socioeconomic methodologies that identify and interpret the consequences of gender differences and relations for achieving development objectives. Gender analysis provides contextual understanding of the environment in which development policies, programs, and projects operate. It examines disparities in the roles, activities, needs, constraints, opportunities, and power associated with being male and female in a given

context and looks at how these attributes affect and are affected by interventions and policies.

Differential access to and control over resources (land, labor, capital, produce, tools, knowledge, institutions, social networks) is an essential component of the analysis, as is the comparative participation of men and women in the exercise of power and decision-making. Collection of sex-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data provides empirical foundation for assessing potential impact of gender relations on the program, and the relative benefits to men and women.

Gender analysis is a constituent of socioeconomic analysis. An examination of gender differences and relations is an integral part of socioeconomic analysis, and cannot be isolated from the broader social context. Even within a single culture or nation, neither men nor women form a homogeneous group. Other social factors like class, race, ethnicity, income, education, religion, and geographic location interact with gender and influence how important gender roles and gender relations may be for a particular program.

Three Touchstones

<div align="center">

THREE KEY TOUCHSTONES
FOR GENDER AND RESULTS
WIDTECH for USAID/Mali WORKSHOP

</div>

IS WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION OR PAYING ATTENTION TO GENDER ISSUES

▶ CRITICAL FOR ACHIEVING YOUR RESULTS?

▶ NECESSARY FOR REDRESSING GENDER INEQUITIES OR EXCLUSION OF WOMEN?

▶ PRACTICABLE OR STRATEGIC IN THE GIVEN CONTEXT (HOST COUNTRY, MISSION, SO TEAM)

Illustrative Poem: Poetic versus USAID Impacts

L'Argent	Développement
Il peut acheter une maison Mais pas un foyer	USAID peut faire construire des maisons pour les familles Mais pas les endroits d'équalité et respect
Il peut acheter un lit Mais pas le sommeil	USAID peut donner les ordinateurs aux ONGs Mais pas la bonne communication
Il peut acheter une horloge Mais pas le temps	USAID peut donner les horloges aux femmes Mais pas le temps
Il peut acheter un livre Mais pas la connaissance	Les PVOs peut donner les moyens pour les écoles Mais pas la determination d'y envoyer les filles
Il peut acheter une position Mais pas le respect	USAID peut donner de formation et capacité pour les gens dans le GRM Mais pas le respect du peuple Malien
Il peut payer le médecin Mais pas la santé	Les PVOs peuvent payer la clinique Mais pas le comportement de bonne santé
Il peut acheter du sang Mais pas la vie	USAID peut . . . Mais pas . . .

Gender Impacts Matrix

	Intended	Unintended
Positive Impacts	LOTS—collect successes	Improve monitoring to capture these
Negative Impacts	Never!	Improve monitoring to detect and eliminate as soon as possible.

Why a Gender Plan of Action?

Brainstorm with group about various reasons for an Action Plan.

- To integrate attention to gender into USAID/Mali's development of its CSP, design of its programs, oversight of partners, and monitoring of portfolio.
- To improve attention to people, roles and resources through the example of gender constraints and opportunities.
- To shift development practice from focusing on outputs to changing behavior.
- To identify improved approaches to addressing poverty at the base.
- To turn policy into action.
- To strengthen USAID's contributions to Mali's socioeconomic development through attention to gender and women's participation.
- To comply with the mandates from USAID/Washington's GPA.
- To model practices for GRM and partner organizations.
- To build USAID capacity to keep up with Malian partners on gender.
- To instill attention to gender into the USAID culture as an organization.
- To ensure the effective and equitable reach of technical and financial resources to rural communities.

ANNEX E
DRAFT GPA MATRIX

DRAFT GPA MATRIX
[To be completed by USAID/Mali]

Action	Person/Team Responsible	When	Monitoring and Measurement
Gender Audit	SO teams and partners	Before designing new projects	Program office tracks number done/ and draw upon findings for program priorities, and intended beneficiaries identification
Discussion of WIDTECH sector reports, identify IRs and subIRs	Each SO team	When reading draft When designing results framework	Program Office
Strategically define sectors or activities of greatest value to men or women	Each SO team	Throughout CSP development	
M&E of gender impacts	SO teams and partners	Developing performance monitoring plan, work plans	Each SO team, and program office
Identify partners re gender/women	Each SO team	Start immediately	Each SO team develop list
Procedures to ensure the inclusion of clear, purposeful language in all TORs and SOWs	Program Office	Sooner the better; by Jan 31, 2002.	Program office
Mission issues statement expecting partners to report on gender impacts	Front Office, program office, SO teams	Sooner the better; beginning any new project or M&E plan.	
Budget line in each grant or contract for gender audits, evaluations and reporting.	SO teams, program office?		
Establish Gender Working Group & select Coordinator	Front Office Program Office	January 15, 2002	
Identify & subscribe to listservs re gender	Gender Working Group Coordinator	March 15, 2002	Keep list, keep notebook of electronic articles
Annual prize for "Gender Champion"	Front Office	Dec. 31, 2001	
Communications strategy focused on Malian women's successes	InfoCom team, in conjunction with SO teams—combining information and "deplacements"		

Action	Person/Team Responsible	When	Monitoring and Measurement
Small grants gender-related research fund	Program Office		
Gender-related trainings	Program Office and Gender Working Group Coordinator	Feb-March 2002 June-July 2002	
Launch Gender Newsletter in Mali	Contract to partner organization or in-house?	First issue by March 2002	
Reinvigorate donors' gender working group	Program office, contact UNDP	First meeting by Jan 31, 2002.	

ANNEX F
POTENTIAL TOPICS AND SPEAKERS FOR USAID SERIES

POTENTIAL TOPICS AND SPEAKERS FOR USAID SERIES

[This list is not comprehensive or authoritative. It is a starting point that USAID should work from.]

TOPIC	POSSIBLE INVITEES
Government policies and promotion of gender equity; Beijing + 5 Mali Action Plan progress and challenges to promote gender equity in Mali.	▪ Mme. Sissoko Naminata Dembélé, Conseiller Technique, Ministère de la Femme, de l'Enfant et de la Famille ▪ Someone else from MPFEF)
Different approaches to training and involving women in decentralization	▪ Mme. Sow Oumou Bagayoko, ANICT (Agence Nationale des Investissements des Collectivites Territoriales) ▪ Mme. Djéneba Cissé, National Coordinator for Mali, Winrock International ▪ Someone from Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family
UNDP's projects addressing gender and gender equity	▪ Mme. Alima Konaté Sylla, Program Administrator and Gender Focal Point, UNDP ▪ Mme. Sow Assa Doucoure, Principal Coordinator, Projet Appui au Renforcement de l'Equite Hommes/Femmes (PAREHF), UNDP
Education reform, nexus education and development; gender equity in education, what reform and strategies to improve girls' education.	▪ Mme. Fatou Camara Diallo, Directrice du Projet D'Appui à la Promotion des Femmes et à l'Allégement de la Pauvreté, FAWE
Rural development, priorities and emerging trends for gender to consider in agricultural development.	▪ Mme. Dicko Bassa, Chef Division Promotion du Monde Rural, Ministère du Développent Rural ▪ Mme. Djeneba Cissé, National Coordinator for Mali, Winrock International
USAID Partner PVOs' Attention to Gender Mainstreaming	▪ Mme. Coumbere Fily Diallo, Gender Coordinator, Save the Children USA ▪ Christie Collins, CARE ▪ Solicit other volunteers!
Gender and poverty alleviation projects targeting rural women; government policies and interventions; decentralization; success and challenges	▪ Mme. Sy Kadiatou Sow, Director, Projet de Reduction de la Pauvreté, Unite de Gestion du Fonds ▪ Mme. Niang Emma Kourouma, Directrice Nationale, Projet " Plates-formes Multifonctionnelles Pour la Lutte Contre la Pauvreté", Ministère de L'Industrie, du Commerce et des Transports (also re women in agro-processing businesses; alternative energy and adapted technology for rural women).
Role of women in the Malian economy; poverty alleviation strategies; economic sectors and opportunities to invest in women; the informal sector	▪ Mme. Dougou Barka Sylla, Conseiller Technique. Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances
Mali consultants' approaches to gender and	▪ Mamadou Diallo CEDREF-GED

TOPIC	POSSIBLE INVITEES
gender audits	▪ Dr. K. Edmond Dembéllé, CERCA ▪ Assitan Diallo
Women's Legal Rights, paralegals, clinics, training elected women	▪ Mme. Fatimata Dicko Zouboye: AJM ▪ Mme. Rokia Bah, Presidente, COFEM
Women in Politics, Women in the North	▪ Mme. Hamedi Nina Walet, Conseillère Municipale, Kidal ▪ Woman at USAID Women's Roundtable, Nov. 7, 2001
EDDI Young Women Leaders' Project, lessons-learned, opportunities to employ/use interns in USAID activities	▪ Mesky Brhane, Chief of Party ▪ Invite 2 interns to tell of experiences as well
Sex-disaggregated data, statistics/data collected or needed re women/gender	▪ Mme. Sidibe Fatoumata Dicko, Directrice Nationale de la Statistique et de l'Informatique (DNSI) ▪ Invite someone from the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family
Gender, women and Islam	▪ Oumar Farouk Diaby, Economiste, Islamologue et Consultant
Girls' education: obstacles, challenges and strategies and/or Informal education, workforce development, youth practical training succesful management of community schools, curriculum development	▪ Mme. Doucouré Kadiatou Coulibaly, Project Coordinator, SAGE/Mali ▪ Mme. Maria Dairra and Debbie Fredo, Institut d'Education Populaire
Women in school administration; mentoring girls in primary school	▪ Mme. Tembely Fanta Ouloguem, Directrice d'école, Membre de la Cellule de Scolarisation des Filles. Sévaré, member of the Association Giina Dogon
Women's entrepreneurship, challenges and opportunities; Women in non-traditional economic sector and exploring new economic sectors and potentials for women; Women's Economic Associations	▪ Mme. Tantou Kébé, Chef d'entreprise, Tantou Teinture, Association des Teinturières du Mali and Mme. Nana Doucouré, Association des Vendeuses de Sable (WASA)
Community-based initiatives to set up micro-credit projects, women and microfinance, savings groups	▪ M. Noury N'Dyne Sanogo, Directeur Jigiyaso Ba (Union des Caisses d'Epargne et de Credit.) ▪ Mme. Fatimata Traoré, M. Moussa Keïta, Secrétaire Général. Association Avril Wyk Laabal in Fatoma ▪ Mmes. Karagodio Fadimata Mahamane, Hazara Maiga Ouedraogo, and Fatimata Guindo Sidibe, Technical Advisor, Partnership & Capacity-Building, CARE

ANNEX G
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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