

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Final Report

30 September 1997 – 30 June 2003



Save the Children/USA

CA NO. 624-A-00-97-00067-00

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List of Acronyms

AE	Académie d'Enseignement
CAP	Centre d'Animation Pédagogique (Inspectorate)
CEP	Certificat d'Etudes Primaire (6 th grade leaving exam)
CNE	Centre National d'Education
DG	Democratic Governance Program
MBE	Ministry of Basic Education
PC	Pedagogie Convergente
PISE	Programme d'Investissement dans le Secteur de l'Education
SAGE	Strategies for Advancing Girls' Education
SC	Save the Children
SMC	School Management Committee

I. Introduction

Impressed by the capacity of the low-cost Save the Children community schools to address Mali's overwhelming education access needs in hard to reach areas, USAID Mali included significant support within this *cooperative agreement* to expand the *Community School* program, begun in 1992 in the Kolondièba district. Through this *cooperative agreement* 804 mud brick community schools were constructed in the Sikasso region making schooling possible for some 50,000 children who otherwise would not have had the opportunity to attend school.

This final report is a summary of the achievements and impact of this program, which was carried out between 30 September 1997 and 30 June 2003.

II. Attainment Level of Project Results

A. Increased Access

Started in 1992 with four pilot village schools in the district of Kolondièba, today, in the Sikasso region, SC and its eight local NGO partners oversee 798 community schools, comprising 1,269 classrooms in which 1,426 teachers teach 47,680 pupils enrolled in grades 1-6. SC supported schools have focused on primary education, expanding from the initial functional literacy 3-year system entirely in the mother tongue to a six-year curriculum integrated into the national system.

The original intent of the program was to support the efforts of 1,100 communities in establishing their own school. In 1999, due to a USAID budget reduction, this target was revised downwards to 777. With 804 schools having ultimately been constructed through this CA's support, this target was surpassed as a result of communities' interest and commitment to education. The initial target student population of 85,000 was based on the construction of 1,100 schools with an average capacity of 80 students. This target was revised down to 50,000 reflecting an anticipated average student population per school of 60. As we expanded the program, we realized that, given the size of the villages we worked in, 46% of the villages did not have the potential to recruit 30 new students every three years. Since most villages have a total population between 400 and 500, a more realistic target student population would have, therefore, been 45,000. Later on *Gross Access AR* and *GER* were adopted as indicators to assess access rather than the number of schools or the student population.

Gross access rate and *gross enrollment rate* have constantly been on a climbing curve as shown in the indicators table in annex 1. ***GAR climbed from 79% in 1999 to 96% in 2003 surpassing the life of project target of 95%. GER followed a similar pattern, going from 57% in 1999 to 66% in 2003 surpassing the final target of 65%.***

ACCESS										
Indicator	End of Project Target		Results 2003		Results 1998		Difference		% Achieved	
Gross Access Rate	Total	95%	Total	96%	Total	80%	Total	16%	Total	101%
	Girls	80%	Girls	91%	Girls	NA	Girls	NA	Girls	113%
Gross Enrollment Rate	Total	65%	Total	66%	Total	54%	Total	12%	Total	101%
	Girls	50%	Girls	56%	Girls	NA	Girls	NA	Girls	112%

GAR in Sikasso is 39% and GER stands at 50%¹

As the program matured, SC and USAID have revised the indicators through annual continuation application processes. The GAR indicator was increased from 85% to 95% since the program had already achieved the 85% target. The GER was reduced from 70% to 65% as a result of the economic hardship experienced by many communities due to the 2001 cotton crisis. Both targets were surpassed, with overwhelming achievements for girls.

The support of USAID to expand the SC community school model has made it possible to significantly increase access to education in zones where it was beyond the capacity of the Malian educational infrastructure. This cost effective model of schools has had the added advantage of empowering communities to be stronger participants in civil society as they experience the success of building and managing their own school. This success has been contagious! The *Academie* in Sikasso has reported the spontaneous creation of 92 community schools without NGO support.

Furthermore, the construction of 427 additional classrooms made it possible for an additional 15,000 students to attend school. The construction of additional classrooms is a tangible demonstration of a community's commitment to education as it reflects not only building a classroom but also recruiting a second cohort and paying the salary of additional teachers. **Though an added responsibility for the community, it translates frequently to a strong sense of ownership.** Sidiki Sangaré, chief of the village of Kalakan, in response to the question whether or not they wanted the government to continue its support in paying part of community school teachers' salary, said 'Deme ka di aw ye, n'ga anw taa ye anka kalanso ye: *We appreciate the goodwill of the government but we want to continue to manage our school by ourselves*'.

B. Improved Quality of Teaching and Learning

During the first two years of the project, a lot of emphasis was placed on access. Later on focus was placed on quality. Anecdotal evidence and field observations indicate that education in the community schools is perceived by communities as relevant to their needs. Started with a community-need tailored 3-year curriculum aimed at providing students with basic literacy and numeracy together with village-relevant life skills, the quality of education has evolved with the changing needs of the beneficiaries. Three key factors favored communities' shift from a vision of a school that meets basic educational needs and life skills to a more advanced academic studies focused school:

¹ CPS/MEN Données 01-02

- **Growing success of community schools;** in Kolondièba, for example, **community schools achieved a 65% pass rate as opposed to 43% in public schools;**
- **Piloting a community middle school;** The existence of a junior high school assured parents that graduating primary school students would have access to further education;
- The **full integration of community schools into the national educational system through decentralization** validated the quality and capacity of community schools.

SC and the community together with the MOE designed a unique educational system in that:

- Parents actively participate in the management of their school;
- Children easily transfer skills acquired in Bambara to French;
- The daily schedule and the academic year are tailored to the needs of the rural communities, enabling children to both meet their home responsibilities and attend school;
- Community schools innovatively use local human and material resources as learning tools, encouraging the participation of elders who share with the youth the history and lore of a village.

The demonstrated quality of the education provided in SC schools has facilitated their official recognition and integration. Quality has been proven through indicators such as 4th and 6th grades attainment and 6th grade exam pass rates. **95% of community school students reach grade 4 as opposed to 72% in the Sikasso region.** Similarly, 6th grade pass exam rates in community schools compete well with their counterparts in public schools. **For two consecutive years, 2001 and 2002, the top CEP student of the Sikasso region has been a community school student.**

QUALITY						
Indicator	End of Project Target	Results 2003	Results 1998	Difference	% Achieved	
4 th grade attainment	Total 95% Girls 85%	Total 95% Girls 83%	Total NA Girls NA	Total NA Girls NA	Total 100% Girls 98%	
6 th grade attainment	Total 65% Girls 55%	Total 67% Girls 57%	Total 24% Girls NA	Total 43% Girls NA	Total 103% Girls 103%	
6 th grade leaving exam pass rate	Total 45% Girls 40%	Total 51% Girls 45%	Total 08% Girls 00%	Total 43% Girls 45%	Total 113% Girls 112%	
Student/teacher ratio	35/1	33/1	29/1	(4)	106%	
Student/book ratio	1/1.5	1/1.2	1/0.4	0.8	80%	
Girls' percentage	45%	43%	48%	(5%)	95%	
% Teachers with minimum 9 th grade education	85%	82%	28%	54%	96%	
% Teachers trained in the last 12 months	100%	100%	100%	0	100%	

Much emphasis was placed on improving the quality of the learning process. Strategies for student retention through improved quality of teaching included:

- Support to SMCs to recruit better educated teachers, the percent of teachers with minimum 9th grade education has increased from 14% in 1998 to 82% in 2003;

- Intensive and frequent training of all active teachers in collaboration with MOE professionals;
- Recruiting more **female teachers**; they tend to be more stable and committed, and are less likely to leave their jobs. They **currently represent 20% of the teaching corps up from 7% in 1998**;
- Use of learner-centered techniques, the child-to-child approach and girl friendly teaching techniques;
- Use of *Pedagogie Convergente* in grades 1 to 4;
- Maintenance of a low student /teacher ratio (36/1);
- Provision of books to ensure a high student /book ratio 1/1.2 and availability of appropriate teaching materials for teachers (USAID through MOE donated nearly 25,000 books during the last three years); there are close to 58,000 student books;
- On-going coaching of teachers and encouragement of SMCs to inform and educate parents to prevent students from dropping out of school;
- Enhanced infrastructure, the physical conditions of all the 1,269 classrooms have been improved by cementing floors, painting walls, and /or establishing flag poles and flower beds on the school grounds.

Bilingual Education: *Pedagogie convergente*

Since 1992, in the framework of EFA, SC's Mali programs have been a laboratory, piloting many innovations in the field of education.

Jomtien advocated the search for alternative education systems, more relevant, less costly, child-centered, promoting women and the poor. SC's innovations featured all these principles.

One of the most outstanding changes brought to education in Mali by SC is the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction and a subject matter, a daring decision in 1992. Positive results persuaded the then Minister of Education to decree the use of local languages in all Malian schools through the extension of *Pedagogie Convergente*.

It is very clear that children, who do not come to school as tabula rasa, but with a wealth of knowledge and skills, cannot communicate maximally in a foreign language they are exposed to for the first time when they enter school. For many children, feeling inhibited to express true feelings and opinions, marks their lives forever.

Promoting education is not just building infrastructures, providing supplies and materials or indiscriminately following syllabuses and methods, it is essentially looking for results gratifying to the learner, and to a given community because the education of its children is responsive to its needs.

Based on these premises, SC chose to divert from beaten tracks and experimented with use of the mother language, which, it is worth noting, is one of the child's rights.

In doing so, SC made four paramount shifts in Malian education:

1. It enabled the selection of the teacher from within the community. No longer a stranger, goading the students to speak a foreign language, student-teacher relations dramatically changed, making the school environment less inhibiting;
2. With the mother tongue as the means of instruction, learning becomes easier as communication between the teacher and students becomes more convivial, more natural. Teaching in the local language enabled parents to better understand what children are learning in school;
3. The content of the curriculum is understood by the communities who may include components directly related to their own needs; and
4. School is no more the “thing” of a distant and faceless government, but the property of the community, empowered and accountable.

The successful results achieved conducting the first three years exclusively in the local language boosted demand for education in general and community schools in particular. However, even though the students demonstrated high levels of understanding; school was not preparing them for full functionality in the Malian environment without French, the national language. Therefore, at the request of the parents, the curriculum was expanded to add French and other subjects through the sixth grade. These additions have enabled enable the students to take the *CEP (Certificat d'Etudes Primaire)*. The introduction of French, however, brought along its own challenges. As in all Malian schools (except the very few *pedagogie convergente* schools), there were no academically based linguistic methods for using French. There was a need to adopt a more appropriate pedagogy; hence the move to *pedagogie convergente*.

Pedagogie convergente is an offshoot of pluri-disciplinary research in education, psychology, and sociology. The approach aims at an integral development of the child, thus laying the socio-psycho-somatic foundation for free and responsible citizenship. *Pedagogie convergente* is learner-centered education.

With *pedagogie convergente*, the class becomes livelier; local songs and learning games make the class an attractive learning environment. Emphasis is on life skills development, including psychosocial ones rather than rote learning. With fun in class, absences and dropouts decrease.

In support of early childhood development, and to better prepare children for the first grade, a community kindergarten has been created in Bohi. Unlike other kindergartens in Mali where the focus is French speaking and writing, the Bohi kindergarten attempts to socially and cognitively prepare children for the a first year of *pedagogie convergente*.

Community school students who sat for the PC version of the CEP on a trial basis achieved an 89% CEP pass rate last year. This year, in spite of the difficulty inherent to the exam itself, and other external difficulties such as delayed payment of teacher salaries, **the success rate was 82% as opposed to 51% for the regular exam.**

Girls' Education

During these five years, a lot has been done to improve girls' education. SMCs have committed themselves to try to achieve 50% girls in each classroom. As a condition to the construction of a school, this was achieved in the early years. After the construction of the school, however, SC had very little control over gender parity. However, it is an enormous achievement that, in 5 years, communities that did not want to send girls to school at all, now have 45% girls on average in classes as opposed to the public schools here it took 40 years to achieve 40%. Sending girls to school and keeping them there has been a big challenge for villagers. Social, cultural and economic factors hinder ongoing commitment for girls' education. Girls were pulled out of school for domestic work or marriage. Other reasons have been the irrelevance of educating girls, the belief that girls are less intelligent than boys, and the fear that male teachers might abuse girls. These different challenges have been addressed through on-going parent awareness raising campaigns about the need to keep girls in school so that they can build a better future for themselves and their future families. These campaigns, combined with girl-friendly teaching techniques, the construction of separate latrines for girls, child-to-child activities, and the recruitment of more female teachers, resulted in a satisfactory retention of students in general and girls in particular. Our statistics show a peak of 48% girls in 1998, and the lowest percent 42% in 2001. On average, girls' participation is 45% as opposed to 40.86%² in the Sikasso region. During this past year more girls than ever before participated in the *cercle d'études*. **Of notable achievement is the girls' pass rate of 45% at the 2003 CEP.** When the first cohort sat for this exam in 1998, no girls passed. In 1999 3% passed and then 4% the next year. A significant climb occurred in 2001 with a 26% pass rate. The curve continued to climb: 42% in 2002 and 45% in 2003.

This unprecedented success resulted from our ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of education through an increased emphasis on teacher training in learner-centered approaches, and through teacher coaching by SC, national NGO partners, and the AE/CAPs. In addition to these efforts, our gender team conducted a set of activities conducive to improving girls' attendance and retention. The team visited 21 villages where they called general assemblies to exchange views on girls' education. It appeared from these discussions that communities understand and are in favor of girls' education. However there is a need for on-going outside support and encouragement. Radio messages on girls' education are periodically broadcast. In addition, social events like sports, and organized competitions which prominently include the participation of girls maintain the momentum. Positive and lasting change takes time; communities are on the right path but they need time to root new habits and integrate them in their paradigm and culture.

² CPS/MEN Données 2001-2002

Improved Capacity of SMCs

School management committees are the backbone of the SC community school model. SMCs are the community-organized bodies that mobilize community resources to establish and manage the school. Their roles and responsibilities have evolved with the project. In the early years of the project the SMCs' responsibilities were limited to mobilizing community members for the construction of the school, the recruitment of the teacher, and the enrollment of students. During the project lifespan, all the SMCs have provided support to the school in cash and in kind. From 1998 to 2001, most SMCs raised funds from the village association treasury to pay for recurrent school costs. Following the cotton crisis in 2001, they developed alternative sources of revenue: market gardening, collective peanut fields, and/or fundraising from village members living in other places. The financial support of the government through the PISE, started in 2001, has brought significant relief to over-burdened SMCs (particularly those with multiple teachers to support). SMCs continue to play their managerial roles, however, raising funds to cover recurrent school costs like infrastructure repairs, additional teachers' salary, and school equipment repairs.

Within these five years, a lot of emphasis has been placed on SMC capacity building. Our DG team trained SMC members in literacy, basic management, and civil rights. As a result, the SMCs are expanding their role from overseeing the general school operations to that of advocate for their needs with the outside world. To adapt to the changing environment (decentralization, Federations, phase-out), most SMCs have recruited new members to include young, dynamic and literate men and women who serve as contact persons with the CAP, the Communal Council, and the NGOs. This changing role has generated more meetings and has increased interest in school related matters. The percent of SMCs meeting regularly has increased from 74% in 2000 to 94% at present. In addition, 85% of the SMCs joined Federations. .

CAPACITY					
Indicator	End of Project Target	Results 2003	Results 1998	Difference	% Achieved
% SMCs which took at least 5 actions to secure services for their school	65%	86%	NA	NA	132%
% Schools receiving community support	100%	100%	100%	0	100%
% SMCs which meet 10 times annually	90%	94%	NA	NA	104%
% SMCs working with federations at least twice a year	50%	85%	NA	NA	170%
% SMCs members receiving literacy training	10%	58%	NA	NA	580%

As part of our strategy for phase-out, we strengthened SMCs' capacities in developing community development plans, in advocacy, and in understanding their rights. Within the context of decentralization, the communes and the CAP are taking on more responsibility in the management of community schools. To this end, we trained 58% of SMC members in literacy and good governance. With SMC/APE Federations becoming more active in

advocacy and more CAPs are engaged in the support of community schools, we are confident that most SMCs will continue to function after the close of this project.

Of significance as well is that at the end of this project **32% of the SMCs have women in leadership positions in the roles of president, treasurer, or secretary.**

III. Impact

SC's USAID supported community school program has been revolutionary in that it has demonstrated that the cost of schooling can be reduced without significantly damaging the quality of education. SC, through this USAID funded program, has demonstrated that education can be decentralized and that the construction norms and the teachers' profile could be adapted to locally available resources. Effects from this program have occurred at both community and national levels.

Community Level

At the community level impact is particularly seen on women and children:

- *Change of attitude towards education can be observed in each community.* Now villagers build their own school and pay money to send their children to school, whereas before the community school project there was a lack of interest in education and willingness to send children to school.
- *Communities have learned how to organize and unite around the Community Schools, providing practical experience and a unique opportunity for mobilizing human and material resources to meet school needs.* The SMCs promote the quality of education by recruiting more educated teachers, encouraging parents to buy school supplies for children, promoting girls' education, and ensuring a good ratio of students per teacher. They also make sure attendance is regular for both teachers and students. Furthermore, they assure that the school environment is safe and conducive to learning.
- *SMC members received training in literacy, good governance, sound management, and advocacy (for their rights).* This has resulted in empowered communities who request their rightful due from local authorities and has strengthened collaborative ties between communities and communal authorities.
- *Women have learned that they can play a larger role in the education of their children* through membership on the SMC and through SC's support of women as important members of such community groups. As women have gained confidence in their role as leaders, they have found opportunities to practice these new skills as members of the SMCs.
- *Villagers speak regularly of the importance of girls' education* and how girls will have a better future if they know how to read, write and do arithmetic. Learning basic facts of nutrition and sanitation will help them to stay healthy and be better mothers.

- *The enrollment rate has increased.* Before the community school project, it was 19% in the Sikasso region. This low enrollment rate was due to distance from existing schools and the perceived lack of relevance of schooling. SC's community school model brought the schools to the communities and ensured that the curriculum addressed the needs of these communities.

National Level

The SC community school model has also influenced Malian education reform through its success with bilingual education.

President Alpha Omar Konaré's statement in 1999 of "a school in every village" demonstrated engagement with the concept of community schools at the highest level.

PRODEC represents that vision through a policy statement. The SC *Community School* program served as a part of the original inspiration for PRODEC. SC is a member of the *Commission de Suivi du PRODEC*. SC is also a member of the *PRODEC Commission Thématique Education Non Formelle*. SC's *Community School* program has continuously contributed to achieving PRODEC's overall objective of fair access to quality education for all. Over the course of the past decade, SC has continued to pilot new activities which have further expanded the boundaries of PRODEC. The curriculum revision of PRODEC was inspired from SC's life skills curricular modules used in Village Schools (1992-1996). Active child-centered teaching methodology and the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in the first years of schooling are also central to PRODEC. In 2002 and 2003, some community school students sat for the Bambara PC version of the CEP. In the district of Kolondièba, an average of 85% of them passed. This remarkable success demonstrates the relevance of PC and supports its extension on a broader basis throughout Mali as desired by PRODEC.

IV. Synergies and Partnerships

Synergies

School Health

Based on the intuitive premise that healthier children do better in school and that higher retention and lower repetition rates enable maximum use of scarce education resources, Save the Children's self-funded *School Health and Nutrition* program was initiated in Mali in 1999 to improve children's performance at school in a sustainable and measurable way through the introduction of simple health and environmental services in schools. Begun in just a few schools, it expanded during the 2001-02 school year to include 140 community schools and 30 public schools in the Kolondièba district. As of 2003, 360 community schoolteachers and 180 teachers from public schools were trained in school health policies including:

- The National Policy in School Health and Nutrition
- Hygiene and Intestinal Worms, and Related Diseases
- Nutritional Deficiencies
- Sanitation
- Organizing Youth Clubs for Health and Hygiene
- Introducing School Health Education
- The Role of Parents, Teachers, and Health Agents in School Health

Fifteen nurses (ICPMs) from local CSComs were trained in diagnosing and treating dental problems and trachoma. Following this training session, a referral system was established. About 25,000 children participated in medical visits at their schools, including dental and eye exams. Cases of illnesses were treated and or referred. These same children received de-worming medication, and Vitamin A and iron supplements.

Sponsorship

Save the Children Sponsorship staff partner with community schoolteachers in Kolondièba who, in many cases, serve as sponsorship volunteers. The community schoolteachers are provided an orientation about sponsorship and monitor students' attendance and educational progress. Because of sponsorship, teachers are trained to help students write letters and share their culture with others. The community school program in the district of Kolondièba is entirely funded through SC private funds.

School Gardens

SC's agriculture team has supported school gardens in Kolondièba using SC resources. Teachers and students were trained in gardening techniques and about nutrition. In many cases the revenues from the gardens have been used to partially cover the recurrent costs of the school.

Democratic Governance

The DG and Education teams worked hand-in-hand to improve SMCs' capacity in advocacy to enable SMCs to gradually integrate community development plans into the communal plans, with a focus on school matters. The DG team trained education supervisors, animators and assistants, who then trained the SMC members locally in advocacy, civic rights, and good management. More and more former community school students are joining the community organizations; their level of education is a value added.

Partnerships

SC scaled up this project through dynamic partnerships established with and between SMCs, AEs and CAPs, USAID, and implementing NGO partners. Holding *cadre de concertation* meetings, to which various education actors were invited, ensured that all stakeholders buy in to the project and participate financially and otherwise. These

partnerships nurtured on an on-going basis helped us capitalize on diverse capacities to achieve significant results. With respect to implementing NGO partners, SC has provided organizational development support based on institutional needs analyses. The sustainability of the community schools relies on these dynamic partnerships among all the education stakeholders.

SC has developed an exemplary partnership with local NGOs. Started with 4 national NGOs, this partnership has involved up to 16 local NGOs. Following budget cuts this number came down to 12 and then 8 to be more cost effective. These partner NGOs benefited from ongoing capacity building and institutional development. In 1998 their role was as implementers in the field but as the program evolved and as they demonstrated conceptualization skills, they became an integral part of strategic planning sessions. From 2001 to the end of the program, they were fully responsible for the geographic zones they covered.

As part of our phase-out strategy, we have strived to strengthen partnerships with AEs and CAPs. This exemplary collaboration is illustrated in joint school supervisions, joint facilitation of in-service teacher training sessions at hub schools within the pilot clusters, and a better-organized examination environment for community school students. During the past six months, there have been some delays in the payment of teachers' salaries. This delay was partly attributable to the change of Directors. By July, however, all teachers had been paid and it is hoped that a transparent system through the CAPs has now been rooted.

V. Challenges Encountered and Lessons Learned

Phasing Over More Responsibilities to CAPs and Communal Councils

New CAPs have been created recently, together with a significant change in existing CAPs. At this point most of them are still settling into their new positions, learning the nature and the inherent challenges of their roles. Community schools rely on the CAPs for long-term support for quality assurance, teacher training, and coaching. CAPs are responsible for teacher training and supervision but their presence, resources, and commitment are not yet sufficient to meet the needs of all community schools.

Similar weaknesses apply to Communal Councils. In many communes the *Conseillers* are newly established and are not fully oriented with respect to their role regarding schools in general and community schools in particular...and when they are, they do not have the necessary resources to meet their responsibilities.

Thus, key to the sustainability of community schools is the support of the CAPs and the communes.

Further Education for Community School Students

SC's endeavors to further enhance the quality of education in community schools with a special focus on girls' education and strengthened capacity of *School Management Committees* resulted in greater achievements on the CEP exam. In 2002 the 51% pass rate meant **2,354** new enrollments for junior high schools; this year's 51% means **4,106** new students including 1,484 girls. Given the growing demand for education, the redefinition of basic education in the Malian education reform as being 9 years rather than 6, and the new bilingual, competency-based, child-centered pedagogy, one obvious weak link is the transition from 6th to 7th, 8th and 9th grades. We know that costs, distances and curricular relevance affect the numbers of junior high school enrollments. But so does lack of nearby junior high schools, particularly for girls whose parents are unlikely to agree to their staying in a district center away from family. Beyond cultural barriers, a deterrent to girls' schooling is limited access to middle schools.

As the program evolves and more and more students are graduating from sixth grade, the need for middle schools for these students has become increasing critical. During the past two years, the village of Bohi has piloted a community junior high school. This middle school accepts students from 11 neighboring villages who passed the CEP and who otherwise would have to travel long distances to an overcrowded school to further their studies. In the Kolondièba CAP district this year, 1,351 students passed the CEP, of whom 728 were community school students. Yet there are only 600 seats in existing middle schools available for the 2003-04 school year. In the Sikasso region as a whole the figures are even more appalling: 17,013 students who passed the CEP, including 4,106 community school students...but with only 9,800 seats available in existing schools. Adding to the space limitations is the fact that approximately 15% of 7th year students repeat grade 7. While the recommended class size is 70, the actual sizes are generally around 120 or more.

SC will continue, using private resources, to pilot innovative approaches to education that will further enhance quality, access, promotion and capacity in community schools and may serve as future models for the national education system. Examples of activities include: strengthening the curriculum relating to HIV/AIDS, expanding *Child-to-Child* activities, expanding *School Health* activities, and establishing more 2nd cycle community schools.

VI. Collateral Activities

The implementation of this five-year program gave us the opportunity to pilot other projects and pedagogical innovations: the *Child-to-Child* approach, school clusters for ongoing teacher training, a Middle School in Bohi and mini projects to combat child labor/trafficking.

Child-to-Child, a Child-centered Learning Approach

The *Child-to-Child* pedagogy, in use since 2001, is child-centered and promotes in children the ability to use and share with others in the wider community what they learn in school. SC and its partner NGOs have introduced the *Child-to-Child* approach to the classroom, strengthening the focus on active learning and the connection between the school and the community. This pedagogy transforms the learning process into a sociological experience.

Children initiate themes for research; they assign duties to group members. They then discuss the issues in the village with community members. The group then reports on what they have learned in class, and exchange with teachers and classmates, enlarging the learning environment and honing a spectrum of skills. In total, 392 community teachers were trained and used this approach in teaching applied science, agriculture, health, and civics.

The child-to-child pedagogy opens up school walls so that learning takes place throughout the community, which participates more actively in the education of its children while benefiting from what children have learned in school.



This picture shows a student teaching her mother what she learnt in class.

School Clusters

To facilitate integration and further improve the quality of the teaching and the learning environment, SC and its partner NGOs piloted the establishment and implementation of school clusters. **In 2002 and 2003, we supported the establishment of 16 pilot clusters of community and public schools in Kolondièba, Yanfolila and Sikasso.** Within these hub schools, teachers gathered to exchange on pedagogical issues under the guidance of SC and NGO staff, the CAP and the directors of public schools. Our pilot cluster model brought together on a monthly basis community schools and public schools of the same geographic zone. Teachers from both community and public schools regularly met and shared experience and teaching materials. Clustering public and community schools allowed SMCs and APEs to exchange best practices.



CAPs, communes, and teachers were equally enthusiastic for these pedagogical gatherings which strengthen existing collaboration and assure long-term sustainability by helping maximize the use of shrinking resources, encouraging decentralized learning, and reinforcing partnership among education stakeholders for a joint management of community schools.

This picture shows the members of the cluster board in Kaboila (Mayor, CAP advisors and President of the APE Federation). This cluster brought together 16 teachers from 5 schools.

Bohi Middle School

The establishment of the Bohi second cycle school has been an exciting challenge. The philosophy was to establish a multiple-layered partnership whereby communities, the AE, CAP, commune, and SC would jointly create a school that met commonly agreed upon expectations. This school responds to the communities' need for further education in a walkable distance and it meets the AE norms of infrastructure and cost effectiveness. The commune contributes toward the teachers' salary, and SC helps the communities build and equip the school and contributes to the quality of education through book supplies, teacher training, and curriculum development. This pilot project brought together communities, the AE/CAP, and Communal Council in the establishment and management of a school... a partnership which certainly promotes long-term sustainability.

A major difficulty in implementing the project was the assignment of teachers by the AE. The project started with three teachers entirely covered by the AE; after the first year these teachers were transferred to another school following a change of Director of the AE. The communities then had to recruit three new teachers and paid these teachers' salary for three months before the AE took them over.

At present the junior high school has 85 6th grade graduates from 11 nearby villages. Distance from home to school is usually a barrier to girls' education. Attending existing second cycle schools for most girls means transferring to a larger community 10 to 25 kms from their village...something which is unthinkable for most families.

Bohi has recently established a village radio station named after late Aminata Doumbia. This radio will make it possible to broadcast messages to neighbouring villages. Messages will include HIV/AIDS information, promotion of girls' education, and other matters of interest and concern to the community.

Child Labor and Education Pilot Project

With the support of USAID, SC, in partnership with two national NGOs, AADEC and Grade Banlieue, has designed projects in two communes in the Sikasso region. The projects' goals were to reduce child labor and migration by providing children aged 10 to 18 access to education, information, skills, and economic opportunities.

Project activities included:

- Identifying two pilot communes;
- With the participation of youth, identifying the causes of migration and child labor;
- Identifying which youth activities could help reduce the phenomenon; and
- Create an environment conducive to student retention and youth productivity.

NGOs selected the communes of Sanguela and Lobougoula based on the following criteria:

- Acute challenges of child migration and or child labor in the area;
- Demonstrated commitment of the communes to combat the phenomenon; and a
- Dynamic partnership between the commune and schools.

Both NGOs conducted participatory analyses of child labor and migration in the target communities. Based on the results of these analyses, they designed a mini project for each commune. In the commune of Sanguela, together with participating youth, Grade Banlieue conceived a project called CEPEDE (Centre Polyvalent d'Education pour le Developpement). AADEC worked with the youth of Lobougoula and came up with PRELUTE (Projet de Prevention et de Lutte contre le Travail des Enfants).

CEPEDE

Grade Banlieue's CEPEDE supported the efforts of the commune of Sanguela in creating a multi-purpose center where youth have access to information on HIV/AIDS (using CEDPA's tools). Youth acquire skills in gardening, silk-screen printing, and dyeing. This youth center is a place for entertainment, education, and information. This project, which built on partnerships with the CAP, the communal council, and the local Ministry for Women and Children's Promotion, has conducted a number of activities: an advocacy workshop was organized to inform mayors and their local councilors about the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, training of 20 youngsters in agricultural techniques, using video equipment, communication, and dyeing.

At this workshop the aspirations of the youth resulting from the PRA analysis were presented to the 31 participants including CAP staff, youth leaders, community leaders, mayors, councilors, and the Regional Director for Women and Children's Promotion. During this two-day workshop, a plan of action was developed. It includes promoting education and sports, encouraging craft industries and repairing roads to access external markets.



Partners signed their commitment to combat all forms of child labor/trafficking.

Youth development center in Ouattarla

The youth center jointly established by the commune, the community of Ouattarla and GRADE BANLIEUE with the financial support of USAID is equipped with a solar system which operates a video set and lighting. At night villagers gather in the center to watch videos on child labor, HIV/AIDS, and feature films. Entry was initially free of charge to encourage people to join though later a nominal fee to cover maintenance and repair costs was established. The center is also used as a literacy-training site for adults.



In addition to the training and entertainment aspects, the center offers income generating



activities to boys and girls through market gardening and dyeing. The community offered one hectare to the youth to grow rice and vegetables. GRADE BANLIEUE helped put up fencing. The produce of the garden will be sold and the revenues invested in the center and the community school.

Youth market garden in Ouattara

Youssouf Diarra from Ouattara confessed during the focus group: *“When I was young, I worked on plantations in the Ivory Coast; from my experience, I can tell you: it is hell on earth; don’t be deceived by seeing a few boys who come back with a bicycle or a radio set. Using the same effort, you can get ten times more working here.”*

PRELUTE

PRELUTE, designed by the youth of LOBOUGOULA with the support of AADEC aims at preventing and combating child labor/trafficking by providing education, information and entertainment. This project included three major components:

- Communication through radio and video on child trafficking, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS;
- Education through a library and documentation center; and
- Sports through football and basketball.

PRELUTE achieved the following:

- A management committee trained in communication, library and video management, good governance and the *Rights of the Child*;
- Establishment of the communication and education center. The center includes a radio station, a library and an entertainment spot; and
- Community members, youth in particular, are better informed about child trafficking/labor.

The library contains nearly 400 books including easy readers, books in Bambara, resource books for teachers, articles on the rights of the child, and testimonies on child trafficking. To avoid loss of books and misuse, the youth committee decided not to lend books,. Rather, they made a number of tables and chairs to encourage reading at the center.



The radio unit organizes on-the-air panel discussions on issues such as child labor, HIV/AIDS, and youth related matters. Testimonies of trafficked children are broadcast to inform the entire population of the risks involved in children’s international migration. The center envisions installing a telephone to allow listeners to interact in realtime. The radio animator, *Ibrahim Keita*, is proudly developing his skills as a talk-show host. His audience appreciates the content of the radio program. Safiatou Coulibaly, a girl student, says: *“Doni doni kononi ba gnanla”*

Birds make their nest bit by bit. The youth center management committee is confident that the center will have a positive impact on the entire community in general and youth in particular and that one day other communities will follow their example.

These two projects have the advantage of responding to the stated needs of the youth and build on multiple partnerships (Commune, CAP/AE, Communities and Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and Family). As such they are more likely to be sustained. A concern for the future is the risk of adults substituting themselves for the youth in the management of the projects. During our visits, we heard adults expressing their worries about mismanagement because they are not confident that youngsters can properly manage the centers despite the various trainings they received. It is revolutionary to have a project setup by youth for youth and managed by youth.

These centers, added to the existing surveillance committees strengthen the deterrence of child labor and trafficking.

Annexes

Program Achievements from 1998 to 2003

Indicators	Final Targets		Results 03		Results 02		Results 01		Results 00		Results 99		Results 98	
	Total	Girls	Total	Girls	Total	Girls	Total	Girls	Total	Girls	Total	Girls	Total	Girls
Access														
GAR	95%	80%	96%	91%	96%	91%	85%	72%	80%	72%	91%	NA	80%	NA
GER	65%	50%	66%	56%	66%	56%	51%	42%	54%	50%	54%	NA	54%	NA
Quality														
4th grade attainment	95%	85%	95%	83%	95%	83%	88%	76%	86%	79%	76%	72%	NA	NA
6th grade attainment	65%	55%	67%	57%	67%	57%	56%	45%	54%	45%	51%	NA	24%	NA
6th grade leaving exam pass rate	45%	40%	51%	45%	51%	42%	31%	26%	20%	4%	10%	3%	8%	0%
Student/teacher ratio	35/1	NA	33/1	NA	33/1	NA	36/1	NA	35/1	NA	30/1	NA	29/1	NA
Student/book ratio	1/1.5	NA	1/1.2	NA	1/1.2	NA	1/1.0	NA	1/0.4	NA	NA	NA	1/0.4	NA
Girls' percentage	NA	45%	NA	43%	NA	43%	NA	42%	NA	47%	NA	47%	NA	48%
% Teachers with minimum 9th grade education	85%	NA	82%	NA	82%	NA	80%	NA	72%	NA	50%	NA	28%	NA
% Teachers trained during last 12 months	100%	NA	100%	NA	100%	NA	100%	NA	100%	NA	100%	NA	100%	NA
Capacity														
% SMCs which have taken 5 actions to secure services for their school	65%	NA	86%	NA	NA	NA								
% of schools receiving community support	100%	NA	100%	NA	100%	NA	100%	NA	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
% SMCs which meet 10 times annually	90%	NA	94%	NA	94%	NA	82%	NA	74%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
% SMCs working with Federations at least twice a year	50%	NA	85%	NA	85%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
% SMCs members receiving literacy training	10%	NA	58%	NA	58%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

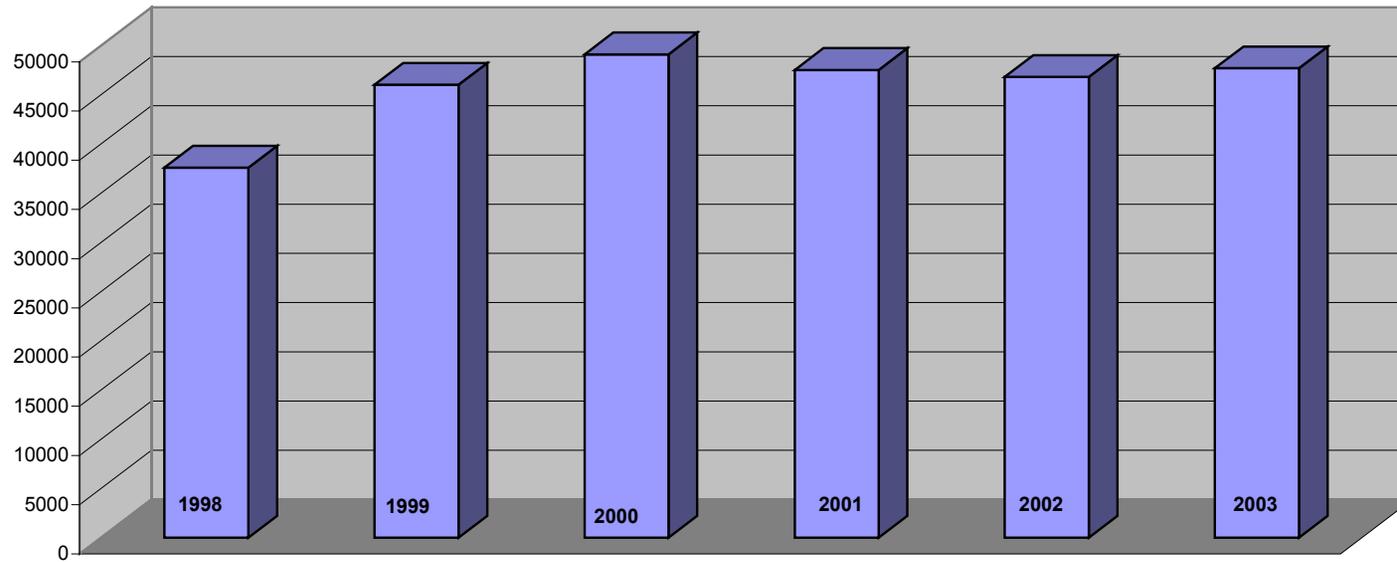
2003 CEP Results Table by NGO

NGO	Candidates			Passed			Percent		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	%B	%G	%T
GRADE	403	340	743	175	91	266	43,42	26,76	35,80
ASG	457	237	694	231	93	324	50,55	39,24	46,69
AMPJ	225	119	344	114	55	169	50,67	46,22	49,13
AADEC	1129	927	2056	668	454	1122	59,17	48,98	54,57
GADS MALI	498	199	697	181	89	277	36,35	44,72	39,74
AID MALI	1008	624	1632	491	263	754	48,71	42,15	46,20
GRAT	383	367	750	288	214	502	75,20	58,31	66,93
SC	294	187	481	242	142	384	82,31	75,94	79,83
GRADE BANLIEUE	405	235	640	225	83	308	55,56	35,32	48,13
Totals	4802	3235	8037	2615	1484	4106	54,46	45,87	51,09

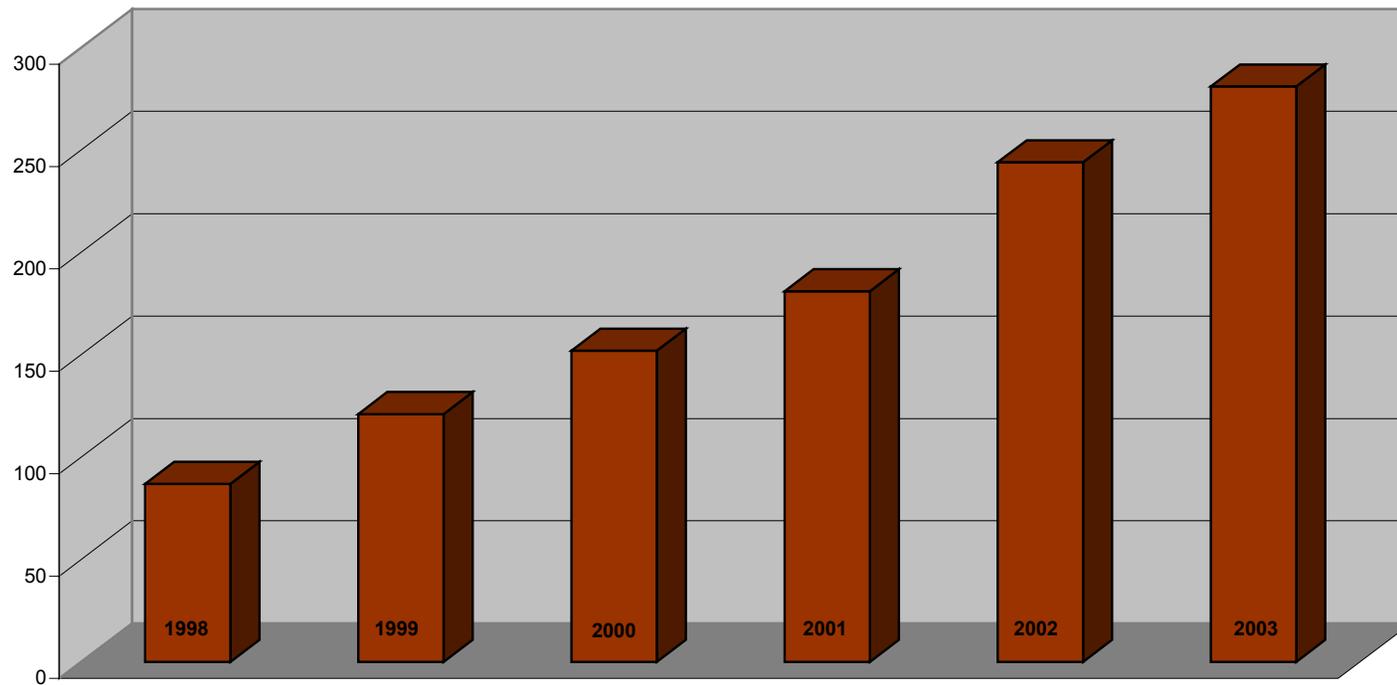
Major Events of the Program

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Agreement signed between SC and DRE Sikasso ✓ DRE Director and Inspectors visited ECOMs ✓ Official recognition of ECOMs as formal schools ✓ First cohort took CEP exam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Introduction of PC in ECOMs ✓ Participation at the Toronto conference on community schools ✓ IPN evaluation of education quality in ECOMs ✓ President Konaré revealed his vision of <i>one village one school</i>. If SC can, PRODEC can. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Introduction of School health and Nutrition in ECOMs ✓ IPN/SC training in testing (Jacques André Gueyraud) ✓ Education PLG in Mali ✓ Study on former students ✓ Gender Relations Analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mid-term Evaluation ✓ SC organized PVOs forum on community schools and decentral-isation ✓ Congressmen visited SC community schools ✓ Creation of SMC Federations ✓ SC participation at the Lomé conference on community schools ✓ SC piloted a community Middle School in Bohi ✓ Africare Senegal visited ECOMs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ECOM students take the PC version of the CEP exam ✓ Sikasso region top student at the CEP came from a community school; ✓ CEP pass rate climbed from 31% up to 51% ✓ Highest retention rate yet (2.4% dropout) ✓ Introduction of the Child-to-Child approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ First ECOM cohort sat for the University entry exam ✓ US Ambassador visited SC programs ✓ Girls scored unprecedented 4x% pass rate at the CEP exam ✓ Final Evaluation
1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003

Student Population



Female Teachers



CEP Pass Rate

