

Democracy and Governance Division  
Office of Sustainable Development  
Bureau for Africa

**DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE  
CROSS-SECTORAL LINKAGES  
MALI CASE STUDY**

December 1999

Field Work Conducted October 1998

PN-ACJ-164

**Mali Team Members:**

Dr. David Miller, consultant  
Dr. Gwen El Sawi–USAID/G/HCD  
Pat Isman-Fn’Piere–USAID/G/DG  
Heather Brophy–USAID/AFR/SD

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS USED.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>STUDY BACKGROUND AND METHODS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I. HOST COUNTRY CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>II. THE MISSION PROGRAM.....</b>	<b>6</b>
MISSION RESOURCES .....	6
THE EVOLUTION OF THE DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE .....	7
<b>III. ACTIONS THE MISSION HAS TAKEN TO PROMOTE SYNERGY .....</b>	<b>9</b>
STRUCTURED COLLABORATION.....	10
<i>The Geographic Focus.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>The Big Four CAs.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Policy Collaboration.....</i>	<i>13</i>
STAFF MANAGEMENT ACTIONS .....	13
CREATING A CULTURE OF SYNERGY .....	14
<b>IV. SOFT CONSTRAINTS AND POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS .....</b>	<b>14</b>
MISSION LEVEL.....	15
AGENCY LEVEL.....	15
<b>V. FIELD LEVEL IMPACTS .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>ANNEX 1: MALI MISSION STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>ANNEX 2: DOCUMENTS CONSULTED IN THE MALI CASE STUDY .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>ANNEX 3: PERSONS INTERVIEWED IN THE MALI CASE STUDY.....</b>	<b>24</b>

## LIST OF ACRONYMS USED

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AFR/SD/DG	Africa Bureau/Office of Sustainable Development/Democracy and Governance Division
AOTR	Agreement Officer's Technical Representative
ATI	Appropriate Technologies International
CA	Cooperative Agreement
CAC	Cooperative Agreement Committee
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDIE	Center for Development Information and Evaluation
CEL	Country Experimental Laboratory
CLUSA	Cooperative League of USA
COTR	Contract Officer Technical Representative
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
DG	Democracy and Governance
DH	Direct Hire
DHRF	Democracy and Human Rights Fund
DTF	District Task Force
FSN	Foreign Service National
FY	Fiscal Year
G/DG	Global/Democracy and Governance
GRM	Government of the Republic of Mali
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
IR	Intermediate Result
LFSSPPII	Livingstone Food Security Project Phase II
MOH	Ministry of Health
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NPA	Nonproject Assistance
NRM	Natural Resources Management
OYB	Obligated Yearly Budget
PCI	Project Concern International
PHN	Population Health and Nutrition
PSC	Personal Services Contractor
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
RFP	Request For Proposal
RPM	Results Package Manager
SEG	Sustainable Economic Growth
SO	Strategic Objective
SOT	Strategic Objective Team
SPO	Special Objective
USIS	United States Information Service
VAG	Village Area Group
VMC	Village Management Group

## **STUDY BACKGROUND AND METHODS**

The Mali study is one of a series of case studies that the Democracy and Governance Division of the Africa Bureau's Office of Sustainable Development (AFR/SD/DG) is undertaking to develop a knowledge base of best practices adopted by Missions integrating democracy and governance program elements and principles into their activities in other Agency goal areas.

These studies are being conducted in collaboration with—and are expected to contribute to—similar democracy and governance cross-sectoral linkages studies being undertaken by USAID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation and the Global Bureau's Democracy and Governance Office.

The studies present examples in the context of host country political and economic developments, Mission resources, and recent Mission institutional history. They identify actions Missions have taken to promote integration, as well as challenges Missions face in promoting greater linkages. The studies also describe positive field impacts that have resulted from this cross-sectoral integration.

The Mali case study highlights a cross-cutting DG SO that has been designed and implemented with a specific view towards encouraging greater synergy across mission programming.

Field work was conducted in October 1998 by a four-member team composed of a consultant, Dr. David Miller, and three USAID staff members: Dr. Gwen El Saw, G/HCD; Pat Isman-Fn'Piere, G/DG; and Heather Brophy, AFR/SD/DG.

## **I. HOST COUNTRY CONTEXT**

The evolving political context in Mali has provided fertile ground for Mission integration of democracy and governance program elements and principles into sectoral activities. Recent political liberalization makes it possible for civil society organizations, once constrained to sectoral and technical assistance, to broaden their approach. The enormous institutional reforms of decentralization created a demand at the local level, an area in which the Mission has experience and comparative strength.

The March 1991 overthrow of Mali's 23-year-old one-party state resulted in a period of political liberalization. As a result, the country has since seen a great increase in the number of civil society actors. Since the coup, over 1,000 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and 5,000 new associations have been registered. These organizations have been allowed great latitude in their choice of activities. While the practices of bureaucratic centralism did not vanish with the overthrow of Moussa Traoré's authoritarian regime, a vigorous civil society, once impossible, is now free to openly advocate for change.

These changes create an opportunity for the Mission to build upon its experience working at the local level. The Mali Mission has long been working through international Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) to overcome the inability of the Government of the Republic of Mali (GRM) to address the crushing needs of local communities that have in turn been implementing programs with farmer's associations, parent-teacher associations, and health committees—all at the local level. Through the 1990s, the Mission increased investment in community level development, and support for national NGOs. Well before decentralization became a reality—it has been on Mali's agenda since before independence—the Mission was working in a decentralized fashion and was also committed to fostering a healthy civil society through work with community based organizations (CBOs).

Concurrent with this growth of civil society, Mali has seen dramatic progress towards democratic decentralization. After some postponements, the communal elections finally took place sequentially on May 2, 1999, and June 6, 1999, choosing leaders for 682 new local governments. The needs of these local governments will be daunting. New governments will assume the responsibilities of office under imposing financial and human resources constraints. Officials and their staffs will require training in management, law, and public administration skills. Need will simultaneously increase at the national level, where judicial reform, administrative deconcentration, and National Assembly capacity building will all be necessary. The transformation of political institutions creates an enormous need for assistance at all levels.

Given all the challenges raised by the decentralization process, the newly created USAID/Mali Democratic Governance Strategic Objective (DG SO) could focus on any of a number of issues.

However, the Mission decided that it has a comparative advantage working at the local community level. While the central government—supported by other donors more experienced in addressing the formal legal and institutional issues—decentralizes, the Mission is preparing civil society to be a full partner in local democratic governance.

Integration of DG program elements and principles into a new strategy seems to have occurred in Mali due to the concurrence of two issues, the broadening political situation demanded support at the same time that the USAID Mission had substantial experience working with community based organizations at the local level. The decentralization of the government was going to effect all parts of the Mali program. The rationale became how to make that process go smoothly, so joining sectoral activities with democracy and governance seemed natural.

## **II. THE MISSION PROGRAM**

The Mission's overall goal is that: Mali achieves a level of sustainable social, economic and political development that eliminates the need for concessionary foreign assistance. In support of this goal, it has identified two key variables: a significant increase in economic growth, and a dramatic reduction in population growth. To achieve its goal, it has identified three strategic objectives, and two special objectives.

- ? Youth SO: *Changed Social and Economic Behaviors Among Youth in Targeted Geographic Areas*
- ? DG SO: *Targeted Community Organizations are Effective Partners in Democratic Governance, Including Development Decision-Making and Planning*
- ? SEG SO: *Sustainable Economic Growth—Increased Value-Added from Specific Economic Sub-sectors to National Income*
- ? Information/Communication Special Objective: *Improved Access To and Use of Information*
- ? The North Special Objective: *Promoting Stability in Northern Mali through Broad-Based Development*

### **Mission Resources**

The mission has 103 total staff of which 37 are members of the 5 SO teams. Workload is one variable in the amount of time and energy Mission personnel have available to address innovative strategies, such as cross-SO planning. This may be a factor in the Mali Mission's success, but more data would be necessary to make a comparative study of personnel to management unit or personnel to budget ratios.

The ratio of foreign service nationals (FSNs) and personnel service contractors (PSCs) to direct hires (DHs) may influence the stability of teams, and their potential for working together smoothly. PSCs, and particularly FSNs, continue in Missions, as direct hires “turn over” every few years. A strong FSN staff not only provides institutional memory, but may determine Mission working dynamic and inter-office coordination.

The DG SO team has 7 Malian members, while the Youth SO team has 12, and SEG has 9. These numbers, in combination with a number of staff “empowerment” actions the Mission has taken, appear to have helped the Mission create dynamic and stable teams. (It should be noted that the distinction between technical and administrative is not finite. At least in the DG SO team, “administrative” support staff can play an important role in technical decisions.)

### **The Evolution of the Democracy and Governance Strategic Objective**

The results, methods, and role of the DG SO are derived from the process that created it. Mission experience, the reengineering process, and the host country context joined to produce an SO well integrated with the total Mission program.

In the years before the initiation of the DG SO, the Mission had limited but formative experience in governance activities. Mission thinking about democracy and governance issues in sectoral activities was influenced by studies conducted under the Decentralized Finance and Management project in the late 80s and early 90s. In 1994, the Mission conducted a DG assessment and began development of a local governance project. In the early 90s, it also funded selected activities undertaken by Mali’s Decentralization Commission, and organized training seminars on mobilizing local financial resources. Through its sectoral projects in education and health, USAID/Mali promoted the administrative deconcentration of service provision.

In addition to these national, policy, and government activities, and perhaps more influential in Mission thinking, was Mission experience in community development. By the mid-90s, the Mission portfolio included PVO activities in community forest management; parent and teacher association capacity building; community schools; rural community development; community clinics; small enterprise development; agricultural and village cooperatives; urban neighborhood associations; and local women’s groups. Through these activities, the Mission gained significant practice in addressing local institutional issues in a number of sectors. The Mission acknowledged the importance of DG and that community organizations play a leading role in local development. This influenced the initial definition of the DG SO, found in the Country Strategic Plan (CSP).

Conception during a period of high innovation also strongly contributed to the definition of the DG SO. As one of 10 country experimental labs (CELs), the Mali Mission not only had a head start on reengineering—it began the process in October of 1994—but also license to push the envelope further. Experimentation included a strong emphasis on program integration. In the participatory process used to

develop the 1996-2002 Country Strategic Plan, the 11 Mission working groups included one focusing exclusively on synergy. According to *Reengineering Best Practices No. 1*, the Mission worked to create interrelated SOs, making SO teams interdependent in achieving planned results. In this way the Mission insures routine communication and coordination among Strategic Objective Teams (Bethune: 1996). The CSP this process produced commits the Mission to continually seek out activities that provide mutually reinforcing overlap between any combination of two and among all three realms.

Heightened responsiveness to partners was another innovation of the CEL period that helped shape the DG SO. In addition to a decentralization working group, the Mission conducted a series of focus groups with partners, and dialogued with government partners. Participants report that, at least for a time, one option being considered was the total integration of democracy and governance into all aspects of the program. The eventual decision to maintain a DG SO was due, at least in part, to Mission desire to demonstrate visible support for the transformation the government was promoting.

Innovations in management practice undertaken in the CEL period also contributed to the composition of the team that completed the definition of the SO. After the new CSP was developed, the Mission drew up a new organizational chart and liquidated all technical positions. The positions of the new strategic objective teams were bid upon and filled. Because the DG SO was new, staff was drawn from other offices in the Mission. For example, the selected SO team leader arrived from the controller's office. Only one person was hired from outside the Mission. By using staff with origins in other sectors, the DG team was assured greater knowledge of other sector programming

The new Country Strategic Plan was infused with the spirit of synergy, but it was up to this team to hammer out the details. Beyond defining specific activities and indicators, they had to determine the SO's mode of operation and technical focus. Initially, it was imagined the DG SO would support local NGOs in an independent set of activities. But a series of ground-truthing exercises convinced the team and the Mission that a more effective mode of operation would be to work through other SOs, complementing existing activities. This would be better for two reasons: First, DG activities must be linked to specific problems; after all governance is simply the means by which people organize to meet shared needs. Second, DG would tap into economies of scale by working with existing activities, and Mission impact would be increased.

The series of ground-truthing exercises also helped the team define the SO's technical focus and the team's role in the Mission. The SO would strengthen the capacity of organizations and associations through training in democratic self-governance, effective management, civic education, civic action, and functional literacy. Team members would become experts on these themes, and, in addition to developing activities, provide technical assistance to the rest of the Mission.

DG team's process of defining their mandate and finding a place in the Mission has not been smooth. To a large extent, it has been up to the team to sell co-location and cross-cutting collaboration to the other

SOs. In interviews, staff from throughout the Mission staff reinforced this conclusion, and provided several specific examples. For instance, as late as January 1998, the DG SO team organized a series of meetings with the members of the other SOs to discuss shared issues. While the agenda listed a range of joint planning and implementation actions, the most important conclusion reached was to hold monthly joint meetings. (Even this decision had later been determined impractical. The teams now hold joint meetings on an as-needed basis.)

Despite these setbacks, the DG SO plays a central role in Mission thinking and planning. It was even reported to the study team that in Mission discussions over the R4 presentation, the Mission Director argued that the DG SO should be presented as the framework of the other strategic objectives. In interviews with the study team, the director described the DG SO as the source of vision that the other SOs are buying into.

Recent developments in the host country context have strengthened the DG SO team's relationship to other SO teams. The holding of communal elections offered another opportunity for collaboration, with USAID and the Embassy observing the local elections through the coordination efforts of the DG team. The communal boards are now being established and are expected to be operational very soon. The DG SO has thus gained strategic importance, because the election process will transform all institutions in all sectors of the government. Currently, Mission staff look to the DG SO team to explain changes taking place. For its part, the DG SO team works closely with its counterpart, the GRM Decentralization Commission, to become the resident experts in decentralization. Staff planning new activities must take into account what the new government looks like, in light of recent elections.

The increased likelihood of this giant step towards democratic decentralization has also influenced the DG SO team's relationship to other teams, and their planning, in a more concrete way. The Mali Mission decided that it would concentrate its program in a limited number of communes. The goal would be to assure a set of healthy, or "effective" communes. The DG SO is charged with selecting these communes in which activities of all SOs will be located.

The DG team continues to define the mode of operation and technical specialty of their innovative SO. As the process of decentralization unfolds in Mali, so will the role of the new SO. Once the new local governments are in place, needs may change, and again alter the dynamics of SO collaboration.

### **III. ACTIONS THE MISSION HAS TAKEN TO PROMOTE SYNERGY**

A multi-sectoral approach to development is not the rule at USAID. Formal and informal policies, practices, and institutions combine to promote the unisectoral conception, implementation, and evaluation of activities. In the face of this "culture of stovepiping" the Mali Mission has taken a number of actions to integrate its program. To oblige staff to think and work across SOs, and to grant them opportunities to reflect on possible future collaborations, the Mission has structured collaborative

mechanisms, and actively promotes new habits, and new patterns of thinking. The two principal mechanisms through which the Mali Mission has structured collaboration among its three SOs are a policy of geographic concentration and the development of joint cooperative agreements (CAs). The DG team has also undertaken studies to promote collaboration on policy issues with the other SOs. These mechanisms are reinforced, and new collaborative activities developed, through management actions and the practice of informal and as-needed activities, part of a “culture of synergy.”

## **Structured Collaboration**

### *The Geographic Focus*

The Mission decided to concentrate its activities in four of the country’s eight regions. Out of the 488 communes in these four regions, the Mission will select 175 in which to invest the most effort. The four regions—Bamako, Ségou, Sikasso, and Mopti—were selected because they are the most densely populated and have the greatest productive potential. The communes selected so far—the lion’s share of the planned 175—are those where the DG SO PVO’s partners have a track record. Over the next two years, most Mission activities will be progressively concentrated into these communes, falling roughly into the four geographic foci defined by the regions of Koulikoro, Sikasso, Ségou, and Mopti, including the District of Bamako.

Mission staff recognizes that co-location in this geographic area does not necessarily put the activities of the three SOs in the same communities, or even the same communes. Proximity will, however, increase the chance of such overlap. It will also facilitate joint field visits of Mission staff from different sectors or SOs.

The Mission’s policy of geographic concentration is more than just a means of promoting collaboration among SOs. The goal of this geographic focus is to create a number of model communes. The Mission means to build jurisdictions with a rich and vibrant civil society, in which organizations such as parent-teacher associations, community health center associations, and credit groups all contribute to the production of public services, advocate for positive reforms, and help build an open, transparent, and democratic political culture. Concentration will keep the Mission, and particularly the DG SO, from scattering its efforts and enable it to produce an important set of quantifiable results in DG—a number of communes have become effective. According to the Mission Director, the geographic area focus is a geographic representation of DG’s central role in the Mission. It forms the framework into which all the activities of the Mission’s portfolio fit, and stands as a constant reminder of the one fundamental objective upon which they are all focused—effective democratic decentralization.

Despite the high hopes for the geographic focus, practical dynamics of the management of the Mission’s large portfolio prevent the process of co-location from being all inclusive. For the DG SO team, the concentration of activities will continue while other sectors continue to have limited programs outside of the triangle. As communes are selected, the team, with the support of the program office, encourages other SOs to put new money to activities inside the triangle, and phase out activities elsewhere. Yet

some activities with long and positive track records resist relocation. Some have been developed in particular environments, or among particular populations. Others are built on approaches that take the decision of activity location out of the hands of the implementing agency.

For example, one of the principal conflicts with the strategy of co-location results from the “demand driven” strategy of some activities. One partner, the Cooperative League of the USA (CLUSA), initially balked at working in a limited number of communes for this reason. Their philosophy is to work with communities who demonstrate willingness to work with them, not with assigned groups.

Furthermore, Mission commitment to this strategy is not clear. Nor is it clear exactly how much of the Mission’s portfolio is expected to be co-located in the long run. A number of smaller PVO activities—implemented by Africare, ATI, and PLAN International—are currently being funded in communes outside of the triangle, as will apparently the large consolidated technical assistance activities recently developed for the SEG and Youth SOs. Neither the SEG contract, nor the Youth Request for Proposal (RFP) mentions this geographic limitation. (The Youth RFP says only that activities will be concentrated in the southern five regions of Mali.) The pressure to share Mission resources is strong; only recently, Mali has initiated a special objective hundreds of miles to the north of the triangle.

#### *The Big Four CAs*

The second principal mechanism through which the Mali Mission has structured collaboration between DG and the other SOs is joint cooperative agreements (CAs). The Mission’s portfolio currently includes four such CAs—known as the Big Four—all signed on September 30, 1997. The program description in each of these CAs contains results from all three SOs. Each also receives funding from the three SOs. The integration of DG SO activities into the activities of other SOs may have drawn inspiration from the ground-truthing process mentioned in section II C above, but it gained practical form through the Mission contract consolidation process.

In early 1997, the Mission found itself with 46 grant agreements signed with 12 different PVOs. To reduce management burden, the Mission announced to partners that they could submit applications for consolidated grants. By the end of the process, many of the activities and five of the PVOs were phased out. The remaining activities, and certain new ones, were grouped in seven new agreements with the seven remaining PVOs.

The idea to develop joint CAs arose early in the consolidation process, apparently in discussions with PVOs. The practical terms were developed in two Mission workshops. At the first workshop, a week-long retreat outside of Bamako, applications were reviewed. At the second, held three weeks later, principal staff again met off-site to finalize the terms of the agreements.

Among the determinations made at the two retreats was the level of the funding from each SO for each CA. Funding amounts were intended to correspond to the contribution each PVO was expected to have towards each SO's results. For example, because the CLUSA CA was seen to strongly align with the DG SO results, DG funds 33 percent of that agreement. In contrast, DG provides only 10 percent of the funding for the Save The Children agreement. (Because the Save CA is \$26 million over five years, almost 3.5 times larger than the CLUSA agreement, DG funds the two CAs almost equally in absolute terms.) In all, the four joint CAs receive over one third of the Mission's obligated yearly budget.

SO CONTRIBUTIONS TO TWO CAs				
	CLUSA		Save The Children	
SEG	50%	3.9m	16%	4.2m
Youth	17%	1.3m	76%	20.5m
DG	33%	2.5m	8%	2.2m
Total	100%	7.8m	100%	26.9m

At the second retreat, participants decided to establish cooperative agreement committees (CACs) composed of results package managers (RPMs) and chaired by the program officer. The CACs are to coordinate and simplify Mission-PVO relationships. The program officer, as the chair of the CAC, now serves as the sole "mail box" for communication between the Mission and PVOs. Together, the committee reviews work reports from the PVOs and coordinates responses.

Once the CAs were established, the DG SO team developed its approach to managing them. Two team members are each assigned to monitor two CAs. They are also each designated as results package managers for different intermediate results (IR) packages. They are expected to be, or become, experts in these fields. One RPM is assigned IR1, *community organization*. The other is assigned IR2 and IR3, *decentralization* and *enabling environment*. Despite these assignments, the DG SO team works effectively as a team, meeting frequently, discussing issues together, and covering for each other when necessary. By necessity, all DG SO team members are familiar with each of the Big Four CAs.

Mission SO teams have also had to define roles and responsibilities with regard to these shared activities. As for the DG SO team, they describe their role as capacity building, while the other SO teams address technical sectoral issues. This is not entirely accurate, though, as the other SO teams also do capacity building, and the DG SO does a lot more than just build capacity.

The principal capacity building assistance the DG SO offers is in civic action. To assist PVOs in this regard, the DG SO financed the development of a training manual. The team contracted for a lessons-learned study, and used the report produced as a resource document for an extended participatory process in curriculum development. The DG SO will now offer the training manual as a resource document for its partners.

Beyond these capacity-building activities, DG results are in the agreements, and PVOs track their attainment with DG-developed indicators. DG team members frequently visit the PVO offices and activity sites, participate in progress reviews, and influence major decisions. In short, as described in Section V (Field Level Impacts) below, the integration of the DG SO into these activities has changed the approach to development used by these PVOs.

While the Mission has developed an innovative approach to integration, the jury is still out on the joint CAs. Their success will depend in large part on Mission coordination and collaboration. The CACs will be critical to this. Although they were conceived when the CAs were negotiated, the CACs have only recently been operationalized. One reason for this is that the CAC chair acts as the agreement officer's technical representative (AOTR). This person's role and responsibilities had to be clarified and agreed to by the contract officer. Recently, though, the urgency of convening the CAC became clear as PVOs became ensnared by communicating with and being managed by three SO teams. Some Mission staff interviewed even feared that as the CAs progress, it will become a mess because of the complexity of their structure. The other consolidated PVO CAs, whose funding comes from individual SOs, do not have CACs, though at one time the Mission considered establishing them.

#### *Policy Collaboration*

The Mission has also begun to integrate DG resources into the sectoral activities of other SOs by undertaking joint policy studies. The DG SO funded a policy study in education (Charlick: 1998), and jointly undertook a study in cooperative law with the SEG SO (Ribot: 1998). Actions to be undertaken based on the results of these studies are currently being discussed by the SO teams involved. Whatever the results, the execution of these two studies is a step towards a unified policy agenda for the Mission. While each SO has, to one degree or another, its own policy agenda, in January the Mission began discussing the idea of fusing them into a single, coordinated strategy. This is a prospect that strongly interests the DG SO.

#### **Staff Management Actions**

The Mission has made relatively few changes in staff management in its effort to promote collaboration among the SO teams.

*Cross-Membership:* One of the most controversial options available to Missions to promote inter-SOT collaboration is cross-SO team membership. Several configurations are available to Missions. The two most obvious are cross-membership on core teams, and cross-membership on extended teams. The Mali Mission decided not to structure its SO teams in this way, except to include a member of the procurement office on the core SO teams.

*FSN Staffing:* When the Mission was a CEL, it liquidated and rebid all technical positions. The decision to staff the newly created DG SO with existing Mission personnel has facilitated collaboration. All but one of the FSNs currently on the DG SO team worked previously in another office in the

Mission. They brought with them the technical knowledge of their original sectors as well as an ability to network with staff throughout the Mission.

*Tasking collaboration:* One potential method for reinforcing collaboration among members of different SOTs is by including it as a work objective. On the DG team, one person has been tasked with collaboration in his or her work objectives. The objective, as stated, is to reinforce synergies. At least one other person in the Mission also has a similar item among his or her work objectives. Yet, working against this one objective are virtually all the other tasks assigned to staff that promote the attainment of their SO. As Mission staff noted, the practice of giving awards to individuals for achievements in their SO and not for cross-SO work further reinforces stovepiping in the Mission.

### **Creating a Culture of Synergy**

In addition to the structured actions the Mission has undertaken, core and DG staff work to promote synergy and collaboration through a number of general and as-needed activities.

*Mission Leadership:* Perhaps the most important force creating a culture of synergy in the Mission is the leadership provided by the front office. The director, the deputy director, and program officer, who are monitoring the implementation process, are strong and consistent advocates of a synergistic approach. In interviews for this study, both supporters and skeptics of the policy confirmed that the director is a central force, encouraging staff to think and act as unified Mission. In addition to planning for synergy in strategic documents and promoting joint activities, the director encourages the staff to fight against the stovepiping culture on a daily basis. In meetings and reviews, he constantly pushes the staff to continue the less formal activities that keep the interactions alive.

*Joint Site Visits:* To implement and promote collaboration, DG SO team members organize joint field visits with other SOTs. Mission staff regard these visits as a very productive means for members of different SOs to cross-fertilize their ideas and identify joint activities. In interviews for this study, Mission staff widely supported the idea of joint field visits, and stated that they should be taken more often.

*Meetings:* While standing monthly meetings have been ruled out as too time consuming, DG staff members are nevertheless encouraged to meet on an as-needed basis with the team members of other SO teams. In addition to ad hoc meetings, DG SO team members attended and contributed to the mini-R4 review of the other sectors and attend the review of unsolicited proposals from PVOs.

## **IV. SOFT CONSTRAINTS AND POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS**

Although the overall attitude of the Mali Mission staff is to see opportunities, not constraints, several obstacles to integrated SO management were suggested to the study team. Given that the Mission has achieved a considerable level of cross-SO integration, the constraints are “soft.” They can be

overcome; they have not blocked cross-SO integration, just slowed it down, and have perhaps prevented the Mission from going as far as it would like to go.

### **Mission Level**

*Mission Squabbles:* The co-management of activities may result in a struggle for influence among members of different SOs. In the four joint-CAs, three teams are working with the same PVO to achieve different sets of results. The CAs are in the initial stages, and no conclusive cases of unproductive conflicts were cited to the study team. The Mission is at the beginning of this experiment in joint funding of CAs; some staff imagine that conflicts will arise.

*Indicator Deluge:* The management of indicators in the joint CAs is an issue the Mission is working on. The number of indicators PVOs are required to monitor may be beyond their manageable interest. Each SO has defined a set of indicators for the PVOs to monitor. The Mission requested that their monitoring and evaluation technical assistance contractors, the Results Center, organize a workshop to help them think about how to best consolidate these indicators, or develop “piggyback” indicators that serve more than one SO.

*Phantom Impact:* Another monitoring issue faced by the Mission relates to the measurement of synergy. The inability to measure the added value of collaboration, and compare it to management costs, impedes reasoned decision-making with regard to future investments in cross-SO collaboration. Can quantitative data be produced to convince the Mission and the Agency that the bang is worth the buck?

*PVO Capacity:* Another factor the Mission noted in relationship to inter-SO collaboration is PVO capacity. The application of the principles of co-location and co-funding in an inflexible manner may stretch PVOs beyond their capacities. Prior to the new CAs, World Education and CLUSA had not worked in the health sector in Mali. CLUSA, which has been working with sedentary farmers, is now working with herders and facing different set of social and cultural issues. None of the PVOs has worked in such a focused manner on civic education, democratic management, or advocacy. The Mission is aware of this risk and working with the PVOs—trying to match expected outputs to PVO capacity—so that it becomes a positive opportunity for PVO growth, and not a cause of over-extension.

### **Agency Level**

*Sectoral Specialists:* Mission staff have for the most part received their training in a single sector; many have spent their careers working solely in that sector. This both limits their technical capacity to develop joint-SO activities, and ingrains the habits and perspective of a single sector approach.

*DH Turnover:* While the learning curve required of new arrivals in a Mission is always steep, getting up to speed may be even more difficult if, on top of mastering sectoral issues, new arrivals must adapt to

the demands of an integrated Mission. Mali Mission staff reported that it takes new staff arriving many months to become comfortable making decisions in their “synergized” Mission.

*Strategic Objectives:* Mission strategic and management organization by SO creates an intense focusing of efforts on the achievement of a single objective, which reinforces a stovepiping mentality, and limits staff time available for collaboration.

*Sectoral Reviews:* The manner in which the Mission program is reviewed in Washington reinforces a sectoral approach. When the Mission presents documents in Washington, such as the R4, comments tend to be provided from a sectoral perspective. Washington technical officers often do not attend sessions in which issues of other sectors are discussed. This practice not only limits cross-sectoral thinking about development issues, but may complicate the approval of cross-sectoral activities that do not fit into sectoral molds, or appear “too complicated” from a sectoral point of view.

*Reporting Requirements:* Guidance for reports presented to Washington do not easily accommodate a powerful presentation of the Mission’s experience and efforts in cross-SO collaboration. Mission staff involved in drafting the most recent R4 had difficulty developing a format for discussing synergy with which they were comfortable. They reported being frustrated because they were unable to elegantly and effectively report on the accomplishments of which the Mission is so proud.

*Attribution:* The exact attribution of funds used in joint-SO activities will be difficult. Under the CAs, central PVO staff is jointly funded, activities are both DG and technical, and results derive from the combined application of resources. Mali Mission staff mentioned this issue, but stated they were confident they could determine attribution to the extent necessary.

*Earmarks:* Single-sector programming is basic to the concept of an earmark. Earmarked money is to be used exclusively for one type of activity. When asked what Agency-level constraints the Mission faced to developing integrated activities, earmarks was the first response given. They reinforce a single-sector perspective and planning approach. Yet, perversely, earmarks may have also increased DG synergy at the Mali Mission. They have limited Mission leeway to respond in a manner commensurate to the enormous needs created by the decentralization process. In this sense, Mission staff identified earmarks as an incentive to devising integrated strategies: low DG earmarks encouraged the Mission to leverage DG activities.

*Annualized Budgeting:* The unpredictability of funding a Mission will receive against a particular SO, in conjunction with the demands for shorter pipelines, discourage Mission planners from creating interdependencies among SOs. In joint-SO ventures, a sharp drop in obligations for one SO may cripple the implementation of one, or even two other SOs.

## V. FIELD LEVEL IMPACTS

Well before the creation of a DG SO, many Mission activities worked on governance issues. Policy dialogue and community development efforts often looked beyond the technical issues of the sector in order to more effectively and efficiently achieve project goals. At the national policy level, the Mission supported decentralization by promoting the deconcentrated administration of the health and education ministries. Policy components helped create new organizations, associations, and networks; they promoted liberal policies, and set examples of new ways of governing. At the community level, Mission projects supported the growth of the civil society through NGO and PVO efforts in natural resources management, child survival, and micro-enterprise development under the large PVO Co-financing Project. In the forestry sector, community forest management activities fed into policy dialogue and the reform of the National Forestry Code.

Current DG SO activities build on these efforts. As the examples below demonstrate, the structured integration of the DG SO into the activities of other SOs has provided for a more explicit and diverse approach to governance issues than in the past. In community development activities, DG has become an analytically separate element. More clearly defined, it receives more effort than before, and goes farther. In policy dialogue, the DG SO team has introduced a distinct approach, more closely tied to field-level activities than in the past.

Evolution of the Mission's approach to policy dialogue can be seen in the education sector. Prior to the creation of a DG SO, the Mission had addressed a number of policy issues through the Basic Education Expansion Project (BEEP), initiated in 1990. Designed to support the formal sector, the BEEP project nevertheless evolved with the political environment, and became an early supporter of decentralization in the Ministry of Education. BEEP promoted regionally based development and financing of annual plans and the decentralized production of school management data. As the importance of supporting the nonformal sector became recognized, BEEP worked on the integration of the formal and nonformal systems, and developed the legal framework providing formal status for community schools in the national educational system.

The DG and Youth SOs continue to build on policy progress achieved under BEEP. For example, BEEP helped reform the national textbook policy, and brought the production of basic textbooks to Mali. To take the dialogue over the national book policy a step further, the DG and youth SOs recently undertook a study on the political economy of education in Mali (Charlick: 1998).

Yet, Mission approach to policy reform is evolving. While the BEEP project was designed to work through the formal education system and use nonproject assistance (NPA) as a policy reform incentive, the DG SO proposes to work through civil society actors to promote policy reform. Policy research will support this process. Instead of engaging in USAID-GRM dialogue, the Mission will facilitate concerned parties in civil society in undertaking advocacy for policy reform. By creating and supporting pressure groups, the DG SO hopes to tap local resources, and assure the sustainability of the reforms.

The Mission's education sector community-based activities—such as the ongoing creation of community schools and the organization and reinforcement of PTAs—also profit from the policy work of the BEEP project, particularly with regard to formal recognition of community schools, and are expected to be further reinforced by continued policy reform.

Community based activities in education also provide rich examples of the impact of the structured integration of DG into the activities of other SOs. The four PVOs with whom the Mission has signed joint-CAs all have long track records in Mali. World Education, the most recent arrival, has been in Mali since 1991. CARE has been there since 1975. Prior to the formation of a DG SO, they all worked in community development and supported the creation of healthy community based organizations. Governance issues—more often perceived as local socio-institutional issues—were integral to the activities of these PVOs and fundamental to their participatory, community development approach.

Youth results package managers report that before the introduction of the DG-supported training, and the change in perspective promoted by the DG SO, the PTAs with whom World Education worked were not taking the lead in the management of their schools. They simply provided financial assistance to schools, facilitated some school activities, and continued to expect the Ministry of Education to provide resources and leadership. The civic education and advocacy training World Education organized under the current CA has apparently changed the attitude of the PTA members. They now understand that they are the primary people responsible for their schools, and consider themselves the owners of the schools they built. For example, prior to the joint-CA, schools did not always receive their portion of locally collected taxes (*Taxe de Développement Régional et Local*, TDRL). Following the more aggressive approach under the current CA, local PTAs have claimed, and received, their just portion of the TDRL.

The very explicit manner in which the Big Four CAs are now addressing DG results can be seen in Save the Children's application for funding. It states that institutional capacity strengthening will include “training and technical assistance in democratic self-governance and effective management and civic action skills and civic education.” Democratic self-governance, effective management, and civic action are each defined in turn.

While Save the Children staff provided no examples of greater impact since the signing of the joint-CA, they did report that their approach had been modified. Prior to the new CA, in the highly regarded Kolondieba Project, Save the Children helped communities form schools. They provided functional literacy training for the management committees, taught them organizational skills, and explained the role of the school in village development. The new emphasis in the Mission has pushed Save the Children to focus better on their exit strategy. Ending their support to villages or regions has always been an issue, but now the steps they will take are clearer. While they have not begun to implement training based on the manual the DG SO developed, their involvement in the development of the manual has helped them

think more clearly about civic education and civic action. Their interactions with the DG team have helped them restructure their approach to the sustainability of their activities.

The experience of CLUSA also shows an evolution in the thinking of Mission partners. CLUSA has been working in Mali since the late 1980s in the Upper Niger Valley, where it promoted local community access to agricultural credit from private banks. The goal of the project was principally economic—to build local institutional capacity to apply for and manage credit. Although the project did not take an explicit DG approach, it nevertheless had impacts that now resemble those targeted by the new DG SO. The CLUSA semester report for the period January 1 to June 30, 1998 (CLUSA July 1998) presents the results of a survey of field agents. For the survey, agents were requested to cite instances of local activism that project participants undertook as a result of the work of the old project. More than 100 instances of activism were reported, but some instances may have been reported more than once. Some examples include: village associations, with CLUSA and USAID support, persuaded national private banks to accept and respond to applications for loans in the local language. Village associations also persuaded government agencies to reduce the price and taxes of certain inputs, to increase regulation of insecticides, and to transfer and/or fine corrupt extension agents.

With the advent of the DG SO, CLUSA/Mali has modified its approach to address the interests of this SO. Like previous work in Mali, the goal of the current CLUSA grant is to improve community-level management of productive resources. The first of two program goals presented in the project application reflect this continuity. However, the second purpose states that the activity will also assist these rural-based businesses and organizations to support the empowerment of their members through democratic, transparent, and participatory processes. Within the terms of the project, civic action and education have become results in themselves, not part of the method to achieve an economic end.

As a result of the inclusion of DG results in the CA, visits by the DG SO team staff, and monitoring against the DG SO, CLUSA staff now regard community development from a new perspective. They believe this new “DG lens” has been a positive change. Their work with cooperatives, still centered on internal organizational issues, also looks out to the larger context in which the cooperatives find themselves. Through discussions of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and how to advance their interests, CLUSA now helps cooperative members determine and improve their role with regard to the larger society and the evolving government.

Many other Mission activities outside of the Big Four CAs continue to address governance issues in their efforts to achieve sectoral results. While the DG SO is not structurally integrated into these activities, in some cases the results package managers nevertheless profit from the presence of a DG SO team and the technical assistance they provide. For example, the Animal Production and Export project (APEX), initiated in 1992, has supported livestock raising and marketing cooperatives. According to the results package manager, the livestock cooperatives with which they worked did not function like cooperatives and failed to exploit the potential of their numbers. Although the project

provided management training, the cooperatives did little more than purchase and distribute inputs. In the sector, only individual enterprises were functioning.

An institutional assessment of the cooperatives convinced the Mission that cooperative members needed training on DG themes, in addition to the technical and managerial topics in which they had been trained. The assessment revealed that the cooperative members were unaware of their individual roles in the cooperative, and of the laws regulating their sector. Training of livestock cooperatives conducted by a local NGO with funding from the DG SO further demonstrated to the SEG SO the potential for training in governance issues. Subsequently, DG decided to fund further training of cooperative members in current legislation in this sector. SEG was convinced of the importance of this approach, and invited a DG SO team member on a joint DG-SEG field visit to APEX project partners to identify potential activities for further collaboration. In particular, they have looked at the potential for drawing on the resources of the joint-CA with CLUSA to reinforce cooperative training. The experience also contributed to SEG-DG collaboration on a recently conducted policy study on cooperative reform in Mali (Ribot: 1998).

The answer given by Mission staff when asked to identify the “developmental good” they expected from the inclusion of DG program elements and principles in sectoral activities was “sustainability.” As the Mission’s experiment in DG integration continues, and we gain more experience on the formation of healthy, democratically managed CBOs who aggressively advocate for their interests, and are peopled by citizens aware of their rights and responsibilities, the Mission may see more distinct evidence of impact on sectoral activities, such as increased mobilization of resources, increased accountability and responsiveness, improved incentives, or increased participation, but for now, this “synergy” summary targets the critical role played by the integration of DG into sectoral activities in the achievement of the Mission’s goal of “more Mali, less aid.”

## **ANNEX 1: MALI MISSION STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

### **Youth Strategic Objective:** *Changed Social and Economic Behaviors Among Youth in Targeted Geographic Areas*

The stated purpose of the seven-year Youth SO, initiated at the end of 1995, is to improve social and economic behaviors among youth under the age of 25, and to give young Malians a clear stake in a stable, progressive Mali by boosting as many as possible into the middle class. This will be accomplished by improving national and community capacity in basic education, child survival, reproductive health, environmental education, and job skills development.

The SO seeks two major sets of results with respect to youth: (1) healthier women and men making responsible decisions about child survival and reproductive health; and (2) better educated women and men with skills relevant to the market economy. Both sets of results focus on increasing access to and demand for social services, improving their quality, and improving the capacity to provide these services in targeted geographic areas.

### **Sustainable Economic Growth Strategic Objective:** *Increased Value-Added from Specific Economic Sub-sectors to National Income*

The stated purpose of the seven-year SEG SO, initiated at the end of 1995, is to increase the value-added of four economic sub-sectors: livestock, cereals, financial services, and new opportunities. This will be accomplished through an improved policy environment, better use of technology, improved skills, and greater access to financing and market-relevant information. The private-sector emphasis of this program and USAID's participatory approach are expected to create the demand needed to sustain these activities after USAID funding ends.

### **Democratic Governance Strategic Objective:** *Targeted Community Organizations are Effective Partners in Democratic Governance, Including Development Decision-Making and Planning*

The seven-year DG SO, also initiated at the end of 1995, focuses on two major areas: (1) helping target community organizations to engage in democratic governance and civic participation primarily at local levels; and (2) helping put in place an enabling environment that empowers community organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and federations. The DG SO supports the Malian government's steps toward decentralization. It will provide community organizations with training and technical assistance in democratic self-governance, effective management, civic education, civic action, and functional literacy. To ensure sustainability of community organizations, the DG SO will strengthen the income-generating capacity of local nongovernmental organizations, federations, and representative partner organizations. The DG SO will identify, analyze, and address constraints in existing regulations affecting community

organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and federations. It will also conduct civic education campaigns on decentralization, as well as improve laws and policies affecting the sustainability of community organizations.

**Information/Communication Special Objective:** *Improved Access To and Use of Information*

The purpose of this seven-year Information/Communication special objective, initiated at the end of 1995, is to achieve improved access to, and facilitate the use of information through Internet and community radio broadcasting. Activities will focus on expanding the dissemination of existing information by: (1) enhancing the existing liberal enabling environment associated with the information and communication sector; (2) increasing the number of Malians who obtain and use current development information; and (3) enhancing communications. USAID will support the Malian government's encouragement of the private sector involvement in the distribution of Internet services.

**Special Objective for the North:** *Promoting Stability in Northern Mali through Broad-Based Development*

This four-year special objective, initiated in 1998, will support the efforts of people of northern Mali to acquire the capacity and confidence to promote stability through broad-based and sustainable local development. This will be enhanced by: (1) strengthening civil society's ability as an effective partner with government in planning and decision-making; (2) increasing economic activity and income; and (3) increasing availability and access to basic social services.

## ANNEX 2: DOCUMENTS CONSULTED IN THE MALI CASE STUDY

- Associates in Rural Development, Inc. *Governance in Democratic Mali: An Assessment of Transition and Consolidation and Guidelines for Near-Term Action*. Edited, Revised Extracts from the Final Draft Report (7/94). Work performed under contract number AFR-0542-Q-00-1109-00. February 1995.
- Bethune, T. *Country Experimental Laboratories: One Year Later*. Reengineering Best Practices No. 1. USAID/CDIE. March 1996.
- Charlick, R. *The Political Economy of Educational Policy Reform in Mali: A Stakeholder Analysis*. Report produced in partial fulfillment of IQC with USAID AEP-5468-I-00-6060-00 DO #806. September 1998.
- Coulibaly, C. *Utility of the Analytic Framework in Analyzing Democratic Governance in Mali*. Work performed under USAID contract number AFR-0542-Q-001109-00. February 1995.
- Economist Intelligence Unit Limited. *1998 Economist Intelligence Unit Country Reports on the Political Situation in Mali*. April to October 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *EIU Country Profile 1997-1998*. Mali. 1997.
- Fox, L. *Mali Governance Strategic Objective: Final Trip Report Deliverables*. Document prepared for USAID under Contract HNE-0000-I-00-2098-00. April 1996.
- Ribot, J. *Political-Economic Analysis of Cooperatives Reform in Mali: "The State Is the Best Hen."* Report for produced for USAID/MALI Democracy and Governance Team under contract number AEP-5468I-00-6006-00. September 1998.
- Smith, J. and Winfrey, W. *Review of Policy Development of Reproductive Health and Child Survival in Mali*. (Draft). The POLICY Project. The Futures Group International. September 23, 1998.
- USAID. *Basic Education Programs in Africa - Mali Country Profile*. nd.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Mali Congressional Presentation*. 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Mali Congressional Presentation*. 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Mali Congressional Presentation*. 1999.
- USAID/Mali. *USAID/Mali Strategic Plan 1996-2002*. August 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *USAID/Mali Youth Strategic and Management Plan*. June 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Progress Review (mini-R4 2201)*. October 1998.

### **ANNEX 3: PERSONS INTERVIEWED IN THE MALI CASE STUDY**

#### *Inside the Mali Mission:*

Amadou Camara, Economic Results, SO 2 SEG Team  
Lamine Coulibaly, Acquisition Specialist  
Salif Coulibaly, Reproductive Health, SO 1 Youth Team  
Mamadou Z. Coulibaly, Acquisition Specialist  
Helaine Daniels, Technical Advisor in Competency and Skills Development, SO 1 Youth Team  
Alex Deprez, Executive Officer  
Oumar Diakite, Micro Finance, SO 2 SEG Team  
Anna Diallo, Team Leader, SO 3 D/G Team  
Maimouna Dienapo, WID Officer, Program Office  
Kadidia Dienta, Community NGO, SO 3 D/G Team  
Cheick Drame, Livestock, SO 2 SEG Team  
Timm Harris, Program Officer  
Karen Hawkins-Reed, Education, SO 1 Youth Team  
James Hradsky, Mali Mission Director.  
Sikoro Keita, Results Center  
Yacouba Konate, Decentralization, SO 3 D/G Team  
Korotoumou Konfe, WID Ed, SO 1 Youth Team  
Salimata Mariko, Admin Assistant, SO 3 D/G Team  
Ursula Nadoly, Health Officer, SO 1 Youth Team  
Larry Paulson, Agriculture Officer, SO 2 SEG Team  
Linda Rosalik, Results Center  
Sekou Sidebé, Development Liaison Specialist, SO 3 D/G Team  
Erin Soto, Officer SO 3, D/G Team  
Abibaye Traoré, Education, SO 1 Youth Team  
Mama Traoré, Acquisition Specialist, SO 3 D/G Team  
Annette Tuebner, Contracting Officer

#### *Outside the USAID Mission:*

Abdoul Aziz Ayouba, Chargé de Projets, Cabinet de Recherche Actions Pour le Developpement Endogene  
Coumbere Filly Diallo, Coordinatrice FACETS, Save the Children  
Aliman Drame, Field Agent, Cabinet de Recherche Actions Pour le Developpement Endogene  
Yousouf Kone, Chargé de Program, Save the Children  
Omar Konipo, Economic and Commercial Specialist, American Embassy  
Robert Porter, Deputy Chief of Mission, American Embassy  
Curtis Reed, CLUSA/Mali

Saloum Sacko, Political Specialist, American Embassy

Aminata Simbara, Assistante de Programme Education, World Education

Amadou Ousmane Traoré, Charge de Documentation et de Orientation, Save the Children

Eric Whitaker, Political/Economic Officer, American Embassy

In addition, the members of the Monzonblena Parents and Students Association of Monzonblena, and the members of the Community Health Committee of Nangola