



COUNTRY PORTFOLIO REPORT MALI ROUND 2
(2017–2019)

Prepared for
12th Board Meeting
9 June 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Since 2016, GCERF has been funding programmes aimed at strengthening resilience to violent extremism in Mali. In the second cycle of the first round of funding, a total of USD 1,965,243 was invested in programmes covering the regions of Kayes, Koulikoro, Mopti, Segou, and the district of Bamako. In total, the investment brought together 16 Malian civil society organisations, divided into three consortia and led by three Principal Recipients (PRs): Association Malienne pour la Survie au Sahel (AMSS), Environnement- Développement du Mali (ENDA-Mali) and Secrétariat de Concertation des Organisations Non Gouvernementales Maliennes (SECO-ONG).

1.2 Between April 2017 and December 2019, the programmes reached 77,745 direct beneficiaries (45,364 men and 32,381 women) and 864,816 indirect beneficiaries, including the following population groups:

- Rural and urban women;
- Rural and urban youth;
- Pupils and teachers of Quranic schools; and
- Community, religious, and traditional leaders.

1.3 For the second round of funding in Mali, GCERF is re-investing USD 2,600,000 into four different consortia. Two grants with Think Peace and Action Mopti were signed in March and April 2020, and the other two grants are expected to be signed with ENDA- Mali and AMSS by the end of June 2020.

Drivers of Violent Extremism

1.4 AMSS, ENDA-Mali, and SECO-ONG, as described in 1.1, conducted a baseline survey to identify the context-specific drivers of violent extremism and address some of them in their programmes. They found that the most recurrent drivers are:

- Perceived lack of governance and related services; lack of “presence” of the State in certain areas, corruption and discrimination by state authorities;
- Lack of economic opportunities, unemployment; and material incentives provided by violent extremist groups;
- Illiteracy, lack of access to formal and informal education opportunities; and
- (Mis)interpretation and misuse of religion.

2. ACTIVITIES BY GCERF LEVERAGE POINT

Social Cohesion

2.1 Throughout the programmes, **42,253 community members** directly participated in activities whose objective was to enhance **social cohesion** (25,576 men and 16,677 women). Most of the activities aimed at raising awareness about the negative effects of violent extremism and spreading messages of peace, forgiveness, and mutual understanding between local communities. Interreligious dialogues were hosted to address the role of religious leaders in the prevention of violent extremism. Discussions were also organised to raise awareness amongst local communities on the drivers of violent extremism.

Community Agency

2.2 Between April 2017 and December 2019, the three consortia engaged **27,046 direct beneficiaries** in activities designed to promote **community agency** (16,236 men and 10,810 women). Advocacy meetings were organised to promote access to property rights for women. Training sessions for young people on non-violent conflict management allowed participants to identify types of conflicts and resolution mechanisms.

2.3 **123 village or town district committees** not only raised awareness on violent extremism but also identified individuals at risk of radicalisation and families in distress in order to discreetly orient them to counselling or to provide direct help. Particularly in the countryside, village committees seek to detect arising conflicts early and initiate dialogue; this is because the Malian grantees have observed a growing number of cases, where extended families resort to extremist groups to put a (violent) end to an escalated local conflict.

Equal Access to Opportunities

2.4 **7,381 vulnerable individuals** (3,061 men and 4,320 women) benefited from **economic empowerment and livelihood activities** designed to help lift the barriers that limit access to social and economic opportunities. Beneficiaries received training on vocational skills, such as forestry product processing or gardening, as well as entrepreneurship training focusing on setting up small micro enterprises (SMEs). Participants received start-up kits of material to contribute to developing their own business. Micro-income generating activities were implemented for unemployed and economically marginalised young people in rural and urban areas.

Sense of Purpose

2.5 Throughout the three years of funding, a total of **1,065 beneficiaries** (491 men and 574 women) directly participated in activities designed to provide individuals with **confidence, critical thinking, and other life skills**. Due to these activities, talibés (religious school students), vulnerable women and girls, and out-of-school young boys increased their sense of purpose. Face-to-face follow up meetings were organised with beneficiaries on a regular basis to follow up on their progress.

3. ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTCOMES

3.1 This section details the achievement of the outcomes, as planned on the results-frameworks developed by grantees during round 2.

3.2 The following *Figure 1* summarises the achievement of project Outcomes. 'Overachieved' means that the actual values for the Outcome Indicators exceeded their Targets for the specified time period(s), 'Achieved' means that the actual values for the Outcome Indicators reached at least 90% of their Targets for the specified time periods, while 'Underachieved' refers to Outcome Indicator values being less than 90% of their Target value. The data here does not include results that have been cancelled during reprogramming in year 1 or 2 of implementation.

3.3 The outcomes being assessed at the completion of Mali grants were classified into five categories: (i) behaviour change at community level (e.g. community change agents who report being involved in PVE activities); (ii) behaviour change at individual level (e.g. individual beneficiary who reports being involved in PVE activities); (iii) knowledge change (e.g. individual beneficiary who reports or is tested on acquiring knowledge on PVE); (iv) perception change (e.g. individual beneficiary who reports perceived level of confidence in obtaining livelihoods); and (v) improved livelihood and employment (e.g. individual beneficiary who reports being gainfully employed or having increased income).

3.4 *Figure 1* shows the achievement by type of Outcome Indicator, while *Figure 2* shows the rate of achievement per type of Outcome vis-à-vis the primary population groups targeted by the programmes during Mali Round 2.

Figure 1: Achievement of Outcomes by Type – Mali portfolio (April 2017 – December 2019)

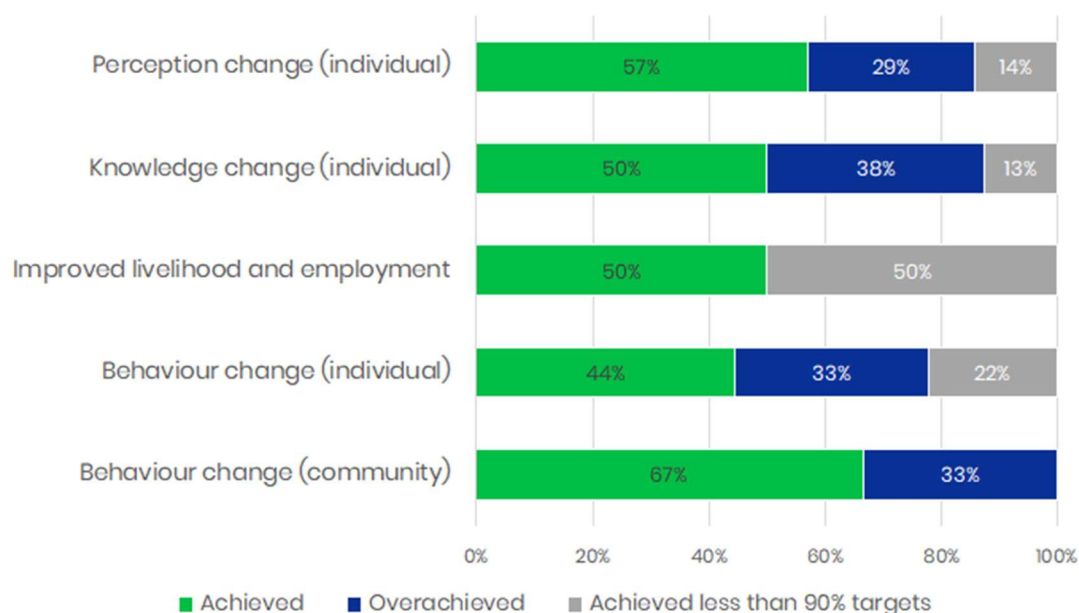


Figure 2: Achievement of Outcomes by Type per Population Group – Mali portfolio (April 2017 – December 2019)

Average Achieve Rate by Population Group

Indicator Classification	Religious/community			
	leader	Youth (general)	Community members	Women
Behaviour change (community)	104%	100%	100%	
Behaviour change (individual)		71%		117%
Improved livelihood and employment		100%		71%
Knowledge change (individual)	100%	100%		138%
Perception change (individual)		96%		

3.5 From the outcomes planned, according to the Results-Framework submitted after the completion of the grants, the **most successful type of outcome achieved was behaviour change at community level**, which is quite surprising given the difficulty of achieving this type of effect. That was especially the case for the outcomes in this category related to religious and community leaders as a target population group.

3.6 On the other hand, **improved livelihood and employment was the type of outcome which had a significant proportion that achieved less than 90% of the target**. However, when investigated by population group, 100% of this type of outcome was successful when

targeting youth (general). However, grantees achieved less than 90% on this type of outcome when related to women as a population group.

3.7 Grantees have reported inclusion of women in certain activities to be challenging, since cultural and social norms regarding gender equality represent a barrier, as discussed in Section 5: Challenges of this paper. Grantees were potentially too ambitious setting targets at the start of the project, downplaying the difficulties represented by these norms.

3.8 Although these numbers provide a good overview, more in-depth discussions about the qualitative effects of the programmes and what has been learned are discussed in the Sections 4: Lessons and Insights, 5: Challenges, and 6: Sustainability of the Programmes. For example, despite the reported underachievement regarding livelihood and employment for women, there were some cases of success (Section 4, Lesson 6).

3.9 Finally, in order to better monitor and evaluate the programmes in the next round, GCERF and grantees might need to implement more sophisticated tools, such as panel studies that trace individuals across time; these can facilitate the collective learning to better understand the longer-term impact of PVE activities in Mali.

4. LESSONS LEARNED AND INSIGHTS

4.1 This section will discuss some of the lessons learned from activities that were implemented by the three Mali grantees during round 2. GCERF commissioned an independent evaluation of two out of the three consortia, focusing on AMSS and ENDA-Mali grants. The Independent Evaluation occurred during the last quarter of 2019. In the subsections below, relevant considerations and recommendations from the Evaluation Report are inserted.

Mobilising key stakeholders for PVE

Lesson 1: Effective PVE programming requires involvement from local leadership and community engagement

4.2 The three grantees stressed the importance of involving local political, traditional, and religious authorities in the implementation of the activities. Their cooperation was deemed essential to ensure sustainability and **increase the visibility of the presence of the state** among the population. Community engagement was identified as a key factor for successful programmes by the three grantees.

PVE awareness raising

Lesson 2: Radio is still a powerful vehicle to disseminate PVE messaging, despite the emergence of new forms of media

4.3 Radio shows on the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) were broadcast in Bambara, Dogon, Fulani, French, and Songhay. They reached listeners in the programme coverage areas, but also across the border in Burkina Faso. Local radio reporters were invited by the consortia to attend other activities, such as hosting graduation ceremonies of vocational training graduates. Grantees recommended continuing to broadcast PVE debates on local radios in regions where the programmes are implemented.

4.4 Independent Evaluation: *Community and national radio is one of the principal media to transmit PVE messages and should be encouraged to be used in the future. However, it is essential that PRs and SRs developing radio messages on PVE be provided with necessary training on effective messaging.*

Lesson 3: The creation of safe environments is crucial to allow difficult conversations around PVE to happen, but a more thorough follow-up is needed to evaluate its effectiveness

4.5 The consortia also organised **small group discussion sessions and workshops** on PVE for youth, local leaders, talibés, and their teachers. Discussion sessions were coordinated in collaboration with local elected officials, women, and youth associations. Workshops organised in groups of 5-10 persons were particularly successful, as they created a safe environment conducive to discussion and questions.

4.6 Independent Evaluation: *While this was reported as an effective way of transmitting PVE messages and creating a safe space for discussion, it is important that future PRs and SRs which are undertaking this activity come up with a storyline and provide a series of discussions / regular meetings. A perception study before and after the activities should be encouraged by GCERF to better understand the effectiveness of this type of messaging.*

Lesson 4: Large events could be multipliers in terms of PVE awareness raising, but more careful design and stakeholder engagement is needed

4.7 **Regular, large-scale in-person events** such as public debates, information events, and community days were organised to raise awareness on PVE. Grantees further relied on a network of volunteers who shared their knowledge on violent extremism with other participants of voluntary activities such as street cleaning.

4.8 Independent Evaluation: *These activities need to be accompanied by service provision to better resonate with the population. The participation of state authorities is essential in these events to ensure their visibility.*

Socioeconomic empowerment to build resilience against VE

Lesson 5: Context-tailored vocational training can empower vulnerable populations and generate trust, but should be accompanied by PVE messaging

4.9 **Training on vocational skills** were organised for the vulnerable population, including pupils of Quranic schools (talibés). The content of the training was tailored to the area of implementation: in rural areas, the activities mainly focused on agriculture, farming, or forestry product processing; in urban areas, beneficiaries could develop their skills in plumbing, clothing tailoring, electrical installation, motorbike repair, print industry, and construction.

4.10 The training was often associated with **business management training**, found to be extremely useful by beneficiaries during their efforts to set up businesses. Apprenticeships and on-site training sessions were also appreciated as they combined theory with practice. Material kits that were provided to beneficiaries who graduated from the training were essential to help them set up their own business.

4.11 Independent Evaluation: *These economic activities should be accompanied by the provision of soft skills in the future. PVE messaging can be highly effective with this group as direct service provision is sustained. In addition, identifying change agents from this group may prove to be effective as their lives are directly impacted by PVE activities.*

Lesson 6: Women's economic empowerment is an important dimension of resilience against VE, and can be achieved through IGA activities but also through advocacy

4.12 The outcomes related to improved livelihood and employment, especially when related to women, underachieved in comparison to the initial targets. It was possibly due to over-ambitious goals, but also because the programmes might have underplayed the challenge represented by social and cultural norms when working on women's economic empowerment.

4.13 However, the project had positive results on supporting income-generating activities (IGA) for women and girls, promoting equal access to opportunities between men and women. In addition to improving the living conditions of beneficiaries and their families, the IGA increased women's access to land, leadership, and entrepreneurship. Their participation and concerns expressed to land commissions were increasingly accepted and taken into consideration. In Niono and Macina, one grantee successfully advocated for improving women's access to arable land. Following a series of meetings with local agricultural associations and political, administrative, and traditional authorities, local decision-makers committed to allocating parcels of land to women.

4.14 Independent Evaluation: *This was reported as a highly successful activity. Similar to the above lesson, PVE messaging can be highly efficient with this group as they are direct beneficiaries of service provision. The presence of local state authorities is essential to strengthening their position within the communities.*

Community engagement and mobilisation

Lesson 7: Community engagement-oriented activities could restore trust between people and their local leaders and conflict resolution mechanisms and facilitate community mobilisation. Both are crucial ingredients to build community resilience against VE

4.15 The three consortia in Mali **promoted community engagement** in their programmes through training and interactive dialogue sessions on conflict management, good governance, and PVE; focus groups to inform and sensitise communities on human security; and inter-community and interfaith dialogues. Traditional leaders and representatives of communities convened to discuss the local security situation and propose solutions to anticipate potential risks. As a direct result of the programme activities, community leaders noted an increase in mediation requests, and volunteer groups were created to detect arising conflicts and initiate community dialogues.

4.16 Independent Evaluation: *These activities had a direct influence on the lives of community members, hence their effectiveness. It would be important in the future that these groups are followed up/traced to see how long they are sustained after the support of the PR has concluded. The success of these activities was largely attributed to the ownership and presence of local and state leaders.*

5. CHALLENGES

Lack of security

5.1 The overall **security situation** hindered implementation of activities, especially in the North and Central Mali. Grantees reported an increase of intimidation, kidnapping, targeted attacks, assassination, and inter and intra community clashes between armed self-defence or violent extremist groups. Some activities had to be postponed or relocated to limit large gatherings and avoid risky environments.

Violent extremism is still a taboo

5.2 Grantees reported that their participants were **sometimes reluctant to discuss the topic of violent extremism**, especially in awareness-raising meetings. The presence of violent extremist groups in some villages weakened the efficiency of conflict resolution

mechanisms and intercommunity dialogues. Despite the risks encountered, the three PRs highlighted the commitment of participants, who overall maintained a high level of participation in the activities.

5.3 Independent Evaluation: *New ways of communicating in highly volatile areas is encouraged in the new round in case similar activities are to be proposed. Extreme conflict sensitivity around messaging and exhibition is to be practiced avoiding any backlash.*

Risk of retaliation

5.4 **Community watch groups** were also confronted with challenges. The members were sometimes reluctant to denounce potential VE cases, as they worried about possible retaliation by violent extremist groups. Grantees reported that the members were denounced to security authorities and amongst the population.

5.5 Independent Evaluation: *The formalisation of these groups may be required to avoid instrumentalization of them by criminal and VE groups.*

Social and cultural norms regarding gender

5.6 The PRs noted the **difficulties of involving women and girls** in programme activities, due to the social and cultural norms around gender equality. They suggested gradually introducing principles of gender equality into the programmes, to avoid drastic changes in local norms.

5.7 Independent Evaluation: *The identification of women champions can be another way to bring more women on board. Peer to peer involvement could also work in the Malian context.*

Insufficient support in-country

5.8 Grantees highlighted the importance of GCERF support in the implementation of the programme, especially in the management, monitoring, and reporting. However, one grantee regretted the **absence of support from the CSM** regarding grant management activities. The PR further recommended **a GCERF focal point** in Mali, to coordinate activities throughout the country and centralise information.

5.9 Independent Evaluation: *It should be noted that since December 2019, GCERF has hired a National Advisor, who serves as an interlocutor between GCERF's Secretariat and key stakeholders in Mali; supports the establishment of grant-making and grant management efforts in the country; and supports capacity-strengthening of grantees.*

The CSM has also been reinvigorated since December 2019 to ensure closer state support to PVE. Members of the CSM will be regularly invited to monitor and participate in activities proposed by the PRs.

6. SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROGRAMMES

6.1 One of the most crucial aspects of any PVE programme is its capacity to not only achieve the desired outcomes, but to ensure that the community engagement and outcomes achieved become sustainable. From lessons learned, the following factors for the sustainability of programmes were identified and will be taken into full consideration for the next round of funding.

Sustainability Factor 1: Identifying the right change agents for awareness-raising

6.2 Identifying change agents, such as religious leaders who are looking for new ideas for public speeches or seasonal migrants who can take the message to their home villages, is essential to increase programme impact. Change agents do not necessarily need to be highly influential figures in society, as peer influence can have a real impact, especially among the youth.

Sustainability Factor 2: Develop intense collaboration with political, traditional, and religious authorities

6.3 The cooperation with political, traditional, and religious authorities was inherent to the success of the three programmes. The grantees found it useful to incorporate the programme activities into the communal development plan to ensure their sustainability.

Sustainability Factor 3: Establish committees/steering groups for income-generating activities

6.4 All grantees established committees or steering groups among the beneficiaries to make decisions and to manage the financial administration of cooperatives, associations, or saving and credit clubs.

7. GRANT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (GPA) RESULTS

7.1 This section summarises the overall grant performance of the three grants for Mali CFM Round 2. Grant performance was assessed using the Grant Performance Assessment (GPA) framework.

7.2 The GPA framework is a rating mechanism based on six criteria: (1) Programmatic, (2) Operational, (3) Financial, (4) Consortium management, (5) Alignment and relevance, and (6) Outcomes and sustainability. Each criterion is subdivided into one or more equally

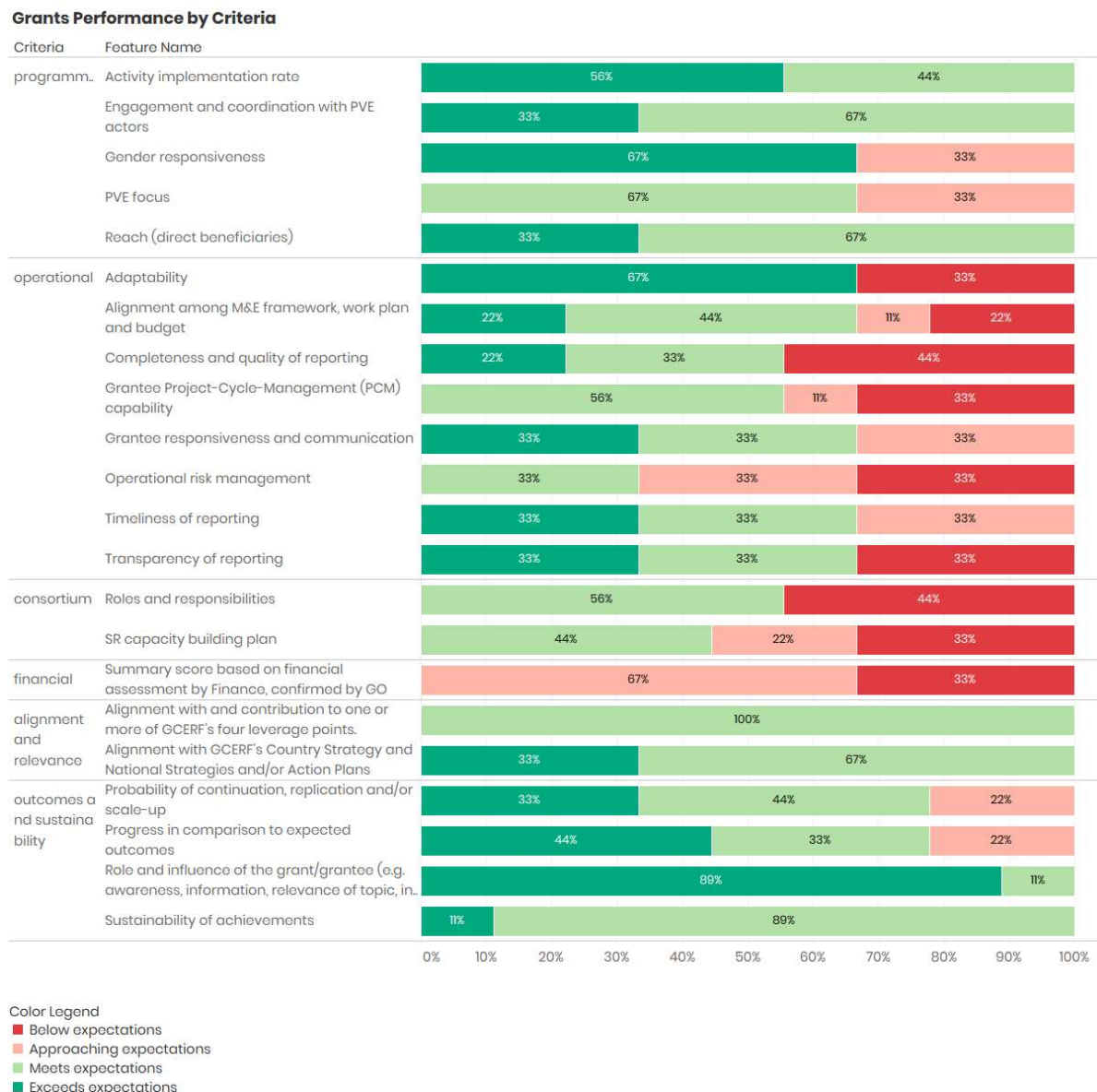
weighted features. The GPA framework applies rubrics that describe and define four performance levels for each individual feature: (4) Exceeds Expectations, (3) Meets Expectations, (2) Approaching Expectations, and (1) Below Expectations. Some of the criteria are assessed quarterly, others semi-annually or annually.

7.3 *Figure 3* below summarises the scores. Dark green and green areas show good to very good performance while light red and red show areas where the performance of the grantee approached or was below expectations. The X-axis shows the percentage of grants (of the total three). The score on the X-axis corresponds to the four performance levels described above.

7.4 It presents a balanced picture of the three consortium performances across multiple criteria. On average, all were approaching expectations or below expectations. Both Operational and Consortium-management criteria also have a mix of performance, ranging from exceeds expectations to below expectations. Alignment and relevance is the only criteria in which all consortiums had on average a performance that exceeded or met expectations.

7.5 Although some of the results were not satisfactory, an important consideration is that Malian grantees did start the projects with a very low operational and financial capacity. There was some improvement across time on operational and financial capacity, but in some cases not enough to be considered as *meet expectations*. It signals that in future, there is a need to further increase capacity building support in those areas.

Figure 3: Grants Performance Assessment for Mali Round 2 grants



Stories of Resilience: Turning Suffering into Strength in Ségou

Boubacar is a village chief's son from Ségou. He lost his arm in a gun fight, and the local court took four years to adjudicate his case. During the legal process, he lost all of his property. Seeing how unfairly he was treated, Boubacar suspected that the perpetrator, who was much richer than he, bribed the judge. After suffering this injustice, Boubacar was highly vulnerable to the recruitment promises of violent extremist groups.

A GCERF-funded grantee noticed him and invited him to an awareness-raising event. When Boubacar responded well to this, they asked him to join a community watch group. He was inspired by these activities and went on to mediate conflicts in his home village.

Because of his personal story of healing and forgiveness, he has become very convincing a mediator. In the future, Boubacar hopes to reach out to religious leaders and traditional authorities to raise awareness on PVE.

Annex 2A: Executive Summary of Evaluation of Mali Round 2 (ENDA and AMSS)

Executive Summary (without recommendations)

This report represents the work of the End-of-Grant Evaluation commissioned by GCERF on the conclusion of two GCERF grants which have been operational in Mali since 2016. These 2 grants have funded two programs which are the subject of the evaluation, namely:

- *“Projet de renforcement de capacité de résilience des communautés des régions de Ségou, Mopti et du District de Bamako face à l’extrémisme violent” implemented by Association Malienne pour la Survie au Sahel (AMSS) and*
- *“Formation professionnelle et insertion des jeunes (garçons et filles) et des femmes comme moyen de lutte contre la pauvreté” implemented by Environnement-Développement Du Mali (ENDA-Mali)*

The evaluation was conducted by Conflict Management Consulting in cooperation with Groupement d’Intérêts Scientifiques des Statisticiens Economistes (GISSE) and is based on data gathered from the communities where GCERF-funded activities have been implemented, more specifically in the regions of Bamako, Ségou and Mopti. Data-gathering occurred during the months of October and November 2019.

*The evaluation finds that, at an overall level, the relevance and effectiveness of the GCERF-funded activities to the lived socio-economic and socio-political realities at community level have been amply demonstrated by the data. Beneficiaries across the spectrum of activities and across geographical areas attest to the benefits accrued to themselves and their communities, based on activities implemented by the SRs. In this sense, the activities of the grants have been well-targeted and effective in terms of addressing the drivers of VE, as identified by the **GCERF Strategy 2017 – 2020**, namely marginalisation, alienation, weak state-society relations, and social exclusion.*

*More specifically, “**socio-economic**” activities, which include vocational education and training activities and income-generating activities, have been successful in generating income and improving the living conditions of direct and indirect beneficiaries. As such, their marginalisation has decreased, increasing resilience to VEO ideology and thus reducing the probability of VE. Some concrete challenges emerged with these activities, specifically concerning the donated equipment, where it is unclear who manages the donated equipment. But the main conclusion arising from socio-economic activities are their “spill-over” or secondary consequences; by this is meant that the very success of the socio-economic activities generates the demand for more resources, equipment, and knowledge to further expand the economic activity itself. It is not clear that more support to socio-*

economic activity, which has become sustainable, will further reduce the potential for VE in this group, as discussed in the recommendations below.

*In the area of “**socio-political**” activities, which include radicalization awareness and orientation activities, thematic education activities (for example, on governance, citizenship, conflict management), and community dialogue activities, activities have been successful in contributing towards a common understanding of radicalisation and the broader conflict in Mali. This has resulted in initiatives which have improved relationships to the local government and improved relationships between communities in urban and rural areas. The sense of social unity in the face of the common threat presented by VEOs is seen as the major contributor to resilience against VEOs which results from these activities, thus corresponding to the VE drivers of weak state-society relations, alienation, and exclusion identified in the GCERF Strategy 2017-2020 Strategy. Surveillance committees, despite a limited occurrence, are still a concern as noted in 2018, as is the inherent fragility of local socio-political initiatives in the face of larger regional and national conflict dynamics, which require additional support to be sustainable.*

On the recommendations made in the TPM of 2018, which included

- *“Recruitment of girls and women for participation activities could consider explicitly drawing women and girls in as groups”.*
This has been applied in the case of the activities of ENDA with respect to their target group 3, namely “young girls and women, scholars and non-scholars, precarious work”.
- *“Vocational education and training activities should be sensitive to the practical difficulties of participants and not allow this to entail exclusion from participation”.*
This has not been noted as a problem in this EGE.
- *VET (Vocational Training) activities can be followed-up by a hand-over to SME-financing facilities of activities which have matured enough for this step”.*
This activity has been beyond the scope of the two grants assessed here but remains relevant.
- *“The concrete procedures pursued for security purposes should be extensively checked and validated with local partners before they are implemented”.*
Interviews with the PRs showed a very high degree of security awareness, including the awareness that in some settings, there was a risk that members of VEOs could be amongst the audience in public gatherings. PRs have responded that in each case, the SRs have responded by formulating communication in a manner that would not exacerbate tensions.

Recommendations

On the basis of the aggregated findings above, the following recommendations are made:

- **Continue to build a common socio-political understanding of VE and radicalization at community level:** *the unifying and mobilizing effect of a shared understanding of the reasons and consequences of PVE and radicalisation operates as a platform for common community action and for a common sense that something active can be done to respond to the crisis. This sense of empowerment is very valuable and effective and permeates into better relationships between communities and local authorities on the one hand, and between sections of communities themselves, on the other. In these cases, the outcome of socio-political interventions of both Grants contributes to PVE by forging a common community front in the face of radicalization.*
- **Cease GCERF socio-economic support when it becomes sustainable:** *the “spill-over” tendency for successful socio-economic support to beneficiaries to convert itself into additional demands for socio-economic support (more investment of resources, equipment and knowledge) with the aim of expanding the economic activity, has been clearly documented. It is however unclear at what point the socio-economic support has achieved “enough” in terms of PVE, as the existing body of knowledge in the area does not enable such a benchmark. Amongst the drivers that contribute to VE, poverty and marginalisation are amongst the well-recognized, and in this sense existing IGA and VET activities may be said to contribute to reducing VE. From this point of view, a cut-off point for GCERF contributions should be at the point when socio-economic activity has achieved sustainability, in other words, when the risk of poverty and marginalisation is mitigated. It may be possible to pass successful beneficiaries on to other actors for the further development of their economic activities and in this way ensure that GCERF resources go to the most vulnerable groups, namely those who remain poor and marginalized.*
- **Support the talibés:** *the precarious socio-economic conditions and high rates of geographic mobility characterising the lives of many talibés, as well as some community stigmas suggesting that talibés are especially prone to recruitment by VEOs, continues to position this group as vulnerable. Apprenticeships, VET and other kinds of socio-economic support should be continued as an effective intervention preventing marginalization, alienation and vulnerability to recruitment by VEOs on these grounds. Additionally, efforts should be made to destigmatize talibés in popular consciousness, perhaps through support to the establishment of a national organisation representing talibés and their stakeholders. It is important, based on the*

data from this evaluation, that all initiatives vis-à-vis talibés are compliant with the religious commitments of talibés, which remain a primary priority for talibés. Additionally, GCERF action on such a recommendation would require a thorough prior analysis of the potentials and challenges involved, including a consideration of the extent to which support to talibés constitutes an endorsement or critique of the conditions under which talibé lives are lived, including the question of the human rights of talibés in this equation. This EGE does not find that the time is inappropriate for a more directly socio-political engagement with talibés and the masters of the Koranic schools.

- **Clarify who owns and disposes of equipment donated to apprentices:** GCERF is advised to continue to donate equipment to apprentices, but to clarify and formalize who manages donated equipment and on which terms the apprenticeships, where donated equipment is utilised, are initiated. Within the framework of the GCERF Strategic Risks concerning the deployment of resources defined in the GCERF Strategy 2017 – 2020, the background for this recommendation is that, in some cases, donating equipment to apprentices is associated with contestation about who manages the equipment and this has implications for the relationship between beneficiaries and their masters, including on remuneration practices. In the context of poverty, equipment is a very valuable resource to both apprentices and their masters and the question of whether or not the apprentice is prepared or required to make this equipment available to their masters is a factor in determining the terms on which the apprenticeship goes ahead. The clarification of this issue should be done on the basis of a prior understanding of the locally appropriate relationship between an apprentice and their master.
- **Continue to build on relationships and projects that have already been established:** the significant amount of social capital that has been created by the activities funded by the GCERF grants is a major outcome of the last few years. For this reason, any new GCERF activities in Mali should further build upon the network of relationships that has already been created with existing PRs and existing communities, using this as a significant resource in terms of:
 - Broadening IGA's beyond the initial group of beneficiaries, which is a very common concern amongst direct beneficiaries on the existing programs
 - Sustaining community dialogue, as respondents suggest that this needs future assistance for sustainability. To this can be added the need to strengthen local level dialogue in the context of increasing conflict
 - Sustaining and further developing the relationship between local government and communities, as this has been an important factor in conscientizing

communities about their rights and about the obligations of local government

- *Sustaining sensitization activities to actively maintain the social unity that has emerged from defining a common threat to community security*
 - *Conceptualizing and initiating new PVE activities in dialogue with communities*
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- **Cease GCERF support to surveillance committees.** *Although Key Informants (KIs) from Bamako and Mopti report that the surveillance committees are successful and that they have increased community security, the TPM conducted in Mali in 2018 had as one of its recommendations, that caution be exercised with respect to the establishment of surveillance committees, specifically because the mandate and powers of such committees are beyond regulatory or institutional control. In some cases, “arrests” by committees were reported, bringing their practice into a problematic grey zone. This picture has been strengthened by the current EGE, with reports that surveillance committees have become parties to local conflicts which have more to do with settling local scores than actively combatting PVE. This concern was also raised by the interview with ENDA in Bamako in October 2019, who discouraged the further establishment of surveillance committees.*