



USAID

Education

USAID/Mali has implemented education programs in partnership with the Ministry of National Education in Mali for more than 60 years. Decades-long complex and multi-faceted crises, underpinned by protracted conflict and insecurity, continue to weaken Mali's educational system, threaten learners' safety, and diminish access to quality learning opportunities, particularly for girls. Educational facilities, equipment, and supplies have largely been damaged or destroyed. Insecurity and violence have prompted many teachers and school administrators to abandon their professions entirely and seek alternative careers. Adding to these challenges, social and economic factors such as child and early marriage, adolescent pregnancy, a dearth of certified teachers, and economic pressures on Malian families further limit students' opportunities to learn and remain in school.

Our programs respond to these challenges by strengthening basic literacy skills and promoting equitable access to quality education for all learners including girls, children with disabilities, and those affected by conflict. Foundational to Mali's future development and self-reliance, USAID's education programs help build a more educated, healthy, and resilient Mali.

EMPOWERING YOUNG MALIANS THROUGH QUALITY PRIMARY EDUCATION

USAID supports the Ministry of National Education to improve learning through relevant, bilingual education grounded in evidence and proven methods. Our flagship education program Doniya Taabolo, or "The Path to Knowledge" in the local Bambara language, aims to improve learning outcomes by working with students, families, and schools.

The project focuses on expanding proven local language literacy programming and introducing a primary mathematics program to improve overall learning outcomes for students in grades 1 and 4; the project aims to reach 300,000 students, 50 percent of whom are girls and 3 percent children with disabilities. The project works with school management committees, community volunteers, and parents to have the skills necessary to support children's learning and improve learning outcomes in reading and mathematics.

PREPARING TODAY'S YOUTH TO BECOME TOMORROW'S LEADERS

USAID works to build a generation of future leaders and ensure today's youth have access to quality education and other social services so they can lead brighter and more prosperous lives. Over the next five years, USAID's Shifin ni Tagne project, or "Youth and Development" in Bambara, will reach between 18,000 and 20,000 Malian youth with education initiatives, workforce readiness programs, media literacy, entrepreneurship skills, information related to private sector engagement, environmental protection, reproductive health, and community participation. These efforts will ensure that young people learn how to manage life's challenges in a healthy way and will help youth build deeper connections with their friends, families, and communities. Young Malians will also participate in programs that will help redefine and influence existing social norms that far too often restrict their full potential.

ADVANCING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIRLS

USAID incorporates gender-sensitive programming throughout all our education programs. Long-standing cultural and behavioral practices in Mali have engrained disparities between men and women, often clouding what is socially acceptable and limiting girls' opportunities to lead prosperous lives. These disparities ripple throughout society, including in education. Many young girls, especially those who are forced into early marriage, often have no other choice than to drop-out of school or not enroll at all. They also frequently choose to remain silent after experiencing violence to avoid stigma or rejection from their communities. Between 2019 and 2023, USAID helped raise community awareness of these and other harmful gender norms, installed anonymous incident reporting boxes in schools, created a gender-based violence referral system, and trained community ambassadors to strengthen locally-led efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. As a result, nearly 30,000 Malians learned how harmful practices negatively affect women and girls and how to address them.

Girls also face disproportionate hardships accessing required documents to enroll in school. Without a birth certificate, for example, girls cannot attend school, increasing their risk of early marriage as they forego an education. To help overcome this barrier, USAID worked with School Management Committees between 2019 and 2023 to negotiate with judicial services to obtain birth certificates more quickly and at reduced costs. Thanks to these efforts, nearly 20,000 out-of-school girls returned to school and 7,000 of them obtained birth certificates. USAID remains focused on improving girls' sustained access to safe and quality education.