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## Mali Peacebuilding, Stabilization and Reconciliation (Mali PSR)

Annual Report FY2022



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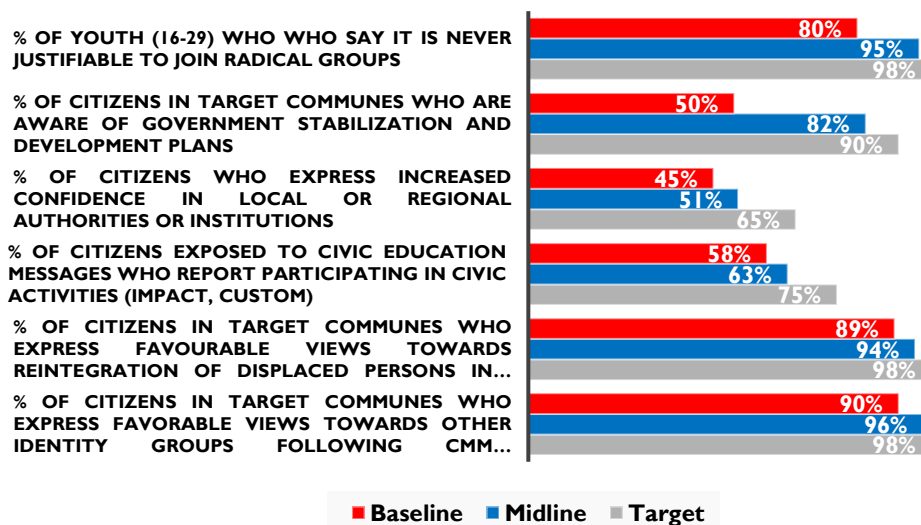
## ACRONYMS

AMRAD	Association Malienne de Recherche-Développement pour le Développement
AMSS	Association Malienne de la Survie au Sahel (Malian Association for Survival in the Sahel)
APIB	Association pour la Promotion des Initiatives de Base (Agency for the promotion of basic initiatives)
CAFO	Coordination des Associations et ONG féminines (Coordination of Women's Associations and NGOs)
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CC	Community Coordinator
CEC	Community Engagement Committee
CMM	Conflict Management and Mitigation
CNAP	Centre National d'Alerte Précoce (National Early Warning Center)
CNDDR	Comité National de Désarmement, de Démobilisation et de Réinsertion (National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration)
COCEM	Coalition pour l'Observation Citoyenne des Élections au Mali (Coalition for Citizens Election Observation)
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECOWARN	Economic Community of West African States Response Network
EWER	Early Warning and Early Response
FAMa	Forces Armées Maliennes (Malian Armed Forces)
FRAMe®	Fragility and Resilience Assessment Methodology
GOM	Government of Mali
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
Mali PSR	Mali Peacebuilding, Stabilization and Reconciliation Program
MINUSMA	Mission Multidimensionnelle Intégrée des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation au Mali (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ORTM	Office de Radiodiffusion et Télévision du Mali (Office of Radio and Television of Mali)
PDESC	Plan de Développement Economique et Socio-Culturel (Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan)
SLI	Sequencing Layering and Integration
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	US Government
XOF	West African Franc
WILDAF	Women in Law and Development in Africa

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022 period that represents Year 4 of Mali PSR, program activities further consolidated gains made during the previous three years towards fostering greater collaboration between community stakeholders and their leaders, and empowering citizens to play productive roles in their communities to advance development, safety and stabilization, and improving their understanding of how, as citizens, they are central actors to building community resilience, security and peace. In Year 4, Mali PSR expanded implementation across the four program objectives despite heightened insecurity in the central and northern regions of Mali.

The year commenced with Mali PSR conducting a citizen perception survey in its 43 communes. The purpose of the survey was to assess progress toward program outcomes, learn what activities are achieving the desired outcomes, and examine changing citizen perceptions on key issues related to community social cohesion, governance, conflict, violent extremism, civic engagement, and COVID-19. A sample of 2,373 people aged 16 and older were surveyed, including citizens who are active participants in the program and those who are not. Preliminary results showed significant improvement over the baseline in several key indicators and key behavioral changes resulting from Mali PSR activities as shown in the graph below.



To date, Mali PSR has organized 44 dialogues, trainings and awareness-raising activities for actors including elected officials, community members, community leaders, and civil society leaders on citizenship and participatory governance. Activities have contributed to increased participation and engagement of citizens in civic activities (from 58% in the baseline to 63% in the midline) and has created space for citizens and elected officials to voice their concerns and urgent needs and to discuss challenges related to the delivery of basic services. The dialogues also allowed leaders and citizens to review and debate issues around accountability and the need for collective action. The analysis showed that a more inclusive approach, coupled with collective action through dialogues, and debates, can and will continue to improve trust between local officials and community members, and sustain efforts towards strengthening social cohesion.

The data from the midline evaluation indicates that in three years, trust in local elected officials increased from 45 percent to more than 51 percent. The analysis also shows that community members are able to increase trust in their government when elected officials use inclusive practices to keep them informed about what actions and policy decisions they are making and what community development initiatives are being planned, and when elected officials solicit input from their constituents and/or provide space for them to give feedback on what they have done and are doing. The data from the midline assessment underscored the need for Mali PSR to continue implementing activities to improve inclusive governance practices in Year 4.

Mali PSR used the data from the midline data to pause, reflect and learn about what activities made an impact across Mali PSR's four objectives. The data revealed that many of the interventions had successfully advanced Mali PSR's overarching goals. For example, data under Objective 3 shows that the majority of youth aged 16-29 years old, who engaged in Mali PSR activities that were designed to reduce their proclivity to violent extremism, now believe that it is never justifiable to join a violent extremist or armed group. That number increased from 80% to 95% between the first and third years of the program. Citizens noted during the survey their belief that if young people are not economically empowered, they will continue to be tempted to join armed groups to earn money. With this in mind, Mali PSR worked to strengthen youth agency and skills in leadership and entrepreneurship. In Year 4, 1,013 youth were trained in entrepreneurship or livelihoods (through direct implementation or through grantee activities) and 479 youth were trained on leadership. At the start of the year, Mali PSR established a Youth Employment Fund (YEF) to provide seed money to aspiring youth entrepreneurs who completed Mali PSR's entrepreneurship training, mentoring, and business plan development, and accepted to be set up into a cooperative to start a micro-business. In addition to these activities, Mali PSR conducted more than 200 events to build community and family resilience to violent extremism among youth.

Following the review and analysis of the midline data, and a pause and reflect session with stakeholders, Mali PSR organized 37 dialogues between elected officials, citizens, and the private sector with the aim of strengthening trust and providing a platform for communities to engage around issues impacting their governance systems. Mali PSR also conducted training for 1,147 people in civic education and good citizenship. The training and dialogues follow the program's Theory of Change which states that: ***If communities are better able to identify and respond to threats to social cohesion and security, if relations between citizens and the state are improved [and confidence strengthened] and if youth, women and marginalized groups are meaningfully engaged in development and democratic change, then communities' resilience to violence and conflict will be strengthened and the foundations for peace-building, stabilization and reconciliation will be strengthened.***

Key accomplishments in Year 4 include:

### **Objective 1: Community Resilience to Violence and Conflict Reinforced.**

Mali PSR developed tools and mechanisms for local government actors and community members to monitor and proactively prevent and mitigate emergent conflicts. The tools include templates to draft and update grievance response plans to help address community grievances sustainably and incident reports to identify and respond to conflicts. Another key achievement in Year 4 was the comprehensive interventions conducted to support victims of trauma and displaced persons who sought shelter and integration in new communities. Mali PSR conducted a series of activities that included social cohesion dialogues between IDPs and host communities to improve trust, understanding, and the ability to peacefully co-exist.

#### **Key achievements under Objective 1 include:**

- A partnership protocol between Mali PSR and CNAP formalized the relationship to operationalize an Early Warning and Early Response mechanism;
- 20 representatives of four CSOs trained on transmitting alerts to the *PaixauMali* platform;
- 289 people trained in fighting Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and psychosocial aid;
- 11 dialogues held to improve coexistence between IDPs and host communities;
- 1 grant awarded to WILDAF to support 135 widows/female heads of family in four communes;
- 5 CMM cases documented to share experiences and lessons learned on conflict resolution;
- Technical assistance provided to 17 communes to formulate grievance plans.

#### **Key achievements under Objective 2 include:**

- 284 elected officials and 1,220 civil society organizations trained in participatory governance and oversight of PDSEC implementation;
- Support to the drafting of 2022 annual activity and funding plans for 17 communes;
- 2 resource mobilization workshops conducted in Gao and Segou;
- 2 white papers drafted on the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process, and the effects of climate change on conflicts.

### **Objective 2: Inclusive Governance and Civic Engagement Strengthened in Conflict-Affected Communities.**

In Year 4, Mali PSR implemented several activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of 2,200 local community actors to design and implement their community development plans (PDESCs) in 17 communes. Mali PSR received and responded to select communes' requests to: 1) capacitate local leaders and actors and strengthen their skills in local community development; 2) teach local leaders how to prepare commune budgets; and 3) finance a community priority project as identified in their PDESC.

### **Objective 3: Empowering Youth and Building Their Resilience to Violent Extremism.**

Mali PSR's FRAME<sup>®</sup> study and anecdotal data collected during community activities and meetings show that empowering youth as leaders was critical to improving their agency, confidence, and desire to engage civically and to participate in decision-making in their communities. This finding is consistent with the Malian government's priorities when developing the framework for the national policy and action plan related to the prevention of and fight against violent extremism and terrorism in Mali.

In line with the goals of Objective 3, Mali PSR continued to make strong contributions to community resilience by building youth's skills in conflict management, prevention of violent



extremism, early warning, participatory and inclusive governance, and community leadership. These contributions were enshrined in interventions conducted in previous years, such as the virtual Youth Cafés or "Grins et Tontines." These and other youth focused activities were designed to strengthen the links between youth and adult community actors around key issues. In Year 3, Mali PSR organized inter-generational exchanges between youth and elders in response to a key finding from FRAME<sup>®</sup> that underscored the essential need for youth and adults to work together towards the stability and resiliency of communities. This year, Mali PSR conducted a series of workshops that engaged religious women in exchanges with youth to develop their understanding and agreement on ways they would work together to contribute to the prevention and fight against violent extremism and conflict. These exchanges helped both groups to realize that by coming together they could reduce misinterpretations between youth and women leaders representing different religious groups. Bringing together youth and religious leaders also helped to increase understanding thus enabling religious leaders to integrate PCVE messages into their sermons in an effort to raise awareness.

**Key achievements achieved under Objective 3 include:**

- 394 young people trained in leadership;
- 562 trained in entrepreneurship;
- 20 youth cooperatives established, involving 200 young people;
- 80 youth trained to become artisans;
- 18 dialogues organized between community members and religious leaders;
- 382 women preachers and leaders participated in workshops to support enhanced understanding, social cohesion and developing P/CVE messages

**Objective 4: Democratic Transition Support, Impact of COVID-19, and Other Crises on Malian Communities Mitigated**

To address the first and second order effects of COVID-19, Mali PSR awarded one new grant to Mercy Corps this year and completed monitoring of a grant to the Association pour la Promotion Des Initiatives de Base (APIB). In support of PDSEC execution, Mali PSR awarded two grants during the year for priority projects that were identified to strengthen governance systems and stability initiatives with a view to support Mali’s democratic transition.

**Key activities under Objective 4 include:**

- A grant to APIB allowed 90 people to produce compost to address shortages of chemical fertilizers;
- A grant to Mercy Corps facilitated cash transfers to 300 vulnerable households (2,768 people) affected by COVID-19’s second order effects;
- Civil society organizations and local authorities of Gao traveled to Bamako to finalize PDSEC priority project proposals.
- 162 youth trained on tools to fight disinformation;
- 1 in-person roundtable assessing the political transition organized;
- 354 roundtables organized through community radios and WebTV to fight disinformation;
- 1 soap opera on disinformation aired on 34 radios.

Also, during the year and in response to growing concerns about mis and disinformation, Mali PSR launched an initiative dubbed *Tigne Ni Maya*,<sup>1</sup> which was created to support democratic transition initiatives under Objective 4, and specifically to strengthen the response and resilience of communities to mis and disinformation in Mali. This initiative focused on information campaigns through radio and social media across the country. To achieve this, Mali PSR partnered with 117 community radios and 10 CSOs to use social media platforms to participate in the fight against false, misleading, and harmful information.

<sup>1</sup> Meaning Truth and Humanity in the local Bamanakan language

By the end of the year, Mali PSR had reached 3,060,000 people via TikTok; 2,000,000 via Facebook; 1,300,000 via community radios; 900,000 via WhatsApp; 10,000 via snapchat; and 1,398,000 via YouTube.

Mali PSR also helped to establish a critical mass of youth as master trainers in the fight against mis and disinformation. Youth Master Trainers went on to sensitize and train other youth in mis/disinformation. To scale program activities, Mali PSR awarded grants to civil society organizations to carry out innovative activities to combat mis- and disinformation around the political process, institutional reforms, and other issues relevant to the democratic transition.

## **BACKGROUND**

Mali Peacebuilding, Stabilization and Reconciliation (herein referred to as the program or Mali PSR), is a USAID five-year, \$19.9 million contract with a \$4.9 million Crisis Modifier. The Crisis Modifier was activated on June 2, 2020 to address the COVID-19 global pandemic and its first and second order effects in Mali and subsequently to support the political transition following a coup d'état in August 2020. The program is implemented by Creative Associates International along with local partners *Association Malienne pour la Survie au Sahel* (AMSS), facilitating implementation in northern Mali, and Think Peace, facilitating implementation in the center of Mali. The purpose of this program is to improve prospects for long-term peace, security, and reconciliation by building trust between conflict-affected communities and their governments; strengthening the ability of communities to mitigate and manage conflict, and prioritize and implement community-led action around their most pressing development needs; training and empowering marginalized youth as change agents; and addressing immediate and second-order impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and support to the political transition. Program activities are being implemented in 43 conflict-affected communes in central and northern Mali covering seven regions: Ségou, Mopti, Tombouctou, Gao, Kidal, Menaka and Taoudenit, with grants to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in Sikasso, Kayes, Koulikoro and the districts of Bamako.

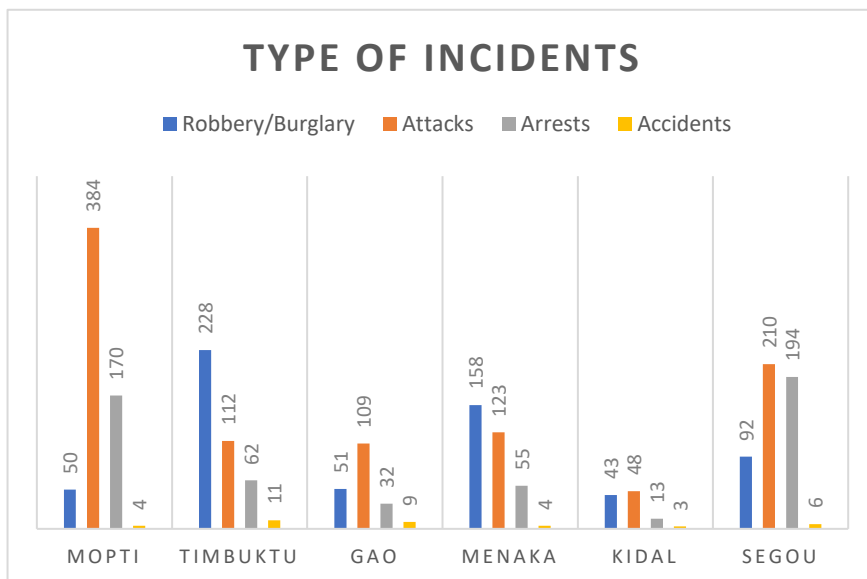
The goal of Mali PSR is to contribute to measurable improvements in the efficiency, effectiveness, and capacities of local communities to be more resilient to conflict and violent extremism, and to address the immediate and long-term effects of COVID-19 and the political transition. Fostering stability in target regions is not only a desired end unto itself, but a necessary condition for the full and complete implementation of the Algiers Peace Agreement and the GOM regional development plans, which, in turn, will create conditions for more lasting, durable peace. Mali PSR activities are integrated through the following four objectives which support this broader program goal.

- I. Objective 1: Community Resilience to Violence and Conflict Reinforced.
- II. Objective 2: Inclusive Governance and Civic Engagement Strengthened in Conflict-Affected Communities.
- III. Objective 3: Empowering Youth and Building Their Resilience to Violent Extremism
- IV. Objective 4: Democratic Transition Support, Impact of COVID-19, and Other Crises on Malian Communities Mitigated.

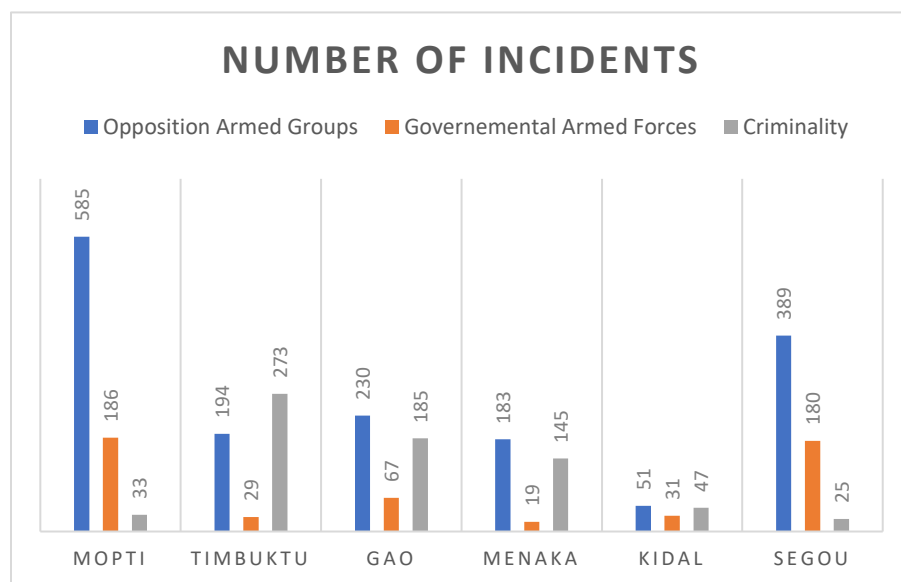


## II. CONTEXT

During the year, the security situation in Mali deteriorated significantly. Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) carried out acts of violence despite the increased operations of the Malian army (FAMa) in several key communes where Mali PSR implements activities. Insecurity in Mali's regions increased following the withdrawal of the French and other foreign troops from the European Takuba forces. These departures, which were prompted by the Malian government, severely impacted security in the North and the Center. In central Mali, there were severe clashes between armed groups and self-defense militias. This resulted in civilians being forced to pay high tolls due to the heavy-handed blockades in the villages by armed groups, which limited their freedom of movement and heightened food insecurity. Targeted assassinations and kidnappings of civilians were rampant because VEOs reportedly accused civilians of cooperating with the national army. VEOs also planted Improvised Explosive Devised (IEDs) which resulted in casualties among the national army and civilians. There were multiple attacks recorded against security forces, civilians, the international community and telecommunication



infrastructure during the year, particularly along the borders of Burkina Faso and Niger. The Al Qaeda-affiliated Jama'at Nusrat ul-Islam wa al- Muslimin', JNIM, and the Islamic State in the Sahel, IS Sahel (formerly Islamic State in the Greater Sahara or ISGS), were linked to many of these attacks.



The graphs in this section represent the number and type of incidents during the reporting period. Based on the *number of incidents* graph, VEOs are shown to be more active in the Center and committed 974 attacks against mainly the Malian Armed Forces and government officials in this part of the country versus 658 incidents in the North. The *type of incidents*

graph indicates that rampant criminality (burglaries and robberies) is the main security issue in the North with 487 incidents reported during the year.

**COVID-19.** Mali’s COVID-19 confirmed cases remained low for most of the year, and especially in the last six months of the year. As a result, the Government of Mali (GOM) lifted the most restrictive measures, including social distancing. Mali PSR reopened its office on October 6, 2021, after ten months of teleworking during the height of the pandemic. The office became fully operational with COVID-19 mitigation measures in place, including increased hygiene awareness for staff, health monitoring and other requirements.

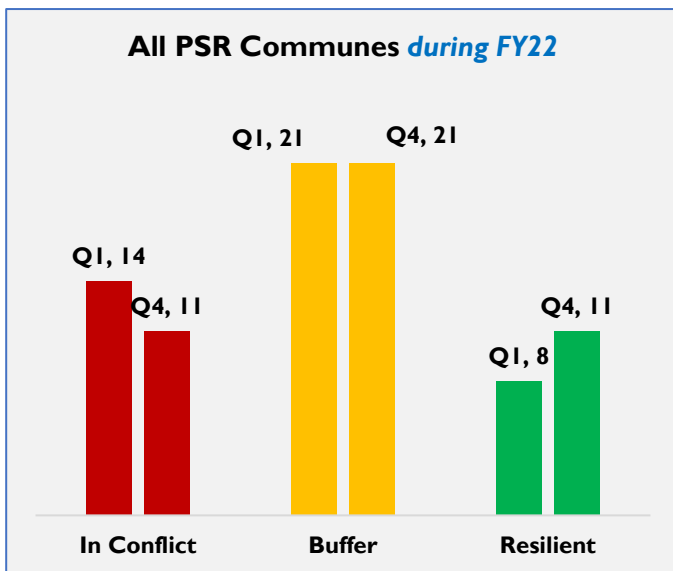
### Classification of Communes

Mali PSR implements activities in 43 communes in the North and Center of Mali, many of which are in high-conflict regions and some of which are resilient but vulnerable to new conflict and/or are dealing with the aftereffects of previous conflicts. At the end of the year, the program conducted its usual assessment of communes using the classification tool to assess and update our understanding of which communes are in active conflict, at risk of conflict, or have demonstrated resilience to conflict. The classification responds to unanticipated changes in an ever-evolving security context and allows for Sequencing, Layering, and Integration (SLI) adjustments in activity design and implementation.

Using the **Commune Classification Tool**, Mali PSR assesses communes at the end of every quarter and classifies them as Conflict, Buffer, and Resilient. The designation as Conflict identifies communes that are extremely vulnerable to and impacted by ongoing conflict and insecurity, and where the absence or weak presence of state officials hinders communication and the delivery of

basic services. This widens the trust deficit between citizens and the government and renders participatory governance and collective action difficult.

Buffer communes have some resilience but are deemed largely at risk of conflict because the presence of armed groups hinders freedom of movement and expression. Basic social services, particularly in schools, are intermittently available. In some communes without a Malian army presence, other armed groups ensure the security of people and property. However, these armed groups lack institutional accountability to the State, which leaves communities with no recourse in the event of abuses.



Finally, communes without conflict and lingering insecurity are classified as Resilient. This means that the state is present and essential services are being delivered.

At the end of the reporting period, 21 Mali PSR communes (49%) were classified as Buffer, 11 communes (25.5%) were classified as Conflict, and 11 commune (25.5%) were classified as Resilient.

The criteria for the commune classification, which allows Mali PSR to track changes in commune status (Conflict, Buffer, or Resilient), are included in Annex I.

### III. TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION

In Year 4, Mali PSR implemented USAID-approved work plan activities during the year and maintained programmatic agility and flexibility to respond to emerging needs and the evolving and volatile security and political context. For example, there were several attacks by violent armed groups in the northern region which caused an influx of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to flee to the city of Menaka. The Mayor of Menaka participated in a virtual meeting with USAID officials and presented an overview of the situation in Menaka, including the needs of the commune and the region. The Governor of Menaka came to Mali PSR's office in Bamako to request financial support to operationalize a Crisis Management Committee (CMC) he established. This year, Mali PSR also helped to reinforce partnerships between elected officials and the Regional Development Agency of Gao and Mayors, Secretaries General and members of the CECs of eight communes to discuss key issues facing their communities.

Mali PSR expanded programming this year on mis and disinformation to counter the impact of inaccurate information that threatens to undermine Mali's social fabric. Mali PSR launched a new initiative called "*Tigne Ni Maya*" which was created to promote credible, accurate information and to expand the geographical focus and impact of the program's countering disinformation activities. Mali PSR developed a partnership with the *Union des radio diffusions et télévisions libres du Mali* (URTEL) to broadcast programs on 117 community radio stations across the country. These radio programs used a roundtable format with guest speakers and covered issues such as fact checking, institutional reforms, and the new electoral law. Approximately 1,360,000 citizens across the country were reached during the broadcasts. A total of 288 listeners interacted with speakers and provided feedback on the radio shows using a toll-free number (44 98 28 18).

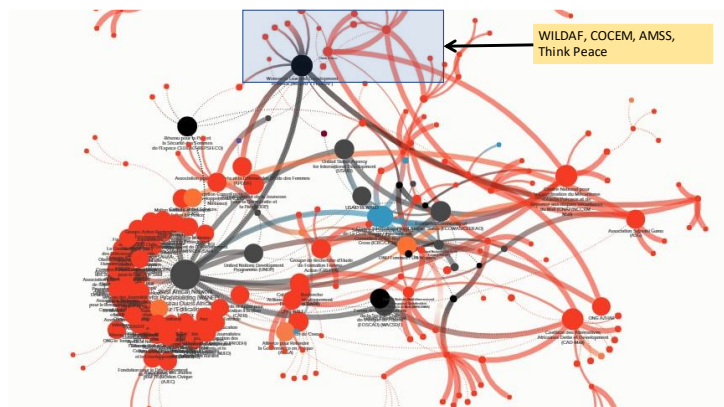
This year's annual report highlights the activities undertaken by Mali PSR and the key outcomes and results achieved during FY22: October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2022.

#### **OBJECTIVE I: RESILIENCE TO VIOLENCE AND CONFLICTS REINFORCED**

Following the successes of the previous year, Mali PSR worked to strengthen the relationship and collaboration with Mali's National Center for Early Warning (CNAP) to launch commune-level Early Warning Early Response (EWER) systems. Last year, Mali PSR's collaboration with CNAP focused on supporting the development of a new platform to track and escalate early warning indicators. This year, CNAP partnered with Search for Common Ground to develop a new platform called *Alerte Mali* in lieu of the *PaixauMali*<sup>2</sup> platform that Mali PSR previously supported. Mali PSR was invited as an observer in CNAP's roll-out of the new platform. Despite this change in platforms, Mali PSR formalized its relationship with CNAP through the signing a partnership protocol that outlines how Mali PSR will work with CNAP on the commune-level platform. Following the signing of the protocol, Mali PSR drafted an in-kind grant award which proposes to cover the training of 220 focal points in 22 communes and the purchase of 22 smartphones for the purposes of entering EWER data into the platform.

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<sup>2</sup> In Year 3, Mali PSR with technical assistance from Fund for Peace developed the *PaixauMali* platform for the collection and analysis of early warning data at the commune-level in designated hotspots



Stakeholder Network Analysis in Mali

The EWER focal points who were identified and trained proved to be an excellent source of data. However, a stakeholder network analysis (SNA) suggested that civil society actors could also bring valuable knowledge and social capital to the EWER ecosystem given their intimate knowledge of community issues and their strong relationships with community actors. Mali PSR decided to train local CSO on the *PaixauMali* platform. The training provided CSOs with an overview of

the tools and processes that had been developed to collect and produce incident reports for the *PaixauMali* platform. As a next step, Mali PSR will organize coordination meetings between users of the two platforms to ensure regular information sharing, situational assessments and that a clear response system is established.

### IR 1.1. Communities develop and implement Early Warning and Response Systems

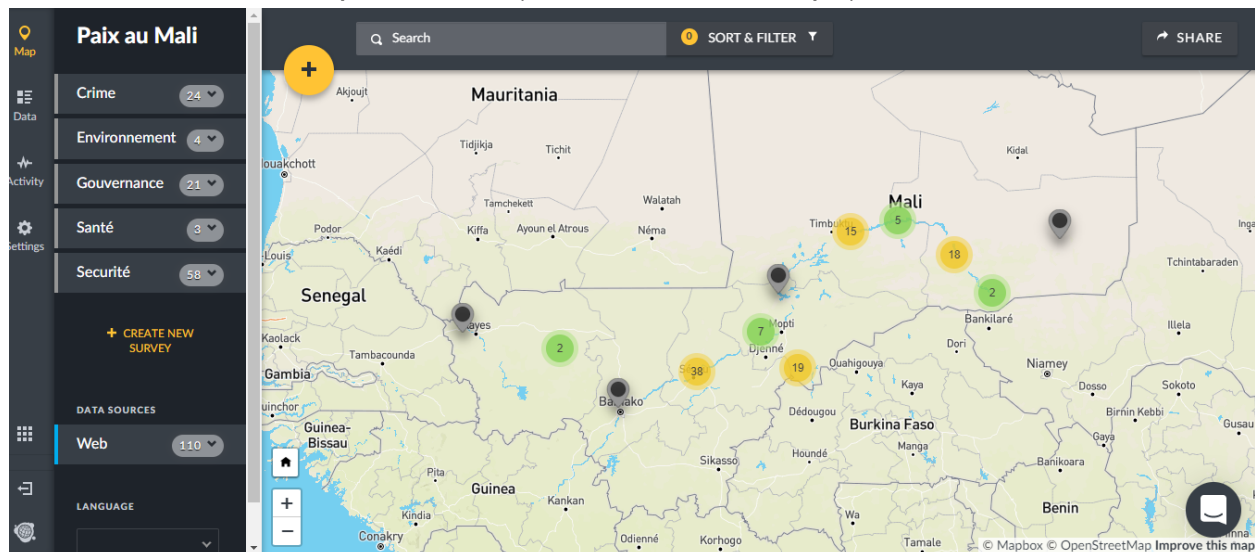
**Establishing a commune-level Early Warning Early Response system.** In Year 3, Mali PSR partnered with Fund for Peace (FFP) to establish a commune-level Early Warning Early Response system. The *PaixauMali* platform was created as a key component of the EWER system using the open-source *Ushahidi* software. Through SNA methodology, Mali PSR worked with commune leaders to identify 220 focal points in 22 communes and train 49 in five communes<sup>3</sup> how to upload incident reports on the platform. During the year, CNAP partnered with Search for Common Ground to launch a new platform called *Alerte Mali*. CNAP will use its grant agreement with Mali PSR to train 220 focal points on how to upload incident reports on *Alerte Mali*.

**Training CSO members on *PaixauMali* tools and protocols.** To ensure that *PaixauMali* has utility, Mali PSR enlisted the participation of CSOs in early warning activities. Mali PSR's technical partner, FFP, facilitated a two-day virtual training to CSO partners on September 19 and 20, 2022. The goal of the training was to present a simple, user-friendly system to help civil society actors to collaborate on early warning and local-level responses. Participants included representatives from Mali PSR consortium members Think Peace and *Association Malienne Pour la Survie au Sahel* (AMSS), *Coalition pour l'Observation Citoyenne des Elections au Mali* (COCEM), and Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF).

The two-day training focused on data collection and how to upload and analyze data to produce monthly, commune-level situational assessments. The training also created a mechanism for CSO actors to better coordinate and upload incidents in a system that is managed by them. The intention of this training was to help make their work easier and enable them to take their efforts to scale, in terms of early warning and to build consensus around priority areas of concern, as they relate to latent, chronic, and urgent conflict risk factors that must be mitigated to avoid violence. On the first day of the training participants were taught to develop incidents reports

<sup>3</sup> Bamba, Soni Aly Ber, Ségou, Markala and Tenenkou

and to upload them on the platform. On day two, the focus was on Situational Assessments, and how data can be used to produce monthly commune-level early warning products with targeted recommendations for response action (see Annex 2 for example).



Screenshot : Paix Au Mali platform - <https://paixaumali.usahidi.io/views/map>

As a critical next step, CSO partners will work on putting into place a management mechanism for the *PaixAuMali* platform to ensure each partner continues to collect, analyze, and transmit data to the platform. Mali PSR will work towards harmonization between the *Alerte Mali* platform and *PaixauMali*.

## IR 1.2. Communities develop non-violent conflict mitigation and management (CMM) mechanisms to resolve disputes and grievances, protect human rights, and strengthen social cohesion

**Documenting and disseminating CMM best practices.** In Year 4, Mali PSR met with 20 conflict actors from five communes<sup>4</sup> to document cases of conflict management and mitigation. Mali PSR supported conflict resolution actors to document the types of conflict they encountered and managed and to document what their experiences have taught them and the lessons they've learned managing and mitigating disputes. Conflict resolution actors predominantly examined and documented cases of conflicts related to access to and equitable management of natural resources. In Macina, a conflict erupted over access to water, specifically the irrigation of rice plots during the off-season. In Markala, the wandering of animals increased tensions between a herder and a farmer. In Ber, the case involved conflict between herders of the Kel Antessar fraction and farmers of the Kel Ouli fraction due to the destruction of crops by wandering animals. Another involved citizens of the Abaradjou neighborhood of the urban commune of Timbuktu and herders of the village of Nibkit Jamma in Achamour over cutting of fodder and wood, which removed pastureland for animals. The last case was between the Tuareg Ibohanane community and the Limhar Arab community over a dispute pertaining to the digging of a second well in Anefif.

<sup>4</sup> Anefif, Ber, Achamour, Markala and Macina.



The conflict resolution actors used both formal Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) processes and traditional mechanisms such as negotiation, mediation, and joking cousin<sup>5</sup> to resolve the conflicts in question. The actors involved in resolving the conflicts included local authorities such as the community mayor and other leaders such as the heads of factions, *cadi*<sup>6</sup> and CEC members to reduce the tensions and negotiate solutions.

Mali PSR will use these examples of how communities are addressing or resolving conflicts and broadcast lessons learned using community radios to demonstrate how communities can use these or similar approaches to resolve conflicts.



Participants updating the local response plan in Soni Ali Ber, May 2022

**Finalizing the local grievance response plans.** Mali PSR made significant progress towards finalizing grievance response plans in 17 target communes. As part of the trainings on inclusive governance (additional details about these trainings are discussed under Objective 2), Mali PSR consultants held workshops to support community members to identify and finalize plans to address various community grievances. Many of these grievances were identified during Mali PSR's foundational studies, the Integrated Conflict Analysis Framework (ICAF) and the Fragility and Resilience Assessment Methodology FRAMe®. The participants in these workshops included members of civil society, key commune influential actors, local officials, and community leaders. In most communes, participants at the workshop established a commission comprised of an elected official, a member of the CEC, and/or members of CSOs. This commission was designated to finalize the plan that will be submitted to the Communal Council for validation and track the resolution of these grievances.

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*"I am very happy to have participated in this meeting [to develop local grievance response plans] which has allowed us to identify our own problems and to propose local solutions. It also allowed us to point out the real problems that our community faces," said a participant in Matomo Marka village.*

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This commission was designated to finalize the plan that will be submitted to the Communal Council for validation and track the resolution of these grievances.

The grievance plan is an instrumental tool that allows communities to identify, monitor, update and address local community grievances, and that will, once addressed, help to foster increased trust and social cohesion, and create a framework for addressing grievances in the future.

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<sup>5</sup> A traditional practice that promotes non-violent management of conflicts.

<sup>6</sup> An Islamic judge or representative of sharia court



### IR 1.3. Victims of violence are identified and supported through trauma-informed approaches to community reintegration and reconciliation

Mali PSR is working in nine communes where Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) sites are present. The activities of Year 4 focused on supporting reintegration and reconciliation and helping to set the stage for victims of trauma and gender-based violence to receive psychosocial first aid and other kinds of reintegration and reconciliation support. In Year 4, Mali PSR helped community leaders organize a dialogue between IDPs and host communities to promote trust, confidence, and social cohesion.



Gender-based violence training, Douentza

Through a grant to WILDAF, women were trained to be peacebuilders in order to overcome their trauma and to fight against GBV. Mali PSR also assisted victims of trauma to develop coping mechanisms and identify safe spaces to get support as they determine next steps.

**Gender-based violence training.** This year, Mali PSR conducted trainings to civil society organizations and service providers to sensitize them and provide them with tools to support IDPs and victims of trauma using a protocol that addresses psychosocial, physical health and legal/judicial needs. Mali PSR conducted training for 289 people, including 166 women, in nine communes<sup>7</sup> on the protocol. This protocol refers to a set of comprehensive and integrated interventions that address the different components of GBV that were put in place by stakeholder members of the multi-donor Protection Cluster. The training provided participants a holistic understanding of the needs of GBV survivors and for the provision of assistance in terms of physical and mental health, psychosocial support, access to security and legal services, as well as socio-economic reintegration.

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*An AMSS focal point stated, "The real problem in Niono, in my opinion, is referral. The fact is that the people of Niono do not easily accept to claim their rights through legal means or through non-governmental organizations specialized in GBV. I think that in Niono, we still need awareness-raising activities, and this activity is very welcome."*

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Following the training, four participants from Douentza informed their peers on the salient points of the training. The association of women living with disabilities along with a representative of WILDAF in Bandiagara also conducted information sessions to women members of their associations. A total of more than 226 additional people benefitted from the GBV training.

<sup>7</sup> Ansongo, Markala, Macina, Niono, Goundam, Timbuktu, Douentza, Djenne and Bandiagara.

**Dialogues between IDPs and host communities.** During the year, there were several deadly attacks carried out by armed groups in Mali PSR communes. These attacks led to massive population displacements to safer towns, which were required to provide for the basic social needs of the displaced populations. A climate of mistrust between Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and host communities developed. Mali PSR worked with local leaders to develop strategies and tools to strengthen social cohesion among the IDPs and residents. This was a critical first step as it helps to build trust and relations among individuals and helps residents to see IDPs as extended members of their own communities. As an entry point to building social cohesion, Mali PSR facilitated dialogues in 10 communes<sup>8</sup> and worked with local community actors to identify opportunities to build the social contract and organize activities to create unity and support to people in crisis.

The dialogues between IDPs and host communities allowed participants to express their fears, concerns, and grievances, which resulted in a better understanding of each other's perspectives and allowed them to identify ways to prevent and manage conflicts. The dialogues also helped community groups develop mechanisms to improve coexistence between both groups such as a special price for IDPs to access health care, support for the construction of

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*A woman leader and member of CAFO Bandiagara said, "We are very satisfied with this meeting because it allowed us to get to know each other better and to strengthen the trust with the displaced people but also to know some of their concerns and we are going to combine our efforts to strengthen our small support to the IDPs."*

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shelters, and increased opportunities for participation in community life. The IDPs and members of the host communities had frank discussions, highlighting fears, challenges, and possible solutions for coexistence; although the mayor of the commune of Ouattagouna, who is an IDP in Ansongo, expressed that he would like to have seen separate meetings with IDPs and host communities before the dialogue in a plenary session because they are some contentious issues to be discussed. A total of 378 people attended the dialogues across the 10 communes. Of that number, there were 201 men, 96 women and 81 youth who represented youth leaders and women from IDP communities, CSO/CBOs, community and political leaders, and members of the CEC. The dialogues provided space for social interaction and engagement such as sharing a meal or, as in the communes of Timbuktu and Goundam, training for IDPs on skills such as how to smoke fish and how to make soap and dye cloths. In general, the dialogues provided safe spaces for IDPs and host communities to strengthen the social fabric and resilience of the communities while also looking at ways to facilitate the gradual return and reintegration of IDPs to their communities. The dialogues concluded with the development of an action plan defining the roles and responsibilities of IDP and host communities and the ways they will all work towards building social cohesion and peaceful co-existence.

**Supporting victims of violence.** Through grant awarded to Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) during the year, Mali PSR supported female IDPs and victims of GBV through training for women on the "Peace Circles" tool. "Peace Circles" bring together small groups of women to share their experiences, promote their role as peacebuilders and strengthen the bonds

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<sup>8</sup> Niono, Markala, Macina, Djenné, Bandiagara, Douentza, Goundam, Tombouctou, Ansongo et Ménaka

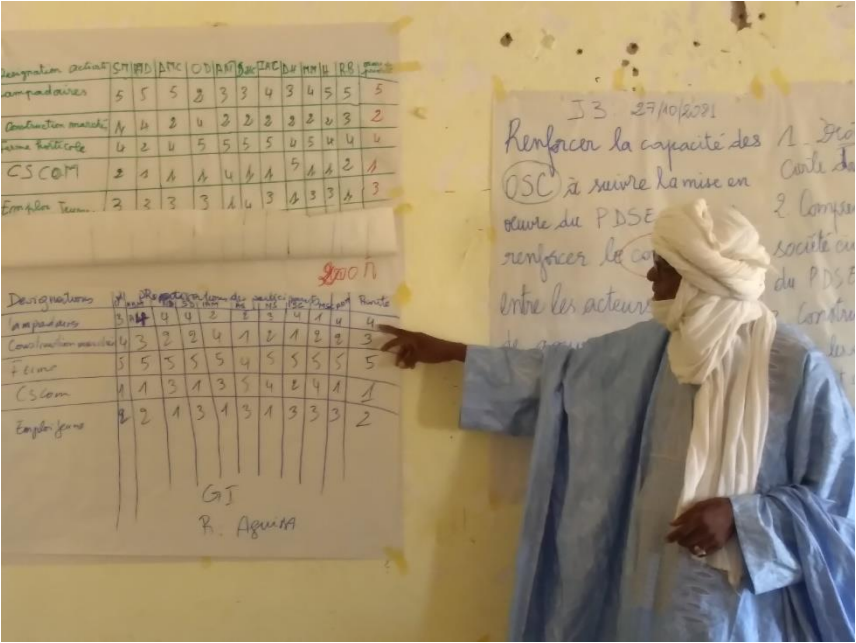
of solidarity. Due to their inability to secure seats on the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) flights throughout the year, WILD AF was unable to conduct the training to the 15 women who were identified in Menaka.

## **OBJECTIVE 2: INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT STRENGTHENED IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES**

This year, Mali PSR conducted a series of activities aimed at strengthening the capacities of local government actors and civil society organizations to implement PDESCs with citizen input and using inclusive, participatory processes. Mali PSR conducted several trainings that helped to improve the skills of stakeholders such as elected officials, CSOs and state technical services in mobilizing resources to finance community development priority needs. Another key accomplishment during the year was the near conclusion of two white papers that will provide policy options for the US and Malian governments regarding the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process and the impact of climate change on conflicts.

### **IR 2.1: Increased participation and inclusion of citizens in the PDSEC development, validation, and review process is strengthened**

**Facilitated dialogues between commune officials, CECs, and other stakeholders.** In Year 4, Mali PSR conducted training on inclusive governance in 17 communes.<sup>9</sup> The goal of the training was to strengthen the capacities of elected officials, communal agents, CSOs, grassroots community organizations and other stakeholders on the participatory process of monitoring the implementation of their PDESCs. A total of 2,200 people were trained including 590 women and 1,610 men.



The topics covered during the training included:

- **Module 1: Facilitating dialogue between communal officials (elected representatives and agents), civil society organizations, grassroots community organizations and other influential figures in the commune** Inclusive governance workshop, Ansongo, October 2021
- **Module 2: Participatory processes in the development and implementation of the PDESC**
- **Module 3: Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) monitoring of PDESC implementation**

<sup>9</sup> Ansongo, Gao, Bamba, Bourem, Soni Aliber, Tessit, Ouatagouna (Gao region); Pelengana (Segou region) ; Mopti, Ouenkoro and Youwarou (Mopti region); and Soboundou, Timbuktu, Goundam, Diré, Bourem-Inaly and Ber (Timbuktu region).

- Module 4: Developing the annual implementation plan and funding plan for PDESC

The training seminars were conducted in two phases.

**Phase I** in the communes of the Gao and Segou regions focused on the first three modules. This step allowed Mali PSR to test the different modules to assess their relevance, strengths, and weaknesses. A consolidation workshop was subsequently organized with the trainers to integrate key findings and lessons learned, and to develop the fourth module which harmonized the approaches for elaborating the PDSECs annual action and financing plans.

**Phase II** training covered all four modules and took place of in the communes of the Mopti and Timbuktu regions. The trainings allowed elected officials and influential members of the community, including CEC members, religious leaders, and members of civil society to acknowledge the importance of citizen participation in the process of developing and implementing the PDESC.

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*A member of Women Associations (CAFO) in the rural commune of Soboundou said, "It is true that we have been experiencing insecurity since 2012 and that life is becoming more expensive, but this should not prevent us from participating in the life of our commune. I believe that beyond security considerations, we must pay our taxes so that our commune can provide us with basic social services. Our elected officials must set an example by paying their taxes so that we citizens follow suit. Regarding the monitoring of the implementation of the PDSEC, I had not understood that I, as a member of CAFO, could do it, but now I will devote myself to it."*

*An elected official of Bourem Inaly stated, "This customized training allowed us to better understand the issues related to bad governance. During this training, everyone felt responsible at a specific level because it was important that everyone's responsibilities, (i.e., elected officials and citizens) be known. Good governance is necessary for the survival of any community in times of crisis."*

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**Developing commune-level resource mobilization plans.** The Government of Mali allocates 17% of the national budget to regional, cercle and commune sub-national authorities<sup>10</sup> to execute activities included in a community's PDESC. Since 2010, the financial laws<sup>11</sup> have provided for the transfer of resources from the national budget to the budgets of the communes for the implementation of activities that fall within their purview, including basic social services such as

<sup>10</sup> The amount transferred is estimated at 471 980 000 000 XOF (786 633 334 USD) out of a total budget of 2 748 229 000 000 (4 580 483 433 USD).

<sup>11</sup> Law 2011-036 of July 15, 2011 on the fiscal resources of the communes, circles and regions, as amended by Law 062 / 2018 of November 5, 2018.

Decree 0678 / P-RM of October 20, 2015 repealing and replacing Decree 02-2002 of June 4, 2002 on the powers transferred from the State to the territorial authorities;

Decree 02-314 / P-RM of June 4, 2002 on the powers transferred in the area of health, amended in 2022



education, health, and sanitation. However, the commune must mobilize sufficient internal financial resources to be eligible for these investment funds.

Communes historically and persistently face challenges in mobilizing internal resources, e.g. taxes and other fees, mainly due to the lack of knowledge of the relevant legal texts. There are also key challenges related to accessing villages due to insecurity and mistrust between elected officials and citizens related to the use of taxes for public purposes leading citizens to not pay their taxes. To address these challenges and help communes to define strategies to improve tax collection, Mali PSR organized two



Inclusive governance workshop participants in Tessit, November 2021

workshops for 80 participants in the urban communes of Segou (April 13-14, 2022) and Gao (April 27-28, 2022). Workshop participants included commune-level elected officials; decentralized state financial service officials from budget, treasury, taxes, and estates; CSOs; grassroots community organizations; and traditional and customary chiefs. One of the exercises during the workshops required participants to take stock of the process and levels of mobilization of budgetary resources from the 2016-2020 period in their communes. They then analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the system and worked through a process of identifying opportunities to improve revenue to meet the anticipated financial needs to adequately manage their budgets and implement their PDESCs.

At the conclusion of the workshops, participants were able to define inclusive and participatory strategies that would enable them to improve their revenue mobilization rates. Following the workshop, the mayor of the urban commune of Ségou noted, “This activity was a space for real dialogue between the actors who have an important role to play in the process of mobilizing the commune's financial resources.” He went on to say that he believes that the implementation of the recommendations and strategies will lead to a substantial improvement in the budgetary revenues of their commune.

Following the workshop in Segou, the commune held a working session with the technical services in charge of tax collection to review the projected revenues of the town hall for this year, enabling them to develop realistic budgets and meet the needs of the communities. The commune also conducted information and awareness-raising activities with traditional authorities

and citizens on taxes on motorcycle cabs and carts enabling them to generate additional revenue during the year.

**White Papers.** In Year 4, Mali PSR made strides towards the completion of two white papers, one on the state of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) in Mali and the other on the Impact of Climate Change on Conflicts in Mali. In Year 5, the two papers will be submitted to USAID for review and validation, and roundtables will be organized to share key findings.

1. Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR): This paper assesses the evolution of DDR and DDR processes, focusing on the three “generations” of DDR adapted to respond to different kinds of conflict and post-conflict scenarios. It also addresses the challenge of legal frameworks for DDR and related programming, before moving to focus on Mali specifically. It looks at DDR in Mali historically, as well as the contemporary progress or lack thereof on DDR benchmarks established as part of the 2015 Algiers Accords. The paper’s development included an Inception Report, key informant interviews, and a thorough desk and literature review, which included secondary, as well as primary resources. As part of the research methodology, the team conducted 10 formal and 10 informal KKIs. These included government personnel, members of the CNDDR, as well as civil society and international expertise from the UN, former State Department, and others. The Mali PSR team developed a report from its midline assessment allowing the researchers to draw inferences on perceptions and possible implications that a DDR process implemented in northern and central Mali could have for the south, a region where there is no DDR presently. The team used discourse analysis to assess trends and draw together a picture of the DDR environment in Mali. A first draft of the paper with annexes will be complete by the first week in November. Importantly, this paper on DDR is part of a suite of two papers – the next one will specifically take up the reintegration of armed groups in Mali. This includes DDR candidates, as well as other armed forces, militias, self-defense groups, so-called *jihadists*, and others.
2. How Climate Change Impacts Conflicts in Mali: Mali PSR hired a firm to develop a white paper focused on the impact of climate change and conflict in Mali. The consultants adopted a mixed methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data. Survey respondents included administrative authorities, mayors, security officials, civil society, technical services, heads of families and resource persons in the localities investigated and the questions posed addressed the vulnerability of communities to the impacts of climate change, natural resource use, conflicts and grievances, capacities to adapt to climate change, possible points of connection between climate change and conflicts, endogenous adaptation strategies, conflict resolution mechanisms, etc. Preliminary data analysis shows a correlation between the communes most vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change and the occurrence of globalized conflicts (historical and present conflicts). These most vulnerable communes are in the center and northeast of Mali. A first draft of the paper with annexes is under review. Once completed, the paper will be submitted for peer review prior to being shared with USAID.



### **OBJECTIVE 3: EMPOWERING YOUTH AND STRENGTHENING THEIR RESILIENCE TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

In line with Mali's National Policy on the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism, which centers religious actors as essential educators, as much as teachers, in actions to prevent violent extremism due to their large numbers of followers, Mali PSR emphasized positive discourse among religious leaders and the communities they serve, primarily youth and women. The focus of this effort was organizing dialogues to discuss issues related to misinterpretations of religious texts and the role of religious communities in community stability and in increasing community resilience to violent extremism. These actions complement the activities of the previous year and provide youth with awareness of violent extremism through a religious prism. Activities under this objective also placed an accent on strengthening youth leadership skills and entrepreneurship. As illustrated in the findings of the midline assessment, there is a strong belief among Malians that if young people are not economically empowered, they will continue to be tempted to join armed groups to earn money. With that, Mali PSR worked to strengthen youth agency and skills in leadership and entrepreneurship.

#### **IR 3.1. Community capacity to support youth empowerment and leadership is strengthened**

Mali PSR has developed a youth empowerment strategy that includes first the identification and validation of economic opportunities followed by a capacity building program based on youth leadership, community engagement and business development, and concludes with supporting business plans and funding applications. These steps create awareness and buy-in among youth and community members, on the essential harmony between citizenship, community engagement and economic development.

***Training youth to map community economic assets and opportunities.*** This year, Mali PSR revised its youth empowerment strategy to improve the alignment of its approach with USAID's Youth Development Policy. Mali PSR made progress engaging young people from its target communes in conducting community asset mapping to identify assets and self-employment opportunities. Using the criteria established with the community leaders and CECs, Mali PSR selected



Youth entrepreneurship workshop, Tongue November 2021

350 youth in seven communes<sup>12</sup> to participate in leadership and entrepreneurship training.

To facilitate the participation of the community in the selection process and to ensure their commitment to supporting and monitoring the success of the young people trained and funded by Mali PSR, the program created ad-hoc commissions composed of representative actors of the community. Fifty youth in each commune were selected through these commissions<sup>13</sup> based on the following criteria:

- Aged between 16 and 29 years;
- Residents of the commune for at least 3 years and agreement that they will reside for at least 3 years following Mali PSR's training and employment support process;
- Being unemployed or and/or being displaced or recently returned to their commune with limited job prospects

Following the identification of participants, Mali PSR organized workshops for elected officials, economic operators, technical services, women and youth leaders, members of the CEC and young beneficiaries. These allowed the youth to identify the following as possible employment opportunities:

1) animal fattening, 2) poultry farming, 3) market gardening; and 4) trade. Two workshops were held in each commune. A total of 524 participants including 118 adult men, 26 women, 218 young men and 162 young women attended these workshops.

**Training and developing youth as leaders.** To strengthen the contribution of youth to the development of their communes, Mali PSR through the National Agency for the Promotion of

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*A young male beneficiary from Konna stated, " I am a herder who lost all his cattle because of this crisis. I had already lost all hope, now that Mali PSR offers me a second chance, I can only thank them for this initiative."*

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Youth leadership training in Macina

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<sup>12</sup> Tongué, Bankass, Konna, Youwarou, Ber, Soni Ali Ber and Anefif.

<sup>13</sup> The ad hoc committee is composed of the following actors: a religious leader, a traditional leader, a representative of the youth council, a representative of the women's umbrella organization, an economic operator, a traditional communicator and a member of the CEC.

Employment (ANPE)<sup>14</sup> held trainings on leadership for 426 participants including 30 men, 2 women, 215 young men and 179 young women in the communes of Macina Tongué, Bankass, Konna, Youwarou, Ber, Soni Ali Ber and Anefif. These trainings have helped to foster a culture of civic engagement and empowerment. In all the target communes, youth beneficiaries have been mobilized on issues of peace and development of their communes through citizenship activities. This is the case, for example, in Youwarou, where the young people who received training have formed youth associations to carry out initiatives, the most recent of which are:

- Carrying out cleanliness activities in public places to support the authorities in the organization of the commemorative celebration of the independence of Mali;
- Holding an awareness caravan on peace, reconciliation, and prevention of violent extremism.
- Holding a soccer match between the Saresala and Bellenfarady teams to support the activities of the reconciliation week held by the transitional authorities from September 15 to 29, 2022.
- Hosting a cultural evening called the "Night of Mali Kura" to conclude the aforementioned activities.

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*A participant stated, "I was a member of the association of students of Mali. My posture as a local leader led me into the common violence as the only way to influence, to the point that I was treated as a disbeliever, a criminal, a danger to the community. Personally, I had a passion for violence. It was after the leadership training that I discovered that I was lost. I decided to change. Today, I am a young entrepreneur and I influence through my talent and production."*

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**Entrepreneurship and employment training for young people.** In the areas most affected by communal conflicts, the lack of development prospects and of training for professional qualifications combined with young people's need to ensure daily subsistence have pushed many towards violence, radical groups and community militias. In response to this and to support youth to gain productive employment, Mali PSR through Zabbaan Institute<sup>15</sup> held trainings to strengthen youth entrepreneurship and employment opportunities in 19 communes.<sup>16</sup> A total of 572 participants including 82 men, 8 women, 263 young men and 219 young women were trained on the techniques of fattening, trade, market gardening, food processing. Youth also received entrepreneurship training through Zabbaan and were trained on basic financial literacy skills and simplified business management. In Year 4, 394 youth (215 men and 179 women) received entrepreneurship training. From these trainees, 190 young people formed into 19 cooperatives

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<sup>14</sup> ANPE is ANPE is a national structure whose mission is to contribute to the Government of Mali's National Employment Policy. It specializes in the training and follow-up of young people to contribute to the implementation of vocational training, retraining, and integration activities.

<sup>15</sup> Zabbaan Institute is the training department of Zabbaan Holding. The company is one of the most active in the field of agribusiness and has received international awards for its performance in using women's cooperative networks in vegetables and fruits for processing to serve their juice and spice production. Zabbaan Institute has a partnership with other company such as Doumambaa to buy back some of the productions of the trained women.

<sup>16</sup> Matomo, Diré, Ansongo, Bourem, Diabaly, Agouni, Kidal, Ménaka, Bandiagara, Douentza, Koro, Macina, Tongué, Bankass, Konna, Youwarou, Ber, Soni Ali Ber and Anefif.



(10 youth per cooperative) that then registered with the Social Development and Solidarity Economy Department. The list of cooperatives is in Annex 3.

At the conclusion of the entrepreneurship training, the youth cooperatives were also supported by Zabbaan to develop business plans to apply for financing. Each cooperative applied for capital seed funding through Mali PSR's grant pool to launch their microenterprises. In order to receive funding, the cooperatives submitted grant applications based on their business plans and the Mali PSR funding application template.

In Year 5, Mali PSR intends to fund the small businesses developed by these cooperatives after participating in the entrepreneurship trainings. However, using their personal

funds some participants have already acted to start microenterprises following these training courses. For example:

- In Macina, a young man created a micro-enterprise in local juice processing (pineapple, orange) and roasted fruit. He currently supplies three local weekly fairs in addition to the city of Macina and employs five young people on a part-time basis.
- Also in Macina, a young man developed a market garden that allows him to supply the city of Macina with cucumbers, okra and papaya. He works with six other young people.
- In Matomo, a young man who started poultry farming after his training in Year 3, and extended his business to include cattle fattening.
- In Bandiagara, a young woman is now active in the trade of agri-food products.
- In Youwarou, the training allowed a male youth beneficiary to begin animal fattening. He started with the purchase of one ox and is now raising four oxen.

**Linking aspiring young entrepreneurs to market.** To create conditions for market access and to create links between the cooperatives and other partners, Mali PSR in synergy with the *Fonds d'Appui aux Moteurs du Changement (FAMOC)*<sup>17</sup> initiated a small-scale trade fair at the International Conference Center of Bamako. Four handicraft enterprises supported by Mali PSR from Segou, Mopti, Timbuktu and Menaka, and a representative of each of the 19 youth cooperatives attended. This fair provided an opportunity for youth entrepreneurs to share their experiences and meet other partners including the Director of Zabbaan Institute, the Doumambaa company, the Abus-



Participants in the microenterprise training in Bankass, December 2022

<sup>17</sup> Danish funding aimed at strengthening and supporting civil society in Mali.

Mali company (specialized in poultry farming and fattening), the Ministry of Tourism and individuals interested in the cooperatives' productions.

**Developing youth skills training, mentorship, and micro-grants to artisans.** In order to support the entrepreneurial initiatives of youth and women in the handicrafts sector in Mali, Mali PSR through Aid to Artisans identified 80 youth, including 33 young men and 47 young women in the communes of Ségou, Mopti, Timbuktu and Ménaka to participate in trainings and mentorship. Four artisanal enterprises trained and mentored youth and helped them develop expertise in the production and sale of handicraft products in the local, regional, and international markets. These businesses have been identified to facilitate the training and monitoring of young people in the target communes. Prior to the training and product development process, an orientation workshop was held to enable the youth to understand product development, production, pricing, business management and marketing.



Youth artisans training in Timbuktu, May 2022

Aid-to-Artisans identified two international designers to help youth artisans develop new collections for all four communes. Design work was done via Zoom calls between the designers and the leaders of the local businesses: Atelier N'Domo of Ségou, Farafinatignè of Mopti, Timidwa of Timbuktu and the Union of Artisans of Menaka. These new products are being prepared for exposition and sale at Salon International pour les Artisans à Ouagadougou (SIAO), local markets via the enterprises' shops, and potentially the export market via online tradeshows. In addition to the four businesses noted above, Mali PSR through Aid-to-Artisans is also working with a Cooperative called Djiguiyaso based in Bamako to train young women on entrepreneurial women leadership to enable them to succeed despite the social pressures of women entrepreneurs in Mali. The heads of the artisan businesses were presented with a facilitator's guide for training in entrepreneurship and market readiness that included training goals, agendas, training materials, and hands-on activities. The 80 male and female youth have been introduced to entrepreneurship and market readiness for the artisan sector. One beneficiary in Mopti has already started the production of bracelets and other artistic objects that she intends to sell in schools, an environment she notes that she is very familiar with.



**Funding and mentorship for youth artisans.** As part of the support to artisan entrepreneurs, Mali PSR placed high emphasis on the sustainability of activities. To this end, Mali PSR established a grant pool that is facilitating artisan businesses to coach young people and assist them to develop quality products and promote their socio-professional integration. PSR grants will cover costs associated with a two-week internship for youth, and the reproduction of new products based on the new product designs. Costs will also cover youths' participation in two major regional fairs and other national and local exhibition spaces such as the Niger Festival, the Desert Festival in Timbuktu, and the Ogobagnan Festival in Bamako in January 2023. Grants are anticipated to be awarded in the first quarter of Year 5.

### **IR 3.2: Youth resilience to violent extremism strengthened through family and community support**

**Engaging community institutions against violent extremism.** In Year 4, Mali PSR organized workshops targeting members of the CECs, religious leaders and other community influencers in 18 communes<sup>18</sup> to take stock of extremist activities in their municipalities, share experiences on peace and social cohesion initiatives, identify factors of violence and propose response mechanisms to each case. The



Participants at the dialogue to strategize CVE in Ber, April 2022

workshops were attended by 547 participants, including 362 men, 116 women, 29 young men and 40 young women. The following outcomes were achieved at the end of the workshops:

- In Niono, the CEC and Local Youth Council worked in collaboration with the religious leaders to produce three radio programs. The goal of the program was to disseminate messages on non-violence and peaceful coexistence.
- Also in Niono, the CEC, the communal youth council and the communal authorities developed and implemented a conflict resolution peace plan between the communities of Tiamaba, Kouye-Bamanan, Ali-Boubou-Wèrè N'Dolan and Kolodougou-Koro.
- In Markala, the president of the CEC was asked to intervene on behalf of the IDP community with the mayor and the sub-prefect after a distribution of food was not

<sup>18</sup> Koro, Douentza, Soboundou Ansongo, Bamba, Bourem, Sony-Ali-ber, Gao, Touwal, Ber, Macina, Bandiagara, Markala, Niono, Ténenkou Ménaka, Konna and Bankass.



received by several of the displaced families. To address this, he mobilized 80,000 CFA francs and a bag of rice for the family of one of the displaced families who has a family member who is visually impaired.

- In Macina, a woman member of the CEC who is also a radio host, devoted one of her programs to raising awareness about prevention of conflict, and the fight against violent extremism. On two occasions, she organized Christian and Muslim religious leaders on her program to speak to listeners and implored them to work together to resolve conflicts through dialogue, and to encourage a culture of peace co-existence.

**Supporting women preachers in sharing accurate information on religion with other women.** In Mali, religious organizations, and especially women religious leaders, are becoming increasingly critical to restoring social cohesion and ending the fight against violent extremism. To continue engaging women in the fight against violent extremism and to minimize violence in their communities, Mali PSR conducted workshops with male religious leaders and members of women's religious associations in 20 communes.<sup>19</sup> A total of 621 participants, including 148 men, 382 women, 20 young men and 71 young women, were mobilized to participate in these dialogue workshops. To conclude the sessions, the participants developed action plans that they will implement.



Workshop with female preachers in Achamour, March 2022

- In Bandiagara, Christian women organized prayer sessions, followed by preaching to sensitize the faithful to speak out for peace and social cohesion in order to overcome extremist propaganda.
- In Segou, a member of the CEC, in his capacity as Imam, held a preaching session during the Maouloud (Muslim feast) where he invited Christian religious leaders to speak on the importance of peace and living together. This partnership between religious leaders has helped to reinforce the collaboration between Muslims and Christians in Segou.
- In Markala, a woman member of the CEC took advantage of the meetings of her tontine network to discuss the fight against violent extremism, conflict resolution and living together with the displaced.
- In Youwarou, the women of the Ançardine Association provided assistance in the form of food, money, and shelter to displaced persons in the commune of Dogo. This gesture aimed to strengthen the relationship between the displaced and resident communities and to

<sup>19</sup> Achamour, Timbuktu, Youwarou, Ségou, Markala, Mopti, Gao, Bourem, Bamba, Goundam, Bourem Inaly, Ménaka, Sony Aliber, Ansongo, Diré, Djenné, Koro, Bandiagara, Niono and Macina.

mitigate the feeling of mistrust and stigmatization. They took the opportunity to organize a sermon on May 12, 2022, where they emphasized the need to increase social cohesion.

**Addressing CVE in schools.** In central and northern Mali, schools have become hotbeds of violence due to the propaganda of religious influencers and the actions of extremist groups. In addition to the closure of classes, there has been an uptick in violence. In Mopti, for example, disagreements between students resulted in the death of one student and left more than a dozen injured. Also, students who are out of school due to heightened insecurity and temporary school closures are particularly vulnerable to radicalization. To address this, Mali PSR planned an awareness campaign in schools to engage young people in countering violent extremism through an artistic competition.

This year, Mali PSR worked in close collaboration with the Ministry of National Education's Pedagogical Department and held a joint workshop with 30 staff members representing 10 government entities. The purpose of the workshop was to develop a model lesson guide on preventing violent extremism. The workshop allowed participants to integrate awareness raising messages on the prevention and fight against violent extremism and radicalization into the secondary school curriculum. This guide will serve as a tool for teachers to develop lessons on violent extremism in the classroom. In line with the Sequencing, Layering and Integration approach, Mali PSR consortium member Think Peace will roll out the guide using funding from other donors such as the UN Development Program.

#### **OBJECTIVE 4: DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION SUPPORT, IMPACT OF COVID-19, AND OTHER CRISES ON MALIAN COMMUNITIES MITIGATED**

This year, Mali PSR awarded two grants to Mercy Corps and to the *Association pour la Promotion des Initiatives de Base (APIB)-Wuye Tègè* to address second order effects of COVID-19. APIB used its grant to train women market gardeners in the production of compost as an organic alternative to chemical fertilizers. Mercy Corps was awarded \$200,000 USD to provide cash assistance to displaced and host community households affected by reduced remittances.

This year Malians have faced an increase in false information on social networks and community radio networks. This contributed to increased vulnerability for communities to conflict and undermining stability during the political transition. In light of this development, Mali PSR trained over 200 youth to be fact checkers, and launched an information campaign that reached over 2.5 million citizens through the *Tigne Ni Maya* initiative—which was created to promote increased knowledge about mis and disinformation and to fact-check information to ensure that citizens are consuming and seeking only credible information from news and on-line sources.

#### **IR 4.3 Support the democratic transition and mitigate the second-order effects of COVID-19**

**Addressing the second-order effects of COVID-19.** During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when the borders were closed, women who had livelihoods in market gardening were unable to access imported chemical fertilizers from neighboring Côte d'Ivoire for their gardens. This stress put their businesses at risk. To address the impact that COVID-19 had on these women, Mali PSR awarded a grant to the *Association pour la Promotion des Initiatives de Base (APIB)-Wuye Tègè* to train 85 women and five men in the production of organic compost. Composting

is an organic alternative to chemical fertilizers that is known to also improve vegetable yields. Learning to compost allowed women farmers to maintain their livelihoods and to garden in a more environmentally conscious and sustainable way. Through the grant to APIB, women from the villages of Diassadéni in Pimpérna commune, Zamblara in Sikasso commune, and Coulibalibougou in Kaboïla commune benefitted from this training.

By the end of the grant, the compost made by the women's associations *Bɛnkadi* (which means *getting along is a good thing in Bamanakan*) in Diassadéni and *Si ni kɛnɛya* (*life and health in Bamanakan*) in Coulibalyougou had reached maturation and the associations were preparing to use the compost to start



Women making compost in Sikasso

a second round of compost creation. In Zamblara, the women of the *Société Coopérative Simplifiée « Kotognontala<sup>20</sup> » des Productrices Agricoles et Transformatrices de Produits de Cueillette de Zamblara* (SCooPS-K.P.A.T.C.Z.) used the compost to fertilize their cabbage, tomato and lettuce production beds. By the end of the grant, a second composting process was in progress.

According to some beneficiaries, COVID-19 brought not only sickness and fear but hunger, social isolation and increased poverty. Members of *Kotognontala* noted that the use of chemical fertilizers caused vegetables to grow more slowly, and their yields were smaller. The women who were trained in composting expressed their gratitude for the training because it helped them to produce higher volumes of vegetables. The women also attested that the vegetables that are fertilized through compost weigh more, taste better and can be preserved longer. The women noted that because of the training, their income had increased at the market. The result of this grant is that women farmers who learned to compost are earning more money and can sell their products quickly due to the higher quality. The women associations also observed that chemical fertilizer dries out the soil and hardens it, unlike compost, which brings it back to its natural state. An additional benefit from composting is that the collection of organic waste that is used for composting has contributed to cleaning up their villages. One of the women farmers stated: "*Since we use waste for compost, we are always out and looking for garbage.*"

**Cash transfers to mitigate COVID's socioeconomic impact in Kayes.** In March 2022, Mali PSR awarded a grant to Mercy Corps to help vulnerable households and communities in the region of Kayes to manage COVID-19's socioeconomic impact. Through the grant, Mercy Corps provided cash assistance to 300 targeted displaced and host community households (reaching approximately 2,768 individuals) which enables them to meet their essential household needs.

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<sup>20</sup> *Compromise* in Bamanakan.



During the year, Mercy Corps introduced a cash via e-voucher transfer initiative to the administrative officials in Kayes. Officials include the Governor, Prefect, Sub-Prefect, local elected officials (Mayors, Circle Councils), technical service of social development and solidarity, and the customary chiefs of the communes of Kayes, Diéma, and Yelimané. Through an inclusive and participatory process, the communes of Déma, Béma, Gourmera, Trinkka and Marekaffo were selected for participation in the distributions. The Mercy Corps team worked with local leaders to establish selection committees<sup>21</sup> to identify families and to address concerns raised by community members regarding the selection of participants. The selection committee identified 21 target villages and 300 participant families for the e-voucher distribution. The selection of families was based on the following criteria which was jointly developed by Mercy Corps and the members of the local selection committee:



Food at the fair where recipients can redeem their e-vouchers for goods.

- Households whose relatives are outside of the country but are no longer able to send remittances.
- Households of vulnerable IDPs/returnees.
- Households with people living with a disability and/or chronic illness.
- Female headed household without a breadwinner (widow, divorcee, single mother, etc.).
- Household expenses borne by a child under the age of 18.
- Households that are severely food insecure and/or have malnourished children under the age of 5.
- Households with no income or with the lowest per capita income in the village (specific thresholds for assistance determined by each community).

The first e-voucher distribution was conducted between 25 July and 3 August 2022 to 300 participant families across five communes. Mercy Corps conducted a post-distribution monitoring which found that the assistance, although modest, significantly improved the food situation of vulnerable households. Key informants who were interviewed emphasized the relevance of the intervention due to hardships they had faced during the lean season and the impact of inflation. The situation related to inflation is compounded not only by the effects of COVID-19, but also the ECOWAS sanctions that impacted Mali between December 2022 and June 2023. The second e-voucher distribution was completed by the end of the reporting period.

<sup>21</sup> Committees include a representative of the town hall; the village chief; religious leaders, women; displaced households; vulnerable indigenous people; youth representative and of people living with disability.

### **The Fight Against Mis/disinformation.**

This year, Mali PSR carried out several activities in support of the fight against mis/disinformation. This activity was deemed critical program's support to Mali's democratic transition. A major focus of this support was to build digital literacy and the skills to teach youth and other citizens how to differentiate fact from fiction in the news and online platforms. Mali PSR taught youth to how to fact-check, debunk, and distribute correct information. To launch this initiative, Mali PSR conducted a Training of Trainers for 63 youth in November 2021. Four youth emerged as master trainers and worked with Mali PSR to build the capacity of another 107 youth in the regions of Kita, Nioro du Sahel, Koutiala, Bougouni and San. The youth who were trained became active participants committed to fighting mis/disinformation and took the initiative to set up group exchange platforms on WhatsApp to keep in touch and to share information about what misinformation they encountered, what activities they were doing to identify mis/disinformation, and to correct false information and rumors they encountered.



Participants in the disinformation training in Kita, March 2022

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*One participant stated, "In my area, the most serious thing is that some local radio stations broadcast false information and this has really traumatized our communities who are on the alert because of the insecurity. The channels that are supposed to inform the population deceive them with unverified information."*

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would be fully equipped to analyze and fact check information that seemed incendiary and to contribute to countering misinformation to mitigate conflicts that many communities in central and northern Mali are facing.

Just as vaccines train one's immune system to recognize a virus, inoculation is one approach to stopping misinformation that seeks to train individuals how to spot incorrect information, so that they can develop a resistance to it in the future. To address the virulent impact of mis/disinformation, Mali PSR partnered with USAID/REWARD II, COCEM, Internews and NDI to build the capacity of grantees, members of COCEM, and journalists sponsored by Internews and NDI to identify and fact-check false information. Mali PSR's Master Trainers used the skills they were taught to train and carry out practical exercises with participants so that they

**Tignè Ni Maya Initiative.** To leverage the achievements of the youth-led trainings that focused on teaching others to identify and to fight disinformation, Mali PSR designed and implemented an initiative called Tignè Ni Maya from July to September 2022 that focused on strengthening the response and resilience of communities to information manipulation in Mali. Tignè Ni Maya implemented a two-pronged approach using digital media and radio information campaigns.

The Tignè Ni Maya initiative kicked-off its digital information campaign through a Citizen Meet-Up at the National Park in Bamako on August 20, 2022 which mobilized 214 young influencers, including 114 women, representing media structures, journalists' associations, bloggers and civil society organizations. The meet-up brought artistic performers together and showcased youth creativity and artistic expression through songs, poetry and slams against disinformation. The meet-up was live broadcasted through WebTV and reached approximately 30,719 internet users in less than an hour. It generated 414 interactions, 294 shares and 81 comments on Facebook.



Youth Meet-Up in Bamako

Given that Facebook is one of Mali's largest social platforms with over two million users across the country, a [WebTV/Facebook](#) account was created and administered by Mali PSR consortium member Think Peace to allow real-time communication on the initiative's activities and to transmit live content that engages the public in important moments or events of the campaign.<sup>22</sup> In order to reach women and individuals with low literacy in the rural areas, about 900,000 people

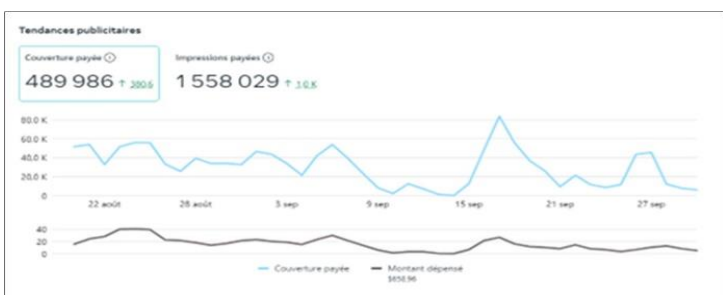


Figure 2: Facebook trends from August to September 2022



Figure 3 : Informations statistiques Keyhole

The tracking application Keyhole tracked engagement on social networks of the Tignè Ni Maya campaigns; as noted above, from August 20 to September 30, 574 publications made by 284 users on social networks used the hashtags (#) of the campaign: #Tignènimaya #desinformationuelinformation #nonaladesinformation. The 574 publications had 13,650 engagements, reached 490,186 people and generated 772, 906 impressions on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat.

<sup>22</sup> Some links to the Web TV round tables: <https://fb.watch/g087Z060qq/>; <https://fb.watch/g08fV6-6Y/>; <https://fb.watch/g08p3shKJY>



were reached through WhatsApp as of September 30, 2022, providing them the option to provide their inputs through audio in addition to text.

The production and dissemination of interviews, videos, and WebTV roundtables on mis/disinformation through *Tignè Ni Maya* provided valuable information for Malians and brought about a new awareness of misinformation that they encounter daily. Through the various platforms, 6 million people were reached on social networks.

*Tignè Ni Maya's* radio campaign was a critical component of the initiative given that most Malians listen to the radio. Mali PSR partnered with URTEL and Studio Tamani through a grant to broadcast 351 roundtables through 117 community radio stations in five dialects languages. Through *Tignè Ni Maya*, Mali PSR grantee Sabou Dorinthe developed a radio soap opera to sensitize citizens on ways to verify the credibility of information prior to sharing. There were 510 broadcasts that reached approximately four million listeners.<sup>23</sup>



Participants in a radio broadcasted roundtable discussion

Mali PSR awarded Viamo<sup>24</sup> a grant to set up a hotline to collect feedback on the radio campaign. The hotline collected real-time feedback and comments from listeners on the content of the radio shows. By the end of September, which marked the end of the first phase of *Tignè Ni Maya*, 486 radio listeners called the number and provided feedback on the radio shows. The survey results indicate that 87% of respondents were satisfied with the content on combating misinformation. One caller commented, "It is easier to destroy than to build." Another listener commented and said: "The Tigne Ni Maya campaign allowed us to distinguish between good news and bad news. This campaign has done fact checking to direct us to the right information on the transition and the political reforms underway."

**Supporting communes to implement PDESC community priority projects.** Based on the needs expressed by communities in the PDESCs and grievance response plans, Mali PSR awarded two grants that contribute the urgent needs: to the commune of Bourem for the installation of master dikes and Ansongo to equip the house of the craftsmen. The selection of the activities followed a meeting organized by Mali PSR that brought together the Mayors, Secretaries General and members of CSOs/CBOs of the eight communes of Gao. During this meeting, participants were asked to review and justify their proposals with an emphasis on the link between the proposed activities and service delivery that would contribute to social cohesion. Following a

<sup>23</sup> Source : audience research / Kantar Studio Tamani

<sup>24</sup> Viamo is a global social enterprise that specializes in mobile engagement and Information and Communication Technology for Development.

review of the proposals, Mali PSR conducted a verification exercise to ensure that the activities were formally included in each commune's PDESC, and that they meet the urgent needs of the communities, including access to basic social services (i.e., education, health, water and sanitation). As of the submission of the report, three other proposals for the communes of Ouattagouna, Tessit and Gao were under review at the end of the reporting period.



Priority project identification workshop, May 2022

#### **IV. GRANTS**

This year, Mali PSR received approval for 26 grant awards totaling \$551,013. Of this amount, 11 grants were awarded to support youth empowerment and 8 to fight disinformation activities nationwide. In addition, one grant was awarded to WILDAF to support women and reconciliation efforts, two were awarded to address priority community needs identified in commune PDSECs, one grant was awarded to Mercy Corps and one to APIB to address COVID-19 second order effects. By the end of the reporting period, 11 grants were being prepared to support youth entrepreneurs and artisans, and one grant is being prepared to support CNAP rollout of a National Early Warning Early Response platform. A complete listing of Mali PSR sub-awards is included in Annex 4.

#### **V. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

From October – December 2021, Mali PSR conducted midline assessment using a citizen perception survey was the methodology. The survey was developed to obtain feedback from citizens in PSR's target communes on the progress that the program has made towards key indicators in three years. As part of the midline assessment, Mali PSR also commissioned the *Association Malienne de Recherche - Action pour le Développement (AMRAD)* to conduct two qualitative evaluations from May to June 2022. The objective of the evaluations was to understand the impact of Mali PSR activities in the fight against violent extremism. Twelve focus groups were conducted with 104 participants. The second evaluation focused on learning how women members of Mali PSR's Community Engagement Committees contributed to program activities. Using one-on-one key informant interviews, 25 women CEC members were interviewed on what activities they are most involved in for Mali PSR and how they perceived their roles on the committee. The following results emerged from these evaluations:

- Youth have a good understanding of violent extremism;
- Young women are less able than young men to develop and implement activities to fight violent extremism;
- Young people in the communes of Diabaly and Ansongo have difficulty initiating activities due to lack of income;
- Women members of the CECs participate very actively in CEC activities and manage to prioritize their needs;
- Local governance remains an area where women members of the CECs are less active because men consider it to be a male prerogative.

**Grants Monitoring.** During the year, members of the Mali PSR Monitoring and Evaluation and Grants teams conducted grant monitoring missions in the regions of Segou (Niono and Pelengana), Mopti (Youwarou), Timbuktu, Gao (Ouattagouna), and Menaka (Anderamboukane) to review the activities of seven grantees.<sup>25</sup> Due to insecurity, the reviews were held in the capital of each region rather than in the commune where the grant activities were implemented.

The seven grantees had conducted sensitization sessions on conflict prevention and mitigation and training to enhance the knowledge and skills of key actors such as elected officials and community leaders. To ensure sustainability of their training and sensitization sessions, these grantees created youth and women's peace clubs in the communes of Ménaka, Anderamboukane, Alata, and Youwarou to address latent and tensions within their communes. Following these grant activities, grantees and some beneficiaries, felt their communities better coexisted, used peaceful ways to address their differences, and came together to build resilience to conflict and violent extremism.

Grantees such as the *Association pour la Promotion de l'Environnement et le Développement Durable* and the *Association Action Tartit pour le Développement Durable* used their awards to facilitate youth economic integration via income-generating activities. In the commune of Timbuktu, the grantee Tanminak used its grant to conduct sensitization and training sessions on citizenship, advocacy, conflict prevention and management, and social cohesion. The outcome of the training led to the establishment of a framework comprising 12 members to prevent and manage conflicts. Another example of the impact of the training was that the local youth council in the Timbuktu commune demonstrated their newly acquired negotiation and peacebuilding skills when they were able to successfully prevent other youth from violently protesting the attempted sale of two soccer fields in Abaradjou and Belafarandy.

In Niono, the *Association pour le Développement Socioéconomique et Technologique de la Jeunesse* trained 60 peer educators on conflict prevention and management. Three of them went on to use their skills to successfully mediate an inter-community conflict that arose between five villages: Koyan Koura, Koyan Bambara, and Aly Boubou Wèrè following the assassination of the son of the village chief of Aly Boubou Wèrè. They worked closely with key actors and influencers

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<sup>25</sup> The seven grantees were : Association de Soutien aux Initiatives Communautaires (Pelengana) , Association pour le Développement Socioéconomique et Technologique de la Jeunesse (Niono), The Association pour la Promotion de l'Environnement et le Développement Durable (Youwarou) TANMINAK (Timbuktu), Groupe de Réflexion pour les Initiatives de Développement (Ouattagouna), Groupe Action Recherche pour le Développement Local (Menaka) and the Association Action Tartit pour le Développement Durable (Anderamboukane).

such as the village chief, an advisor to the village chief, a youth representative, a women's representative, and a traditional communicator to manage and avert the conflict. Ultimately, the siege on the village of Tiémaba as a result of the clashes was lifted.

Under the *Tigne Ni Maya* initiative, Mali PSR awarded a grant to GISSE to conduct a baseline survey with 450 listeners to measure the impact of the radio campaign. The results of the baseline showed that 80% of the Malian population had never received any awareness about misinformation. The baseline also showed that 100% of the population aged over 15 years listens to radio and that 72% access information and news on and social media.

## VI. CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Mali PSR faced several constraints in year 4, but the consortium used those constraints as opportunities during the implementation of activities during the reporting period.

For example, the PSR program team spent significant time co-creating grants with youth to build their resilience to violent extremism and with commune councils to address urgent needs of the communities. However, most of the members of youth cooperatives and commune councils have limited capacity to complete the application forms and to develop viable grant applications. These limitations required the program team to provide more hands-on support to applicants than anticipated to complete their applications and to get them into shape for submission thus extending the time that had been programmed to complete the grant application process.

Mali PSR implemented programmatic interventions in communes where there were ongoing volatile security concerns. This required the program to have to relocate activities to safer locations. These changes were challenging logistically and had substantial cost implications<sup>26</sup> and in some instances created delays in the implementation of activities, such as finalizing the selection of priority projects in Tessit and Ouattagouna and cancellation of the governance training in Segue. Moreover, during the year, violent/armed groups vandalized cell phone towers in several Mali PSR communes, which was one of the tactics used to isolate communities such as Dire and Timbuktu. The destruction of cell towers made communication with the PSR program staff in communes and remote management very difficult. To mitigate the impact created in contacting staff members, Mali PSR installed satellites at the Mali PSR offices in Timbuktu and Gao.

Another challenge that the program encountered this year was the delays with the signature of the partnership agreement with CNAP and their decision to bring other partners into the communes to support EWER, which required the program team to do extensive coordination. The decision by CNAP to set up another platform, which was not yet designed, in lieu of the Mali PSR sponsored *PaixauMali* platform further delayed the operationalization of the commune-level early warning and early system. As a result, Mali PSR responded to the request of CSOs to activate the *PaixauMali* platform that will allow them to contribute to EWER efforts.

For the implementation of *Tigne Ni Maya* under Objective 4, Mali PSR requested a branding exception which was approved and allowed the pilot phase of the *Tigne Ni Maya* to operate independently and neutrally. Some of the challenges encountered included: 1) the coordination of ten CSOs and specifically the limited time for the review/verification of complex and sensitive

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<sup>26</sup> Governance trainings for the communes of Tessit and Ouattagouna in Ansongo and Youwarou and Ouenkoro in Mopti while the training in Segou could not take place. The entrepreneurship training for the Diabaly and Matomo communes took place in Segou and Markala.

content before publishing and 2) the availability of resource persons to participate in the radio roundtables. For example, in the regions of Timbuktu, Gao and Menaka, several panelists requested to be paid to participate. Another challenge was that the program was unable to track statistics on certain applications such as WhatsApp which is used predominantly in rural communities.

Mali PSR grantee Mercy Corps also reported challenges in implementation, noting that the vendor identification process took more time than expected and planned. This was largely because most of the vendors for the e-voucher distribution in the region of Kayes were not familiar with the NGO compliance processes and procedures. As a mitigation measure, Mercy Corps provided guidance to the vendors and was successful in selecting vendors with proper documentation for e-voucher distribution.

## **VII. LESSONS LEARNED**

### **Objective 2: Inclusive Governance and Civic Engagement Strengthened in Conflict-Affected Communities.**

Mali PSR has learned that the best way to stabilize certain communes is by investing in social programming to respond to urgent needs of the population. Mali PSR dialogues and trainings involving elected officials and CSOs at the commune level around issues related to budget elaboration, management, and allocation for PDSECs priority projects is a game changer. All these efforts and contributions required the buy-in of Mali's transitional authorities. It is recommended that donors in collaboration with the local authorities prioritize the funding of PDSEC projects within a specific sector to yield immediate social impact. Given the volatile security context and lack of transparency in the allocation of resources to the communes by the government, the PDSECs that have been developed to date are not able to meet the needs of the communities. In addition, many of these are hosts to displaced populations from neighboring or distant communes. In some localities, communal councils have also been moved to urban centers because of the intimidation of the VEOs. Consequently, in the absence of an emergency plan at the commune level, the IDPs and host communities have difficulties accessing basic social services from the communal councils, which nevertheless continue to benefit from state subsidies. The situation reinforces the overall perception that local authorities abandon IDPs to their fate whenever there is danger. Based on current experience, Mali PSR recommends that the government put in place a taskforce to address the needs of the citizens in targeted areas and sectors. Mali PSR recognizes that addressing the needs of populations with massive displacement requires both local authorities and international implementing partners to put in place the necessary innovative mechanisms to respond to urgent needs. It is necessary to support the communes that have been hard hit by VEOs or armed groups to regain control and to restore their institutional links with their constituencies, including the displaced as well as the remaining populations. According to Malian government statistics, there are approximately 500 communes in Mali in which nearly half of the population have been displaced by the effects of violent extremism or terrorism. To respond to such crisis, it would be necessary to build a crisis governance system that would ensure that the communal councils take on the responsibilities of caring for the citizens.



### **Objective 3: Empowering Youth and Building Their Resilience to Violent Extremism.**

In Mali, it is important to note that Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), like those in other developed countries, are facing four main challenges. 1) instability, 2) limited access to credit, 3) high interest rate on loans, and 4) limited access to markets. Based on Mali PSR experience, it would be helpful for Mali to have an incubator that would provide technical assistance to MSMEs. Incubators in Cote D'Ivoire, Rwanda or South Africa have helped strengthen the capacity of MSMEs mainly in the agricultural, artisanal and textile sectors to create jobs mainly for young men and women to discourage them from joining armed groups, as the lack of income-generating activities contributes to their enrolment in armed groups.

### **Objective 4: Democratic Transition Support, Impact of COVID-19, and Other Crises on Malian Communities Mitigated**

The lesson learned from the Tigne Ni Maya is that community radio programs play a major role in facilitating and promoting constructive dialogue and debates on a range of issues. When microphones are open for citizens to exchange on matters that relate to their daily lives (such as security, access to health, justice, jobs, education, and health) people do participate and feel safe sharing their experiences or points of view. A survey conducted by Mali PSR grantees GISSE and Viamo show that it is necessary to have thematic radio content to attract larger audiences to listen. National and community radio programs are a popular and useful platform to spread messages regarding fighting mis/disinformation. Through the various USAID implementing partners such as National Democratic Institute/EMERGE, Mali PSR sought partnerships to provide content to the community radios to ensure broadcasting is from reliable sources and of interest to most people. Hence, Mali PSR learned that is important that information campaigns be run through credible radio programs that are deemed a reliable source of information.

## **VIII. OPERATIONS**

### **Staff Changes**

Over the past year, Mali PSR experienced several staff changes.

- Musu Clemens who served as Mali PSR's Chief of Party (COP) resigned on March 13, 2022 and was replaced by Karl Jean-Louis who was mobilized to Mali on May 2, 2022.
- The Security Program Manager, Abdoulaye Traore, resigned on December 31, 2021 and was replaced by Patrice Dembele, who started on January 17, 2022. Mr. Dembele then resigned on July 31, 2022 and was replaced by Nouhou Mohamed Ag Issa on September 19, 2022.
- The Finance Manager, Djibril Kouma resigned on March 11, 2022, and was replaced by Moussa Diawara who started on June 13, 2022.
- The Program Assistant, Kani Diawara resigned on January 18, 2022, and was replaced by Fatoumata Traore who came on board on March 24, 2022.
- Abdoulaye Djibrilla Maiga, Timbuktu Procurement Assistant, resigned on May 25, 2022, and was not replaced.
- The Grant Assistant in Mopti, Mohamed Samake resigned on March 31, 2022, and was replaced by Marie Madeleine Koudemedo who worked from May 20, 2022, to August 19, 2022.
- Younoussa Maiga, the Grants Assistant in Timbuktu, resigned on July 15, 2022 and was not replaced.

- The contract of Abdoul Rahimi Harouna, Grants Development Officer Gao, expired on August 9, 2022.
- Batorman Sanogo was hired as the MEL Officer for Gao on December 15, 2021.

#### *Think Peace*

- The Community Coordinator of Segou, Ibrahim Harane Diallo's contract ended on April 30, 2022, and was not renewed. He was replaced by Sory Ibrahim Cisse on June 15, 2022.
- Ibrahim Guindo, Community Coordinator of Koro, resigned on May 30, 2022, and was replaced by Antiamba Guindo on June 1, 2022.

#### *AMSS*

- The Community Coordinator for Menaka, Anderaboukane and Alata, Moussa Ag Almarzock, resigned on December 1, 2021, and was replaced by Baba Ould Hamadi, who started work on December 21, 2021.

#### **Creative Headquarters Assistance**

Several TDYs were conducted during the year with staff that came from Creative's headquarters. They included:

- Jaqueline Glin, Senior Program Director, traveled to Mali in November 2021 to provide technical assistance and monitoring. She also traveled in March to serve as Acting COP following the departure of Ora Musu Clemens. TDY dates: March 16, 2022, to April 7, 2022.
- Natalie Hench, Senior Program Associate, traveled to Mali in March 2022 to conduct a finance training and to initiate a management systems review with the operations team.
- Deborah Kimble, (former) Practice Area Director, Democracy, Governance and Electoral Integrity, conducted a Training of Trainers (ToT) with governance experts in Bamako from May 21, 2022, to June 1, 2022.
- Nicholaas Rademeyer, Regional Security Officer, conducted a security training and undertook a security assessment with Mali PSR's new Security Manager. He also reviewed the program's security protocols. TDY dates: May 28 to June 3, 2022. He also traveled to Mali on September 26, 2022 to conduct an orientation to the second PSM who was hired during the year.
- Mustapha Below, Regional Grants Manager, conducted a TDY in Bamako from August 14 to September 3, 2022 to provide surge support on grants and to provide a refresher training to the Sr. Grants Manager who is responsible for the program's grant portfolio.

**Closing of Mali PSR's Segou Office.** Mali PSR's Segou office was officially closed on January 12, 2022. All equipment and materials were transferred to the Bamako office.

**Staff Retreat.** Mali PSR field-based staff assembled in Bamako for a team retreat in June. The purpose of the retreat was: 1) to take stock and evaluate the progress of the implementation of the Mali PSR program; 2) to review lessons learned; and 3) to adapt activity plans based on the lessons learned and challenges identified during the implementation of activities and to find solutions. The retreat also presented an opportunity for the new COP to meet the entire Mali PSR field team and to share his vision for advancing the program's goals and objectives. The team focused on the three pillars of how we work: communication, collaboration and coordination

within the consortium partners, and reviewed results-based management and security. The meeting was also an opportunity for Mali PSR staff to get to know each other face to face, and to have the opportunity to discuss challenges in the field, as well as achievements and successes.



## IX. SEQUENCING, LAYERING AND INTEGRATION

Mali PSR consolidated coordination with key government entities and other implementing partners to ensure complementarity and sustainability, maximizing U.S. government funding and program effectiveness. During Year 4, the following coordination activities took place.

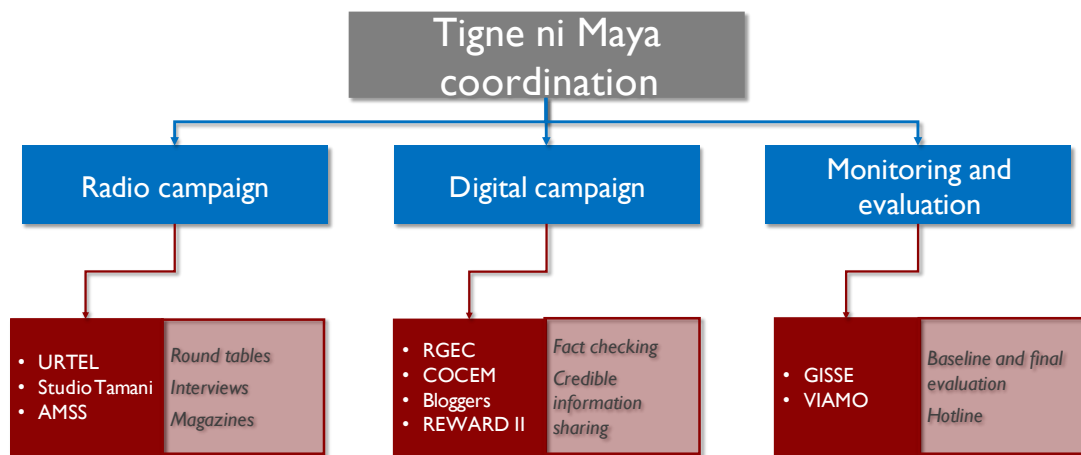
Mali PSR signed a partnership protocol with CNAP to operationalize the commune-level Early Warning and Early Response system. Mali PSR also held briefings with the newly appointed Director of the National Commission for Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration on Mali PSR's development of the DDR white paper. The program signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education through the National Directorate of Pedagogy (DNP) to develop a model lesson guide to raise awareness on violent extremism among youth.

Mali PSR participated in a USAID meeting to discuss how social cohesion can contribute to humanitarian access and efforts. Following this meeting, the Governor of Menaka requested Mali PSR support for the operationalization of the Crisis Management Committee of Menaka.

Through Mali PSR consortium partner, Think Peace, the program partnered with Zabbaan Holdings to conduct microenterprise training for youth. Zabbaan has extensive experience working in the agricultural sector and with government, such as with the National Employment Agency (*Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi, ANPE*). In addition, a partnership was created with Centre

N'Domo, Farafinatigne, Timidwa and Union des artisans de Menaka to support youth artisan enterprises.

Under the Tigne Ni Maya initiative to fight disinformation online and offline, Mali PSR leveraged past USAID investments by setting up a coordination mechanism incorporating implementing partners such as Viamo, EMERGE, and USAID/REWARD, and civil society organizations such as WILDAF, COCEM, and RGEC into program activities focused on countering mis/disinformation. The key partnerships under Tigne Ni Maya were developed with Malian national media outlets such as Studio Tamani and the umbrella radio organization Union des Radios et Television du Mali.



## X. SUCCESS STORIES

Please see attachments.

## XI. SUBSEQUENT QUARTER'S PLAN

As detailed in the Mali PSR Annual Workplan, submitted to USAID on September 15, 2022, Mali PSR will complete activities while working towards ensuring sustainability of program achievements. Illustrative activities planned in Year 5 include the following:

- Train 220 focal points in 22 communes to collect and transmit incidents on the *Alerte Mali* platform and support CSOs in uploading incidents on the *PaixAuMali* platform for CNAP response. Both platforms will contribute to the commune-level Early Warning Early Response system once fully operational.
- Conduct activities to support individual and community healing processes for victims of trauma
- Complete the development of four white papers aimed at informing GOM and USG thinking and policy options around issues of DDR, conflicts, and governance.

- Provide youth with the tools and skills to leverage community assets to create businesses that address social challenges in their communities and build livelihoods through training, micro-grants, and career planning to prepare them for the job market.
- Conduct activities that support community members and youth in understanding and performing their key role in addressing false mis/disinformation
- Assist the U.S. government in supporting a successful political transition by providing targeted assistance such as fighting disinformation through digital and radio campaigns;
- Conduct final program endline evaluation.



## ANNEX I: COMMUNE CLASSIFICATION

### Under Objective 1

- Level of conflicts
- Status of the mechanisms to prevent and mitigate conflicts
- Existence of external threats

### Under Objective 2

- Functioning of state services
- Basic social services to the citizen
- Existence of communication and exchange mechanisms between the state and the citizens

### Under Objective 3

- Existence of radical beliefs
- Engagement of youth in violent extremist activities
- Occupation by violent extremist groups

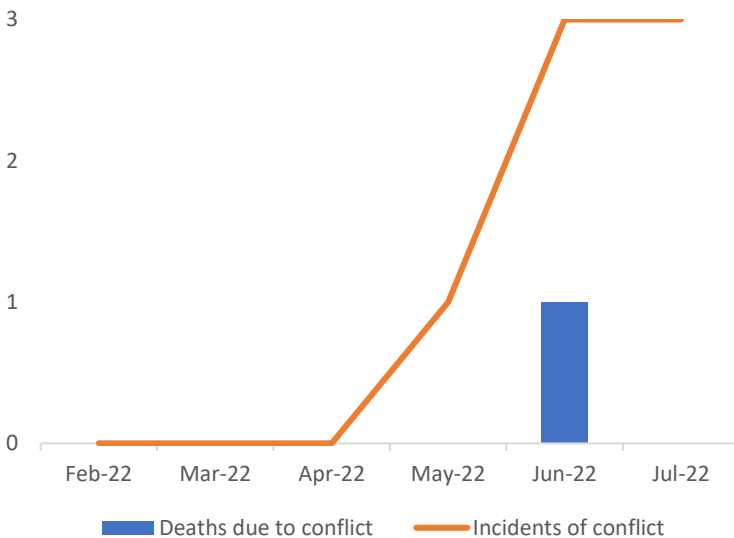
**Table I. Assessment Tool Used by Mali PSR to Update Status of Target Communes**

Criteria	Status 1: Conflict Commune	Status 2: Buffer Commune	Status 3: Resilient Commune
<b>Objective 1: Community resilience to violence and conflict reinforced</b>			
Conflict level	Open and violent conflict	Latent conflict	No open conflict
Status of mechanism for conflict prevention and resolution	Non-operational/non-existent mechanism	Reactive or irregular mechanism	Functioning and proactive mechanism
External threats	Presence of armed groups	Threats of armed groups	No threats from armed groups
<b>Objective 2: Inclusive governance and civic engagement strengthened in conflict-affected communities</b>			
Functioning of State bodies	Absence of the State	Intermittent State presence	Continuous State presence
Service delivery	No service delivery	Intermittent service delivery	Continuous service delivery
Consultations and communications between State and citizens	No consultations and communications	Occasional consultations and communications	Regular consultations and communications

Criteria	Status 1: Conflict Commune	Status 2: Buffer Commune	Status 3: Resilient Commune
<b>Objective 3: Youth empowerment and strengthened resilience to violent extremism</b>			
Existence of radical religious currents	Continuous presence of active armed groups	Intermittent presence of armed groups	Absence of armed groups
Engagement of youth in violent extremist groups	Enrollment of youth in violent extremist groups	Radicalization of youth	Positive dynamics allowing youth to resist radicalization
Influence of violent extremist groups	Presence of violent armed groups imposes Sharia, prohibits cultural activities, imposes fees	Sporadic influence of violent armed groups	No influence of violent armed groups

## ANNEX II: EXAMPLE SITUATION REPORT

### July 2022 Situation Report: Segue Commune, Mopti



**Summary:** Over the past six months, violence in Segue has become ethnically colored (Peul/Dogon) and has increased in frequency. Reported incidents of conflict include attacks on communities by suspected JNIM militants and clashes between JNIM militants and Dan Na Ambassagou militiamen.

**Prognosis:** The combined factors of violent extremism, ethnic tensions, and seasonal resource conflicts create a viscous cycle of potential escalation over the next three months.

#### Recommendations/Priorities:

- Humanitarian and non-governmental organizations should anticipate the possibility of increased food insecurity over the next three months.
- There is an opportunity to conduct peacebuilding interventions among Dogon and Fulani communities to reduce their susceptibility to co-option by violent extremist groups.
- Liaise with the CNAP and the ECOWAS Early Warning Directorate for national and regional synergy.

#### SEVERITY SCALE

<b>1 - Low - Little or no impact on conflict risk</b>	
<b>2 - Latent - A potential risk to the intensification of conflict in the commune concerned</b>	
<b>3 - Chronic: The risk profile is chronic and persistent, but there have been no major changes recently.</b>	
<b>4 - Urgent: There has been a sudden change and urgent increase in severity.</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>5 - Intensification: This indicator worsens and has a cascading effect on one or more of the other thematic fields, creating a vicious circle</b>	

THEMATIC AREA	DESCRIPTION
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	Theft of livestock and looting of granaries during the rainy season will impact food security during the dry season from October to December.
<b>CRIME/CRIMINALITY IMPLICATIONS</b>	In addition to violent extremism and ethnic/communal violence, community looting adds an element of banditry that could reinforce cycles of predatory violence.

<b>HEALTH IMPLICATIONS</b>	Ethnic violence, violent extremism, and banditry impact physical injury and food security. Widespread insecurity and displacement can reduce access to health services.
<b>SECURITY IMPLICATIONS</b>	Ethnic violence, violent extremism and banditry destroy lives, livelihoods and property.
<b>GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	Relative lack of public security presence and ambiguous governance of the security sector by community militias.
<b>GENDER IMPLICATIONS</b>	Women, as janitors, are severely affected by the looting of villages and the displacement of the village of Niondo.

<b>MONTHS</b>	<b>INCIDENTS</b>
<b>FEBRUARY 2022</b>	No
<b>MARCH 2022</b>	No
<b>APRIL 2022</b>	No
<b>MAY 2022</b>	Suspected JNIM militants kidnapped four people, including two herders, and seized a large number of sheep and goats in the village of <b>Dioboro</b> .
<b>JUNE 2022</b>	Suspected JNIM militants looted and burned the village of <b>Niondo</b> and asked the residents to leave. Suspected JNIM militants and Dan Na Ambassagou militiamen clashed in the town of <b>Ségué</b> . The militants seized livestock. One person was killed.
<b>JULY 2022</b>	Suspected JNIM militants burned houses and motorcycles, sabotaged granaries, and seized livestock in the Dogon village of <b>Dian</b> . Suspected JNIM militants burned houses and motorcycles, sabotaged granaries, and seized livestock in the Dogon village of <b>Diounda</b> . Suspected JNIM militants attacked the Dogon village of <b>Sama</b> . The number of victims is unknown.



## ANNEX III: LIST OF COOPERATIVES

N°	REGION	COMMUNE	NAME OF THE COOPERATIVE	Member		Sector
				Male	Women	
01	Segou	Diabaly	Simplified Cooperative Society Scoops " Sinignesigui " Agropastorales of the youth of Diabaly	6	4	Poultry farming, fattening, trade,
02		Matomo	Simplified Cooperative of Matomo Youth for the Valorization of Income Sources "CS JMVS	7	3	Fattening, Trade
03		Macina	Simplified Cooperative Society of the Youth of Macina for the Development of Agropastoral Activities	5	5	Fattening, Agri-food processing
04		Tongue	Cooperative of the youth of Tongue	5	5	Fattening, Agri-food processing
05	Mopti	Bandiagara	The Cooperative Society of Youth for the Promotion of Livestock and Trade of Bandiagara (COOPs JPECB)	5	5	Forklift, Trade,
06		Bankass	Bankass Youth Cooperative	6	4	Animal husbandry, Market gardening Trade,
07		Douentza	Weltare Simplified Cooperative of Douentza	6	4	Forklift, Trade,
08		Konna	Simplified Cooperative Society of the Youth of Konna for the Development of Agropastoral Activities (SCOOPS JKDAAP)	5	5	Fattening, Agri-food processing
09		Koro	Simplified Cooperative of the Youth of Koro for the Development of Agropastoral Activities	5	5	Poultry Filling,
10		Youwarou	Youwarou Youth Cooperative	5	5	Forklift, Trade,
11	Gao	Ansongo	Ansongo NAFA Simplified Cooperative	5	5	Animal husbandry, Market gardening Trade
12		Bourem	The Simplified Cooperative Society of the Youth of Bourem for the Development of Agropastoral Activities SCOOPS-JBDAAP	7	3	Animal husbandry, Market gardening Trade
13		Soni Ali Ber	Sonni Ali Ber Bonifonda Simplified Youth Cooperative	5	5	Animal husbandry, Market gardening Trade
14	Kidal	Kidal	Simplified cooperative of the youth of Kidal for the development of agro-pastoral activities	7	3	Animal husbandry, Market gardening Trade
15		Anefif	Cooperative Simplifiee Des Jeunes de Anefif, TASSAK	6	4	Animal husbandry, Market gardening Trade

16	Ménaka	Menaka	Simplified cooperative of the youth of Ménaka for the development of agropastoral activities	6	4	Animal husbandry, Market gardening Trade
17	Timbuktu	Ber	Cooperative Simplifiée Des Jeunes De Ber	10	0	Animal husbandry, Market gardening Trade
18		Diré	Cooperative Society with Board of Directors SUBA NAFA	7	3	Animal husbandry, Market gardening Trade
19	Taoudenit	Agouni	Simplified cooperative of the youth of Agouni for the development of agro-pastoral activities	8	2	Animal husbandry, Market gardening Trade

## ANNEX IV: Mali PSR GRANTS in FY 2022

	Commune	Grantee	Description	Status	Nature
<b>OBJECTIVE I</b>					
1	Macina, Djenné, Ansongo et Menaka	Women in Law and Development in Africa	Support to widowed heads of households	Agreement signed	FAA
2	Mali PSR 22 communes (North and Center)	National Center for Early Warning (CNAP)	Operationalizing commune-level Early Warning and Response	Submitted to HQ	In-Kind
<b>OBJECTIVE II</b>					
3	Bourem	Commune Council	Development of dams	Agreement signed	In-Kind
4	Ansongo	Commune Council	Supply and installation of electrification equipment for the Maison des Artisans	Agreement signed	In-Kind
5	Ouattagouna	Commune Council	income generating activities for women and youth	Submitted for grantee's signature	In-Kind
6	Tessit	Commune Council		Submitted to HQ	In-Kind
7	Gao	Commune Council	Cleaning of gutters	Submitted to HQ	In-Kind
<b>OBJECTIVE III</b>					
8 - 18	Douentza, Koro, Agouni, Ansongo, Bandiagara, Bourem, Diabaly, Dire, Kidal, Matomo et Menaka	Youth cooperatives	Animal fattening/poultry farming, market gardening, trade and/or local juice production	Pending approval of restricted commodities	In-Kind
19- 26	Anefif, Bankass, Ber, Konna, Macina, Soni Ali Ber, Tongué et Youwarou	Youth cooperatives	Animal fattening/poultry farming, market gardening, trade and/or local juice production	Submitted to HQ	In-Kind
27	Segou	Atelier Ndomo	Aid to young artisans	Submitted to HQ	FAA
28	Mopti	Farafinatignè	Aid to young artisans	Submitted to HQ	FAA
29	Timbuktu	Timidwa	Aid to young artisans	Submitted to HQ	FAA
<b>OBJECTIVE IV</b>					
30- 37	Nation-wide	GISSE, Viamo, RGECC, URTEL, Studio Tamani, Sabou Dorinthe, COCEM	Fight against disinformation	Agreements signed	FAA
38	Sikasso	APIB	Addressing COVID-19 second-order effects	Completed	FAA

39	Kayes	Mercy Corps	Addressing COVID-19 second-order effects	Agreement signed	Standard grant
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