

# Health Policy Plus: Mali

## Overview

In Mali, the Health Policy Plus (HP+) project, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has been working since 2016 to strengthen policies and support activity planning at the national and community level to help improve the Malian population's health outcomes. During this period, HP+ has partnered with government, civil society, and community/religious leaders to revise and strengthen policies, conduct advocacy, mobilize resources, optimize health spending and financing, and reinforce accountability and capacity. HP+ fostered a favorable policy and funding environment in support of critical community health workers and generated evidence essential to advancing the government's progress toward universal health coverage.

## Strengthening Healthcare Access and Delivery

HP+ provided technical assistance to help improve policies to fund community health workers (CHWs), who deliver essential health services in Mali. First, HP+ conducted a pivotal [situational and cost analysis](#), revealing where partners supported CHWs and a significant opportunity to pay CHW stipends from government resources. Second, in close collaboration with government stakeholders, HP+ developed a [geographic information system tool](#) that maps complex data on thousands of CHWs across Mali. This information has been used to [support advocacy](#) around geographically targeting limited resources to optimize service delivery and CHWs' rights. HP+ also supported the National Coalition on the Essential Community Health Program to co-develop its

## Strategic Secondments for Capacity Strengthening

HP+ strengthened the capacity of in-country partners to navigate the complexities of effective policy development, implementation, financing, and governance aligned to country priorities by [seconding technical assistants](#) to the Ministry of Health and Social Development and the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children, and Families. The secondees' work ranged from co-developing innovative tools for activity implementation and monitoring to training staff to improve data analysis, collection, and use. The technical assistant for immunization played a key role in strengthening capacity to operationalize Mali's COVID-19 vaccination rollout.

national strategy, which includes the management of CHWs. To ensure the sustainability of the strategy, HP+ produced a [video](#) to advocate for paying CHWs' stipends with domestic resources and [galvanized mayors](#) and health committees to mobilize funding.

Other policies and plans that strengthen access and delivery of care supported by HP+ include costed implementation plans for family planning, the fourth Five-Year Plan for Health and Social Development, and the Global Financing Facility investment case for reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child, and adolescent health and nutrition. In the case of the costed implementation plan, HP+ supported implementation, monitoring, periodic reviews, and resource mobilization efforts for the 2014–2018 plan, then using lessons learned, supported the

development and [financial analysis](#) of the [2019–2023 plan](#), which included greater input from the regions.

## Operationalizing Health Financing Policies

HP+ worked with various health system stakeholders to conduct several analyses to support efforts to progress toward universal health coverage. [Actionable recommendations](#) to mobilize public resources for health were provided to the General Directorate of Health and Public Hygiene and other key stakeholders while an infographic was developed detailing public funds flows and key bottlenecks in the process. An evaluation of Mali's provider payment system under the obligatory health insurance scheme (AMO) provided recommendations to improve the system while an efficiency and equity analysis of drug policies under Mali's Universal Health Insurance Plan provided recommendations for increasing equity in access to medications for all Malians insured through AMO. In support of government efforts to operationalize and implement community-level health reforms, HP+ developed a technical brief on the integration of free health services within AMO and extension to rural populations.

## Reinforcing the Advocacy Capacity of Local Leaders

In collaboration with Muslim and Christian religious leaders, HP+ co-developed [faith-specific talking points on ending gender-based violence](#) (GBV) in Mali. This built upon previous HP+ capacity strengthening efforts of religious leaders to promote improved family planning and reproductive health outcomes and combat HIV-related stigma. HP+ also strengthened dialogue and coordination between organizations such as the

Alliance of Muslim and Christian Religious Leaders and the National Program against GBV.

Strengthening the capacity of stakeholders to advocate in favor of improved reproductive health and family planning, HP+ used the [Family Planning-Sustainable Development Goals Model](#) to quantify the benefits of accelerated contraceptive use to help make the case for increased domestic resources for family planning. HP+ also strengthened youth ambassadors' capacity to advocate for their own reproductive health and rights using the [RAPIDWomen model](#).

Other groups HP+ worked with include Mali's National Network of Key Population Associations, to develop its strategic plan and strengthen the capacities of its members in the areas of HIV and human rights, and the National High Council to Fight Against AIDS, creating a [Dakar Declaration implementation roadmap](#) to define priority actions to ensure improved health services and reduced stigma for key populations in need of HIV services.

## The Way Forward

Moving forward, it is important for stakeholders to continue strengthening Mali's health system at all levels. HP+ has helped identify several areas where resources can be allocated, mobilized, and spent more efficiently and equitably, providing actionable recommendations. Additionally, community and religious leaders must continue to advocate and raise awareness for rights-based, voluntary health services, including family planning, especially for marginalized groups including women and youth. The leaders with whom HP+ has partnered have demonstrated strong passion and dedication to this cause, and the respect they have earned in their communities and congregations will continue to be invaluable to their advocacy work.

## CONTACT US

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