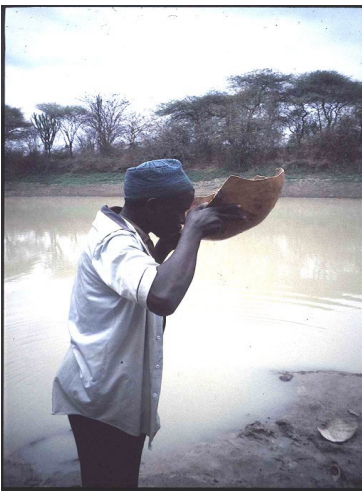


Country strategic plan summary for 2000 - 2015

This document describes how Plan Mali and its partners will mobilise the different resources to improve the welfare and prospects of vulnerable children. It provides the strategic framework for consistent and continued action from 2000 to 2015.

Mali covers more than 1.2 million square kilometres, and has a population of approximately 12 million, 24% of whom are between the ages of 19 to 24 years old. The Sahara Desert occupies 60% of the country to the north, thus the population is concentrated in the south, where there is more rainfall.



Access to safe drinking water is a priority

PLAN IN MALI

Plan started its operations in Mali in 1976 during the period of the Sahelian drought and famine. With more than 30 years of history in Mali, Plan's activities can be divided into three periods of varying length. During 1976 to 1984, Plan's operations were organised to alleviate the immediate effects of the drought on the suffering population. Plan's assistance ranged from distribution of medicines and agricultural inputs to nutrition projects. The program was essentially centred on relief activities and community participation was minimal. During the period of 1985 to 1993, Plan shifted its focus towards strengthening community organisations and village institutions to respond better to future crisis. Plan supported the communities' efforts in construction of permanent sources of water, schools, health centres and erosion control systems. Community participation was relatively high. Since 1994, the pendulum has swung sharply from emergency assistance to addressing the long-term development interests of the communities and to putting in place a child-centred community development approach.

Since the beginning of Plan's operation in 1976, five program areas have been opened: Banamba (1976), Kangaba (1982), Kati (1984), Kita-Kourou (1994) and Baroueli (2005).

MAIN ISSUES AFFECTING CHILDREN

"*You cannot shave someone when he is absent,*" says the Malian adage. Therefore, Plan Mali's intervention, in line with the government's decentralisation policy, aims at making the communities play a key role in their own development. We use participatory methods and focus groups to facilitate participation of the poor and the rich, men and women, children and adults in the identification of issues. Following are the main issues identified:

- 1. High death rate among children and mothers due to:**
 - Malaria, respiratory infections, diarrhoea and malnutrition
 - Insufficient health services
 - Low community participation in the management of pharmacies and maternity centres
 - Inadequate response to HIV and AIDS awareness campaigns
 - Low access to safe drinking water which cause infectious and parasitic diseases
 - Inadequate and insufficient basic sanitation facilities

- 2. Poor quality of primary education due to:**
 - Insufficient and inadequate school facilities leading to overcrowded classrooms
 - Inadequate learning materials
 - Insufficient number of teachers
 - Unqualified teachers and poor school management
 - Poor awareness on the benefits of girl's education at the community level

- 3. Low protection of children against excision, child labour and trafficking due to:**
 - Lack of awareness on the Convention on the Rights of the Child signed by the government at various levels
 - Lack of children's involvement in the fight for their rights due to traditional beliefs

- 4. Lack of birth certificates among children and youths**

5. **Obstacles to children's participation in decision-making and in exercising of their rights due to conflicting socio-cultural traditions**
6. **Low income level of Malian households (less than one US dollar per day) due to :**
 - Poor production, diversification, productivity and conservation in agriculture
 - Lack of diversification of income-generating activities
 - Poor savings practices and insufficient access to sustainable credit institutions
 - Poor capacity of community-based and communal organisations to support or lead development processes



"When you educate a boy, you educate one person, but when you educate a girl, you educate a whole family, a whole community."

OUR RESPONSES

1. Child and maternal survival focuses on:

- Provision of mosquito nets and training on effective prevention and treatment of malaria for children.
- Provision of financial and technical support to community-based organisations to improve the health facilities, combat the spread of malnutrition, respiratory infections and diarrhoea, enhance immunisation and nutrition and carry out anti-diarrhoea awareness campaigns.
- Prevention of HIV and AIDS and support and care of children affected and infected by the disease.
- Construction and promotion of safe and clean water sources.
- Construction and promotion of improved latrines for schools and households.

2. Child education and development focuses on:

- Early childhood care and development programs
- Improving the quality of primary schools and informal education
- Literacy training for adults, particularly for women

3. Promoting protection and participation of children by:

- Enhancing the capacity of communities and the civil society to protect children from harmful practices
- Supporting birth registration campaigns
- Facilitating, supporting and advocating children's participation in the development process at the community, local and national levels

4. Strengthening economic independence of women by:

- Supporting the poorest households in food production and diversification of income-generating activities
- Facilitating access of poor families to credit and loans
- Reinforcing the capacity of community-based organisations and local authorities for better planning and management of their development

OUR PROGRAM APPROACH

Children, families and communities identify issues and priorities, and prepare the community development plan with the assistance and supervision of community-based organisations. Plan supports the implementation of programs in partnership with government offices, local authorities and non-governmental organisations. Children participate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs and inform sponsors and potential donors on child-related issues.



Children participate in the development of their community