

CENTRAL MALI PROJECT

FOR SECURITY AND
DEVELOPMENT

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Research on the population's perceptions of security, governance and development in Central Mali.



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Aerial view of a sand mining port in Ségou



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SPECIAL APPRECIATION

Our thanks go first and foremost to all the people of central Mali who patiently answered our questions in each survey.

FOREWORD

Understanding the perceptions and needs of the populations by giving them a voice and listening to them, was the ambition of this research project conducted in central Mali by SIPRI and its partner Point Sud, funded by the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Mali.

The European Union has been present in Mali since 1958 and supports the country in various fields, including the environment, road infrastructure, humanitarian aid, institutional support and culture. The project has supported Malian institutions, in line with the EU missions in Mali, by combining research and development. Indeed, the collection of objective and contextualized data is essential to identify the needs of the populations we serve and to understand local issues in order to allow development actors to better define their interventions and adapt them to the needs of the populations.

Central Mali is a land of contrasts between the Niger Delta, the cliffs of Bandiagara and the Gourma desert. Geographical richness refers not only to the diversity of production methods, whether agricultural, pastoral or piscicultural, but also to the diversity of lifestyles and therefore, finally, to the diversity of local contexts. The heterogeneity of local situations is exposed herein, whether by geographical realities — villages, cercles and regions — or social and economic realities. Understanding this diversity is all the more essential today, as within a decade, the populations of central Mali have seen their sociopolitical, environmental and especially security environment change. Those whose daily lives have been disturbed were interviewed over four years, and the main results are presented in this report.

BART OUVRY

Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Mali

SIPRI is an independent international institute, which for more than 50 years has been dedicated to research on armed conflict and examining multiple efforts to achieve lasting peace. Its work aims to understand the root causes of these conflicts, including local conflicts, as well as their consequences for societies and to provide recommendations to national and international actors, based on objective and independent data.

The 'Central Mali Project for Security and Development' is fully in line with the vision and mission of SIPRI. Understanding the complexity of conflicts in central Mali requires a local approach, based on the populations' perceptions in order to address human security concerns.

The production of knowledge and data on conflict areas is a major challenge that we have been able to address thanks to a partnership with the non-governmental organization (NGO) Point Sud and funding from the European Union in the Republic of Mali. Between 2019 and 2022, quantitative and qualitative research was regularly conducted among the populations of central Mali, focusing on indicators of governance, socio-economic development and security. This body represents today, an important database able to inform both humanitarian and development actors and Malian institutions working towards stabilization.

This work has become all the more necessary as access to certain localities and communities is restricted. The continuity of this work over four years has made it possible to provide 'local knowledge'. Giving a voice to the populations of central Mali is essential to strengthen our understanding of current issues. This publication is a modest testimony to their daily lives.

DAN SMITH

Director of SIPRI

Established in 1997 and based in Bamako, Point Sud, the research centre for local knowledge, aims to strengthen dialogue between scientists from Africa and the rest of the world. Led by Professor Mamadou Diawara, Chair of Anthropology at Goethe University since 2004, and Professor Tiéman Diarra, health anthropologist and former head of community-based interventions in the fight against malaria at the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa in Brazzaville. Point Sud is a one-of-a-kind institution in Africa whose main missions are: research on the interface between local and global knowledge, the promotion of young researchers and the synergy effects between university knowledge and development projects. Each year, Point Sud offers several scientific forums in eight member countries of its network (Burkina Faso, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal and South Africa), where experts from Africa and elsewhere discuss current issues, in cooperation with civil society. Since 2020, it has also been home to the *Pilot African Postgraduate Academy (PAPA)*, which trains early-career African researchers. The institution, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and Goethe University in Frankfurt, collaborates not only with universities around the world, but also with renowned research centres, such as SIPRI as part of the 'Central Mali Project for Security and Development.'

For four years, SIPRI and Point Sud worked together in a scientific partnership, funded by the European Union in the Republic of Mali. This project has made it possible to strengthen the capacities of the personnel involved, whether they are scientific leadership, technical coordination or administrative and financial support. This research, which is a first in Mali given the size of the sample and the time spent, helps us to understand populations' perceptions of security, socio-economic development and governance. The results of this research are presented here.

PROFESSOR TIÉMAN DIARRA

Research Director, Co-Director of Point Sud

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INTRODUCTION

Already more than 10 years of a crisis described as multidimensional: from the consequences of the fall of the Libyan regime in 2011 to the continuous expansion of radical armed groups to the centre and then the south of the country through the occupation of cities in northern Mali by jihadist groups, Mali is facing one of the biggest crises of its history.

In 2012 – 2013, while the crisis mainly concerned northern Mali, from 2015 onwards, it was the central regions that have been destabilized by the establishment of radical armed groups. The distrust of these groups towards the state is concretely reflected in targeted attacks against its symbols (barracks, schools, security posts), its representatives (mayors, prefects, judges and magistrates), but also traditional and customary authorities. Kidnappings and assassinations have become the daily life of the populations of central Mali and the instrumentalization of social and community tensions, sometimes very long-standing, has led to acts of violence between communities. This crisis is first and foremost dramatic for the civilian population: 2022 was the deadliest year and the number of internally displaced people in Mali reached 440 000 (UNHCR, 2023). The deployment of various international military operations since 2013 has not stabilized the situation, nor do the delays in the implementation of the peace agreement signed in 2015 make it possible to find a lasting solution to the crisis in the north.

In this context, on 18 August 2020, Mali experienced its 4th coup since independence in 1960. President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta elected in 2013 and re-elected in 2018, is overthrown by the military. This coup followed several months of contests to the government, led by opposition political parties, civil society organizations, and also religious movements claiming to be followers of Imam Dicko (former president of the Malian High Islamic Council), for instance. The demonstrators, Friday after Friday, demanded the departure of the president, denouncing corruption and bad governance as well as the manipulation of the results of the legislative elections of April 2020, which were upheld in the midst of the pandemic and despite the kidnapping of the main opposition leader Soumaïla Cissé. Eventually, like in 1991, and after a particularly deadly event in July 2020, the military took power, effectively leading the president and his government to resign. Mali is now ruled by transitional authorities and a National Transitional Council, which brings together members chosen by the president of the transition from among the country's main political and social forces, with a mandate to lead the transition until the election of new civilian authorities.

Calls for a return to constitutional legality have caused dissension between Mali and the Economic Community of West African states (ECOWAS) as well as with some neighbouring countries and other partners. The extension of the transition phase has aggravated tensions: Mali has been suspended from several regional bodies, it has left the G5 Sahel; tensions with France and European and regional partners, such as Côte d'Ivoire and Niger, led to the departure of French troops and the withdrawal of foreign United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) troops (Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Denmark, Sweden, United Kingdom, etc.).

Mali, presented as an example of democratic success in the 90s, is now going through a serious crisis of governance. If Mali is the most visible face of the crisis playing out in the Sahel, it is important to note that the Malian crisis is not only a security crisis but that it is also – and even above all – a political, economic and human crisis and that it now affects the central Sahel.

• The crisis is a security crisis

The state no longer exercises its authority in the north of the country, controlled by the signatory movements of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation resulting from the Algiers process (APR, 2015). While the ceasefire enshrined in the Agreement has been respected by the signatory parties since 2015, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has several groups in the north that commit recurrent acts of violence. Overall, radical armed and terrorist groups have expanded their presence in the territory and are now moving throughout the Sahel strip. Before the 2000s, the rebellions only took place in the north of Mali (and Niger) and were limited to regionalist demands, the establishment of AQIM, the development of radical and jihadist groups such as Ansar Dine, MUJAO, Katiba Macina. However, the unification of these different movements into the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (GSIM, 2017), linked to Al Qaeda, and their opposition to the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) have complicated the issues. ISGS, for its part, settled in the Menaka and Gao regions, particularly after the departure of Operation Barkhane.

• The crisis is economic

The Saharo-Saharan strip has always been a transit zone for nomads and herders, trade and exchanges between communities without borders being a real obstacle. With this crisis, border control, the militarization of certain areas, such as along the Algerian or Mauritanian border, and the presence of radical armed groups, has profoundly changed trade and routes. Daily activities are severely affected by insecurity, especially on trade and transhumance routes. Armed groups, whatever they may be, control trade and trafficking routes, which, although not new, have nevertheless developed considerably (drugs, weapons, migrants, medicine, gold, etc.). Competition for control of these routes is one of the main factors in the regular bloody clashes between the groups.

• The crisis is political

The election of Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta in 2013 raised hope after the 2012 crisis and the occupation of northern Mali cities by jihadist groups, including the application of Sharia law. Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta had placed the return of state sovereignty and authority at the forefront of his priorities: from the conference on decentralization (October 2013) to the national conference for the development of the northern regions (November 2013) and the launch of the inter-Malian dialogue (July 2014), the first months of the presidency demonstrated a certain political voluntarism. However, Prime Minister Moussa Mara's visit to Kidal (May 2014), during which violent clashes broke out between armed groups and the Malian army, marked a turning point and forced negotiations with armed groups in the north. Conducted under international mediation, under the aegis of Algeria and the United Nations, the finalization of the APR in Bamako (May and June 2015) positioned Mali as an ally in the fight against terrorism and was to stabilize the country. But several corruption scandals, lack of progress in implementing the APR, and a deteriorating security situation in central Mali have weakened the presidency and successive governments. Growing protests by political parties but also by civil society organizations and the inability to restore security have led to the overthrow of the democratically elected authorities by the army (18 – 19 August 2020), still in power, with presidential elections expected in the first half of 2024.

• The crisis is also and above all human

Violence against the civilian population leads to significant population displacements, particularly within the country, with commuting movements according to attacks and violations committed by both armed groups and the defence and security forces.

IN THIS CONTEXT, UNDERSTANDING THE DAILY LIVES OF THESE POPULATIONS IS THE PRIMARY AMBITION OF THIS RESEARCH. TO BE ABLE TO MEET THEIR NEEDS, IT IS FIRST FUNDAMENTAL TO UNDERSTAND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DYNAMICS AND CONCERNS. THE VERY WORRYING SITUATION IN CENTRAL MALI REQUIRES MULTI-LAYERED CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES AND A LONG-TERM VISION OF PEACE AND SECURITY. TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS, GIVING PEOPLE A VOICE IS ESSENTIAL.

The development of a local knowledge based on populations' perceptions

To understand the multifactorial challenges facing the region, it is essential to produce local knowledge based on objective and independent data to identify local actors' perceptions and representations of their situation and environment. Much has already been written about the Malian crisis. This research is therefore based on an extensive knowledge of the existing literature, but knowledge of local realities is another equally essential element for understanding the interactions between political, social and community dynamics, humanitarian emergencies and development. This research aims to present local realities to better guide actions conducted in central Mali.

All threats to stability have ended up disrupting previous development dynamics, exacerbating vulnerability factors (poverty, inequality, limited access to public services, etc.) and undermining social cohesion between individuals and communities. The deterioration of the security situation continues and is manifested through the upsurge in attacks against the armed and security forces, MINUSMA, administrative authorities and the civilian population.

Many initiatives have been launched to combat terrorism and insecurity. On the government side, the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection had, in 2017, initiated an Integrated Security Plan for the Central Regions (PSIRC) which aimed to strengthen the security apparatus in the area and included four components: security, governance, socio-economic development and communication. The implementation of the PSIRC has been supported by various international partners including the European Union through several projects: the Support Programme for the Strengthening of Security in the Mopti and Gao regions and the management of border areas (PARSEC), the EUCAP Sahel and European Union Training Mission (EUTM) missions, the Youth and Stabilization Programme (PROJES). Today, the central regions stabilization strategy has been adopted and is being implemented by the Permanent Secretariat of the Central Crisis Management Policy Framework.

But, despite the efforts made in central Mali, the various interventions face major challenges: structural weakness of the state, growing insecurity, lack of coordination in programmes, poor access to intervention areas because of the extreme volatility of the security context. Under these conditions, it is difficult to attain reliable data on the real situation, especially at the local level. Yet, this

essential knowledge makes it possible to adjust interventions and programmes and to measure the impact of policies on populations in the overall context of the stabilization and development of the central regions of Mali. **The objective of this research is to understand the needs and priorities of populations in order to support the programmes implemented by the technical and financial partners and the national actors they support.**

To support these actions, the surveys conducted by SIPRI and its partner Point Sud measure the evolution of populations' perceptions through three key indicators relating to governance, development and security.

SIPRI uses a mixed research method, both qualitative and quantitative, which is the only way to grasp the complexity of local dynamics. The qualitative method made it possible to collect the accounts of populations, traditional authorities, farmers, breeders and traders, and recorded the observation of life in the localities 'field journals'. The quantitative method measured changes in perceptions over four years, in time and space, but also according to socio-economic profiles, age, education level, gender and many others. This bottom-up research method provides a holistic framework for interpreting the situation of populations living in central Mali. The regularity of the surveys has made it possible to measure developments and perceptions and to highlight trends over time with regard to changes in the socio-political and economic environment.

The research was conducted in the regions of central Mali (Ségou and Mopti to which are added, since 2021, those of Bandiagara, Douentza and San), which are areas of economic and strategic interest for Mali and its partners. Central Mali is located at the heart of several geographical crossroads and close to Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger. The area concerned also includes the southern shore of the Niger loop, which is crucial for Mali's economy. The cercles cover various realities. Understanding them and the local issues is a relevant tool to help with the programming of activities and political decision-making.

While populations maintain relations of mistrust with the central state, long perceived as predatory and arbitrary, community narratives have been able to find a favourable echo in favour of this crisis, understood as means of promoting local interests or changing the balance of power. The crisis has exacerbated the vulnerabilities of populations, whose activities are mainly focused on subsistence economy, making them even more vulnerable to exogenous shocks, such as floods or lack of rains, animal health diseases, etc. This situation of insecurity increases the vulnerability of populations to all other risks, whether climatic, security, food, etc. The challenge to state authority by armed non-state actors accentuates its structural weaknesses. If the state is unable to meet the basic needs of its populations or if it loses the monopoly on legitimate physical violence, people can turn to other service providers.

These four years of survey have highlighted the difficulties and challenges specific to the populations of central Mali. Conditions have been documented at the governance, socio-economic development and security levels. These objective data, measured and updated every three months, give precise indications of the constraints and opportunities specific to these regions. They also make it possible to compare local situations and to take into account the variables most relevant for the analysis of the data to which we add the accounts and thematic qualitative surveys.



VIDEO. SIPRIoverviews

Understanding and addressing the root causes of conflict in central Mali.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Trust in local authorities, whether elected or traditional and customary, shows that the state is also built 'bottom-up'. The existence of two distinct spaces of legitimacy — traditional and electoral — has consequences for the mechanisms of local governance. The local level is not the most inclusive and the lack of codification of decisions taken by traditional and customary authorities can place populations in a situation of legal uncertainty. The state must protect the most vulnerable populations (women, young people, foreign-born communities, for example) who suffer, more than other citizens, from inequalities in customary governance mechanisms. In addition, traditional authorities do not always have a good relationship with local elected officials who use them for tax collection and other services but ignore them as partners in local governance. The definition of local governance and the challenges of local authorities must be a priority for the authorities to support communities. Mayors and councillors must have the means to manage communities, and this is all the more important in the context of insecurity where populations are isolated.

3. Strengthen links between the military and civilian populations to combat insecurity. The proximity of the armed forces, with regular patrols and better responsiveness, is an essential requirement for the protection of populations provided that the forces are trained to respect human rights.

2. The territorial coverage of basic services is uneven and services are generally of low quality. People often denounce inefficiency, incompetence of personnel or lack of material means. Public services are less and less functional, their quality is severely degraded (complaints that also come from state officials). But it is important to remember that civil servants continue to work: local actors have different perceptions, logic, action and strategies from those deployed by the state. However, growing insecurity and regular attacks by radical armed groups are impacting the provision of basic social services. Insecurity not only limits the construction of new infrastructure but also disrupts the functioning of existing infrastructure. To better adapt aid programmes, it is important to understand the lived reality of officials and populations. Indeed, the programmes give priority to supporting reforms of the central state, highlighting its deprivation and failures, but this prevents us from seeing how local governance adapts to the rules and constraints imposed by armed groups and the absence of the state and, above all, from developing solutions based on the realities of communities and adapted to different ways of life.

1. Encourage collaboration between traditional and customary authorities and elected authorities to strengthen local governance mechanisms.

2. Support local community initiatives aiming to ensure the functioning of services of public interest. Access to and maintenance of basic social services, in accordance with the principles of equality and inclusiveness, is a priority policy, especially since insecurity isolates communities from each other.

3. Despite an objective deterioration of the security situation in central Mali, the resilience of populations makes it possible to contain its effects by adapting behaviours and limiting activities or through local protection mechanisms. The security forces can play their role in security plans provided they strengthen their technical training, respect for human rights, set up early warning mechanisms and promote dialogue with civilian populations to restore or strengthen confidence. The privatization of security raises the question of the future of local security groups, militias and brigades. Young people in villages or 'social cadets' see it as a way to be of service, thus regaining a social role within their communities, in the absence of economic opportunities. Their 'civilian' reintegration presupposes policies targeted at young people.

5. Maintain the administrative, educational, medical and social services provided by the state, as well as their staff, in order to guarantee access to them by the populations. The state is expected by the populations: to play its sovereign role, to protect the populations whether at the security, economic or political level and to be the guarantor of the social contract.

5. While the main drivers of conflict and instability have arisen from the weaknesses and failures of the state, the situation is very different from one region or locality to another. The factors of vulnerability are numerous: economic deprivation, limited access to services of public interest, unequal presence of state authorities. This research shows the need to implement development strategies that target the priority needs of populations and, in particular, peripheral populations. The state and its partners must take into account local dynamics and start from local realities. The failure of reforms does not necessarily come from a lack of political decision-making, but rather from a problem of design, implementation and maladjustment to local settings. The need for population protection is now a priority policy, whether it be security, economic, social or food protection.

4. Support policies aimed at developing territories and creating local employment opportunities, particularly for young people and women. Lack of economic opportunities and food insecurity are identified by the populations surveyed as the main threats.

4. The failures of the state push people to find alternative solutions. Security-only approaches have shown their limits — even their failure. However, populations' expectations of the state are very important in terms of the delivery of public services, protection and employment opportunities. Human security issues (employment and economic development) are the top concerns: lack of economic opportunities and food insecurity are identified by the populations surveyed as the main threats and concrete measures are expected in this area. This situation illustrates the failure of the state to impose itself in order to protect its populations effectively and to pursue development policies. The priorities are employment, education, food security and appropriate policies for the most vulnerable groups of populations are desperately needed.

6. Ensure that development and stabilization policies are grounded in local contexts and designed by, with and for the state and the populations they serve.

THE PROJECT

The 'Central Mali Project for Security and Development' was designed to support stabilization and development efforts in the central regions of Mali.

Initiated in 2018, this project was implemented by the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)** and its partner in Mali, **Point Sud**, with the objective of observing the evolution of the situation in terms of security, governance and socio-economic development.

In order to measure the evolution of the main trends affecting peace and development in the central regions of Mali, the project relied on the monitoring of governance, development and security indicators. These quantitative data collected every three months made it possible to provide precise information on the situation in the cercles of central Mali, highlighting the continuities and changes in the daily lives of the

populations. These data were systematically triangulated and supplemented by thematic questionnaires and qualitative surveys carried out on an ad hoc basis, which allowed for further study of aspects such as youth, migration, health and education.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Governance, security and development indicators

SIPRI and Point Sud relied on a mixed research approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, which allowed the production of local data, based on the perceptions of a representative sample of populations.

Thus, between February 2019 and September 2022, every three months, thirty facilitators collected quantitative data using a questionnaire focused on three key indicators, each composed of several sub-indicators: **governance, socio-economic development and security**.

At the same time, teams of researchers conducted thematic qualitative research. Focus groups were also held regularly, especially at the beginning of the project, as this format is now more difficult to implement for security reasons.



VIDEO. SIPRI reflections
The complexity of conflict and peacebuilding in central Mali.

PERCEPTION SURVEYS

Perception surveys are particularly useful when they are conducted at regular intervals. This type of survey has been the subject of an abundant academic literature in the field of social sciences, whether it is *The Phenomenology of Perception* as addressed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945), or *The Psychology of Perception* (Jimenez, 1997).

Discussed in *The Perspective of a Cognitive Sociology* (Friedman, 2011), perception has been central to form theory and the basis of projective methods in clinical psychology. More recently, these surveys have become an important tool, allowing governments and organizations to assess the impact of implemented reforms. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) notes, for example, that positive perceptions and stakeholder support play an important role in the success of reforms (OECD, 2012). These surveys are subjective indicators that capture what respondents feel or believe about a given situation, fact or policy. These surveys generate information on the concrete experiences of population segments, situations, beliefs, values, attitudes, opinions, expectations and understanding of problems (GSDRC, 2013).

In this research, perception is approached as what is thought, seen or judged. If the perception relates to facts, situations, events relating to governance, development and security, it does not concern the factual bases of the realities analysed. The perception of security here refers to the subjective interpretation of objective security conditions, which is 'both a feeling and a reality.' (Schneier, 2008). The reality of security is mathematical and based on the probability of different risks and the effectiveness of different countermeasures and psychological responses to risks (Schneier, 2008). The perception of security, as a subjective indicator, should not be confused with, nor considered as a substitute for, objective security indicators. Research indicates that there is often a substantial difference

between objective security and people's subjective perception of security. An individual's perception of security being subjective can be deeply rooted in the person's personal experiences while having strong ties to their identity.

Such regular surveys are measures of the experience of populations in a given environment, at a given time. They are relevant when it comes to understanding how people experience a specific situation, describe it, think about it, interpret it and represent it. A perception study is a search not for the truth, but for a truth as thought and reported by a population. Perception is related to the truth of a situation in that the person reports on their experience and feelings at a given time and in a given environment.

The results of these perception surveys are very important because they present the reactions of populations to the different situations experienced over four years. Such research is all the more substantial as it involved a sample of 1800 people. Beyond saying and thinking about different situations experienced, the people have also expressed themselves on what they do in various circumstances. The perception survey made it possible to examine opinions in different circumstances, which should not be confused with factual data.

FACILITATORS, VARIED PROFILES FAMILIAR WITH LOCAL CONTEXTS

30 facilitators were recruited on the basis of their level of study (bachelor's or master's degree), from the regions studied or with work experience there. Speaking one or more local languages was decisive in the selection.

The interviewers have varied profiles: geographer, sociologist, anthropologist, teacher, lawyer, humanities scholar, linguist, communicator, educator. They all received training on qualitative and quantitative research methodology, report writing including field journaling, as well as initial training focused on the presentation of the study. In addition to ongoing capacity building, some facilitators have enrolled in diploma training. One of the facilitators defended his doctoral thesis during the project.

The facilitators were divided into pairs in each cercle, each in charge of 60 households. While substitute facilitators were deployed in the field from the first surveys, the majority of facilitators were involved throughout the research.

QUANTITATIVE METHOD

Quantitative method was implemented through the administration of questionnaires. The objective was to focus attention on the intangible elements to better understand populations' experiences of security, governance and socio-economic development. SIPRI research in the Sahel has shown that populations' perceptions are important because they provide information on the understanding and interpretation of facts, beliefs, feelings and, above all, on the meaning that populations give to their environment. To capture variations in perceptions of governance, socio-economic development and security in the central regions of Mali, the same sample was interviewed at regular intervals to observe changes in their perceptions and/or behaviours and analyse the reasons for said changes. This deployment over time is necessary to highlight changes in the indicators chosen with the households surveyed.

Between 2019 and 2022, we conducted twelve perception surveys, in addition to the first baseline survey (Q0). It should be noted that some changes have been made, inherent in the conduct of surveys in conflict zones and the challenge of attrition. The alteration of the sample may be due to households leaving their localities because of violence against civilian populations or to the fact that some localities can no longer be surveyed for security reasons. In these specific cases, if the change concerns only one household, we chose a respondent with the same demographic profile (age, gender, etc.) and residing in the same locality. As a result, we did not necessarily interview the same person during the twelve rounds of survey. If the change corresponds to a locality, we have

ensured that the replacement locality has the same demographic characteristics. The project was extended in 2020 and, faced with the fatigue of some respondents, the sample was completely renewed. Due to these incorporated changes to ensure a large and representative sample, our complete data (Q1-Q12) do not lend themselves to panel data analysis techniques and should be considered as a pooled cross-section.

PERCEPTION SURVEYS ARE MEASURES OF THE EXPERIENCE OF POPULATIONS IN A GIVEN ENVIRONMENT, AT A GIVEN TIME. THEY ARE RELEVANT WHEN IT COMES TO UNDERSTANDING HOW PEOPLE EXPERIENCE A SITUATION, DESCRIBE IT, THINK ABOUT IT, INTERPRET IT AND REPRESENT IT.

●● CHOICE OF LOCALITIES

The study was spread over the two regions of central Mali, Ségou and Mopti, divided into five regions in 2021 (Bandiagara, Douentza, Mopti, San and Ségou). The sampling ensured representation of respondents at all administrative levels — region, cercles, communes and villages — covering the fifteen cercles. The communes of the cercles were chosen in two ways: first a reasoned choice and then a random choice. By proceeding exclusively to a simple random choice of all the communes, the research project ran the risk of not selecting the communes of intervention of the European Union and its partners. Thus, to include them in the study, the communes were the subject of an exhaustive reasoned choice. Consequently, in each cercle, four communes were selected, two by a reasoned choice (corresponding to the communes of intervention of the partners) and two others randomly by drawing lots. The research project covered 60 communes and 120 villages (2019 — 21) and 116 communes and 57 villages (2021 — 22) after the renewal of the sample.

●● CHOICE OF HOUSEHOLDS AND RESPONDENTS

Eligible individuals are those who were present in their community in the six months preceding the first survey. The questionnaire survey was conducted among the household, which is the basic unit of analysis, composed of persons living under the same roof and forming a family, i.e. at least two persons related by birth and/or marriage (father, mother, brother or sister, grandparents, etc.). For this survey, only one member of the family household (male or female), aged 18 and over, could answer the questions.

The facilitators were then trained on the questionnaire. This training is very important since it involves explaining the logic of the questionnaire, its conduct, discussing the terms used so that they correspond to local representations. Facilitators also worked in groups on the translation of concepts, when the questionnaire had to be administered in a local language. Finally, the questionnaire was tested on tablets and the necessary corrections were made before the deployment of the teams.

Regarding the sample size for quantitative surveys, Daniel Schwartz's formula for the minimum sample size N was used. While the initial sample consisted of 2160 households, the surveys were conducted with a sample of 1800 people. Indeed, it was a challenge in the field to cover a sample of this size with 30 facilitators in 15 days. As it was not possible to extend the duration of the collection, the decision was taken to reduce the sample to 1800 households, without compromising the quality of the collection.

●● DATA COLLECTION

The questionnaire was designed by researchers from SIPRI and Point Sud, in collaboration with the Delegation of the European Union. It was first coded on CSPRO before migrating to the KoboToolbox platform. The use of this specialized software allowed us to track data collection in real time. Thus, to control the quality of the data collected and ensure that the sampling quotas were respected, daily reports were published and shared on the WhatsApp group, and this, throughout the duration of fieldwork. These reports contained details of the sample, sampling quotas and the duration of each interview.

Each survey was preceded by joint training by SIPRI and Point Sud. The first step was to report and discuss the results of the previous survey. During this session, the results were presented with graphs, discussed and analysed. Another session was devoted to the conduct of field work during which the facilitators reported on the technical and administrative difficulties encountered. The third session concerned the questionnaire, a very important step that allowed us to improve the understanding of the questionnaire, to modify response options to better correspond to the reality of the populations, to correct technical errors.

Throughout the project, SIPRI attached great importance to the continuous training of facilitators not only in quantitative and qualitative survey methods and the use of the collection software, but also in areas as diverse as security (awareness in hostile environments), conflict sensitivity, climate change-related risks and gender. These trainings were provided by SIPRI, Point Sud or other partners such as BUCOFORÉ (Chad), the Centre for Democratic Governance (CGD, Burkina Faso), LASDEL (Niger), Search for Common Ground and other experts.

●● LIMITATIONS

The project and surveys aimed to understand the perceptions of local populations. Emphasis was placed on the judgement and understanding of the situation by the population. This should not be confused with an assessment of objective security or governance conditions. However, while subjective perceptions of security may reflect objective security conditions, research has shown that they mostly present different results (H. Rosling, O. Rosling, A. Rosling Ronnlund, 2019; A. Bodian, A.Tobie, M. Marending, 2020).

Another aspect to consider when evaluating the body of data collected is that the perception of security includes not only the perception of an external threat, but also the individual's ability to cope with such a threat and the coping strategies that individuals and communities use to reduce external threats or vulnerabilities (E. Wills-Herrera, L.E. Orozco, C. Forero-Pinada, O. Pardo, V. Andonova, 2012). The perception of security therefore represents an individual's ability to negotiate the security threat and is highly dependent on the individual's social capital. However, social capital is a very difficult concept to define through quantitative surveys, even administered under stable conditions because they are conducted in conflict zones.

Finally, we must point out that the data collection took place in a context of crisis, propaganda and disinformation campaigns, especially on social media. It is difficult to concretely assess the impact on the responses collected, but we must take it into account on the discourse collected. The security climate has had an impact on people's ability to express themselves and additional precautions have been taken, depending on local situations.

QUALITATIVE METHOD

The qualitative aspect of the mixed method used the most common qualitative research tools: (i) semi-structured interviews that are based on a series of themes determined by the research team; (ii) focus groups; (iii) and field observation that provides contextual data about people and helps to understand their perspectives, behaviours, interactions, needs and social relationships in their environment. Unlike perceptual surveys, these qualitative data collection tools provide an in-depth understanding of both the meanings individuals attribute to events and the complexity of their behaviours and experiences.

Quantitative/qualitative thematic studies were carried out punctually and made it possible to deepen certain aspects that were of particular interest to the actors operating in Mali, including the European Union. Thematic questionnaires were administered at the same time as the core questionnaire to the same households and supplemented by focus groups. Purely qualitative studies have also been carried out by several teams of senior and junior researchers.



QUANTITATIVE SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY 30 FACILITATORS IN 15 CERCLES IN THE REGIONS OF CENTRAL MALI.



12 **QUANTITATIVE SURVEYS**



390 **FOCUS GROUPS**



394 **QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS**



VIDEO. SIPRI reflections

The research methodology for SIPRI and Point Sud in central Mali.

SAMPLE

1800 respondents

50% men women

58% adults

42% youths

95% are residents

18% are urban

82% are rural

56% are farmers

11% are traders

4.6% are salaried

2.5% are civil servants

2.4% are breeders

1.4% are fishermen

LOCALITIES SURVEYED

Map of the regions surveyed, by cercle



● Ségou Region ● San Region ● Mopti Region ● Bandiagara Region
● Douentza Region

WEALTH INDEX

To account for differences in perception within our sample depending on social class, we created a wealth index from the Q9 survey.

This variable is an additional index consisting of nine elements: 1. bicycle, 2. cart/plough, 3. drinking water, 4. television, 5. motorcycle/car, 6. generator/electricity/solar panels, 7. owner of a house, 8. owner of a field, 9. owner of livestock.

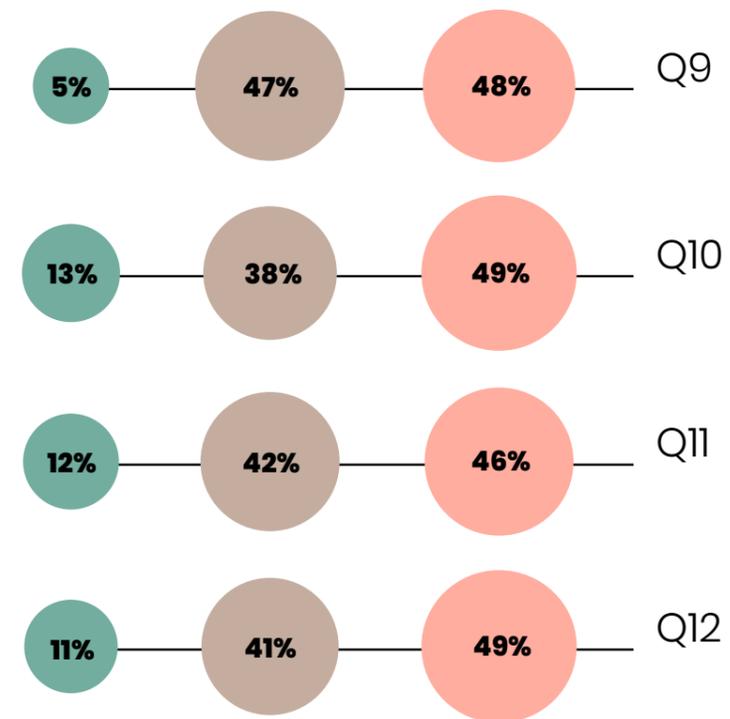
During our survey, we list these items to our respondents and ask them if they own one or more of the items on the list. Responses are recorded as 'yes' or 'no'. Each 'yes' answer is coded 1 and each 'no' answer is coded 0. The total score of each respondent is then calculated by adding the number of 'yes' answers to the different elements proposed. For example, if the respondent answers 'yes' to three of the questions, their wealth index is 3 out of 9. This score is then used to create three categories of wealth: respondents with a wealth index of 0 to 3 are classified in the lower wealth category; respondents with a wealth index between 4 and 6 are classified in the average wealth category, and those with an index of 7 or greater are classified in the higher wealth category.

Interpretation

When collecting data from our 9th survey, we found that 5% of respondents are in the lowest wealth group, indicating that 5% of the sample owns between 0 and 3 of the nine items listed.



Wealth index



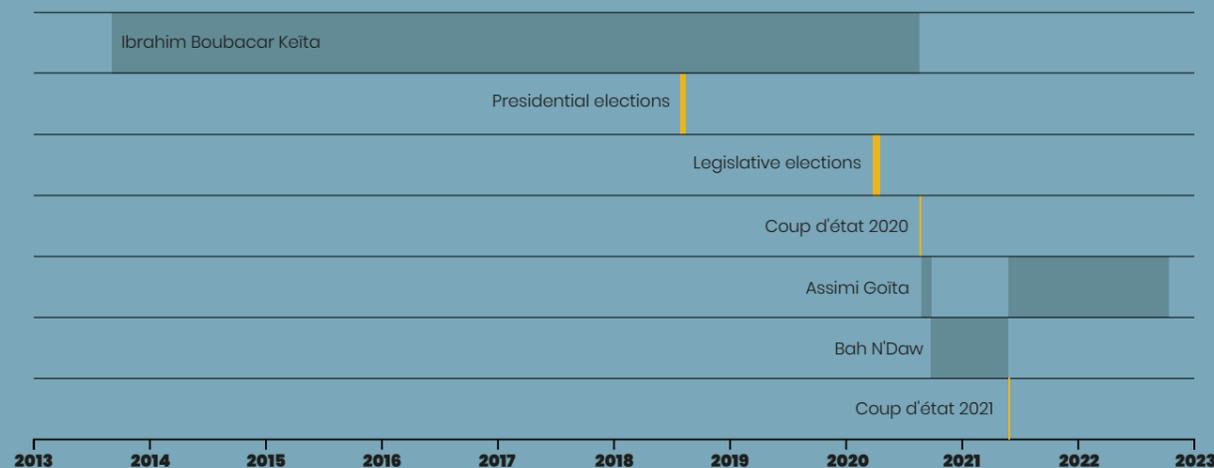
Categories: ● Lower ● Middle ● Upper

The wealth index helps us understand how perceptions of security differ across social strata. In the four rounds of surveys where we collected data to construct the wealth index, interviewees indicated that security conditions had improved at both the national and local levels. This improvement in security conditions is also consistent across the three groups of the wealth index. At the national level, we see a marked improvement in the security situation after the 9th survey. While most respondents in all wealth groups indicate that security conditions continue to improve in successive surveys, it is important to note, despite the small difference, that a smaller percentage of the lower wealth group express the

same sentiment in the last round of the survey. On the other hand, a higher percentage of the least wealthy group indicates that the security situation has not changed compared to the other two groups in the last round of the survey. A similar trend also emerges in perceptions of security at the local level. While respondents, overall, indicate that perceptions of security have improved, a slightly higher percentage of respondents in the lower group indicate that the security situation remains unchanged, indicating that the benefits of policies designed to increase the security of individuals, while effective, do not spill over into all categories of society.

1. GOVERNANCE INDICATORS

Timeline of political developments in Mali (2018 – 22)



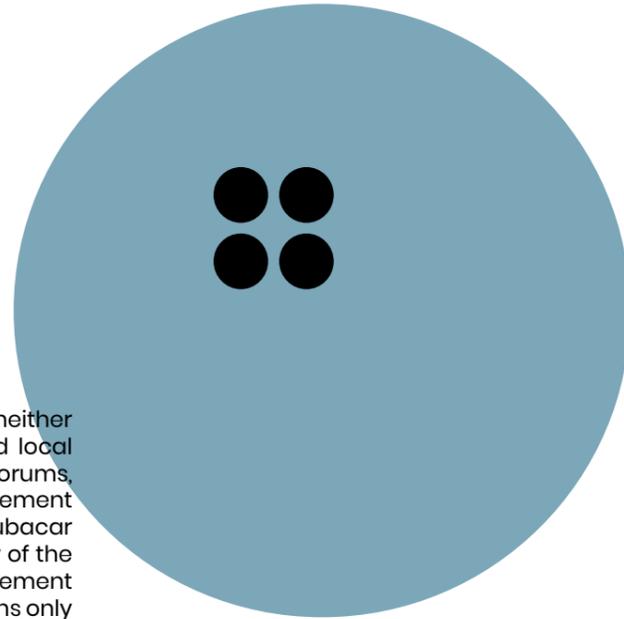
28. Local governance

- The presence of actors and institutions
- Availability of services
- Trust in national actors
- Trust in devolved authorities
- Trust in local actors
- Institutional effectiveness

40. Traditional authorities

- Role of traditional authorities
- Relations between traditional and customary authorities and populations
- Difficulties encountered

LOCAL GOVERNANCE



The need to reform the state resurfaces with every political crisis and neither the crisis in 2012 nor in 2020 were exceptions. Territorial reform, and local governance, remain priorities, which are raised at all the major forums, whether at the Brussels conference (2013), the Ouagadougou agreement (2013), the conference on decentralization organized by Ibrahim Boubacar Keita in 2013 (in particular the issues of regionalization and autonomy of the northern regions of the country) or in the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (2015). Although the state planned in 2022 to become devolved, the plans only entailed uncompleted decentralization, despite the populations expressing a need in these surveys for the state to be in close proximity.

Decentralization was a clearly formulated demand at the time of the democratic transition and this reform is one of the achievements of the transition. Decentralization is often associated with governance, as it is seen as a means of reforming local governance and promoting democracy at the grassroots level. This has certainly made it possible to open up the local political arena and encourage people to participate in managing their own affairs, but although the full communalization of the territory has been achieved, decentralization has not been completed, both in terms of transfers of resources and competences.

This research confirmed the important dualism of power at the local level: on the one hand, traditional and customary authorities play a fundamental role in protecting communities and mediation; on the other, there are the elected municipal authorities, who are responsible for managing the municipality. The surveys have shown that the level of trust in mayors varies from locality to locality; generally people say they are satisfied and trust mayors and councillors, but the political context often makes relations more complex. This is in stark contrast to the traditional authorities, who enjoy a very high level of trust. Traditional legitimacy seems less contested (or contestable) than electoral legitimacy, but it is important to differentiate between citizens' expectations. On the one hand, people expect concrete actions from mayors, aid (food or other), infrastructure and employment opportunities. And in the absence of resources, the populations will be more dissatisfied with the action of the mayor and councillors and denounce the political nature of municipal management. On the other hand, expectations of traditional and customary authorities are of a different nature. Their symbolic role is very strong, including the maintenance of social cohesion, but they do not have the means to go beyond mediation and community protection activities. The authorities collect taxes for mayors, but the chiefdom has no means of action. With decentralization, these centres of local power have, in some cases, become issues of electoral competition where the chiefdom invests communal power and vice versa.

THE NEED TO REFORM THE STATE RESURFACES WITH EVERY POLITICAL CRISIS.

The state's presence in Mali has never been fully assured throughout the territory, and the rebellions in the north have particularly expressed this need, which is a demand to take into account the aspirations of peripheral populations. Yet it is difficult to say that the state is absent in Mali, since its presence is diverse and ranges from the deployment of a detachment of soldiers, a school, a health centre or even a water and forestry officer – what JP Olivier de Sardan calls the 'external signs of the state.'

On the other hand, the presence of the state does not mean that all services are delivered and if they are, that they are effective, that the officers play their role and that the populations are satisfied with the services rendered. It is therefore essential to question the real functioning of state institutions, which is sometimes far from the objectives and expectations of citizens, and also to look at 'organizations.' When services are not functional, populations organize themselves with multiple actors to compensate for the shortcomings of the state and maintain a minimum of public services active, whether in the field of education (recruitment of contractors), health (management of a centre by the community) or security (self-defence group).

These surveys have highlighted people's perceptions of local governance but also of the availability of services and the level of satisfaction.



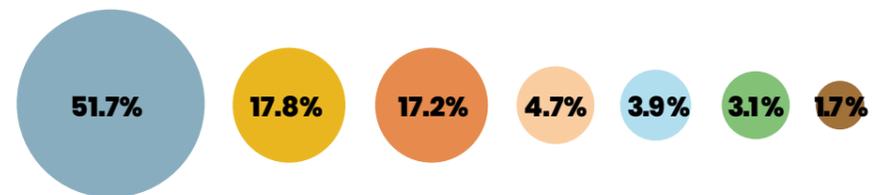
People's perceptions of governance issues

The results of the Q1 survey showed that 'absence of the state' topped the list of governance problems, accounting for 52% of responses. However, what is generally attributed to the non-delivery of basic social services, or at least lack of access, is not identified as a governance problem. The structural weaknesses of the Malian state are to be found elsewhere and these surveys have allowed us to understand what 'absence of the state' means.

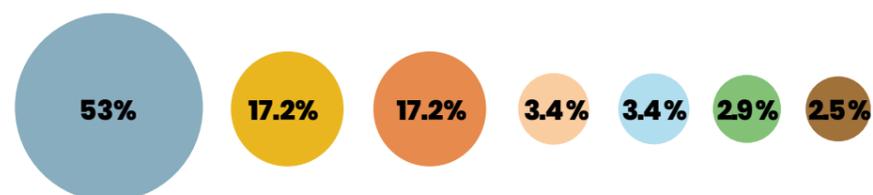


The most important governance issues

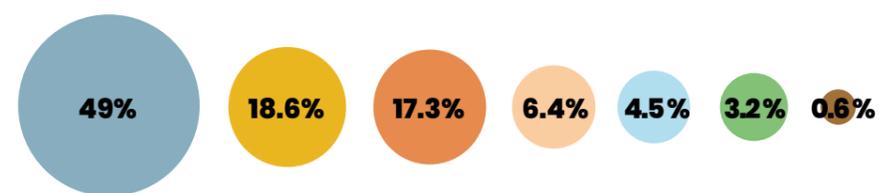
Average



Adults



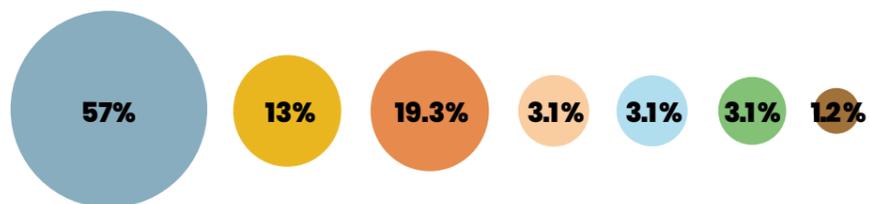
Youths



Men



Women



● Absence of the state ● Corruption ● Lack of basic services ● Other ● Discrimination
 ● Social exclusion ● Access to justice



The presence of actors and institutions

The presence of local actors and authorities

The state has official representatives everywhere, whether governors, prefects or sub-prefects, even if these actors are not present everywhere all the time. This research has shown that the presence of the state varies according to the regions, cercles and municipalities and now in addition to the structural weaknesses of the state, there is also insecurity.

- The uneven presence of state authorities (prefects and sub-prefects) in the localities surveyed is often linked to insecurity. The threat to these authorities, which are particularly targeted by non-state groups when they attack the state and its symbols, forces them to seek refuge in regional or cercle main towns, where the defence and security forces are present, or in Bamako. Some mayors, sub-prefects and prefects are forced to reside outside their place of work for security reasons and travel to the main towns of communes to deal with day-to-day business.
- Customary and traditional authorities and village/neighbourhood chiefs are widely represented and enjoy a great deal of public confidence. These authorities are the privileged and daily interlocutors of the population, but they are also very often targeted by armed groups.
- The presence of the authorities has varied over time. There was a redeployment of authorities in March 2020 just before the parliamentary elections, which also demonstrates the strength of political decision-making. The level of presence has remained quite high since then, but it varies; the absence is much more marked in cercles where insecurity is greater. In 2021, a new redeployment of prefectural and sub-prefectural authorities was carried out.
- Relations between people and local authorities vary between localities but are generally quite good and people have a positive appreciation of the work done by mayors and their councillors.

These good relations do not prevent people from feeling abandoned by the state. For example, civil status documents must be drawn up in the main regional town and some movements have become very difficult because of the state of the roads and insecurity, making people feel neglected and isolated.



The presence of the regional authorities

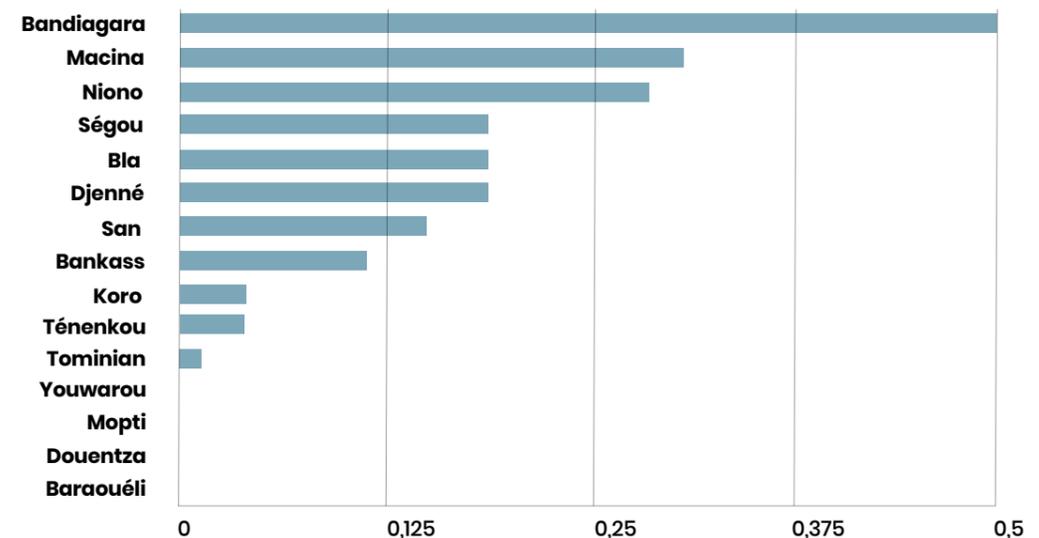
The presence of governors, prefects and sub-prefects varies greatly according to the cercles and regions of central Mali. While governors are more present, the presence of prefects in regions and cercles varies depending on the level of insecurity. Up until Q8, it was asked whether or not these actors were present at their workplace, and if so, whether they were performing their function. However, it became apparent that this no longer reflected reality and, from Q9 (September 2021), we distinguished those who were present at their workplace from those who performed their function away from the duty station. Indeed, some authorities are forced to retreat to regional or cercle main towns. They go to localities regularly but do not live there.

In other cases, the vacancy is linked to the time between appointment and taking office. The cercles most affected by insecurity, such as the Macina or Koro cercles, have experienced long vacancy periods for the post of prefect, exceeding 400 days.

Between 2019 and 2022, several waves of appointments and changes of prefects and governors took place, especially after the two coups. In 2021, the redeployment of prefects allowed army executives to integrate this civilian function. Nevertheless, the militarization of the prefectural body is more visible at the level of the sub-prefects.

Prefects' vacancy period estimated in percentage.

Period between 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2022.



The vacancy period was estimated by cross-referencing the appointment decrees and the documents showing that the position had actually been taken up. In the majority of cases, press articles covering transfers of power made it possible to identify the date of the new prefects taking office, as well as giving information about the former prefects. The vacancy period was estimated in the number of days reported over four years to produce a percentage estimate.

When specific dates were missing, the shortest period was chosen. In the cases of Barouéli, Douentza, Mopti and Youwarou, the lack of information on transfers of power and taking office prevented us from proposing an estimate.

Availability of services

Respondents have access to a number of services including education (basic 1st cycle), health, drinking water and, to some extent, electricity although the latter is mainly available to respondents in urban areas. The most present services are places of worship, wells, health centres, schools and customary justice.

But presence does not mean functionality of the service. When they are non-existent in the locality, some services are available in a nearby locality, located less than a day's walk away. On the other hand, the feeling of remoteness from services is deeply felt by populations, especially when communities are forced to limit their movements due to insecurity, particularly with regard to health services. Households report supply disruptions of some medicines, expensive prescriptions, lack of competence of doctors and misdiagnosis. Services are available and people say they are satisfied, but many complain about the quality of services and equipment that does not live up to expectations, as well as the consequences of insecurity that prevent them from having access to certain types of care or schools that are further away.

The services most used by households are health centres, schools and water points. Urban municipalities are better equipped than rural areas. In most cases, the difficulties are cumulative and the absence of administrative and local authorities is often aggravated by the absence of basic social services.



Identity documents

In their daily lives, the non-possession of identity documents is a constraint, especially since controls are more frequent with the redeployment of security forces:

Well, the difficulties that I have and that are self-evident are mainly the lack of identity documents. The checkpoints wear us out because of the identity documents (...). When you look closely, sometimes it's normal. But sometimes they overdo it because, for example, at the Kita checkpoint, they stopped me on my first visit to ask about identity papers and told me that if you didn't have any identity papers you had to pay 5000 CFA franc, and they took that from me once. Some people told me, which I didn't know, that if you don't have any ID you have to pay 1000 CFA francs, while others said 2000 CFA francs. But the time when I was passing through and they stopped me, they said that if we do not have identity documents that we had to pay 5000 and I gave them those 5000 CFA franc to be able to pass.'

Interview with a farmer and seasonal migrant, Baraouéli cercle, September 2022.

These practices of agents are very common and the price variation reported in this interview indicates a form of racketeering, the price of which varies depending on the agent.

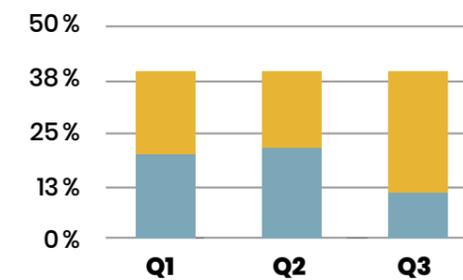
Trust in national actors

Trust in the various national authorities was regularly measured between 2019 and 2022 and, until 2020 before the overthrow of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, the results showed great dissatisfaction, with relatively low levels of trust for all actors (president, government and political parties).

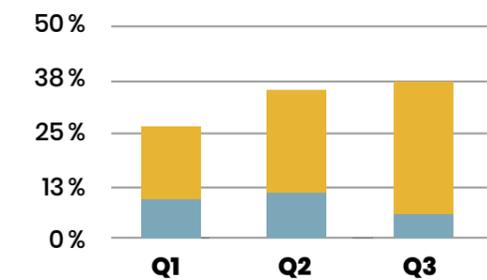
During these three phases of the survey, the cumulative trust (trust and a lot of trust) in the President of the Republic did not exceed 50% of the sample, while the levels of trust in elected officials and members of the government remained below 40%. In October 2019, only 11% said they had 'a lot of confidence' in the President, 8% in members of the government and 6% in elected members of the National Assembly.

Confidence in national actors

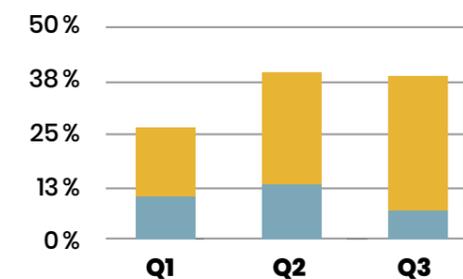
President



Deputies



Members of the Government

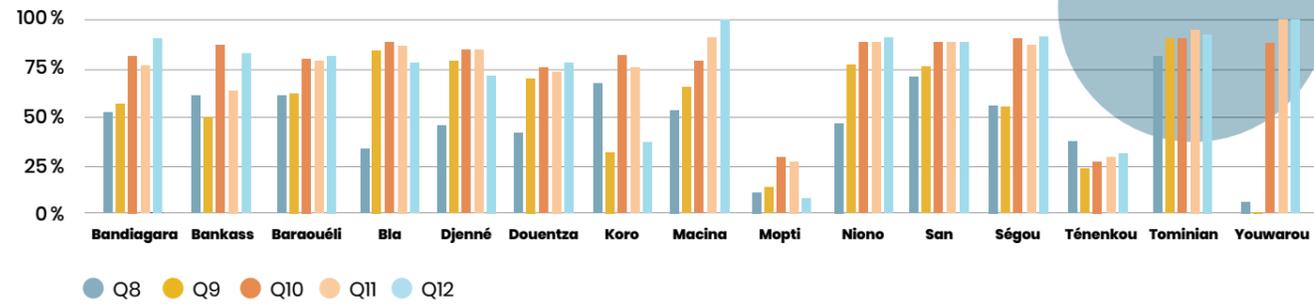


● A lot of confidence
● Often trusted



The coup of 18 August 2020 confronted the Malian population with new actors, mainly military. Confidence in the transitional authorities has improved in all cercles in central Mali with exceptions in the cercles most affected by insecurity, such as Mopti and Ténenkou.

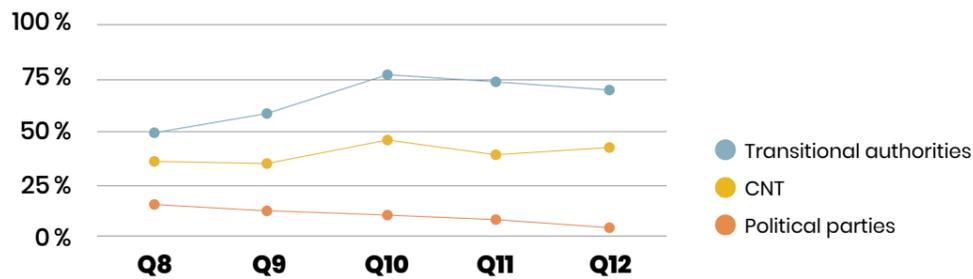
Confidence in the transitional authorities



In 2022 (Q10-11-12), confidence (a lot) in national authorities, especially transitional ones (President and Prime Minister) remained stable.

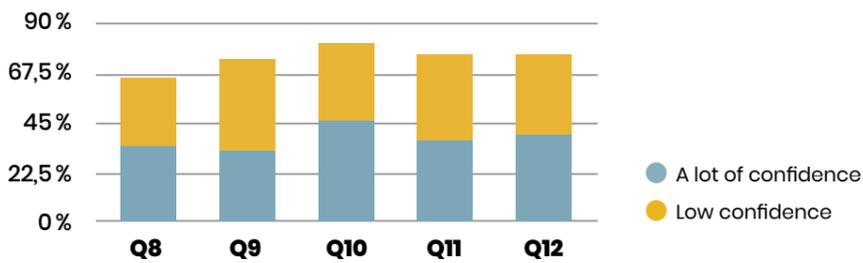
Confidence (a lot) in the CNT (National Transitional Council) is lower but it also remains stable. As of September 2022, the cercles where confidence is lower are those of Bandiagara, Bankass, Baraouéli, Bla, Koro, Mopti, Niono, Ténenkou and Youwarou. The role of the CNT is unclear to the respondents and, in particular, the increase in membership has been criticized. The fact that the CNT is composed of politicians does not promote confidence.

Confidence in transition actors and political parties

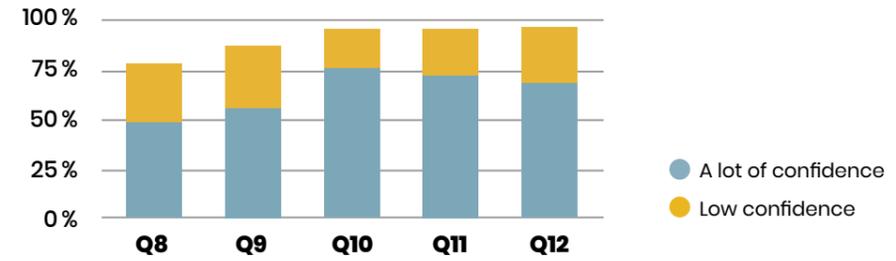


On the other hand, confidence in political parties is very low and continues to be eroded: in September 2022, only 5% of respondents have 'a lot' of confidence in them against 45% who say they do not have confidence in them.

Confidence in CNT



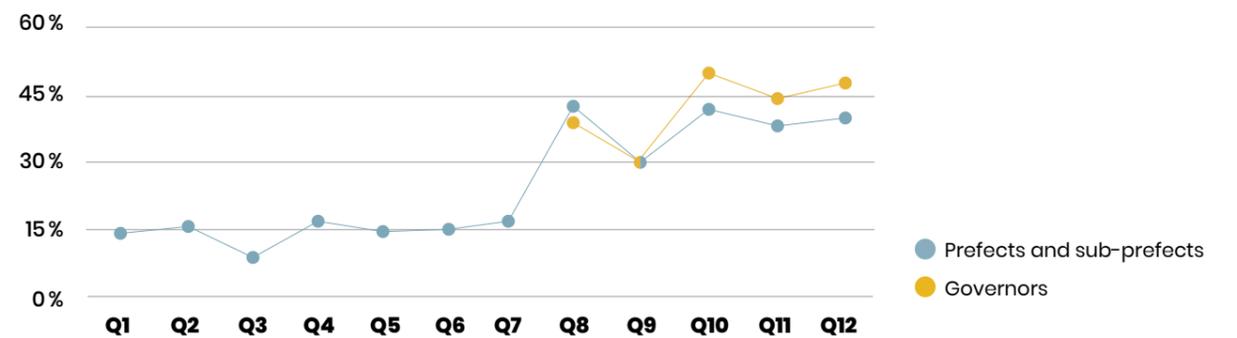
Confidence towards the transitional authorities



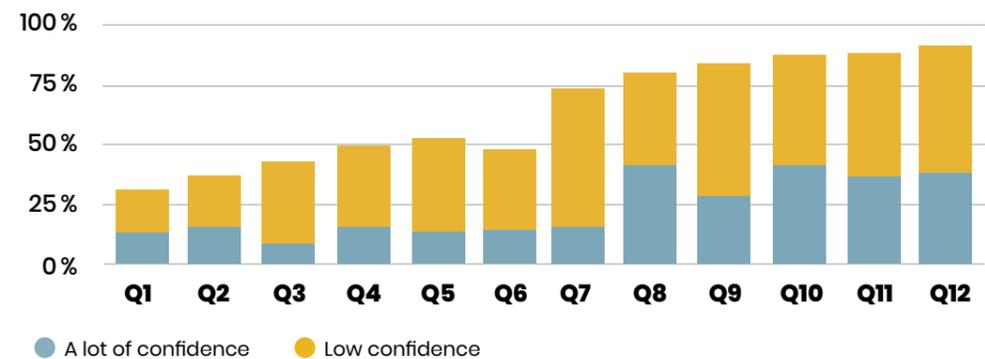
Confidence in regional authorities

In general, confidence in prefects and sub-prefects was 24% between 2019 and 2022, while it was 42% for governors between 2021 and 2022. However, these figures do not reflect the changes in trust levels that took place over the period. Indeed, confidence (a lot of confidence) in prefects and sub-prefects jumped from 17% to 42% between October 2020 (Q7) and November 2021 (Q8). In September 2022, 40% of the population of central Mali had 'a lot of confidence' in the prefects and sub-prefects and 48% in the governors, which may be related to the redeployment, and therefore to their presence.

Confidence (a lot) in prefects, sub-prefects and governors



Confidence in prefects and sub-prefects



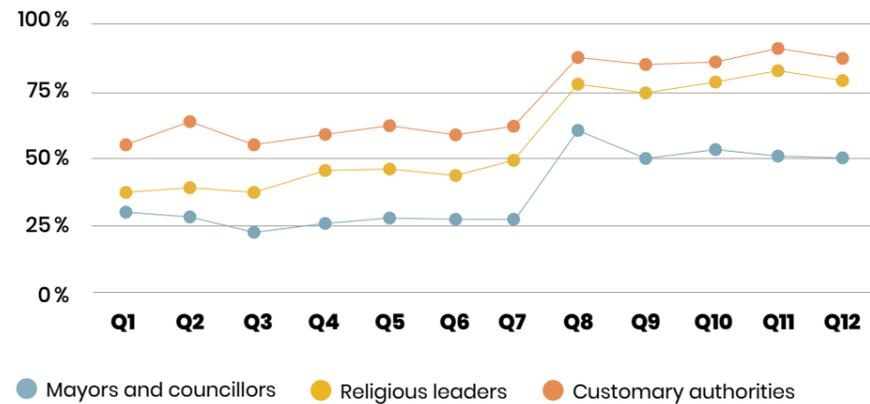
Confidence in local actors

Mayors and councillors enjoy the confidence of one in two respondents (‘a lot of confidence’) while confidence (‘a lot’) in traditional authorities is 79% and 86% for religious leaders.

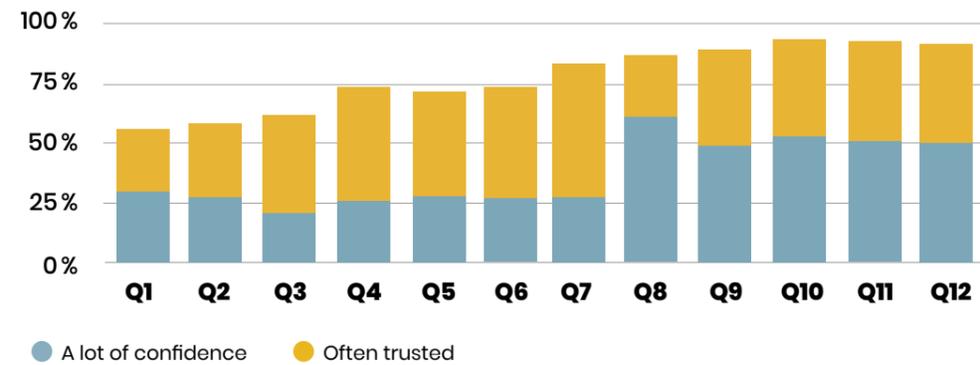
The level of confidence (‘a lot’) in mayors and councillors is the lowest among local actors, with gaps of up to 30% with religious leaders and customary authorities depending on the locality. The level of confidence in mayors and municipal councillors has nevertheless evolved positively, from 30% in April 2019 to 50% in September 2022, with very positive assessments from those who receive food aid.



Confidence in local actors



Confidence in mayors and councillors

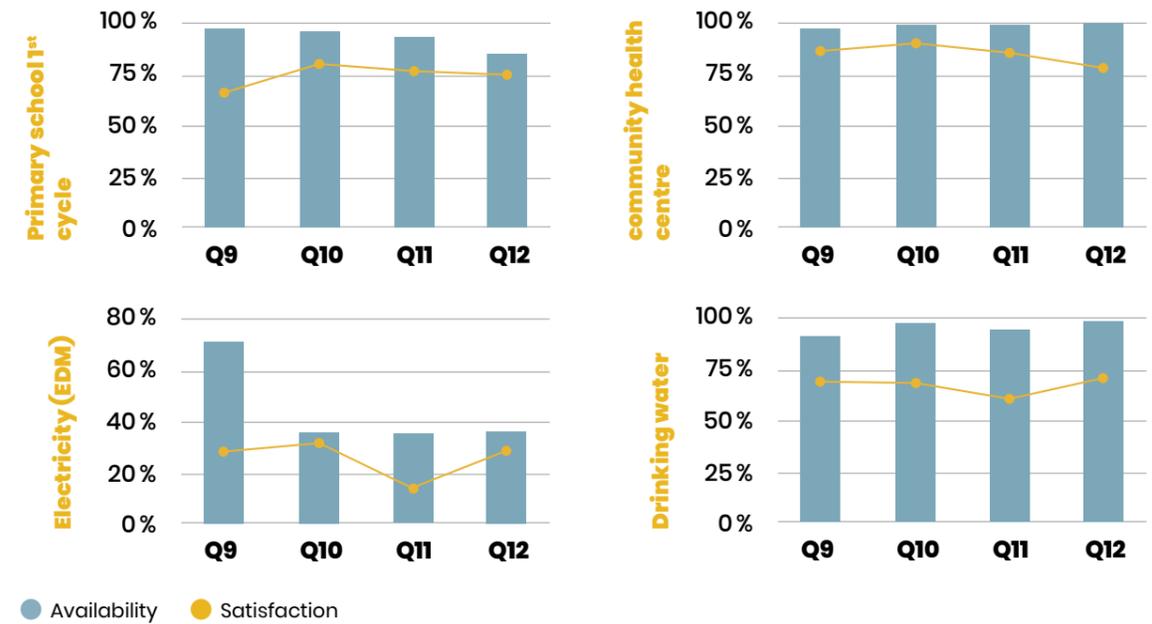


Institutional effectiveness

Perceptions of the effectiveness of institutions and actors vary. Local authorities often do not have sufficient human and financial resources to carry out their missions, but people report that regional authorities work in synergy with local authorities to strengthen or improve the available public and community services. In general, cooperation between local authorities and the population is good, but mayors complain about the lack of resources granted by the state to be able to manage their municipalities.

However, even when these services are present, the populations expressed, during focus groups or qualitative interviews, their dissatisfaction with their quality: the absence of a functional school, human and material resources for community health services, the remoteness of the courts, the lack of basic infrastructure (roads, water points) or the absence of competent personnel.

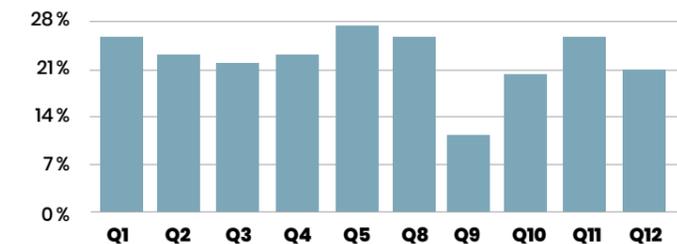
Availability of services and satisfaction of populations



Tax collection in central Mali

Tax collection remains a challenge for national and local authorities. Between 2019 and 2022, only 22% say they have been asked to pay taxes. In the ‘other’ category, respondents mentioned the levying of taxes by armed groups and/or zakat on crops and livestock.

In the last three months, have you been asked to pay a development tax? ‘YES’



TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES



THESE AUTHORITIES ENJOY A GREAT LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE FROM COMMUNITIES.

Traditional authorities and customary institutions: key players in local governance

In Mali, traditional and customary authorities have a role to play in protecting communities (they must guarantee their cohesion), mediation and regulating social order. They have been longstanding actors, but since the colonial period, they have sometimes been abused, instrumentalized and/or sidelined. The introduction of decentralization from 1993 onwards definitively changed their position: while traditional authorities are still consulted in a number of areas, such as land, they are vested with a role in supporting authorities resulting from universal suffrage.

Two types of legitimacy coexist at the local level: on the one hand, traditional legitimacy; on the other, electoral legitimacy. The elected authorities are responsible for the management of public affairs, supported where necessary by traditional authorities. Surveys have shown that the latter enjoy a high level of trust, which is both the result of the crisis of legitimacy of the public authorities and that of their historical and daily proximity to the populations. Their role is all the more important today because state representatives are sometimes forced to retreat to the main towns of the cercle or region because of the threats they face. Armed groups attack the state and its representatives, and traditional and customary authorities are also heavily targeted by the producers of violence.

The colonial period

During the colonial period, the cercle commander represented the administrative authority and the village chief was confined to the status of auxiliary, essentially responsible for ensuring the mediation with the populations. While traditional leaders dealt with land and tax issues, security and recruitment, the scope of customary law was significantly reduced. The colonial administration first sought to weaken the customary institution before relying on it for supervision and domination.

During the World War II, the extensive mobilization of colonial personnel in France forced the colonizer to strengthen the attributions of the traditional chiefdom, particularly in the areas of justice and the collection of taxes. Although they were integrated into the system, the chiefs were still devoid of real powers, their main function being to serve as intermediaries between the colonial authorities and the populations. In contrast to their traditional role in protecting communities, they also sometimes embodied the arbitrariness and violence of the colonial system, which contributed to the loss of their legitimacy. Similarly, the introduction of the elective system in the colonies contributed to the weakening of traditional authorities.

The first Republics (1960 – 1991)

The First Republic (1960 – 1968) took over the colonial administrative framework and reproduced its centralized mode: administrative officials were appointed by the central power and the customary chiefs maintained their role as administrative auxiliaries. In the context of nation-building, the struggle against the chiefdom of Modibo Keita and the US-GDR (Sudanese Union – African Democratic Rally) must be understood through the US-GDR's struggle for influence against the PSP (Party for Solidarity and Progress), which supported this institution. The government set up a structure to supervise the farmers, which would later be reintroduced under the military regime (Second Republic 1968 – 1991) in the form of the *ton villageois*. From 1981, the populations were supported by the development committees and constituency councils, but to compensate for the state's shortcomings, particularly in the areas of health and education, the populations organized themselves through associations, community centres and cooperatives.

Democratization

After the democratic transition (1991 – 1992), decentralization was President Alpha Oumar Konaré's major reform. Until the establishment of rural communes in 1992, the chiefdom was the only institution representing local authorities. From the complete communalization of the Malian territory, two bodies of power then collaborated at the local level: the customary chiefs and the municipal executives. Chiefdoms have long participated in missions of general interest such as civil registration, tax collection or various awareness campaigns, but without their role being codified. The decentralization laws then formalized the participation of traditional authorities: in a certain number of matters, municipal authorities were required to seek the opinion of village or fraction councils and neighbourhood chiefs. The village chief was placed under the authority of the mayor and his role was recognized and defined in the code of local authorities (Articles 26, 71 and 245 of the law of 2 October 2017). Mali has chosen to create a place for the chiefdom in the new political-administrative order.

A variety of traditional and customary authorities

Several types of traditional authorities coexist: village chief, neighbourhood chief, brotherhood of hunters, council of elders etc. Some traditional authorities were weakened, such as the cult leader (*hogon* among the Dogon, while the *komo* in some Bamanan villages of the Djenné cercle), are still very present and active.

Traditional and customary authorities constitute the village chiefdom. Village chiefs are assisted by a village council, composed of notables and usually heads of the families and religious leaders. The village chief convenes the council for all important matters and decisions to be made by the village and the village council may consult with resource persons other than its members when it has to give an opinion or make a decision. The village council is empowered to deliberate, and the decisions taken are binding on everyone, and when a decision of the council is not accepted, the parties may have recourse to the administrative and judicial authorities. Cases brought before administrative and judicial authorities may also be referred to traditional authorities, village chiefs and village councils.

Traditional and customary authorities have different levels of authority depending on their nature. Thus hamlets in the central regions of Mali or fractions in the northern regions of the country are governed by chiefdoms and councils in the same way as villages. Such chiefdoms and councils rule and deliberate on all matters concerning the life of the hamlet or fraction and that of its inhabitants.

Access to the village chief as well as to the hamlet or fraction chiefdom is based on the rules of primogeniture within the founding lineages. As such, the chief of a village, hamlet or fraction is appointed by the notables, the council of the village, hamlet or fraction. In practice, many challenges end up before the administrative court.

Access to the status of traditional authority is done in the same way in all cercles:

'After the death of the current village chief, there is a waiting period during which the administrators will conduct their investigations and consult the village council to appoint someone.'

Excerpt from an interview with a village chief, Koro cercle, April 2019.

The succession is patriarchal: the oldest in the paternal line becomes the village chief. This regime can experience a social upheaval if, for example, all the fathers have died, the chiefdom's power goes to the children (especially the sons):

'Nowadays, there is no father. I am the eldest child, who is the village chief.' One advisor adds: 'All the fathers have died, it's the turn of the children. It is the Kabila who chooses you to become the village chief, then the administrative authorities issue a note of recognition.'

Excerpt from an interview with a village chief, Baraouéli cercle, April 2019.

The **customary village chief** relies on traditional legitimacy, as he comes from the founding family of the village. He manages customary affairs and works for the consolidation of the social fabric through mediation around social events such as marriages, deaths, baptisms and inheritance conflicts. He is surrounded by his advisors and accompanied by his caste men during ceremonies.

The **administrative village chief** is appointed by vote. Their roles and missions are defined by administrative act and they are the privileged interlocutor of the administration in the locality. The administrative head may be perceived as political, because of their appointment process. Their election can be a source of tension or even inter-community conflicts, as when political parties mobilize to elect administrative chiefs by transgressing customary rules. Sometimes it is necessary to go all the way to the Supreme Court to decide customary successions.

“...if the cult leader announces a communal sacrifice for the whole community, or if a couple quarrels and invites themselves to the customary village chief's home, the latter summons us (griots/caste men/blacksmiths) first and then his advisors. Then he sends us to do the first mediation steps. And if that were not enough, he will ask one of his advisors, or he himself will get more involved, by inviting the belligerents into his vestibule to find a solution...”

Interview, Koro cercle, April 2019.

Role of traditional authorities

Traditional and customary authorities, which have long remained without legal status, have always had a prominent place in Mali's socio-political life. **Traditional leaders are seen as social mediators and guarantors of societal values and the cultural heritage of communities.** The authorities are consulted in conflicts, they have a role of intermediaries between the local populations and the administrative authorities and the most important role is that of the protection of the communities and guarantor of social cohesion. It should be stressed however, that this social order can also be unequal, more unfair to dominated groups.



“When a stranger comes to the village, it is the village chief who is his first host. It is he who gives him a living space, a cultivated field, a pastoral area. (...) If he comes with his cattle it is to them (the councillors) that he speaks. And the village chief orders his advisors to find him a suitable place to settle. If the same foreigner, after settling in the village, commits a serious offence, it is his landlord who is called to give warnings. If his landlord talks to him and he listens, it's over, but if he doesn't comply, they kick him out of the village.”

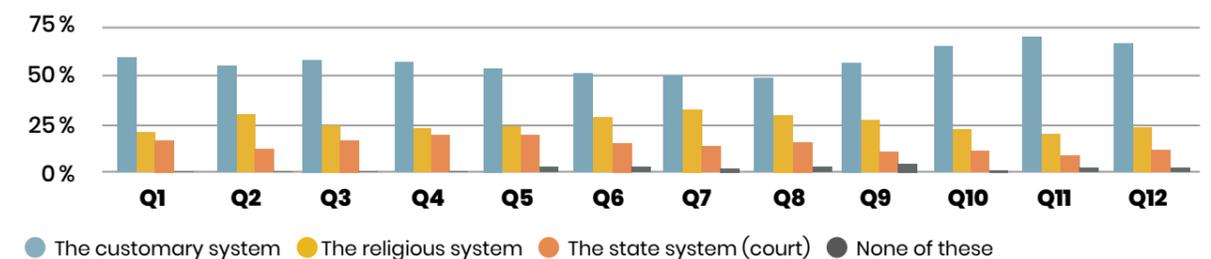
Excerpt from an interview with a village chief and his councillors, Djenné cercle, April 2019.

THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEYS SHOW THAT MALIANS RELY MORE ON CUSTOMARY AND RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES THAN ON ELECTED OFFICIALS OR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHEN THEY HAVE A PROBLEM, WHETHER IN CASES OF MINOR CONFLICT, SERIOUS CRIME OR CONFLICT RELATED TO NATURAL RESOURCES.

The problems most often brought before the traditional authority are land conflicts and problems of access to and the exploitation of natural resources, which lead to conflicts between herders and farmers. Then come family problems (forced marriage, divorce, adultery etc.), then those related to the division of inheritance. 'People have less confidence in formal justice, which is considered corrupt and biased, because you can pay to overturn the decision of a traditional authority.'

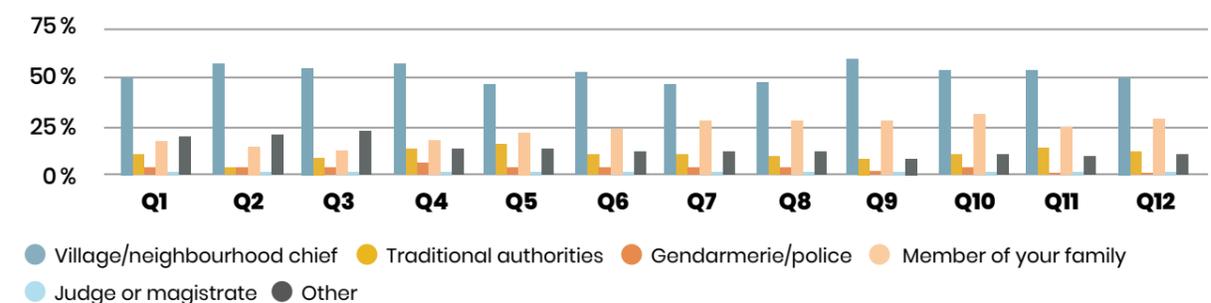


Most impartial judicial system through different phases of survey

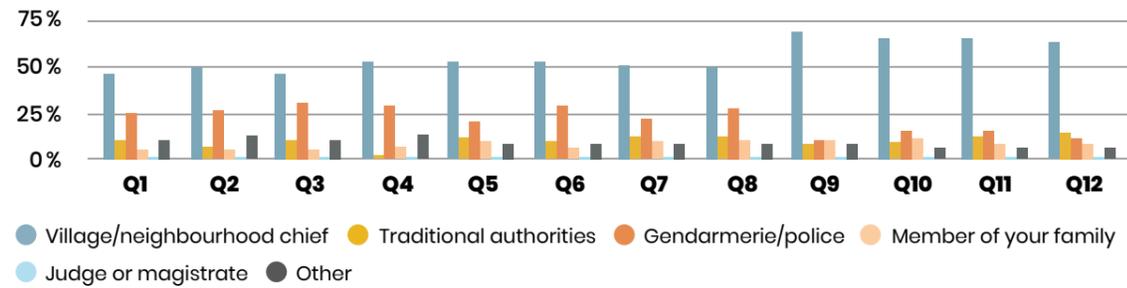


The prerogatives of traditional leaders include their role in the resolution of land conflicts and access to and exploitation of natural resources.

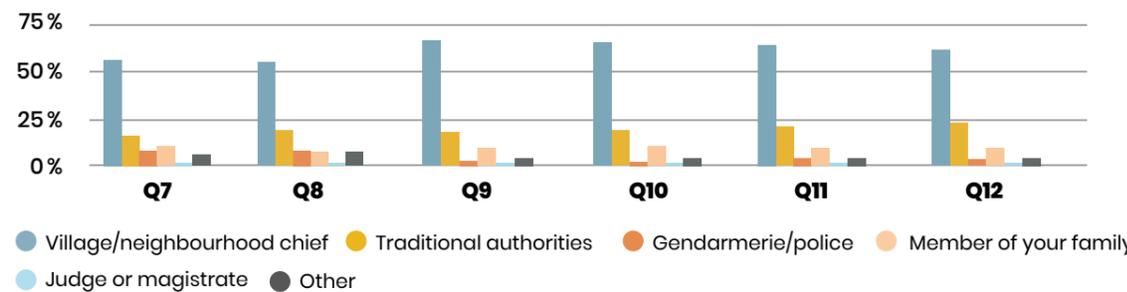
In the event of a minor conflict (neighbourhood conflict, family conflict etc.), who do you consult first?



If you witness a serious crime (murder, rape, robbery etc.), who would you report it to first?



In the event of a conflict related to natural resources (water, grazing etc.), who would you report it to first?



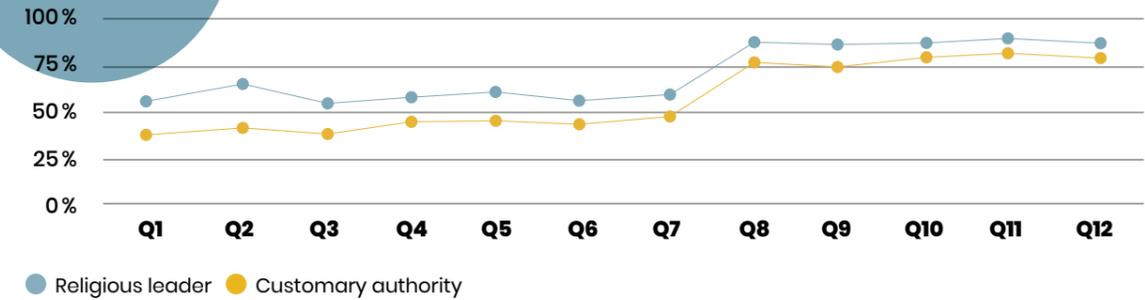
Insecurity has led to changes in relations with and between different authorities. The new actors, in this case the so-called jihadist armed groups, who wish to enforce Sharia law, are at war with traditional and customary authorities and state authorities. Access to natural resources remains a fundamental cause of the struggle that these new actors are waging against existing practices, advocating faith and free access to resources. The exploiters of these natural resources, especially people looking for firewood, are for example, frequently apprehended by those whom people call 'bush people.'

In the area of justice, the authorities face competition from self-defence groups, traditional hunters and other armed groups, which are sometimes consulted by the population to settle disputes or take the initiative to settle disputes. Traditional authorities, which lack resources and the means to enforce their decisions, see these new actors as challenging their prerogatives in the area of justice.

Relations between traditional and customary authorities and populations

Traditional and customary authorities are present in all the localities surveyed, whether rural or urban, and the level of satisfaction with these authorities is very high. We have also found that the more the situation deteriorates, the more traditional authorities enjoy the confidence of the people. When local authorities are sometimes forced to take refuge in main towns or cercle capitals, it is the traditional and customary authorities who manage displacements and protect the communities. These authorities are also particularly targeted by armed groups. For example Amadou Issa Dicko, village chief of Dogo, was assassinated in his village in April 2015 and the same happened to Manga-Peul in November of the same year.

Level of confidence in the following actors



The surveys show a very strong attachment to traditional and customary authorities, whether they are mediators, engaged in dialogue between communities, or support local authorities in tax collection, for example. These authorities enjoy a certain legitimacy.

“The role of the village chief is to solve all the problems that concern the inhabitants, whether they are conflicts or couples’ disagreements. The role of the councillors is to support the village chief in decision-making and conflict resolution: ‘The village chief plays a big role in the village. The village chief is consulted day and night on any issue: land dispute, conflict between farmer and herder. And he does his duty to calm the situation. The village chief participates in the collection of taxes for the community. In addition, the village chief is the social mediator between couples if the clans are unable to manage such disputes.’

Interview with a village chief and his advisors, Baraouéli cercle, April 2019.

Relations between traditional and customary authorities and state authorities

“The authorities collaborate with mayors and councillors and prefectural authorities. According to the village chief of Baraouéli, ‘if there is a problem in the city, the prefect calls me to ask if I am aware of what is happening there.’ One advisor adds that ‘collaboration is getting stronger every day.’ This good understanding between the traditional authorities (of Baraouéli) is, according to the village chief, a legacy: ‘We inherited it from our grandparents, because they lived in this way. We have followed the same path.’

Interview with a village chief and his advisors, Baraouéli cercle, April 2019.



The relationship between traditional and administrative authorities and local elected representatives is more complex. Traditional authorities complain about the lack of consideration for them. There are often land conflicts when mayors allocate land without first consulting village chiefs, as it is customary to do.

“The mayor does not consult the chieftom in decision-making. The municipality allocates land either for residential use or for cultivation without consulting the village chief. So, if there is a problem, it will be between us and our own children because local elected officials are our children from here. But the authority they hold leads them to pay us no consideration.”

With decentralization, conflicts of competences between traditional institutions and decentralized powers are recurrent: traditional authorities have lost much of their power and resources, but these authorities retain a large audience and enjoy legitimacy among the populations. However, the seriousness of the current crisis sometimes renders traditional conflict management mechanisms ineffective.

Interview with a village leader, Niono cercle, April 2019.



●● Difficulties encountered

Many of the difficulties reported are related to the fact that village chiefs and their councillors do not feel acknowledged by local elected officials, complaining that they are treated as subordinates and not as collaborators.

Tax collection

Previously, all taxes collected were remitted to the village chief; since the advent of decentralization, taxes have been paid directly to the municipality. Taxes are intended for basic social services (education, hygiene, health etc.): *In the past, the tax was collected, handed over to the village chief, who was responsible for paying it to the commander. This is no longer the case. As soon as the councillors finish collecting the taxes, they are asked to bring them back to the municipality. When you ask the people, they will tell you that they (the councillors and the village chief) benefit from something. No! They do not even get a franc. In case of a problem, everyone contributes to managing it here in Djenné.*

Interview with a village chief and his councillors, Djenné cercle, April 2019.

Chiefs sometimes complain about their loss of legitimacy, especially in the face of elected authorities, claiming a better knowledge of communities: *‘If you go back to Bamako, tell the country’s top authorities to return power to the village chief. This is the only way the country will be quiet. Because they are the ones who know the city and the countryside.’*

Interview with an advisor to a village chief, Djenné cercle, April 2019.

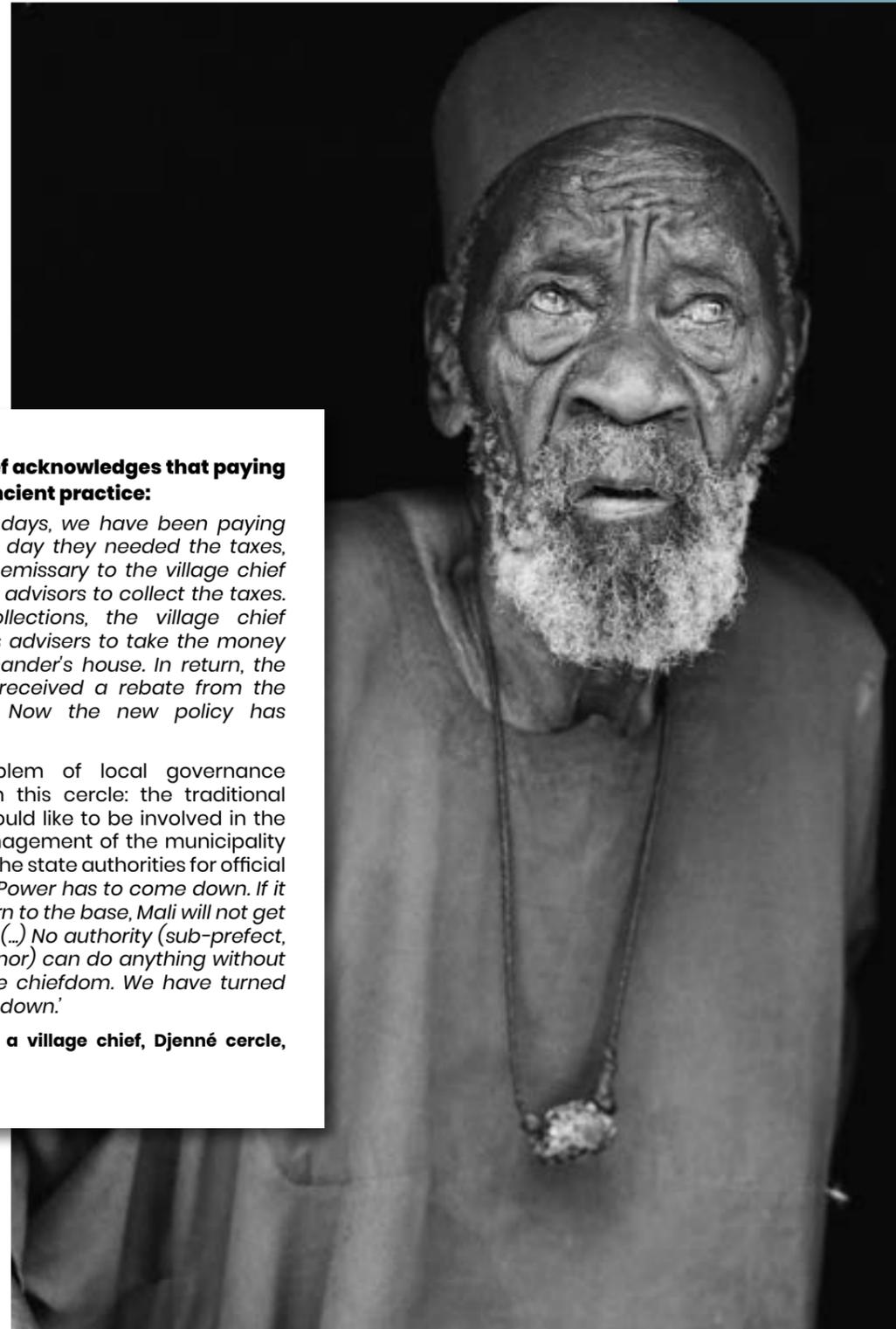
COLLABORATION BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND CUSTOMARY AUTHORITIES AND STATE AUTHORITIES HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED WITH THE SECURITY CRISIS, WITH EACH NEEDING THE OTHER TO SUPPORT THREATENED POPULATIONS.

A village chief acknowledges that paying taxes is an ancient practice:

‘Since settler days, we have been paying taxes. On the day they needed the taxes, they sent an emissary to the village chief to instruct his advisors to collect the taxes. After the collections, the village chief delegated his advisers to take the money to the commander’s house. In return, the village chief received a rebate from the commander. Now the new policy has stopped that.’

It is a problem of local governance that arises in this cercle: the traditional authorities would like to be involved in the financial management of the municipality and they ask the state authorities for official recognition: *‘Power has to come down. If it does not return to the base, Mali will not get what it seeks. (...) No authority (sub-prefect, mayor, governor) can do anything without consulting the chieftom. We have turned things upside down.’*

Interview with a village chief, Djenné cercle, April 2019.



2. DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

- 52. Agriculture**
 - 70. Animal husbandry**
 - 78. Fishery**
 - 80. Trade**
 - 96. Development projects**
 - 114. Education**
 - 126. Increasing resource scarcity & migration**
 - 142. Being young in central Mali**
 - 156. Health**
 - 164. Covid-19 Pandemic**
-



VIDEO. Akili Sigui
The Way of Peace.

DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

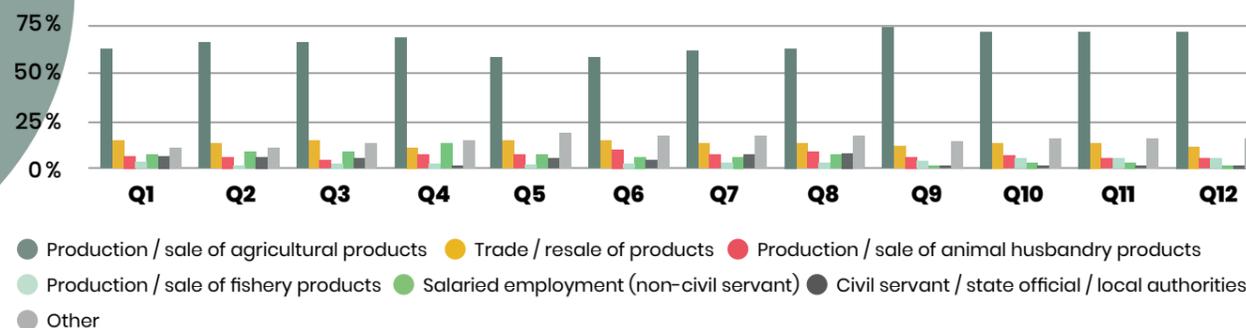


Primary production methods are very vulnerable to shocks — climatic or security — and are ill-secured (land titles, methods of product valorization). The majority of households practice agriculture, whether it is the main activity for some, or a secondary activity for others, own livestock and practice animal husbandry, with other complementary activities such as trade. All these activities are mainly carried out for subsistence purposes.

The agricultural survey was based on cross-data collection (production methods, capital and existing goods) and on economic prospects and the impact of external factors on means of production and subsistence.

THE POPULATIONS OF CENTRAL MALI ARE MAINLY DEPENDENT ON THE PRODUCTION OF THE PRIMARY SECTOR TO MEET THEIR IMMEDIATE NEEDS.

Main household income



The research found that:

- Regarding the socio-economic distribution of populations, while some communities define themselves according to their production method, the results confirm that most households depend on several production methods, mainly agriculture and animal husbandry. While specialization is often highlighted, factors affecting agriculture or animal husbandry, for example, affect a wider population than the one traditionally in charge of these modes of production.

- Economic activities are mainly devoted to feeding the family, rather than to capital accumulation or improving living conditions. Production methods depend on precarious resources: ill-secured land titles, access to water resources, access to markets and economic inputs. Populations are particularly vulnerable to shocks (climatic or security) and have few alternatives to meet their needs in the event of a crisis.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES ARE MAINLY AIMED AT FEEDING THE FAMILY, RATHER THAN AT ACCUMULATING CAPITAL OR IMPROVING LIVING CONDITIONS.



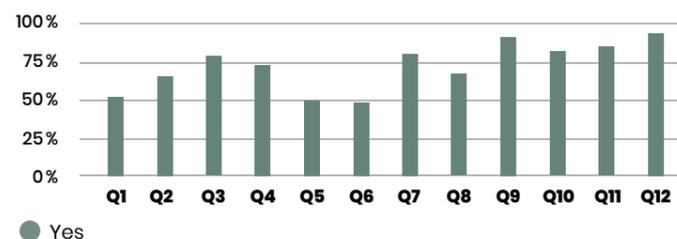
AGRICULTURE

The Malian economy is mainly based on the agricultural sector, which employs nearly 62% of the active population (World Bank, 2021b): agriculture (including animal husbandry), which accounts for 40% of GDP and 58% of direct and indirect jobs, supports 11 million Malians (World Bank, 2022). This sector contributes about 15% of export earnings in 2019 (World Bank and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2019). The situation in central Mali differs between cercles with little agricultural land (Bandiagara) and those with a lot of land (Koro and Bankass).

THE DATA DEMONSTRATE THE HIGH VULNERABILITY OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR TO CLIMATIC AND SECURITY CONDITIONS.



Does your household practice or did it practice agriculture in the last three months?



THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR ARE PARTLY EXPLAINED BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH, THE LACK OF ORGANIZATION OF CULTIVATED AREAS, CLIMATIC OR GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTRAINTS AND INSECURITY.

Agriculture (including animal husbandry), which accounts for 40% of GDP and 58% of direct and indirect employment, supports 11 million Malians (World Bank, 2022). The data demonstrate the vulnerability of the agricultural sector, which is dependent on rainfall and Malian land tenure regulations.



Access to land

More than 80% of respondents own a field or agricultural land, but only 12% hold a land title, transmitted by family inheritance (58%), by the estates department (9%) or by other means (29%). In other words, 68% of farmers do not have land titles for their farm. Most often the fields belong to families. There are few individual properties.



It is easier to have a dwelling house than a field to cultivate. Even all natives don't have enough land to cultivate. That's why you don't see any individual field because they all belong to families and have owned these fields for a very long time.'

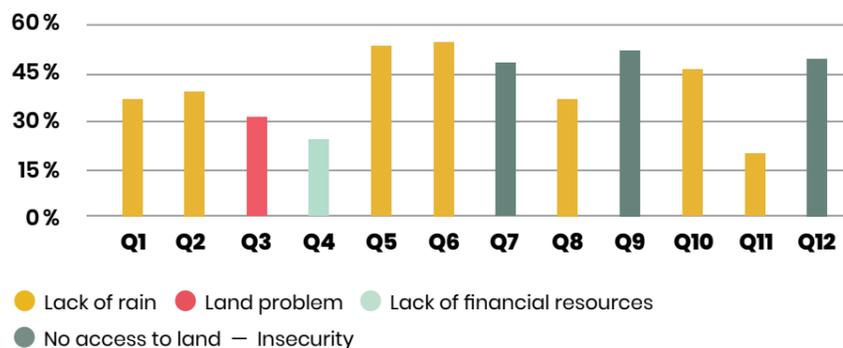
Interview with a farmer, Koro cercle, April 2019.

Access to and right to use cropland can be obtained in several ways:

- through village chiefs who are considered to be the true owners of land resources.
- by landowners, called 'dugukolotiguiw' (land holders) who are different from village chiefs.
- In dry farming areas, land is given up in exchange for symbolic objects (roosters, kolas, etc.) or money.

When they do not practice agriculture, the reasons are multiple and have varied according to the phases of survey. About 15% of households are not farmers and have never practiced agriculture. For the rest of households, the practice of agriculture could be limited for climatic reasons, such as lack of rain or floods, but also by insecurity, which restricts access to fields.

If your household has not practiced agriculture in the last 3 months, why?



Borrowing agricultural land involves risks since, most often, the land is borrowed without legal formalization. The duration of this loan is variable and can go up to one or two generations. Conflicts often occur when owners want their land back, and when loans have been made through kinship relationships or children who have grown up and who do not know that the land does not belong to them. Also, when the owner claims their land, the conflict can go all the way to court.

In the developed area of the Office du Niger, the request is addressed to the local management of the Office. In the distribution of cropland, the demands of villages located near the developments are generally considered as a priority and then come those of other farmers. In this

production system, all small farmers benefit from an annual operating contract, renewed each year by tacit agreement, against payment of the water fee necessary for crops.

Farms are mainly family farms and often managed by one or more households. However, research has shown that demographic growth and conflicts within families contribute to the emergence of individual production units.



“ There are many collective fields. There are individual fields, but the most numerous are collective fields. There are both here. The collective field is called Lara. Members of the large family work in this field. This field belongs to the oldest of the family. This field is given by inheritance. Each village has its own system, but with us, it is age that matters. Lara is given to the eldest. The oldest villager called Hogon has his own separate field. It's different from Lara. In the neighbourhoods too, the oldest also has his own field. Now, in some families there are 6 to 8 households, the oldest has his own field too.’

Interview with a farmer, Bankass cercle, April 2019.

• Lack of available agricultural land

“ When we were still very young, there was no land problem here. The city wasn't as big and there weren't as many people. Some heads of families even had two or three fields. But nowadays, the city has grown with families that have multiplied and outsiders who have come to settle. As a result, there is no longer enough land. Even the clan of the village chief who was giving the land is in need today.’

Interview with a farmer, Koro cercle, April 2019.

In some cases, the shortage of cultivable land is explained by a problem of organization and management of space. In Macina and Niono cercles, there are two production areas: the exposed area and the flooded area, managed by the Office du Niger, which distributes plots developed and irrigated for agricultural or vegetable production, but which are not sufficient to cover the production needs of the rice-growing population.

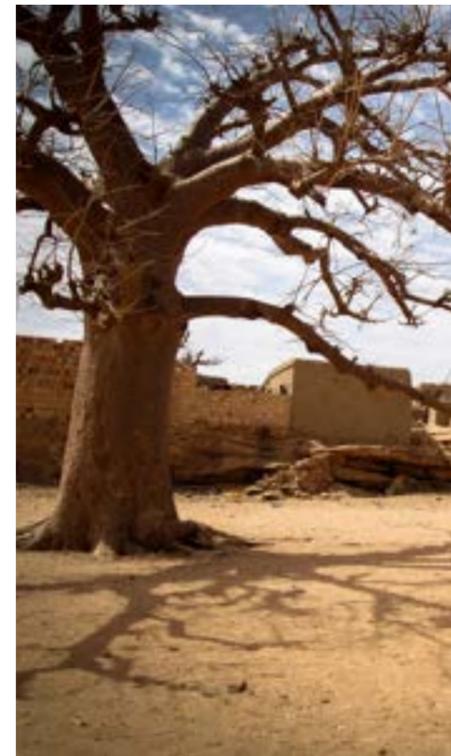
“

The lack of cropland is very serious here. For several years, we have been on the same land that belongs to our fathers. Nowadays, these lands can't even feed us anymore because our families have grown. We only have 3 hectares that had been given to our father since the beginning of the Office. At that moment, his family did not exceed a dozen people. But nowadays, there are 32 members in the family. How could this be enough for us? That's why we make demands every year to obtain land but they have never been satisfied.’

Interview with a farmer, Macina cercle, April 2019.

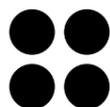
These statements reveal a great disparity between the level of developed land available and the needs of the populations. The Office du Niger has a fairly large potential of agricultural land suitable for development, but in the Niono area, the land crisis is pushing farmers to seek land in new production areas. The exposed area is particularly vulnerable to variations in rainfall with consequences on agricultural yields. Soil fertility is also decreasing due to the sand silting of arable land and the depletion of the soil due to its constant use. Added to this is the growing insecurity that now prevents several communities from cultivating.

• Irregular rainfall



Perception surveys have highlighted the precarious economic situation of populations whose agricultural activities depend heavily on rainwater and water from rivers, streams and canals, particularly in the Office du Niger area.

Mali's rainfall regime is characterized by a steady decrease in rainfall and the length of the wet season from south to north (de Coning & Krampe, 2021). The amount of rainfall varies greatly from one area to another or depending on the year. According to farmers in the Ségou and Mopti regions, the wet season is not only getting late, but it is also stopping earlier and earlier. This drop in the water level of the Niger River has consequences on production activities in the off-season and the lack of water prevents a large number of farmers from cultivating.



“ The issue of water is strongly linked to rainfall and the problems are different in each cercle. In Koro cercle, ‘At the end of February, all water-related work stops because of the water problem. Only drinkable water remains the priority for everyone. This is why women who do market gardening are forced to use water in turn. Because if all women draw water at the same time, the wells will dry up.’

Interview with a member of a farmers' cooperative, Koro cercle, April 2019.

In the dry-farming area, agriculture is also heavily dependent on rainwater and its irregularity is a serious problem. Thus, whether it is the dry-farming area or the developed areas, access to water remains a determining factor for crops.

Dependence on natural water sources is high and people have few alternative sources such as private or public wells or reservoirs.

Climate-related concerns (drought, floods, storms) are often cited by respondents as a key difficulty in their farming practice.

In Koro and Bankass cercles, water is available but not in sufficient quantity. According to an agri-food processor in Koro: ‘From March water is no longer available in our locality. All wells dry up at this time of year. Even though this is the ideal time for vegetable production.’

Interview with an agri-food processor, Koro cercle, April 2019.

●● **In Bandiagara, the water problem concerns both groundwater and rainwater.**

After the rainy season, the water retained in the dams is used for market gardening (November-April), but it is not sufficient to cover all agricultural activities against payment of a lump sum (about 5000 F.CFA per year).

“ After the rainy season (around October) the water flow decreases and we close the dams to have water for 6 to 7 months of the year. ‘This year we had a lot of water. So far there is water in the beds of the marigot, but unfortunately this water is currently polluted by lye poured into the Yamé by dyers.’

Interview with the chairman of an agricultural cooperative, Bandiagara cercle, April 2019.

A subsistence activity

The products of the harvest are first intended for food for the family and then for sale on the market, but this production is only partially, if at all, sufficient to cover the needs of the family.

To meet needs such as health, education or travel, the farmer is often forced to sell part of his production or livestock, but when production is insufficient, there is no surplus to put on the local market. Vegetable production is complementary, and despite strong growth, farmers are facing a lack of sales in the local market.

“ In our commune, we grow for food and to sell a little. Unfortunately, in our commune there are very few people who have the capacity to produce and then sell part of their production. Even for food, for many it is not enough to sell.’

Interview with a farmer, Niono cercle, April 2019.

LAND DEGRADATION AND LESS RAINFALL CAUSE YIELD DECLINES.



According to a Bankass farmer:

“ In the past, you could feed the whole family with only 3 hectares, but now to meet the family's food needs you have to double this amount of plot.’

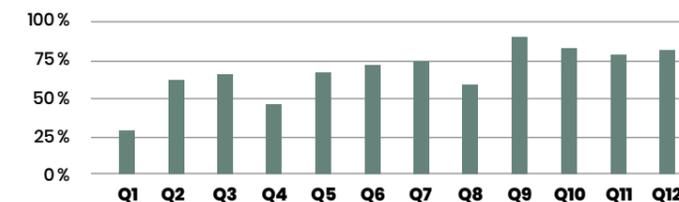
Interview with a farmers, Bankass cercle, April 2019.

The fertility of agricultural land is a constant concern for farmers and, to compensate for land degradation, farmers use fertilizers, manure and other inputs to increase yield. Farmers use compost or leave animals in the field during the dry season; during the wet season, the farmer uses fertilizer.

In the current context of climate change and insecurity, a poor harvest can plunge households into a situation of food insecurity.

In this case, farmers do not have any more resources to allocate to the health needs and schooling of their children. The populations of central Mali are very vulnerable to exogenous shocks, such as climatic hazards, parasites, etc.

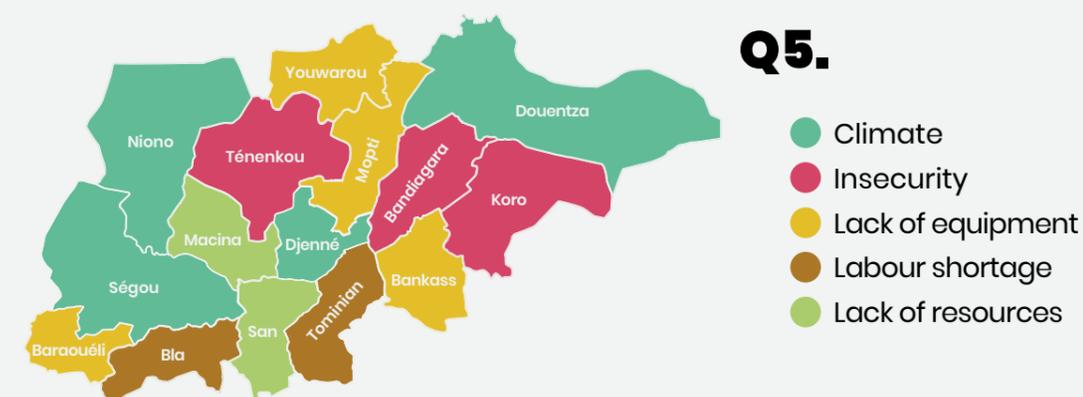
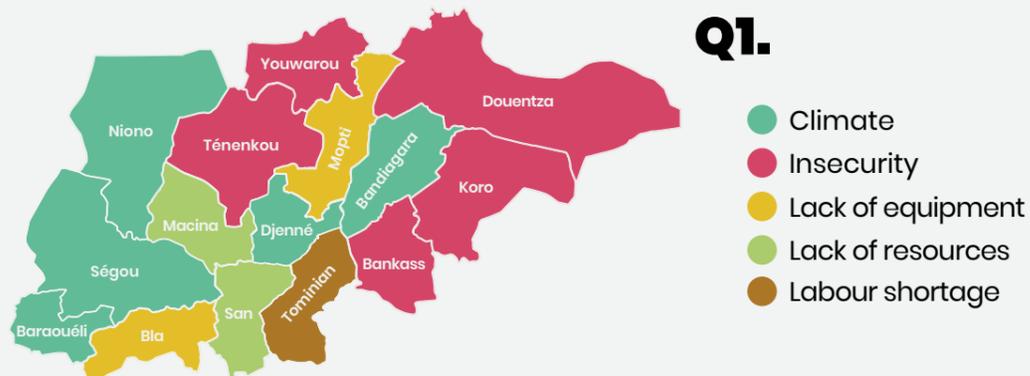
Have you had any problems recently (in the last 3 months) related to field work? Yes





Main problems related to the practice of agriculture

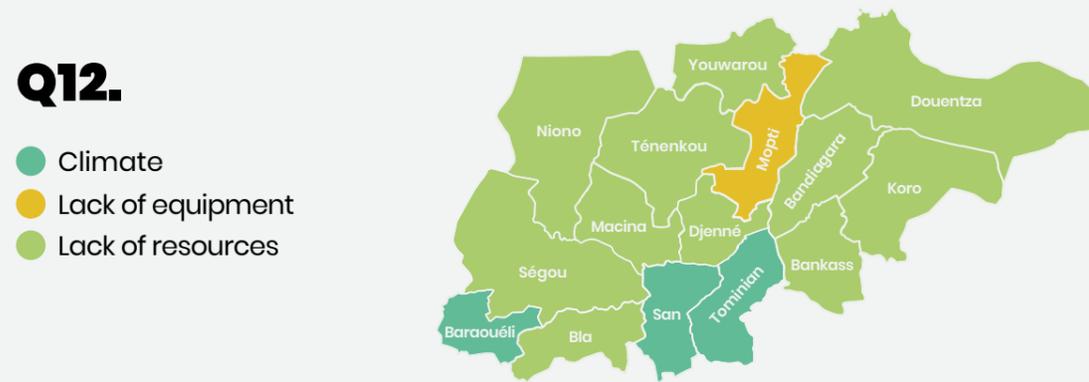
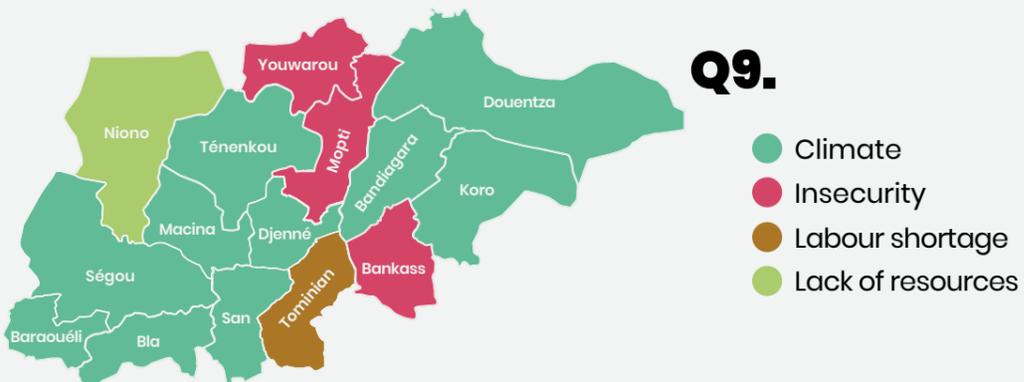
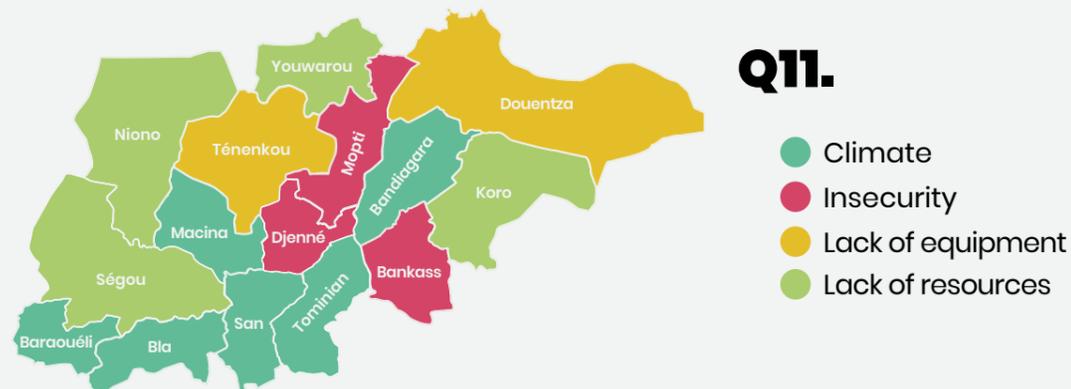
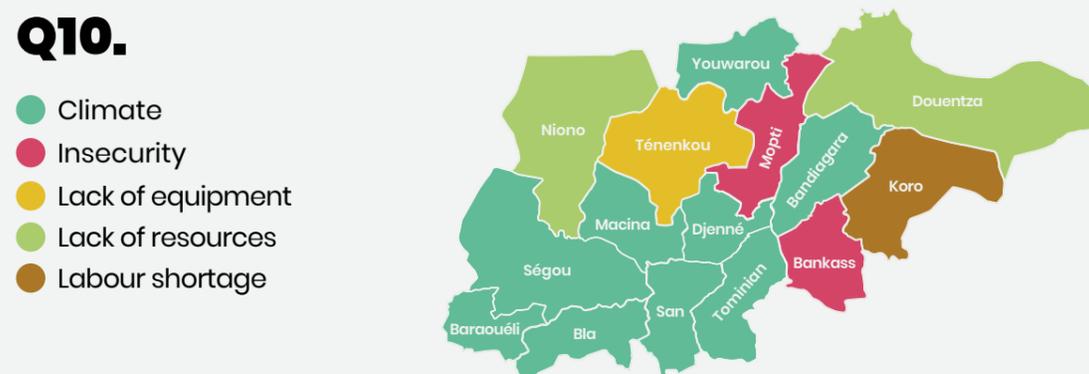
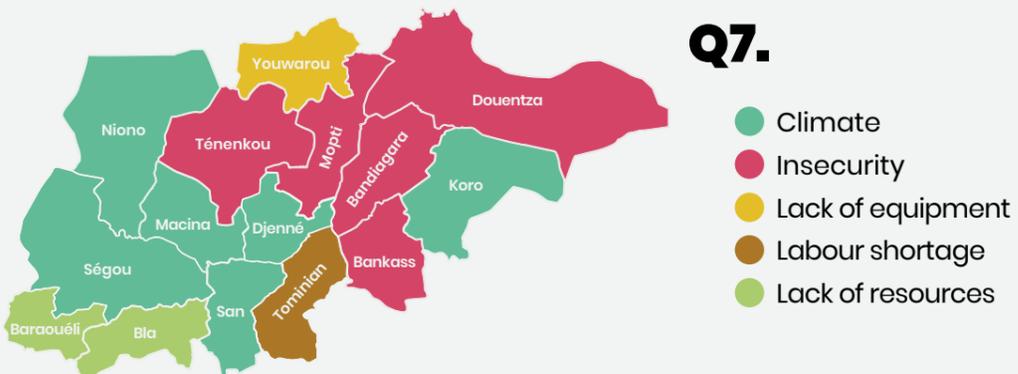
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May 2019	July 2019	Oct. 2019	Jan. 2020	Apr. 2020	June 2020	Nov. 2020	March 2021	Nov. 2021	Feb. 2022	June 2022	Oct. 2022



Source: Decentralization/mapping of Mali, carried out by O. Dembélé, coordinator of the Central Mali Project.

Main problems related to the practice of agriculture

Q1.	Q2.	Q3.	Q4.	Q5.	Q6.	Q7.	Q8.	Q9.	Q10.	Q11.	Q12.
May 2019	July 2019	Oct. 2019	Jan. 2020	Apr. 2020	June 2020	Nov. 2020	March 2021	Nov. 2021	Feb. 2022	June 2022	Oct. 2022

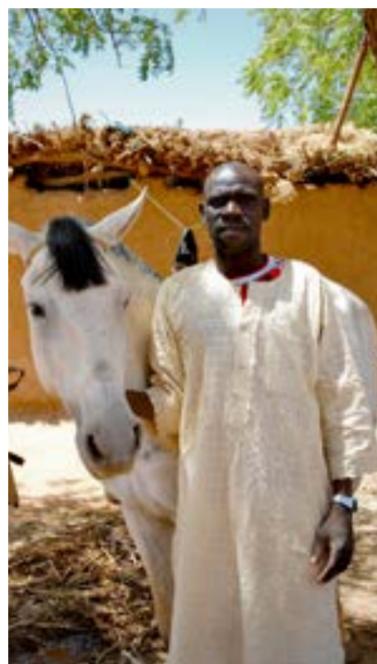


Source: Decentralization/mapping of Mali, carried out by O. Dembélé, coordinator of the Central Mali Project.



Resource conflicts

Two main resources are regularly subject to conflict: cropland and grazing land. Conflicts over these resources are linked to the cohabitation between agriculture and animal husbandry, whether in the developed or dry-farming area.



ANIMALS IN SEARCH OF WATER PASSING THROUGH FIELDS CAUSE CONFLICTS, OFTEN VERY VIOLENT ONES, BETWEEN FARMERS AND BREEDERS.



“ *In the past, there were not as many people, land was available for all and animals could pass through without major problems. But nowadays, the village has grown, and the hamlets of culture have multiplied, which is why the animals have trouble finding their way. We are much more concerned about what we eat first before giving space to animals.* ”

Interview with a farmer, Macina cercle, April 2019.

In the case of the irrigated perimeters of the Office du Niger, the conflicts stem from the pressure exerted on the animals in the pasture holding area. On the one hand, the return of animals from the transhumance zone generally coincides with the rice harvest period: the animals must wait around the perimeters until the farmers have finished their harvests. This wait causes pressure aggravated by the decrease in grass, but also water, pushing animals to return to the border strips to drink and graze. Animal damage is a source of conflict. The wandering of animals is another major problem: in the absence of space exclusively reserved for the passage of animals, the latter, in search of water, pass through the fields, causing conflicts between farmers and breeders.

Farming practices are changing: the use of the plough has increased yields, encouraging farmers to use it. Training is provided to farmers (on good practices, planting techniques, time management, etc.) by different partners.

According to an agricultural sector officer in Niono:

“ *We work with farmers through the field-school approach. We train them directly on good practices in the fields. It is the same modes of approach applied in animal husbandry. After the demonstrations, farmers easily adopt these good practices.* ”

Interview with an officer of the technical service of agriculture, Niono cercle, April 2019.

Farmers are adapting to new constraints: crop diversification by adopting improved seed varieties and short cycles — such as early cowpea — to fill lean seasons.



In large families, it is the head of the family who is responsible for buying agricultural equipment just before the rainy season. It is rare to find a family without equipment and *‘those who do not have any can borrow it. We don’t rent. They are given because of the kinship relationship.’*

Interview with a farmer, Bankass cercle, April 2019.

On the land, the agricultural equipment has remained the same because there is little land where the use of the plough is easy. According to a farmer and processor in Gologou: *‘Old practices have not changed. We always use the same work tools. We do not use oxen. Work is always done by hand.’*

Interview with a farmer of agricultural products, Bandiagara cercle, April 2019.

On the other hand, at the Office du Niger, it is the opposite: *‘we buy agricultural equipment. You can rent but borrowing is not possible. You simply have to ask the owner to plough your field; he will give you the price. They say 50000 francs for each hectare.’*

Interview with a farmer, Niono cercle, April 2019.

EACH FARMER BUYS HIS EQUIPMENT SUCH AS HOE, PLOUGH, OXEN, ETC.



Labour is used for short periods of time and for piecemeal work such as soil preparation and rice transplanting in the Office du Niger area, hoeing or weeding, harvesting and livestock guarding. This use of salaried labour is practiced everywhere but it is more important in the area of the Office du Niger because of rice cultivation.

●● Relations with state technical services and partners

Farmers work with state technical services, such as agriculture, animal husbandry and fishery, and non-governmental organizations. They receive training related to agricultural techniques or improving the quality of production. Technical partners also facilitate access to agricultural inputs and are very involved in supporting farmers.

“It is a project that showed us this technique. We used to do it with poison. They asked us to be careful with that. It can harm us and the products we grow, which is why we have adopted this new technique.”

Interview with a processor of agricultural products, Macina cercle, April 2019.

During the off-season, farmers carry out other activities such as market gardening, small trade, fattening and processing of agricultural products. These activities help cover food needs and small daily expenses, such as health and clothing.

“Market gardening and the sale of small ruminants are the activities that are carried out besides agriculture. For three months we grow salad, potatoes, cabbages, and many women do animal husbandry and small trade. They buy the products and sell them in other cercles.”

Interview with a farmer, Bankass cercle, April 2019.

Market gardening, an activity traditionally practiced by women, is now also often practiced by men. Market gardening is a crucial contribution during lean seasons and represents the most common form of resilience in the cercles studied.

Many hydro-agricultural developments and market gardening perimeters have been carried out in the different cercles, supported by several technical and financial partners and banks, in cooperation with various public and private structures. These developments are managed by management committees.



MARKET GARDENING IS A CRUCIAL CONTRIBUTION DURING LEAN SEASONS AND IS THE MOST COMMON FORM OF RESILIENCE IN THE CERCLES STUDIED.



HYDRO-AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO BETTER MANAGE CLIMATE INSECURITY.

The state, through the agricultural services and some non-governmental organizations (NGOs), provides seeds to farmers.

“According to a farmer in Bankass, these seeds are good. They are better than the ones we have. Old seeds are good, but they take time. The rain can stop without them being ripened. The current seeds can be harvested within 2 months or 2 and a half months.”

Interview with a farmers, Bankass cercle, April 2019.

However, the commercial circuit of seeds is not really developed yet.



Every year, farmers cultivate the same land, which depletes the soil, hence the need to use fertilizer or manure, but this depends on the means available to the peasant. For example, manure involves having enough animals to produce it. Fertilizer is subsidized by the government and distributed by traders or large suppliers, but farmers complain about the small amount of fertilizer they are given and those who can afford it also get more supply from the market, often at a higher price.

“When the state offers 11000, the cooperatives take a loan from the banks with a small margin; the loan will go up to 12500. The cooperatives make the request. These are village associations and village cooperatives. The village association represents the members of its cooperative. The members submit their invoices to the cooperative officer, who processes them as security for the loan. They use this security to take a loan from the bank. The cooperative signs for the loan with the bank. Now they will come to the merchant to buy the product. Then they give the product to the farmers. After the harvest, the farmer also reimburses. It is the head of the group who will pay back the money to the bank.”

Interview with a farmer, Niono cercle, April 2019.



● The impact of exogenous factors on agricultural production



The difficulties are many and varied including lack of water due to poor rainfall, drought, floods, water and wind erosion, excessive logging, etc.

●●
‘ALL THE BIG FARMERS WHO COULD PRODUCE TONS CAME BACK TO KORO BECAUSE OF THE INSECURITY. ANIMALS ARE STOLEN. TODAY WE NEED PEACE SO MUCH.’

●●
THE FEAR OF ATTACKS PREVENTS ACTORS FROM CARRYING OUT THEIR ACTIVITIES.

●●
Insecurity and agricultural production

Insecurity is a major threat to agriculture, animal husbandry and rural life in general.

“Yesterday and the day before yesterday towards the east of my commune, the last hamlets before Kassa, a little further in the pasture, bandits came, they took more than two hundred cattle. They killed four people. Since the day before yesterday I have been in communication, because somewhere it was said that they saw the animals. So I'm here managing with people in Bamako, Mopti, Douentza and Diakabou because there is a post there. So if things continue like this, no one will go in the fields anymore. People will all flee. Today, you see, Koro is so populated. All the big farmers who could produce tons came back to Koro because of the insecurity. Animals are stolen. Today we need peace so much. It was the most populated cercle in the region and people produced a lot. But all these people hung their dabas, left the ploughs and came back to Koro.”

Interview with a farmer, Koro cercle, April 2019.

Fear of attacks prevents farmers from carrying out their activities. Technical services and partners, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), are also limited in carrying out their activities.

●●
The difficult commercialization of products

Commercialization networks are not very well developed and a large majority of farmers sell their products on local markets. On market days, small farmers load trucks, trucks with produce such as millet often sold by women. In Bandiagara cercle, the commercialization of agricultural products mainly concerns market gardening and the products sold are, among others, cabbage, tomato, onion, guava, potato, pepper, etc.

“We do not have specific customers. We are looking for customers little by little. We have not yet found people who can export our products outside Macina. Everything is sold in Macina here. We want to have customers in Ségou, Bamako, etc. This year, the projects came to help us, which is why processing has developed here.”

Interview with a processor of agricultural products, Macina cercle, April 2019.

In the rice border strips of the Office du Niger in Ségou, three levels of commercialization have been identified.

- The first concerns wholesale traders coming mostly from the capital, Bamako, to buy rice, store it and then sell it at the market. For some respondents, the traders always come at a time when the price of rice is still very low on the market and when the Office is demanding the water fee, which puts farmers in a fragile situation.
- The second level affects individuals resident in Niono and Macina, who take out loans with microcredit funds to buy paddy rice and resell it in large cities.
- The third level is the small traders who go to collect rice in the villages during harvest time to resell it to big traders.

“It should be noted that with the growing insecurity, the last two levels have become very uncertain: no one can move with money to buy rice in the villages anymore without being attacked on the road by bandits. Similarly, nowadays no one can come and sell their rice and go back without being attacked.”

Interview with a farmer, Niono cercle, April 2019.

●●
‘NO ONE CAN MOVE WITH MONEY TO BUY RICE IN THE VILLAGES ANYMORE WITHOUT BEING ATTACKED ON THE ROAD BY BANDITS.’



●●
TRADE IS GREATLY AFFECTED BY INSECURITY. WEEKLY FAIRS ARE LESS FREQUENTED BY POPULATIONS FROM NEIGHBOURING COMMUNES AND VILLAGES. THE LACK OF ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE, THE EXISTENCE OF IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES ON THE ROADS AND ROBBERIES MAKE TRAVEL DANGEROUS.

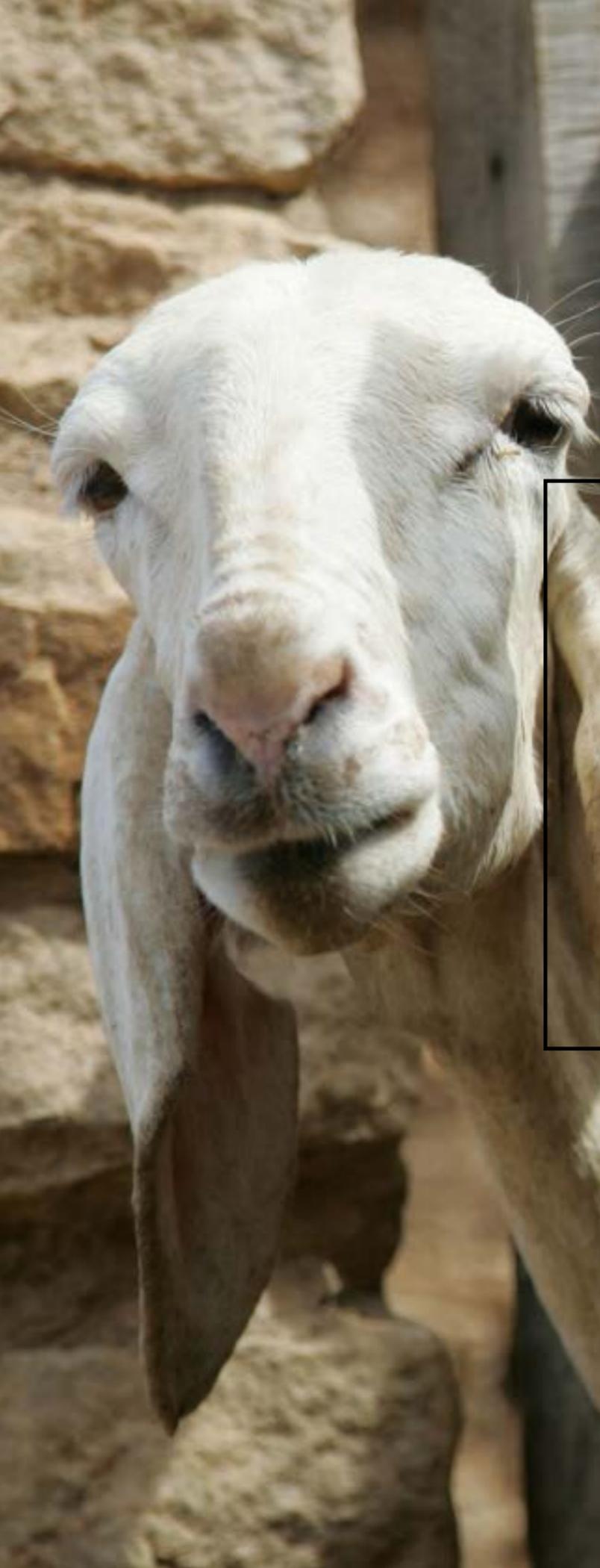
Commercial activity is affected by the insecurity situation. Weekly fairs are less frequented by populations from neighbouring communes and villages. The lack of road infrastructure linking the villages of the commune, the existence of improvised explosive devices and robberies make it dangerous to travel in the cercles of Bandiagara, Bankass, Koro, Macina and Niono. The quantity of agricultural products placed on the market varies according to commercialization periods. It is during harvest that the commercialization of products is the most important, but the prices are also very low.

“ Production is the market. The customer is the market. I have to say that the current circumstances have caused these production prices to plummet in Macina. Because of insecurity, the main customer of the Office du Niger or Macina is Mopti. No vehicle or canoe can leave Mopti to arrive in Macina. Last year at that time, rice went up to 350 or more, but this year we did not even reach 300 yet. It is around 285 maximum. We have not reached 300. Mopti denizens are our customers. Many of them no longer come because of insecurity. You can't navigate on the river. Localities like Diafarabé and Toguerekoumbé all have to come and buy rice here. People from those localities don't come anymore.”

Interview with a farmer, Macina cercle, April 2019.

In the central regions of Mali, agricultural production is dependent on rainfall, which is increasingly erratic. This dependence increases from year to year making production difficult. While access to resources, such as water, land and fodder, is a major problem for agricultural actors in central Mali, security remains the major challenge affecting agricultural activities: farmers work their fields in fear and markets are less frequented. The commercialization of products suffers from lack of infrastructure, but also from insecurity.





ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

More than 70% of respondents say they own livestock. Livestock belongs primarily to the head of the household. When households do not own livestock, it is most often because they lack the financial means to buy livestock or because access to pasture is limited. When other people take care of the animals, it is mainly parents and family.

Animal husbandry products are mainly used for subsistence purposes, for household consumption, but also for sale at the market. Livestock also have savings value, as households can sell livestock to meet unexpected expenses such as health expenses.

+70%
OF RESPONDENTS
OWN LIVESTOCK



Animal theft

As a result of insecurity, animal theft by armed groups has become very common and widespread. This threat is changing the practice of animal husbandry: breeders choose to keep their livestock close to their homes and limit movement in grazing areas, which has consequences for the cost of animal husbandry:

“Acts of theft and abduction of animals are commonplace in the area, so animal husbandry has become very expensive because of the purchase of fodder and other foods for animals.”

Interview with residents, Bankass cercle, February 2019.

Animal theft, but also the inaccessibility of pastures or the fear of acts of violence push breeders to find other means of subsistence, to limit their animal husbandry activities or even to stop them. For example, in Ténenkou cercle, a traditional animal husbandry area, livestock is moved to southern Mali, Bamako, but also to the sub-region and, in particular, to Côte d'Ivoire.

The impossibility of practicing animal husbandry has strong economic repercussions on breeders who are often forced to find other economic activities:

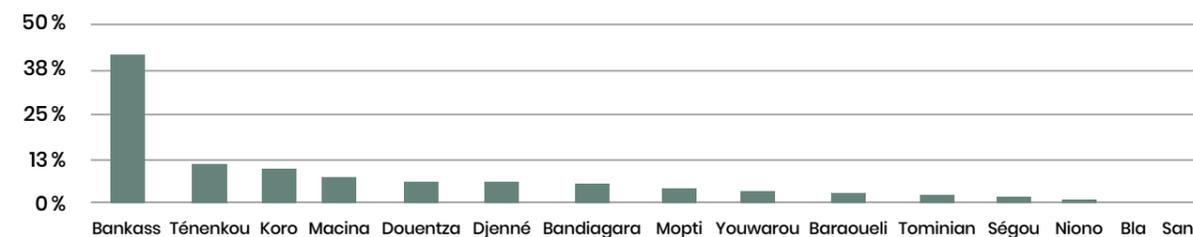
“Breeders who do not have spaces for their animals in our locality due to insecurity, acts of violence and livestock theft have had to transport their livestock to other places and either turn to small trade or are inactive.”

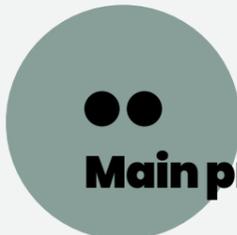
Interview with breeders, Ténenkou cercle, February 2019.



INSECURITY AND LIVESTOCK THEFT, SOMETIMES ON A MASSIVE SCALE, PUSH BREEDERS AND FARMERS TO MOVE THEIR LIVESTOCK, OFTEN VERY FAR.

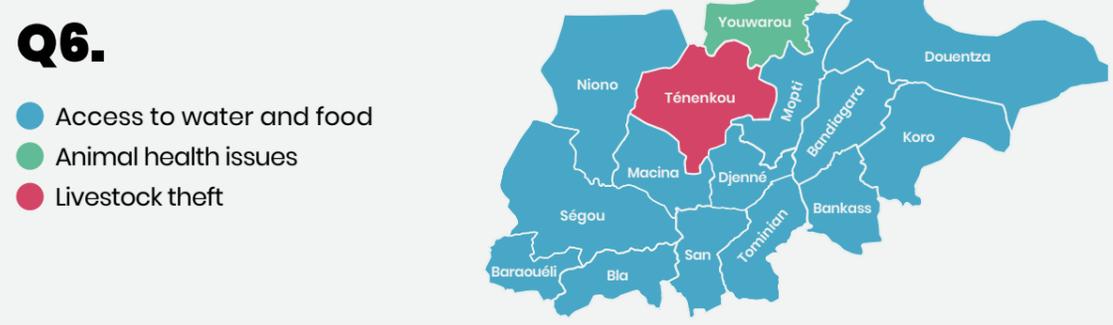
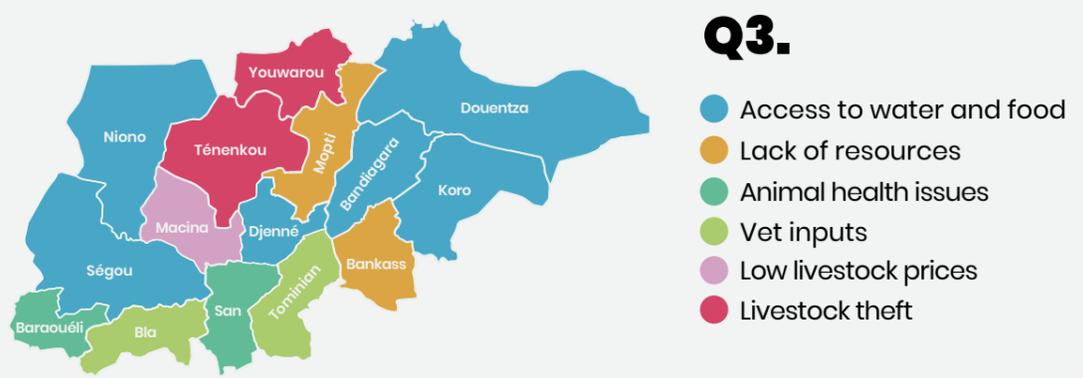
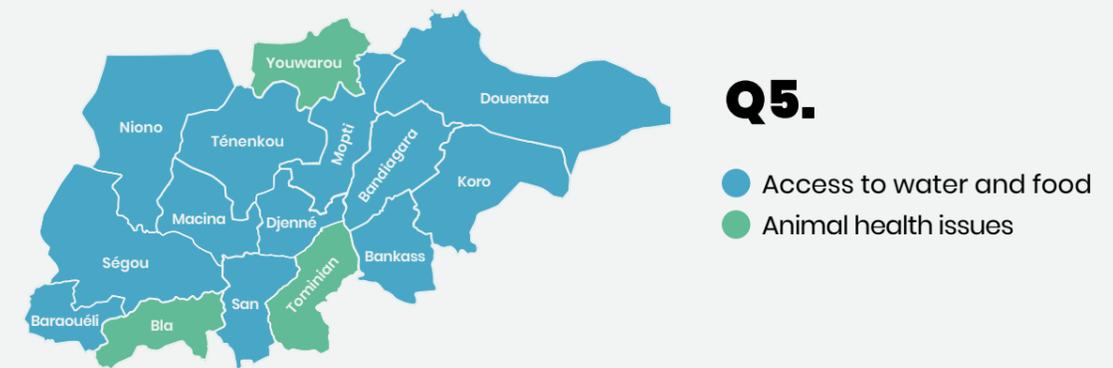
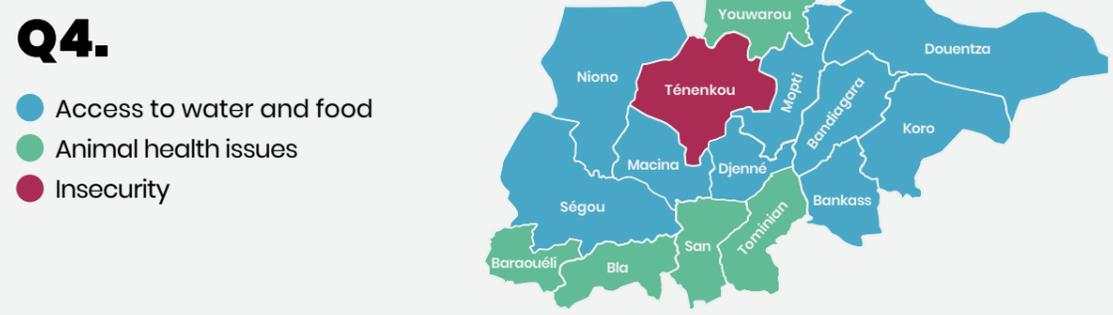
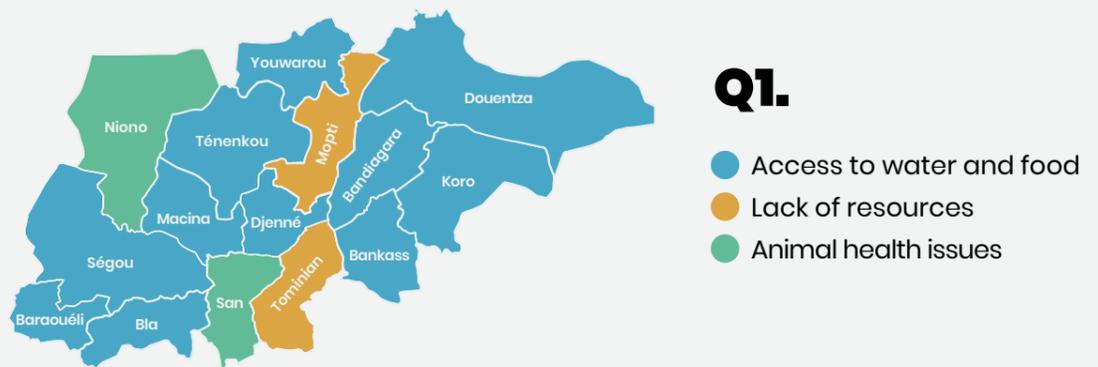
Animal theft is a recurring problem in the practice of animal husbandry (2019 – 2022).





Main problems related to animal husbandry

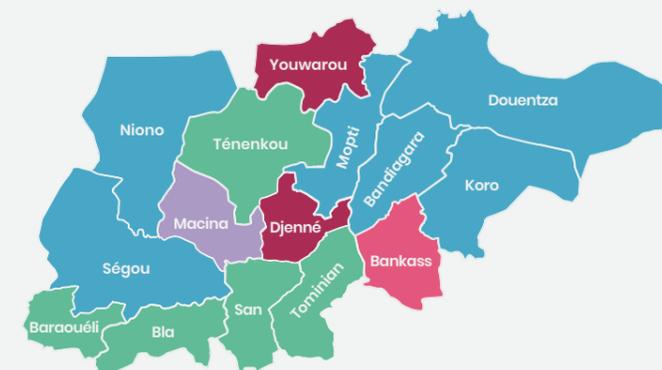
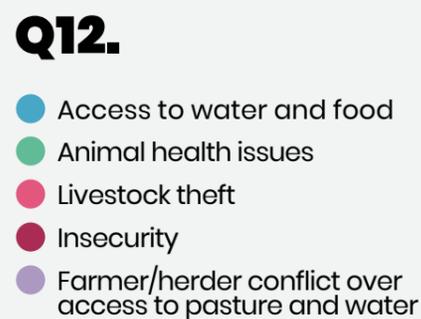
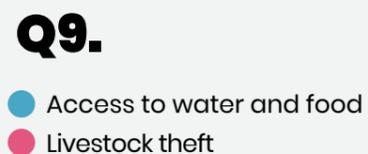
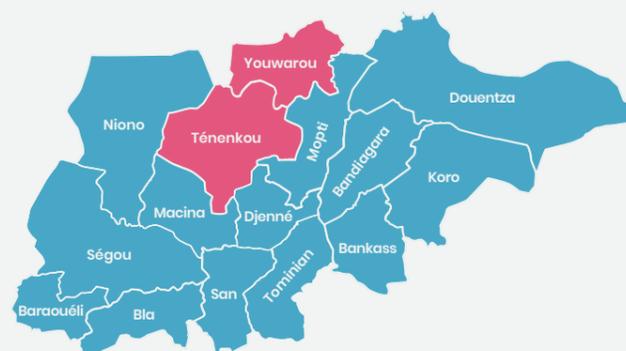
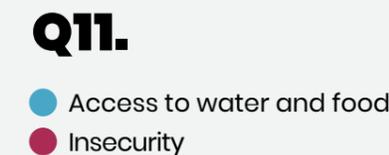
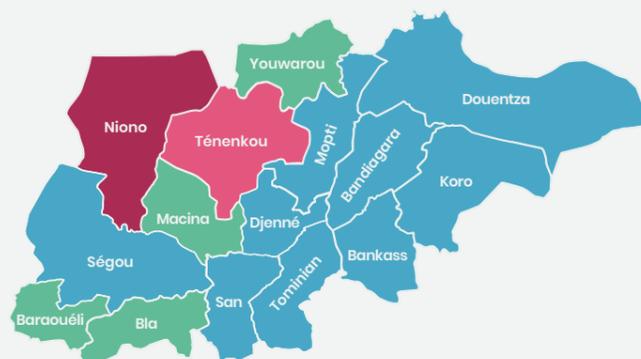
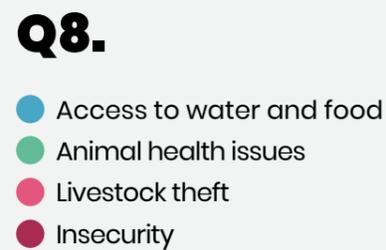
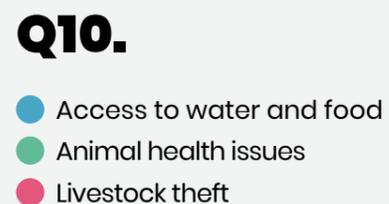
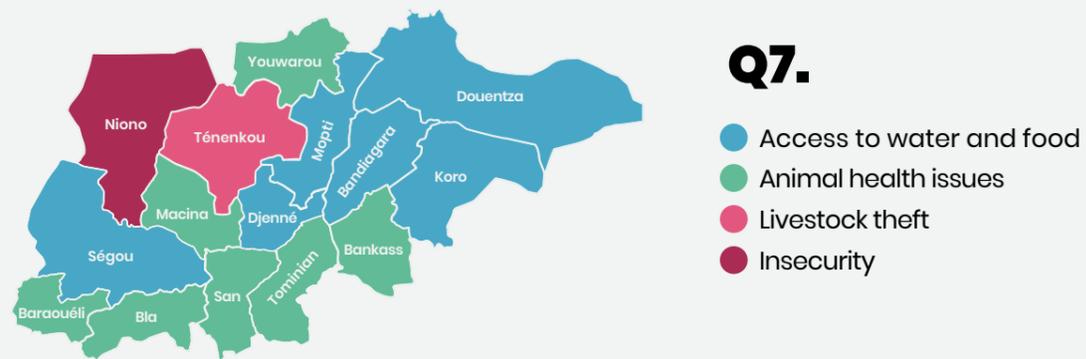
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Source: Decentralization/mapping of Mali, carried out by O. Dembélé, coordinator of the Central Mali Project.

●●
Main problems related to animal husbandry

Q1.	Q2.	Q3.	Q4.	Q5.	Q6.	Q7.	Q8.	Q9.	Q10.	Q11.	Q12.
May 2019	July 2019	Oct. 2019	Jan. 2020	Apr. 2020	June 2020	Nov. 2020	March 2021	Nov. 2021	Feb. 2022	June 2022	Oct. 2022



Source: Decentralization/mapping of Mali, carried out by O. Dembélé, coordinator of the Central Mali Project.



IN THE CENTRAL REGIONS OF MALI, THEY ARE MAINLY AGROPASTORALISTS, FARMERS BEING MOST OFTEN ALSO BREEDERS.

'TODAY, THERE IS NOT EVEN ANY AREA LEFT TO KEEP ANIMALS. FOR THAT MATTER, MANY PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY FLED THE AREA BECAUSE, AT ANY TIME, YOU CAN BE KILLED AND ALL YOUR ANIMALS TAKEN.'

The availability of grazing areas is another issue. Bandiagara cercle is particularly affected by the lack of grazing areas, due to its geographical location. As a result, most breeders practice fattening and feed the animals with peanut leaves, cowpea leaves, bean leaves, etc.

“ In Gologou, a village located 10 kilometres from Bandiagara, *the non-cultivable land around the village is used as grazing area. 'Some breeders also walk along the Yamé to feed their animals and, in case of conflict between breeders and farmers, the incident is resolved amicably.'*

Interview with a cooperative president, Bandiagara cercle, February 2019.

In the Seno — Bankass and Koro — cereal farming is more developed and animals have easy access to hay and grazing areas. Breeders find it easier to search for food for animals than those in Bandiagara cercle. However, in some villages in Seno, farmers no longer have access to pasture because of insecurity:

“ *Currently, it is not easy to feed the animals because of the deteriorating security situation. There is no more area for grazing. We are forced to buy cattle cakes to feed the animals.'*

Interview with a farmer, Bankass cercle, February 2019.

In the Macina area, there are grazing and trans-humance sites for local breeders. In Soroweli, 4 km from Niono, the grazing site is frequented by breeders from all the localities of the cercle to feed the animals.

The lack of pasture is also explained by the fact that most of the areas are cultivated, especially in Bandiagara, Bankass and Koro cercles. There is less and less fallow land or land rotation between agriculture and animal husbandry. This makes it difficult to manage areas:

“ *We are all illiterate, which means that we have very little knowledge on organizing land space. In these conditions, racing to occupy the land is the rule. This is the main reason why we no longer have room for our own animals.'*

Interview with a member of a farmers' organization, Bankass cercle, February 2019.

In Bandiagara cercle, geography is the main obstacle to the creation of pastoral areas. Also, for a very long time, the Dogon community — of the plateau as well as the plain — has forged alliances with the Fula community of the region to guard the herds. The Fula, who have lost most of their livestock over the past three decades, now drive most of the livestock belonging to the Dogon in two main areas: the Ségué forest and the Samory forest, the only areas now able to shelter animals in the region. But the rise in intercommunity tensions weakens this pact.

From Niono to Macina, it is very difficult today to talk about access to grazing areas. The various interviews show that at the level of these two cercles, all the areas reserved for grazing are occupied, as are most of the animal paths and watering places. However, several agents of the services interviewed affirm that, since its creation, the Office du Niger area has always been considered an agropastoral area, but with the recent development of irrigated cultivation, the question of pastoral area has been relegated to the background, which, according to several informants, is the root of several conflicts between breeders and farmers. According to a farmer in the Macina area:

“ *Today, there is not even any area left to keep animals. For that matter, many people have already fled the area because, at any time, you can be killed and all your animals taken. This is why some have already brought their animals to Ségou and Sikasso. It has not been two weeks since 64 of my goats were taken with my shepherd nephew. My neighbour in Kokry-Bozo lost over 300 head of oxen. His two shepherds were murdered and thrown into a well.'*

Interview with a farmer, Macina cercle, April 2019.

“ *In Niono, the area indicated for grazing is not at all suitable. Even if there is room, there is no water. This is what causes the animals to go back to the border strips at some point in search of water. Most farmers have not yet finished the harvest.'*

Interview with a farmer, Niono cercle, April 2019.

Multiple agreements have been signed to improve access to pastoral resources and cohabitation between breeders and farmers. But with the current insecurity, trust between breeders and farmers is weakening. These divisions create significant tensions between communities against a backdrop of competition for natural resources. The deterioration or inaccessibility of these resources has a considerable impact on the households of breeders, who must find other economic activities to supplement their income:

“ *The area of Diafarabé (...) was an island that met the needs of all the populations of the locality. Exchanges were fruitful. Everyone in their field of activity was able to live and there was no competition. These days, the situation has changed, everyone is doing the same activity and there is nothing to gain.'*

Interview with traders, Ténenkou cercle, February 2019.

FISHERY



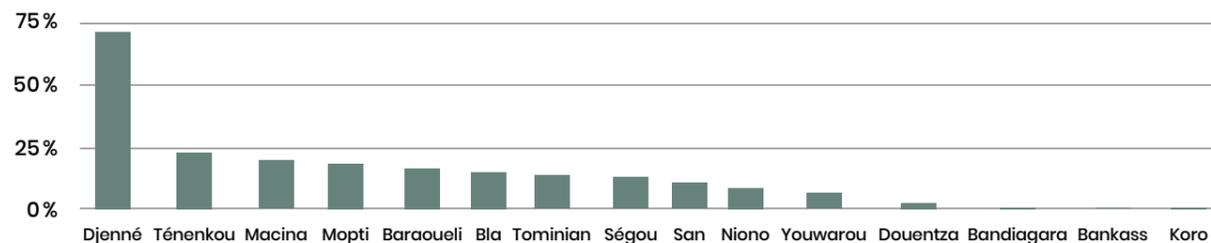
Fishery is mainly practiced in Djenné, Baraouéli, Ténenkou, Macina, Mopti and Tominian cercles. The main tool is the net and the vast majority of fishermen own their fishing tools.



THE MAIN USE OF FISHERY PRODUCTS IS FOOD FOR THE FAMILY

The main use of fishery products is food for the family and, to a lesser extent, market sales. However, the lack of fish is a regularly reported problem, contributing to rising prices.

Does your household fish or has it fished in the past three months?

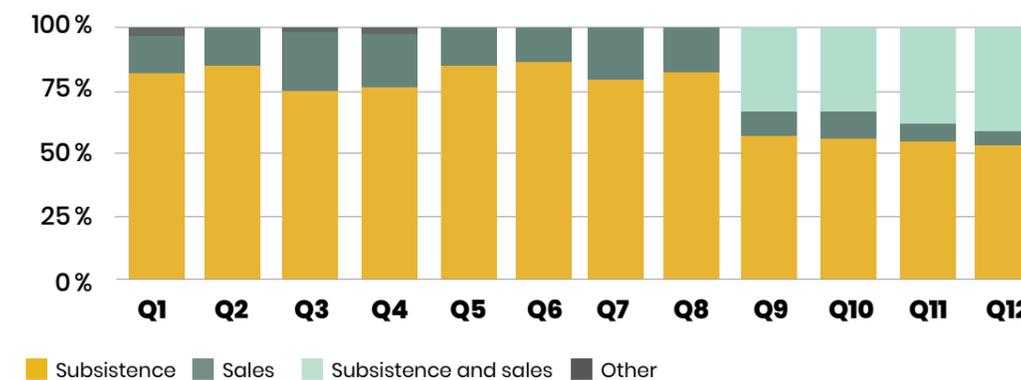


As with animal husbandry, fishermen are forced to combine several activities or leave their village:

“The current state of our natural resources is totally different from before. Nature has totally changed because of the drought. (...) The lack of spate and rain is causing us to become poorer day by day. Agriculture and fishery are the two main activities of our village. (...) I think that forty years ago, the riverbed reached the outskirts of our village. In the past the river did not dry up, and we had fish all year round. (...) But now, the river has receded and no longer offers enough fish.”

Interview with fishermen, Djenné cercle, June 2019.

What is the main use of fishery products?



The presence of armed groups around fishing grounds severely limits the mobility of fishermen, particularly affecting villages that depend on this activity. Armed groups regulate movements around towns and on the river, to the point of imposing directives on fishermen:

“The river is full of fish, but we can't fish. We were prevented from fishing at certain times, which interrupts fishing activity. Fishing has stopped because even on the river, the threat is high. It is now necessary to fish at hours when fish are not at the right depth, and even on the river, insecurity is persistent.”

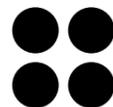
Interview with a fisherman, Ténenkou cercle, February 2019.

Faced with the constraints of climate change and insecurity, populations are adapting, to compensate for the lack of fish, some fishermen practice aquaculture by transferring small fish from the river to their wells, where they are fed, but this concerns only a minority of fishermen, who have the necessary infrastructure. A large number of fishermen choose to migrate, often outside the country, especially to Côte d'Ivoire where fishing is easier, or change their activity and turn to gold panning or agriculture as a supplementary activity.

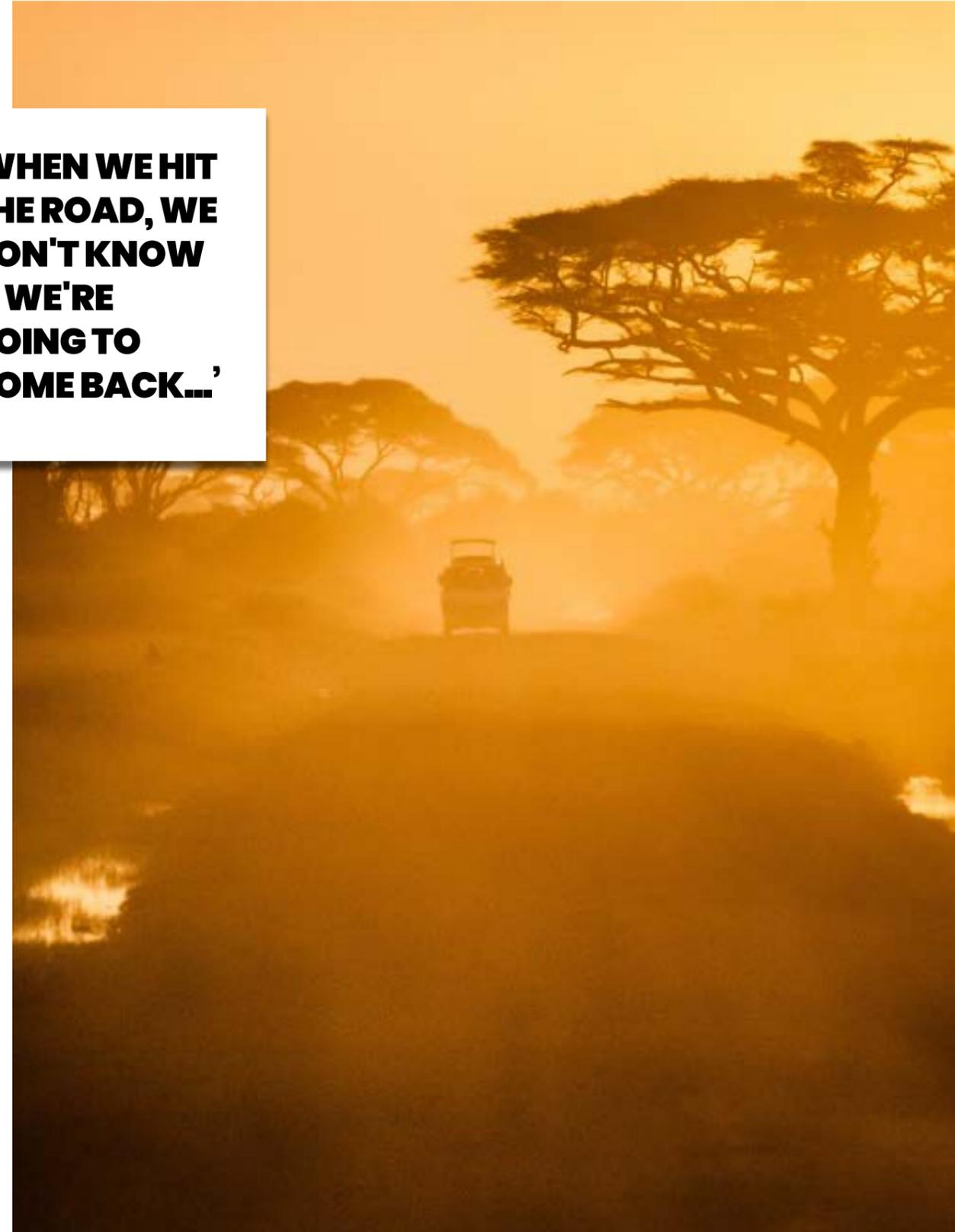
TRADE



Trade is another activity badly affected by the security situation, yet it is a regular and almost daily activity for the vast majority of households, which go to the market at least once a week in rural areas, and two or three times a week in urban areas.



‘WHEN WE HIT THE ROAD, WE DON'T KNOW IF WE'RE GOING TO COME BACK...’



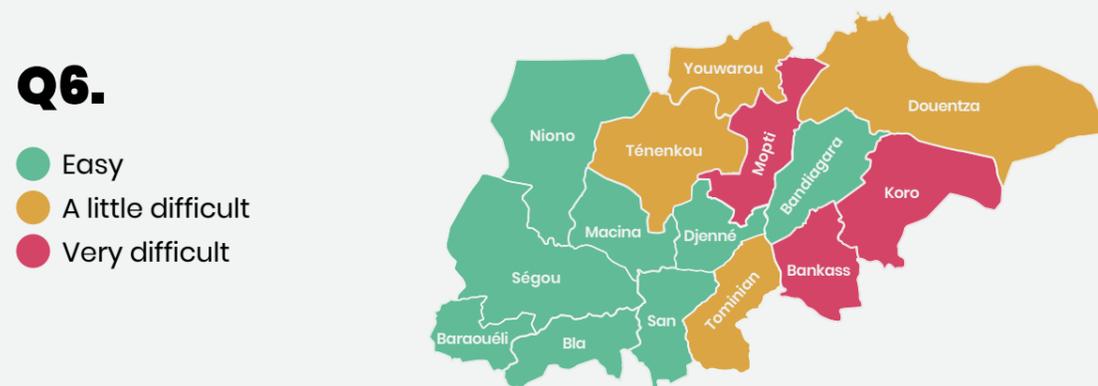
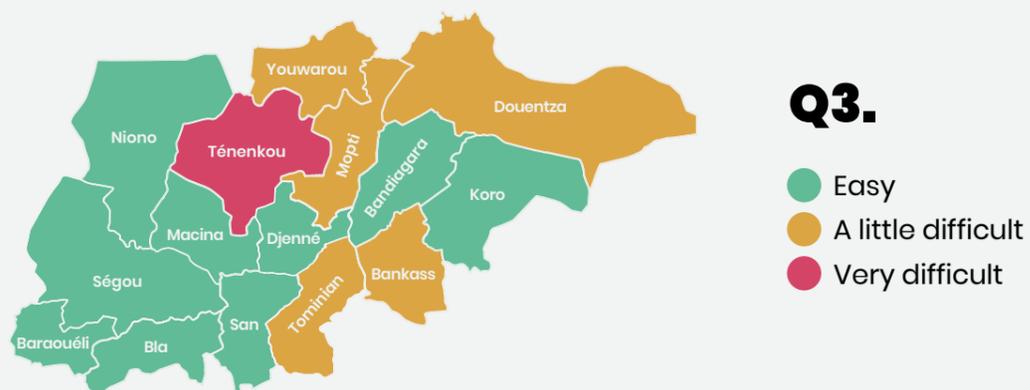
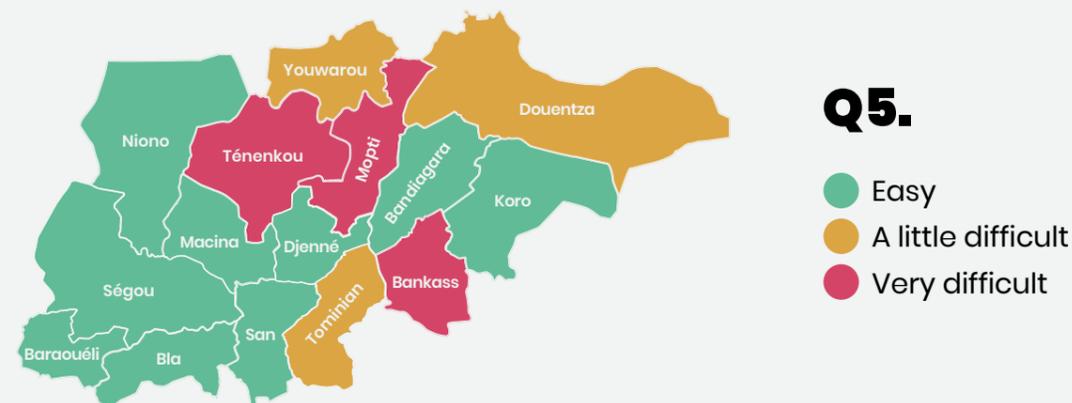
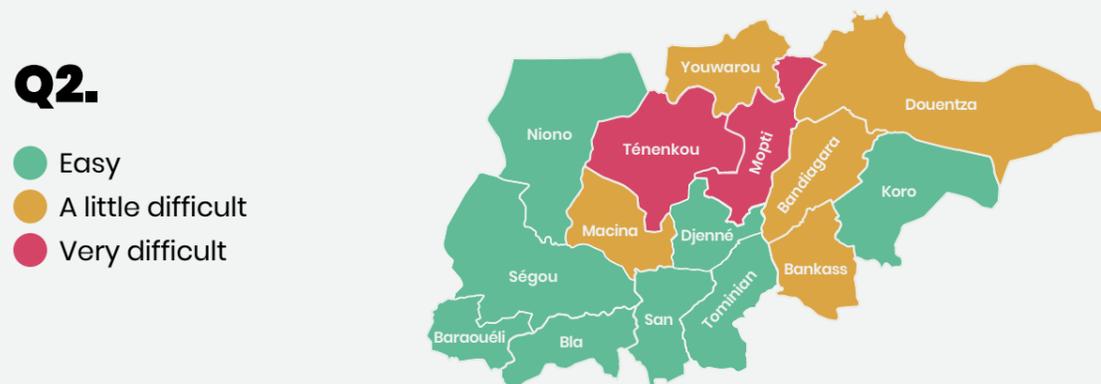
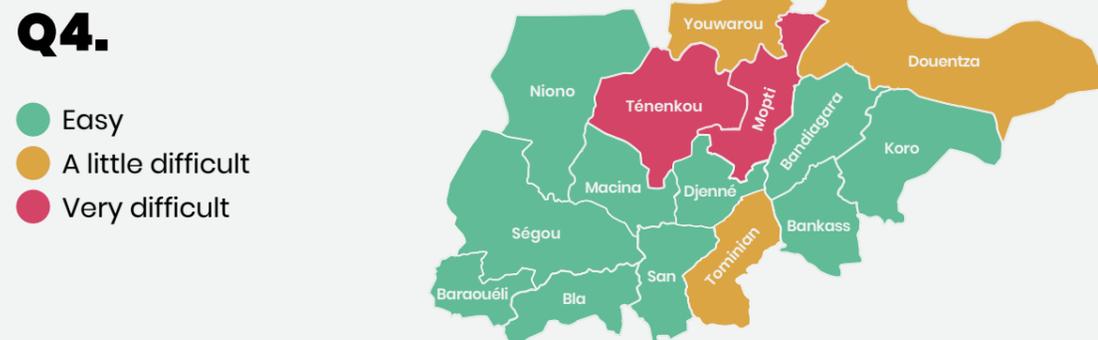
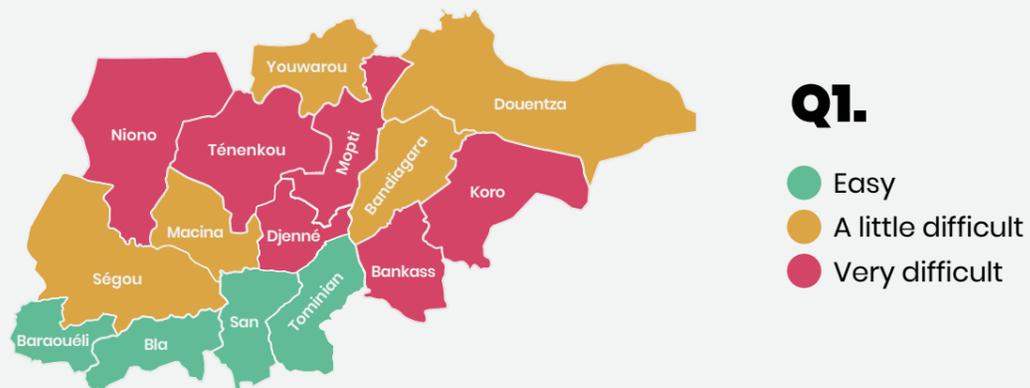
TRADE IS AN ACTIVITY BADLY AFFECTED BY THE SECURITY SITUATION

People are reluctant to go to markets for several reasons:

- presence of mines on roads;
- recurrent attacks on public transport vehicles;
- poor road conditions;
- transport and vehicle problems, the latter being less available due to fear of attacks;
- some markets no longer operate.

●●
Physical access to markets

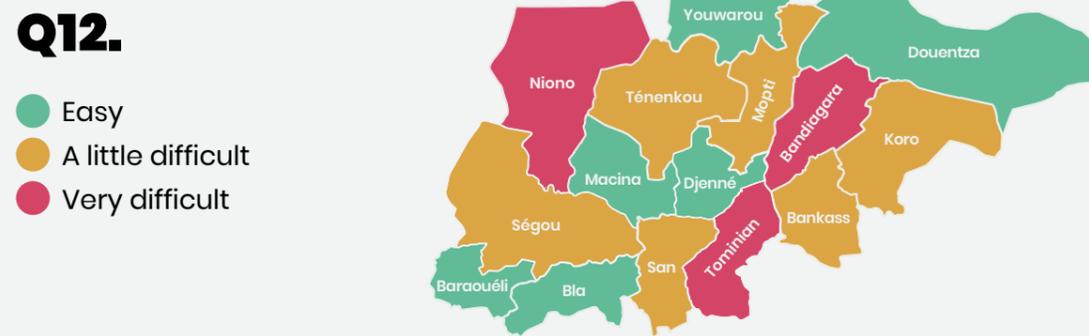
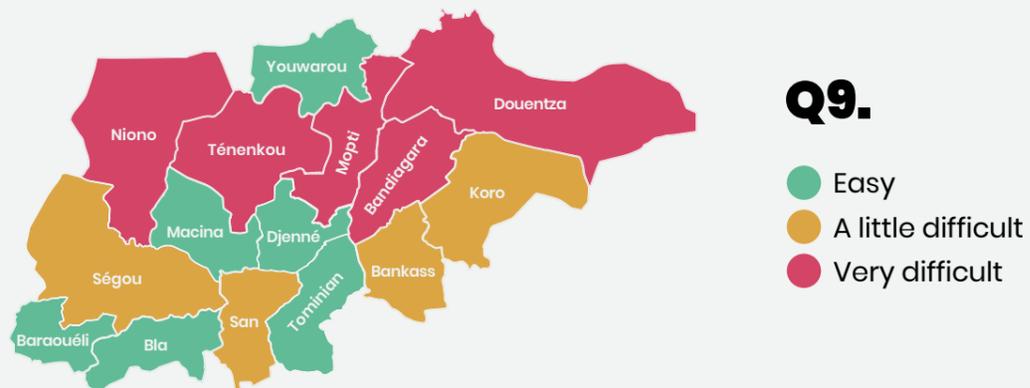
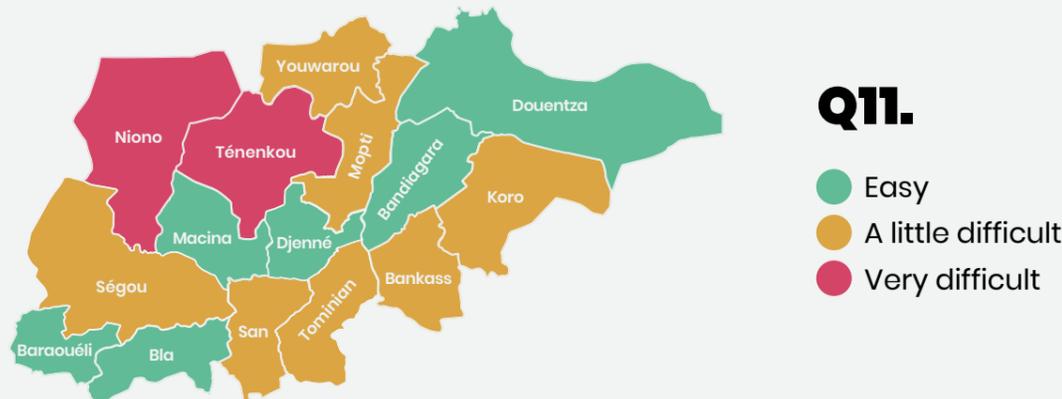
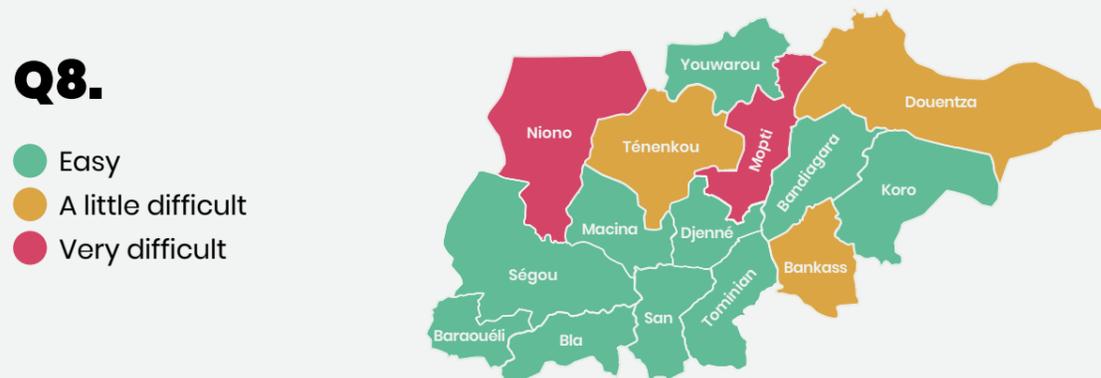
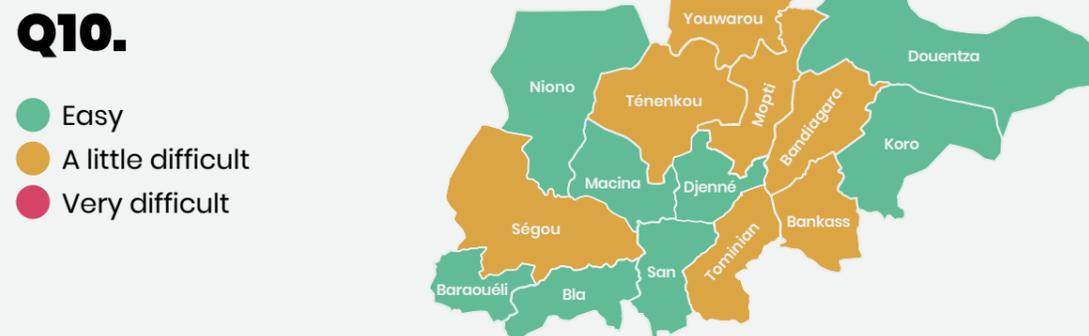
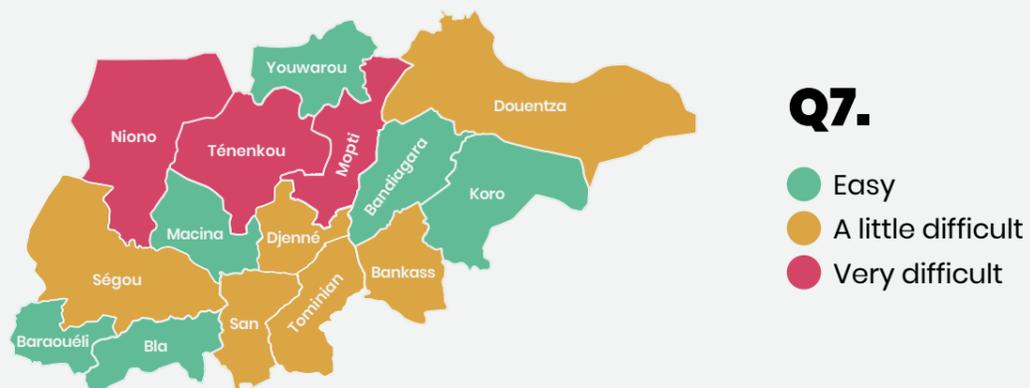
Q1.	Q2.	Q3.	Q4.	Q5.	Q6.	Q7.	Q8.	Q9.	Q10.	Q11.	Q12.
May 2019	July 2019	Oct 2019	Jan. 2020	Apr. 2020	June 2020	Nov 2020	March 2021	Nov 2021	Feb 2022	June 2022	Oct 2022



Source: Decentralization/mapping of Mali, carried out by O. Dembélé, coordinator of the Central Mali Project.

●●
Physical access to markets

Q1.	Q2.	Q3.	Q4.	Q5.	Q6.	Q7.	Q8.	Q9.	Q10.	Q11.	Q12.
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Source: Decentralization/mapping of Mali, carried out by O. Dembélé, coordinator of the Central Mali Project.

As can be seen from the maps above, trading activities — selling or buying in markets — are affected differently in each cercle. In particular, access to markets may be limited by security issues related to travel and its feasibility. These security issues are also due to roadblocks imposed by armed groups, but also due to thefts and robberies.

“My husband is a trader in Douentza. He used to leave early in the morning and come back late. But because of the security issues, this is no longer the case. He was threatened several times by bandits. Now he only goes out when other people start travelling and he comes back quickly.”

Interview with a woman, Douentza cercle, March 2019.

“There has been an impact on economic activities in the area since before the 2012 crisis people travelled from Gao to Timbuktu to trade; but now with travel restrictions everything has slowed down.”

Interview with village chief, Tominian cercle, February 2019.

“The security situation has changed our habits because people no longer come to our fair. (...) And other people came to us on fair days to sell and buy other products, but because of the security issues, people are afraid to come. This is why we are experiencing several hardships in daily life. Everything has become expensive.”

Interview with a young person, Douentza cercle, March 2019.

Merchants also indicate that the poor condition of the roads and the absence or cost of the service for transporting goods are significant constraints. The ban on the use of motorcycles affects traders in particular:

“It is strictly forbidden to ride a motorcycle to trade, and trade has totally slowed down. Previously we went to Dogon country to buy poultry and oxen and resell them to the village, but motorcycles can no longer travel to trade, and it slows down the commercialization of our products.”

Interview with a president of a youth group, Tominian cercle, February 2019.



TRADERS, FOR FEAR OF BEING ROBBED AND/OR ATTACKED, LIMIT THEIR TRAVELS TO MARKETS CLOSE TO THEIR LOCALITY AND AVOID TRAVELLING TO THE LARGER MARKETS IN THE CERCLE.



“For example, Bozos came to sell fish here on fair days. They don't come anymore. Because traveling by motorcycle is no longer allowed. It changed everything. (...) Nothing is easy. Quite simply, those who manage to come face all the difficulties in the world.”

Interview with a young person, Douentza cercle, March 2019.

‘IN MANY CERCLES, CUSTOMERS ARE BECOMING SCARCER, WHICH CAUSES PRICES TO FALL AND AFFECTS THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF BOTH TRADERS AND FARMERS.’

Interview during the Q0 survey, Niono cercle field diary, February–March 2019.

THE ISSUES OF SECURITY AND SUPPLY ARE CLOSELY LINKED. THE PRESENCE OF ARMED GROUPS LIMITS SUPPLY OPPORTUNITIES IN SOME AREAS.

AU TRAVAIL NON À LA MENDI



“

I do transport, I also do trade which is currently not satisfactory. Products are expensive, times are hard, and there is no travel either. Trade does not earn much, it does not earn as much as before. I work from home.

I post my products online, people see it, and they call me, and I do everything to go and sell the products.

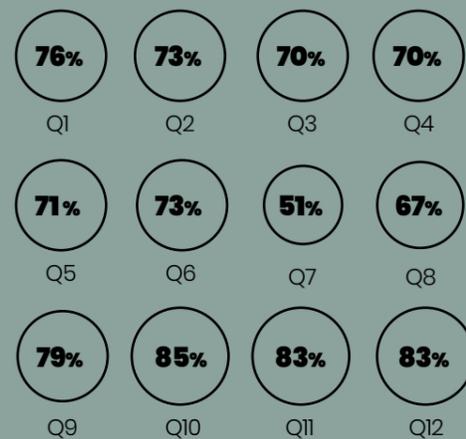
Now, I can say that it is impossible to go to fairs to sell your goods because armed bandits will stop you on the road or on the way back. Accomplices can tell them that there is such a person on the road who is coming, and they will attack you or kidnap you, and that's why people are afraid to go to fairs.

You know, we risk our lives on the roads to Konna, Fatoma, Goundaga, Douentza and Bandiagara. There are always mines on these roads, and they often explode and kill people. For that reason, we now prefer to stay at home so as not to fall victim to these circumstances.

Interview with a carrier person, Mopti cercle, September 2022.

THE SECURITY SITUATION AFFECTS ALL HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Is your economic activity (your main source of income) affected by the security issues? 'Yes'



THE PRICE OF MILLET IN AUGUST 2022 IS 163% HIGHER IN THE SÉGOU REGION AND 88% HIGHER IN THE MOPTI REGION, COMPARED TO AUGUST 2017 PRICES.



36% OF RESPONDENTS SAY THAT SECURITY ISSUES HAVE LED TO A DECREASE IN THE QUANTITY OF FOOD AVAILABLE FOR SALE.

The impact of insecurity

The main economic impact of insecurity on household activities has varied over time and across cercles.

74% of households believe that their main source of income has been affected by the security issues between 2019 and 2022.

The price of millet in August 2022 is 163% higher in the Ségou region and 88% higher in the Mopti region, compared to August 2017 prices. During the same period, the price of local rice increased by 29% and 24% respectively in Mopti and Ségou (Afrique Verte International 2022). Prices have particularly increased from October 2021 due to the economic sanctions imposed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) following the coup.

Between August 2021 and August 2022, the price of rice increased by 29% and 27%, and millet by 97% and 147% respectively in the Mopti and Ségou regions (Afrique Verte International 2022).

Between 2019 and 2022:

- 36% of respondents say that security issues have led to a decrease in the quantity of food available for sale.
- More than 20% mention price increases, a response that increases significantly between March 2020 and September 2022: March 2020 (19%), October 2021 (30%), September 2022 (48%).
- 16% of respondents say they limit their travels to markets
- 11% say their income has changed.
- Some mention the inability to resell their products: customers do not have the necessary means to buy them (5%).
- Finally, nearly 7% cite other problems caused by security issues, such as lack of labour or limitation of their own consumption.

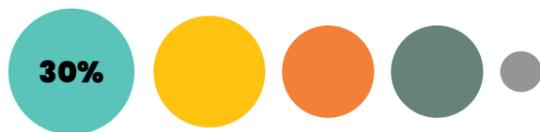
• What is the main economic impact of the security issues on your household activities?



• **What is the main economic impact of the insecurity on your household activities?**

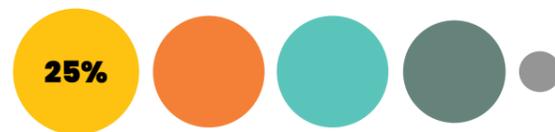
Q1. **Q2.** **Q3.** **Q4.** **Q5.** **Q6.** **Q7.** **Q8.** **Q9.** **Q10.** **Q11.** **Q12.**
 May 2019 July 2019 Oct 2019 Jan. 2020 Apr. 2020 June 2020 Nov 2020 March 2021 Nov 2021 Feb 2022 June 2022 Oct 2022

Q5



- Fewer customers are able to buy my products
- Limitation of attendance at markets and fairs
- Rising food prices
- Fewer products available for sale (agriculture, animal husbandry, fishery)
- Other

Q6



- Limitation of attendance at markets and fairs
- Rising food prices
- Fewer customers are able to buy my products
- Fewer products available for sale (agriculture, animal husbandry, fishery)
- Other

Q9



- My income has changed
- Rising food prices
- Fewer products available for sale (agriculture, animal husbandry, fishery)
- Limitation of attendance at markets and fairs
- Other

Q10



- My income has changed
- Rising food prices
- Fewer products available for sale (agriculture, animal husbandry, fishery)
- Limitation of attendance at markets and fairs
- Other

Q11



- Rising food prices
- My income has changed
- Fewer products available for sale (agriculture, animal husbandry, fishery)
- Limitation of attendance at markets and fairs
- Other

Q12



- Rising food prices
- My income has changed
- Fewer products available for sale (agriculture, animal husbandry, fishery)
- Limitation of attendance at markets and fairs
- Other



THE SURVEY REVEALS THAT RISING FOOD PRICES HAVE BECOME THE MAIN ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCE OF INSECURITY.

During different focus groups, participants often shared their difficulty in practicing their activities due to insecurity.

The conflict has created problems and difficulties for us (...) When we go to the fields, we are forced to go home early because we can be attacked by armed groups or bandits. We can no longer travel and trade between villages. We can no longer properly and regularly farm our fields and raise our animals.'

Interview with a young person from a rural community, Douentza cercle, July 2019.

As with the activities mentioned above, security issues force populations to change careers or to practice several activities at the same time. For example, breeders practice small trade in addition to grazing activities, but this also creates competition for resources:

Breeders who do not have space for their animals in our locality due to security issues, acts of violence and livestock theft have had to transport their livestock to other places and either turn to small trade or become inactive. This aspect has led to an increased number of people practicing the same activity.'

Interview with a breeder, Ténenkou cercle, March 2019.

Prices depend on road conditions and access to urban areas. Stallholders' vehicles can be stopped by armed groups or denied access to certain fairs. Some markets are less and less frequented by vendors, especially livestock markets in Ténenkou cercle for fear of animal theft. In May 2022, armed groups launched an attack on the town of Ténenkou on the day of the fair, causing civilian casualties. Fair day is now considered very dangerous in Ténenkou. Similarly, many markets are no longer held, partly because of mines on the road between Diondori and Ténenkou. The RN 15, which connects Sévaré to Burkina Faso via Bankass and Koro, is particularly dangerous, with many attacks reported.



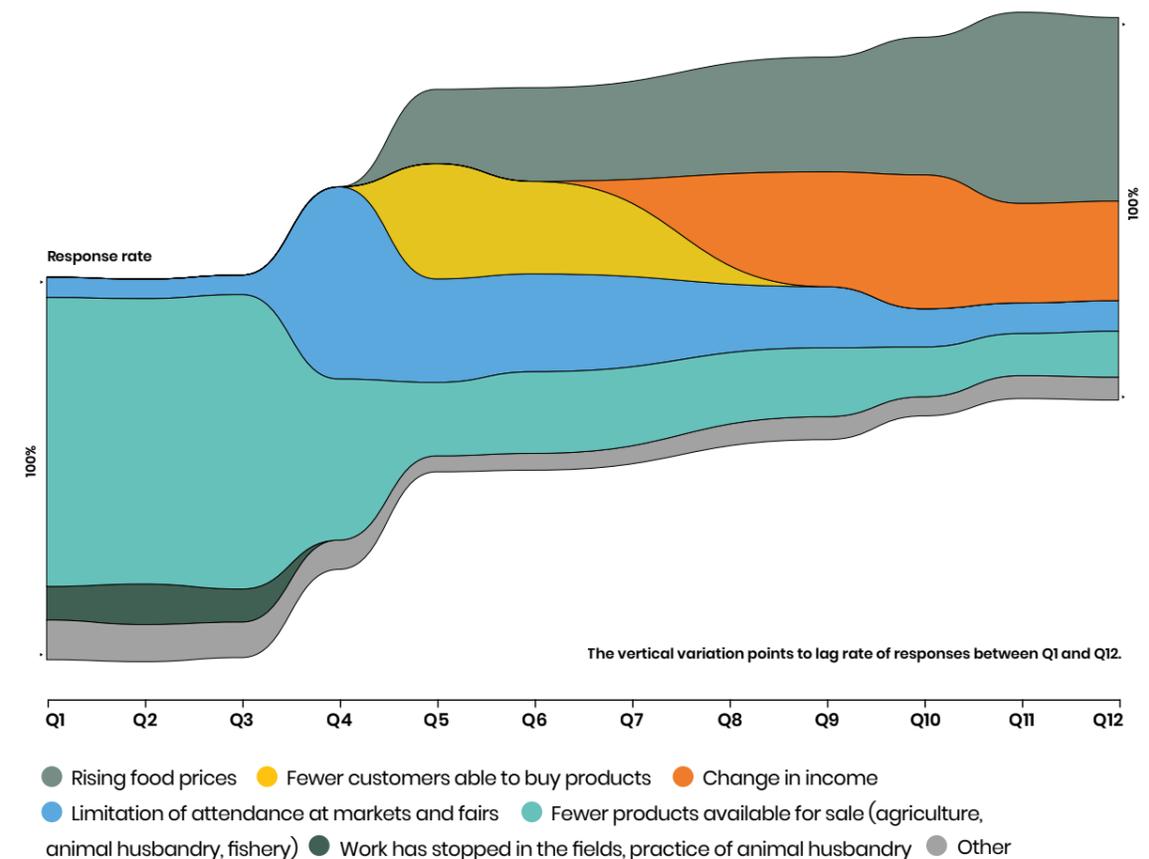
Before the embargo, we paid for transport from here to Bamako for 8000 CFA francs with the transport companies, currently the price has increased to 13000 CFA francs, so it's impossible for many people to make the trips now.'

Interview with a resident, Koro cercle, June 2022.

Consequences for commercial activities

While 74% of households consider that their main source of income has been affected by insecurity between 2019 and 2022, the first consequence being a decrease in the quantity of food available for sale and purchase, and therefore an increase in prices.

Impact of security issues on communities' trade activities



To support families, young people go on an exodus and return for field work during the rainy season.

For economic reasons, young people are allowed by their families to go on a rural exodus at the end of each rainy season. The goal is for these young people to get their pocket money so as not to depend on someone else financially. As the rainy season approaches, they all have to come back. But this year, two of my younger brothers still haven't come back even though our father called them several times to come back.'

Interview with a resident, Baraouéli cercle, June 2022.

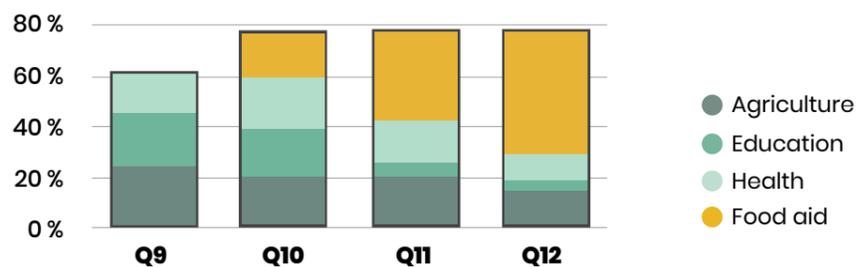
FUEL SHORTAGE IS ANOTHER PROBLEM OFTEN REPORTED DURING THIS SURVEY. IN THE DOUENTZA REGION, FUEL COMES FROM ALGERIA OR MAURITANIA.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

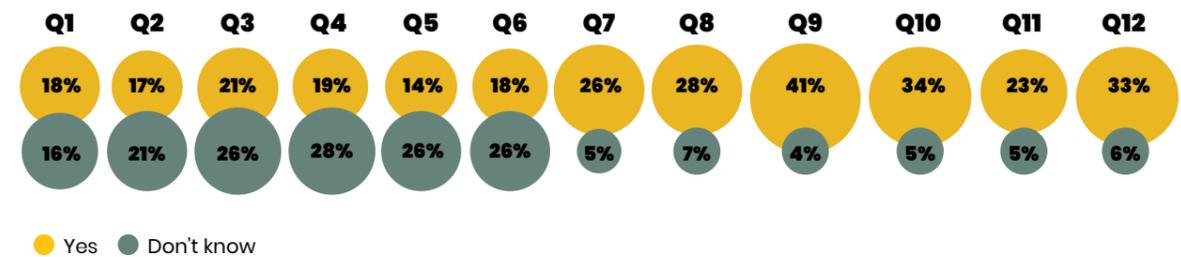
The reduction of development aid programmes, the redirection of certain aids or the cessation of activities because of risks are other consequences of insecurity. On the one hand, threats to national and international non-governmental organization (NGO) workers have led to their departure from certain areas; on the other hand, the presence of armed groups prevents the implementation of certain projects, as infrastructure is sabotaged or destroyed. However, the reduction and/or cessation of income-generating activities (IGAs) have very important consequences for the populations and their cessation came up very often in interviews as a factor of vulnerability.

Between 2019 and 2022, development projects mainly targeted agriculture, education and health. We have noted, however, that humanitarian aid programmes, and in particular food aid programmes, have become predominant to the detriment of development programmes. This is particularly visible between October 2021 (Q9) and September 2022 (Q12), where food aid programmes account for 48% of projects due to the worsening food situation.

Target topics for development projects in central Mali between October 2021 (Q9) and September 2022 (Q12)



In your village, do you know if a new development project has been initiated in the last 3 months?



In general, populations rarely know the name of the project or the organization behind the project or the target group, unless they are directly beneficiaries.

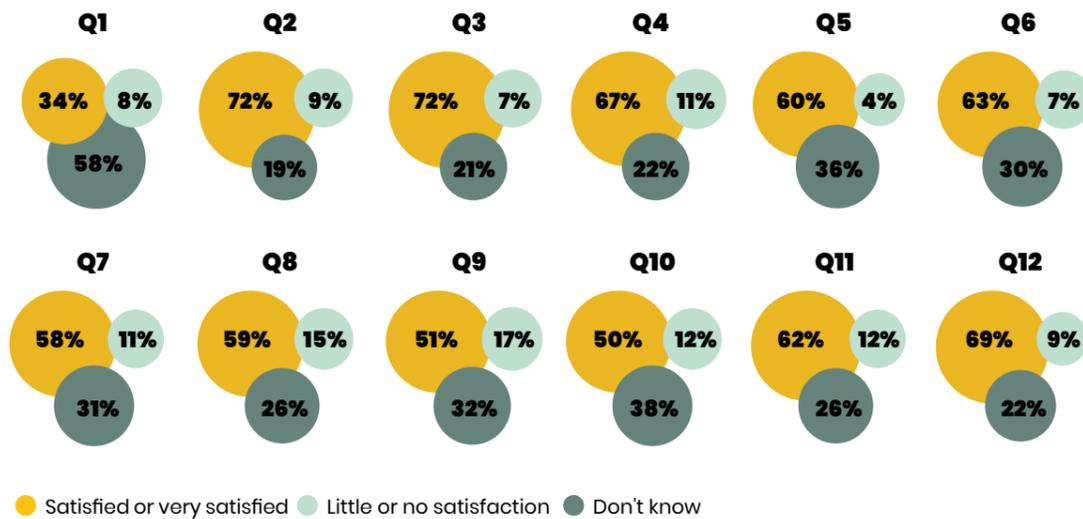
Between 2019 and 2022:

- 62% of respondents cannot identify the organization responsible for implementation and/or the one responsible for funding
- 55% did not know the name of the project
- 54% of respondents know the main activity (education, farming, health etc.)

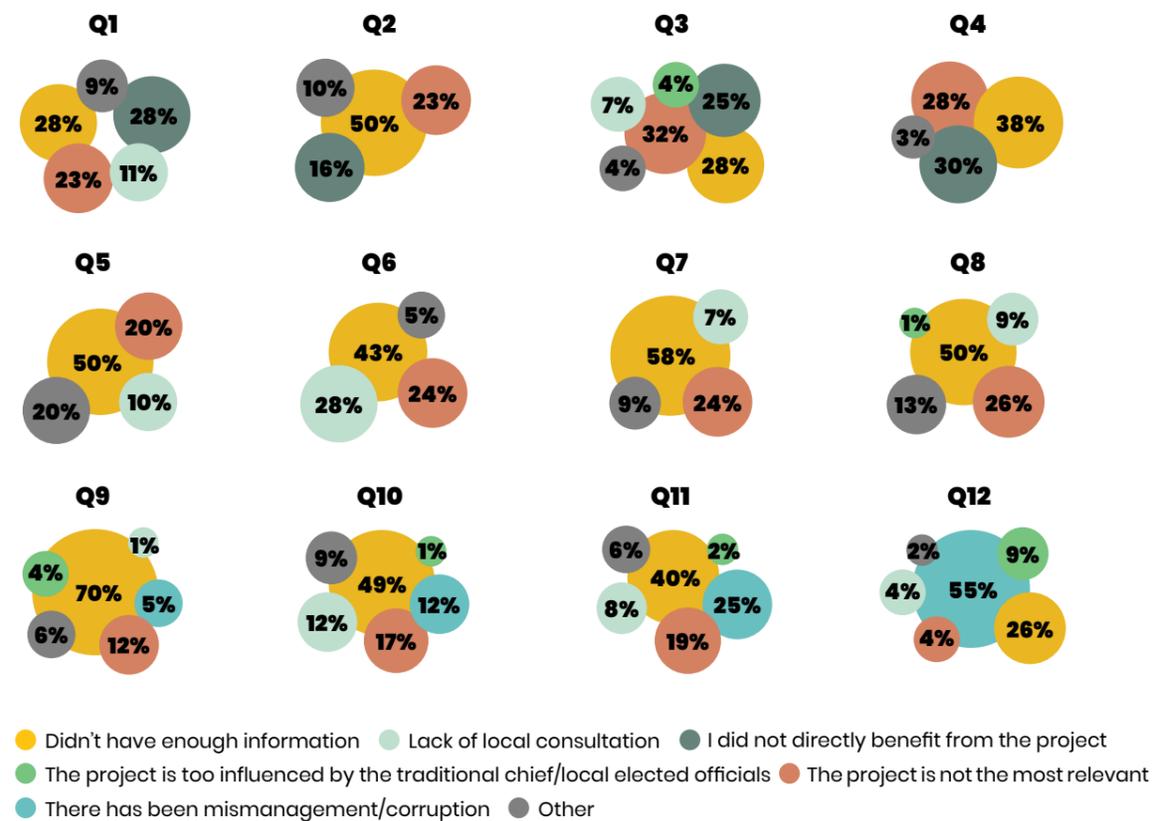
For those who are aware of the projects, respondents are generally satisfied with new projects. On average, between 2019 and 2022, 44% of people say they are satisfied and 15% very satisfied.

Those who are aware of new projects and who are dissatisfied regret not having received enough information about the project or doubt the relevance of the project in their locality. In the later phases of the investigation, corruption or the fact that respondents suspected malfeasance at the management committee level also became an important reason for dissatisfaction.

Are you satisfied with the project?



What is the main reason for your dissatisfaction with the project?
by survey phase



The professional integration of young people

Research conducted from 29 October to 12 November 2020 in the cercles of Ségou, San, Bla, Baraouéli, Tominian, Macina, Mopti, Djenné, Bandiagara and Koro.

The professional integration of young people is a major challenge. As part of this research, 137 individual interviews and focus groups were conducted with target groups, youth organizations, municipal elected representatives, local youth services, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) etc.

Youth unemployment is very high: in 2020, nearly 29% of young people aged 18 – 35 in Mali were considered unemployed without actively attending training, apprenticeships or attending school (Coulibaly, 2020).



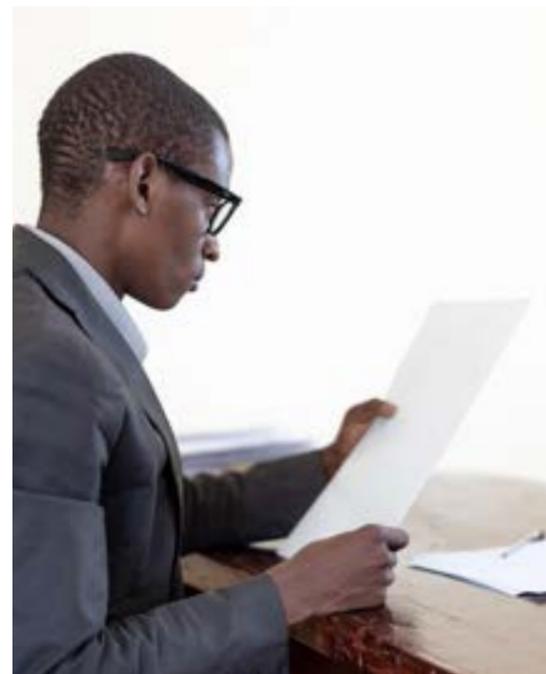
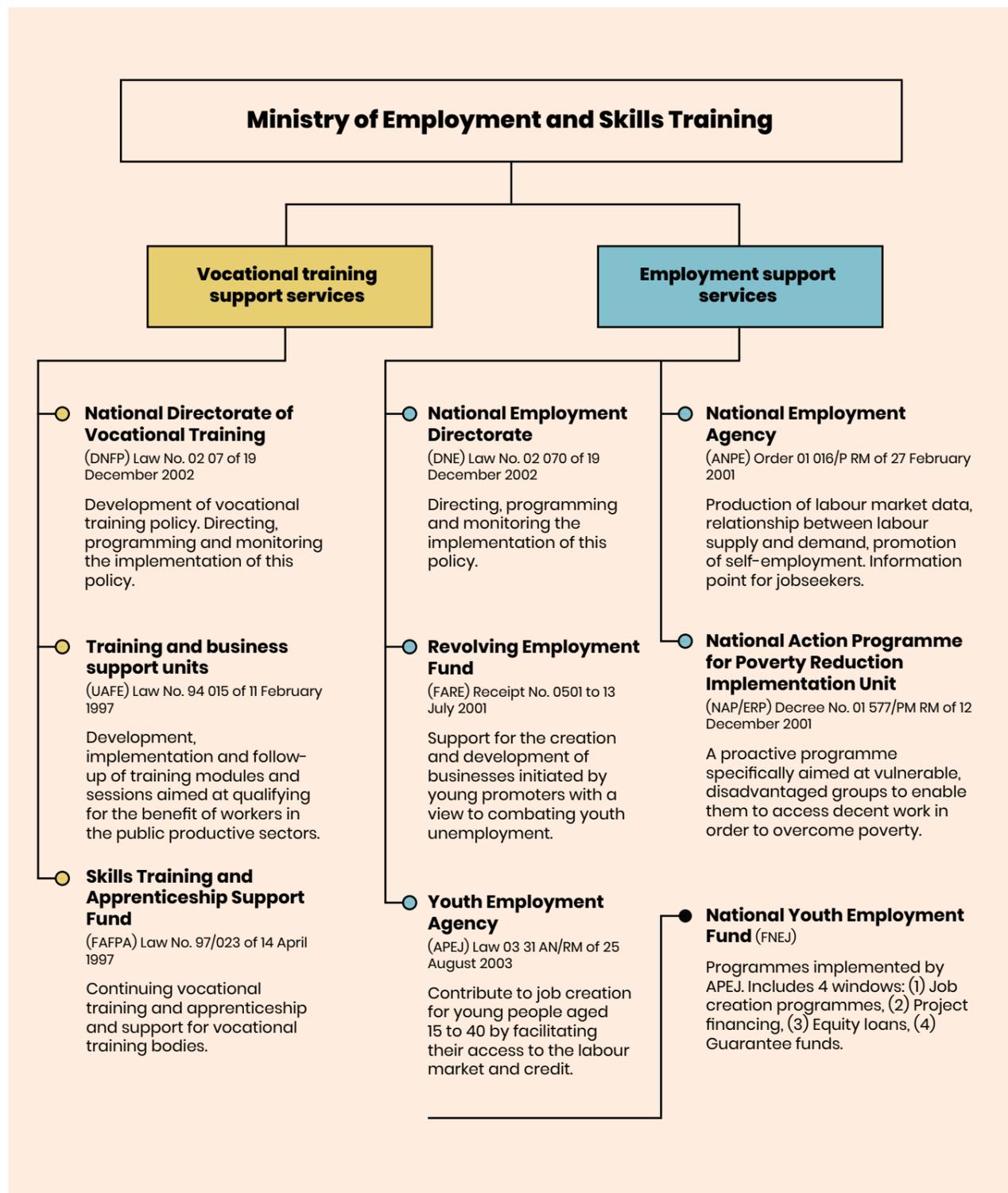
THE SECTORS PROVIDING JOBS MOST AFFECTED BY THE SECURITY CRISIS ARE AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK, TOURISM AND TRADE.



Professional integration of young people and state services

Several state institutions and services have been established to combat unemployment and improve access to the labour market, especially for young people. The majority of these services depend on the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, including the Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment (APEJ) and the National Youth Employment Fund (FNEJ).

• Organization chart of the Employment and Vocational Training Services of the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training



Since 2009, the national vocational training policy has enshrined the intervention of the state, local authorities and the private sector in the fight against unemployment.

This policy is supported by the National Directorate of Employment (DNE) and the National Directorate of Vocational Training (DNFP). It is based on funding from the National Employment Agency (ANPE) and the Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment (APEJ), in particular to subsidize vocational training.

Categories of youths looking for work

- **Young graduates**, a category particularly affected by unemployment.
- **Youths who have failed school**, that have no diploma, find themselves in all sectors.
- **Youths who have never been to school**, often employed in agricultural activities and animal husbandry. This category moves little.

“ In my family, there are 3 unemployed people at home. There is one who graduated from the Institute of Teacher Training (IFM) and the other finished at Bazo University. He is a senior health technician. The final one has finished the sewing training. This is a striking example. There is also the example of the neighbouring family, in the same situation. There must be unemployed members of almost every family here.”

Interview with a head of livestock department, Barouéli cercle, November 2020.

The main sectors of youth employment

The main sectors of activity are agriculture and animal husbandry but youths are also employed in carpentry, mechanics, masonry, crafts or rice cultivation. Youth employment sectors are different in different localities and depend on socio-economic and cultural realities.



Agriculture

Many youths, male and female, work in this sector. However, a number of youths interviewed reported that they did not consider this activity as a job since it does not bring them personal income, unlike market gardening activities:

“The work I do in the garden is for me alone while what I do in the field is for the family. So it's not the same thing.”

Interview with a young farmer, Koro cercle, November 2020.

In the cercle of Bandiagara where land is less available for agriculture, youths practice market gardening more.

The main difficulty is access to land: agricultural land is owned by families and it is very difficult for youths to acquire a plot of land. To free themselves from the family environment, some youths find themselves in small groups to obtain plots of land from mayors or village chiefs.

In the cercle of Macina, agricultural land is granted to families by the Office du Niger.

“Our youths can only have access to the land in the off-season to do gardening, where they make a lot of money. If they can get land in their name, I know they can go far.”

Interview with an elected official, Macina cercle, November 2020.

In the off-season, many youths leave in exodus and then return to their localities to help families with field work before returning to the cities once this work is completed. Some also go to gold panning areas.



Animal husbandry

Youths are very involved in cattle and sheep fattening. This activity is more accessible than farming and income is easier to obtain than farming, where income is managed by the head of the family. Female youths are very active in the practice of fattening, especially young brides. However, this sector faces two major problems: lack of training and resources. Indeed, the practice remains artisanal and extreme poverty is an obstacle to the purchase of livestock or ruminants.



Fish and poultry farming

These activities are increasingly practiced by youths, but the problems mentioned also relate to the lack of training and follow-up once funding has been obtained.



The tourism sector

This sector generated thousands of jobs, especially in the cercles of Djenné and Bandiagara, thanks to hotels, travel agencies, tourist guides, the small trade in arts and crafts etc. This sector is now almost at a standstill and many workers have had to retrain.

For the other sectors, crafts provide jobs:

carpentry, dyeing, mechanics, hairdressing, small trade, transport, tailoring etc. These are areas of employment for which some have received training and material support from partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs).



Strategies for access to employment

The APEJ and ANPE deal with youth employment at the local level. non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also active in this field, including PROJES/GIZ, Orientation of unemployed youth (OIJ) and the ACTIF non-governmental organization (NGO). Youths learn about jobs through the technical services of the state and on social networks. The ANPE and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) disseminate information on job opportunities.

The research identified 5 job search strategies.

1. Seizing the opportunities offered by local services and non-governmental organizations (NGOs): 'Whenever we hear that a non-governmental organization (NGO) or a local company wants to recruit people, we bring all our files in the hope of being recruited.'
2. Submitting files in the various services or local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the hope of being called for a job opportunity one day.
3. Forming associations to develop projects that are then submitted to government departments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for small-scale funding.
4. Using social networks through which youths share information about job opportunities.
5. Using interpersonal relationships (friends or relatives): this network goes beyond the simple local sphere since it aims to solicit relatives or friends living in urban centres.

Projects and programmes exist to train and support youth in different employment sectors:

“The project of vocational training, integration and support for entrepreneurship of rural youth (FIER) is based on the integration of youths; the priority areas are animal husbandry, fattening and agriculture. Some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) come for training and others for support, so these actions are complementary. The FIER project also works with the funds to finance youth activity projects. To benefit from the support of the funds, you must register first then you can take loans from the funds up to a sum of 500 000 CFA franc.”

Interview with a head of service SLPIA, Bla cercle, November 2020.

In Bla, youth associations have developed local solutions:

“For example the BADENYA-TON and SIGUIDIYA group. After the harvest each member contributes a bag of millet and together they sell these bags. Then this money is given to 2 or 3 people in the group. These 2 people are supported either in the fattening or in the market gardening. In the second year, they contribute the bags of millet and give this money to 2 other young people in the group. Then in the third year those who benefitted in the first year repay the money. They then support 5 other young people and so on.”

Interview with a communal council president, Bla cercle, November 2020.

Main obstacles to hiring

- Weaknesses in the education system
- Shortcomings of state mechanisms for professional integration
- Lack of knowledge of administrative procedures
- Access to information issues

“A lot of youths don't know how to find a job on the Internet. For example, in case of an opportunity on social networks, some do not even know that you have to click on the link to find the information related to the job. They write directly at the bottom of the post, I am interested in the position, describing their specialty and saying they are unemployed.”

Interview with the president of a youth association, Koro cercle, November 2020.

However, initiatives exist at local level to help youths:

“Computer training today is essential so the local youth council of Djenné has found it necessary from time to time to use its own resources to organize computer training courses for the youth of Djenné.”

Interview with a development officer of the local youth council, Djenné cercle, November 2020.

“The youths benefited from the accompaniment in terms of training, motivation and capacity building. All these initiatives have been taken for youths in order to deal with the problem of employment. So that male and female youths can find jobs in the right way.”

Interview with a sub-prefect, Mopti cercle, October 2020.



Despite these initiatives, many rural youths complain of a lack of guidance and counselling structures, and the fact that they do not receive enough support in their search for employment.

Gender and youth employment

Interviews show that female youths feel disadvantaged compared to male youths. This disparity in employment opportunities is linked to several factors including the security crisis, socio-cultural barriers, early marriages, strong dependence on husbands or successive pregnancies. In Mali, the fertility rate remains very high with 5.7 children per woman in 2020 (UNFPA, 2022), as does early marriage with a rate of 55% in 2014 (Doumbia, 2020).

“They don't have the same job opportunities. For example, would an non-governmental organization (NGO) now recruit women to go and run events in remote villages? That's impossible. Even if the will is there, the crisis has hit the genre hard. The same goes for the disabled; the context does not allow them to have the same opportunities. I think that if we have to work today on promoting employment, we have to work on the issue of gender. Inequality is the deepest cause of keeping people in poverty. We must promote gender equality and make employment accessible to everyone.”

Interview with a resident, Bandiagara cercle, October 2020.

The practice of animal husbandry, including sheep fattening, market gardening and small trade, have been identified as the main sectors of employment for women, but female youths are among the most affected by unemployment, with nearly 42% aged between 18 and 35 who do not go to school and are unemployed (Coulibaly, 2020). This inequality in employment can be explained by the lack of initial training, but also by cultural barriers. Girls often leave school earlier than boys, with a primary completion rate of 39% for girls compared to 47% for boys in 2016 (Loua, 2021).

However, developments have been reported.

“Married or single, young or old, all women nowadays seek to do something because men's work can no longer be enough to meet families' needs.”

Interview with a president of an association, Koro cercle, November 2020.



Women's employment may suffer from cultural barriers when women's work remains subject to the husband's authorization or because it is still poorly perceived by the community, with the woman having to take care of the household and the education of the children.

“ In most cases, women's work is only accepted in the place where she lives with her husband. It is generally denied that women go to work elsewhere where her husband is absent.”

Interview with a head of agriculture department, Koro cercle, November 2020.

This perception tends to change because of schooling and above all, according to the respondents, the presence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Development partners and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) insist on the local recruitment of women:

“ There has been a change in the employment situation for young people here. Women and men have the same job opportunities because the partners who come to help us insist on gender.”

Interview with a president of a youth association, Djenné cercle, November 2020.

●● The consequences of insecurity

“ **Agriculture** is a sector that suffers considerably from insecurity: in some areas, farmers no longer have access to the fields furthest from the villages: 'when going to the field, everyone is afraid of falling victim to the jihadists. Therefore, all the fields that are located far from the city have been abandoned.' ”

Interview with a president of rural youth, Macina cercle, November 2020.

“ The mayor of the same commune adds: 'Rice cultivation requires special monitoring by youths, which has not been possible in recent years because of the insecurity.' ”

Interview with an elected official, Macina cercle, November 2020.

These constraints linked to insecurity would have caused the exile of several youths from the commune. Insecurity affects all activities:

“ We no longer have customers because the authorities banned the movement of motorcycles in the city.”

Interview with a young mechanic, Koro cercle, October 2020.

'THESE DAYS, I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO GET THROUGH IT.'

“ I traded fuel between villages and rural communes and made a really good living. But for a while the authorities banned my activity on the pretext that jihadist groups are profiting. As a result, I stopped my activity and the authorities did nothing to help me. These days, I don't even know how to get through it.”

Interview with a young fuel trader, Koro cercle, November 2020.



Tourism, one of the most affected sectors

“ Some establishments have declared definitive closure, while others have temporarily closed. This situation has caused the loss of thousands of jobs for youths, especially for women: catering, maintenance, waitresses, guards, managers etc. Several hotels have tried to resist by any means, often by even lowering prices but it still did not work. In the entire Mopti region, there are twenty-seven travel agencies but nowadays, there are only 4 that are really functional.”

Interview with a tourism sector official, Mopti cercle, November 2020.

“ The most affected sector is tourism — as you know, Djenné is a city that lives from tourism. In 2010 Djenné officially received 30000 tourists who brought back to the town hall 30 000 000 CFA francs, without counting what it can bring for the population of Djenné in terms of catering, handicrafts; many things depended on tourism. The crisis has brought the city to a standstill. We have also noted that many guides are unemployed, even if there are initiatives, they are not sufficient to enable as many youths as possible to be integrated into socio-professional life.”

Interview with a manager of a vocational training centre, Djenné cercle, November 2020.

“ Nowadays, quite a few youths are unemployed. They were tour guides. They didn't learn any other trades. Also, the craft sector is the sector most affected by youth unemployment. It is not only the guides who are affected by unemployment, we also have the hotel industry, tourist sectors, craftsmen etc. Today, it is very important to put special emphasis on the retraining of these tourist guides.”

Interview with an APEJ agent, Mopti cercle, October 2020.

Insecurity and job offers

Many non-governmental organizations have left areas of insecurity or are limiting their activities and no longer recruiting as often. Many projects and programmes had to stop:

“ Due to insecurity, most areas are inaccessible. Otherwise, recruitment by non-governmental organizations creates jobs, even long-term ones, but with the insecurity, recruitment is reduced. Some non-governmental organizations have even reduced their staff due to the insecurity (...) The policy is there, it is well structured even if there are rearrangements to be made but given the security issue its implementation is experiencing many difficulties.”

Interview with a sub-prefect, Mopti cercle, October 2020.

●● **SOME NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS HAVE EVEN REDUCED THEIR STAFF DUE TO THE INSECURITY.**

Retraining strategies for youths

Two types of retraining can be highlighted: voluntary retraining and that imposed by the security situation. The first concerns youths who have completed their studies and who, unable to find work, retrain in another field. The second is related to the loss of employment due to the security situation.

Retraining strategies exist:

“Yes, there is no shortage of retraining strategies, if the sectors in which youths work are no longer successful, they can move on to more promising sectors. Retraining is possible and it is done on several levels. For example tourism — previously tourism worked enormously well, now there are no more tourists. Most of the youth tour guides have turned to agriculture, market gardening and others have become transporters.”

Interview with a head of the agriculture department, Bandiagara cercle, October 2020.

“Retraining is done on several levels and comes down to personal motivations. A lot of youths, before losing their jobs, made arrangements by saving some resources to do small income-generating activities (IGAs) such as fattening and small trade. On the other hand, others go on adventures while saving money. Others get together in groups to start small businesses and this is very common. Small businesses are often focused on selling food, sand, dry herbs etc. Some also study, knowing that with their diplomas the opportunities are limited; they try to undertake the most suitable studies.”

Interview with non-governmental organization (NGO) officer, Bandiagara cercle, October 2020.

Youths sometimes carry out several activities at the same time or often change:

“Here in Bla there were many youths who were traders but it did not work so they returned to breeding. From the breeding they returned again to trading. There are other youths who were welders and at one time there was no electricity, so they converted to masonry, and today with the support of the craftsman's association they have returned to metallurgy.”

Interview with a resource person, Bla cercle, November 2020.

“I did my small trade between Koro, Dounapen and Derou. But since my goods were raided, I've stopped trading because I've run out of money. I have a family to feed. So what can you do? That's why I'm obliged to work, to provide for my family.”

Interview with a young trader, Koro cercle, November 2020.

“More generally, youths in our country have secondary jobs, so when they lose their jobs they turn to small trading, agriculture and so on. I even know a youth who used to work for a non-governmental organization, but his contract ended and he started selling fish. He goes to Mopti to get the fish to sell in Bla and today he has been able to open a shop selling fish.”

Interview with a communal council president, Bla cercle, November 2020.

Certain sectors are particularly coveted by youths during their retraining. In the cercle of Bandiagara, the sectors targeted by youths are agriculture and animal husbandry:

“For me, I think that the first sector most coveted by youths is market gardening, secondly fattening and then trades and crafts (...). Whether it is market gardening, fattening, fish farming etc. Failures are rare and the risk is minimal.”

Interview with head of agriculture department, Bandiagara cercle, October 2020.

“In the cercle of Bla, youths generally target rural activities and gold-bearing and panning. In Baraouéli, they mainly have the choice of fattening, trade and market gardening.”

Interview with a youth, Baraouéli cercle, November 2020.

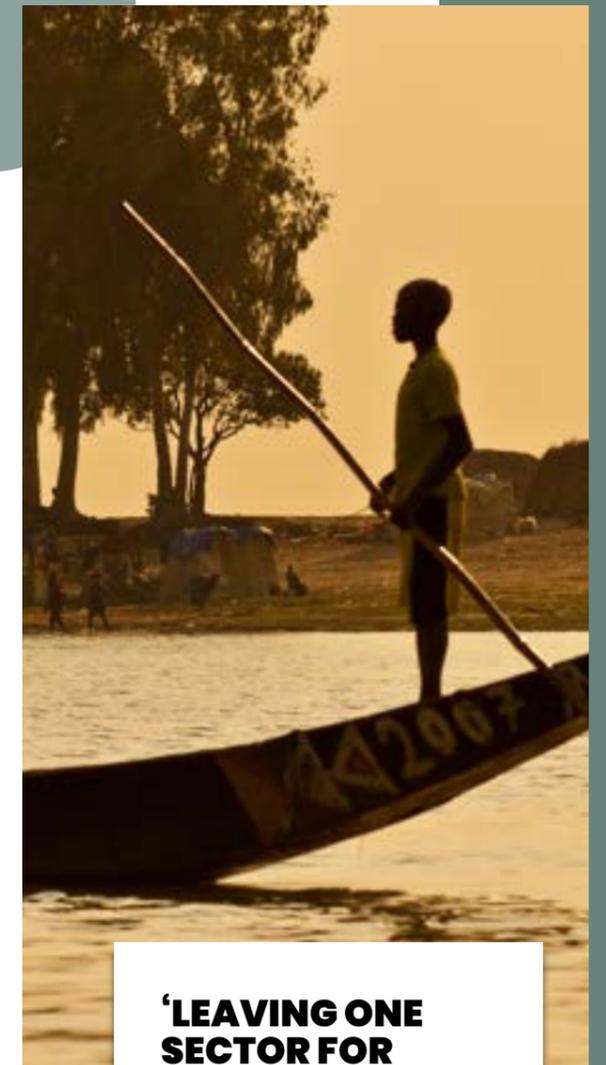
However, retraining remains difficult because of the lack of financial resources, initial training, guidance and support:

“Leaving one sector for another without much prior preparation is really difficult. More generally, retraining is very difficult. It's an alternative, if it's done well, but if it's not done well, you can fall back into unemployment, you can go bankrupt, and that's catastrophic.”

Interview with a resource person, Bandiagara cercle, October 2020.



‘SOME ALSO STUDY, KNOWING THAT WITH THEIR DIPLOMAS THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE LIMITED.’



‘LEAVING ONE SECTOR FOR ANOTHER WITHOUT A LOT OF PRIOR PREPARATION IS REALLY DIFFICULT.’



The difficulty of finding a job was mentioned by all respondents. Structures that are supposed to offer financial and technical conditions for business creation and offers of qualification or employment courses are unable to absorb the population seeking employment. After years of implementation, youths feel little of the effects of these schemes at regional, cercles and commune level.

The town hall is then a key space to find new opportunities:

“When you lose your job, in order to find a new one, here it's the town hall that you inform and explain the reason for the job loss so that solutions can be found, if possible.”

Interview with a young leader, Djenné cercle, November 2020.

“Initially, they try to get the job they had before, but if they can't, they go to the cercle council, the town hall, and if they have a qualification they go to the president of the chamber of trades and if there are opportunities that match their training, they will be reinstated.”

Interview with CAFO president, Tominian cercle, November 2020.

A youth focus group in Djenné revealed that many of them want to join the civil service, particularly because it allows them to benefit from a pension. Non-governmental organizations are another privileged sector. On the other hand, youths without a diploma prefer to start their own business. Through the PROJES programme funded by the European Union, youths are continuously trained in different trades (masonry, plumbing, electricity, wood and metallurgy etc.). At the end of their training, the youths are provided with kits and today many work for themselves. The project targets youths aged 16 to 40 who are unemployed or in precarious employment in the cercles of central Mali.



• Disadvantaged rural youth

Urban municipalities offer more opportunities than rural areas, in particular to enter the civil service:

“Everything is usually decided in Bamako or Mopti. Our children are only really informed about the exams on the day before and usually do not even have time to prepare.”

Interview with a woman, Koro cercle, November 2020.

YOUTHS WITHOUT A DIPLOMA PREFER TO START THEIR OWN BUSINESS.

Youths in rural areas lack information and the means to gather all the administrative documents, travel etc., which reduces their chances:

“For employment issues, youths get much more information through their friends or relatives living in Bamako or Mopti.”

Interview with a president of a rural women's association, Bankass cercle, November 2020.

This is discouraging and reduces the job search to a matter of social relations:

“You have to have good relationships to get work; a poor man's son always ends up devoting himself to working the land.”

Interview with a young graduate, Macina cercle, November 2020.

‘YOU HAVE TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONSHIPS TO GET WORK.’



AS FAR AS YOUTH EMPLOYMENT POLICY IS CONCERNED, THE PROBLEM LIES NOT IN THE TEXTS AND EVEN LESS IN THE INTENTIONS, BUT RATHER IN THEIR IMPLEMENTATION.

This disadvantaged situation in rural areas often has significant consequences on the vocational orientation of youths, in particular by pushing them to engage in professions very different from their initial training:

“My 2 children and daughter-in-law finished their studies more than 2 years ago. But due to lack of work, the first 2 were forced to engage in gardening. And the third, my daughter-in-law, does sewing, even though she has a secretarial diploma.”

Interview with CAFO president, Koro cercle, November 2020.

One of the problems mentioned is the application of the law and the lack of awareness of local needs on the part of state services:

“As far as youth employment policy is concerned, the problem lies not in the texts and even less in the intentions, but rather in their implementation. This is where all the shenanigans of politicians and even technical service agents come into play. That's why we're increasingly appreciative of the new approach of partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which consists of coming directly to identify the needs and groups involved in youth activity.”

Interview with a municipal elected official, Macina cercle, November 2020.

“Youth employment policy is very ill-adapted because training does not correspond to the jobs available at local level. These days, many of our young people are trained with diplomas for which they have no practical skills. Those who are not graduates, that we call the rural youth, have practically no financial means to carry out the activities they want.”

Interview with an elected official, Ségou cercle, November 2020.

However, in some localities surveyed, youths showed more confidence thanks to the establishment of new structures supported by PROJES. Installed in the various survey areas (Ségou, Koro, Macina and Mopti), these structures now constitute spaces for reception, listening and guidance for youths seeking employment, whether they are graduates or have had no training. Several youths have expressed their hope to find employment through these structures but remain disappointed.

“ We thought they were giving jobs to youths, but in reality that's not what they're doing. They just want to listen to our problems without doing anything serious, that's what's discouraging. People said they came to give jobs to youths here.”

Interview with a young leader, Macina cercle, November 2020.

• Local perceptions of youth unemployment

Youth unemployment is generally poorly perceived by the population. While some accuse the state of failing to integrate young people, others believe that it is the security situation that is to blame. The risk most mentioned is the shift towards banditry or jihadist groups.

“ They (the jihadists) are very rich and they pay anyone well who provides them with good information. So, the temptation could be strong among some youths who have nothing else to do.”

Interview with a mayor, Macina cercle, November 2020.

“ I am convinced that rebellion, jihadism and other scourges that hinder development and peace in Mopti will end if youths find jobs. Many youths are moving towards rebellion because they have nothing else to do. Most believe that jihadism can enable them to support themselves.”

Interview with a local elected official, Mopti cercle, November 2020.

Young people have a hard time dealing with the way their elders look at them and this also leads to conflicts between generations:

“ The community thinks that we youths don't have the will to work. Young unemployed graduates are often blamed for not wanting to do rural work (...). Youths live desperately in the face of unemployment. We have no future. Yet one day we will be called upon to take care of our expenses and those of our family. Here in Baraouéli, if you don't work, it's very difficult to get a girl to marry you, and decision-making in the family is the same unless you do the family's physical work.”

Interview with a young leader of an association, Baraouéli cercle, November 2020.

'FEMALE YOUTHS COMPETE BEFORE MARRYING OTHERWISE AFTER MARRIAGE THEIR AMBITION TO FIND A JOB IS FORGOTTEN.'



Many youths are experiencing this situation of unemployment with anxiety. Lacking a future, they are sometimes discredited by families. Girls and people with disabilities are the categories that have the most difficulty in finding employment.

The lack of economic opportunities is a social handicap: without financial autonomy, it delays their independence. Youths can only marry and start a family if they can support their (future) family and also their parents. It also jeopardizes socio-professional prospects.

“ Very generally, female youths struggle doing this before marrying otherwise after marriage their ambition to find a job is forgotten.”

Interview with non-governmental organization (NGO) agent, Djenné cercle, November 2020.

Unemployment is also perceived locally as the result of poor governance and state policy. People expect the state to take measures to combat unemployment.

“ We want an orientation towards entrepreneurship to alleviate the problems of unemployment. These days, the civil service is no longer recruiting; we want to be trained, supported in setting up factories, for example.”

Interview with a local youth council president, San cercle, November 2020.

Local leaders blame the state for the lack of commitment to tackling youth unemployment:

“ Youth unemployment in our locality is experienced as negligence on the part of the authorities. Those who have completed their studies are victims of injustice because they have not received what they deserve. The young graduates have accomplished the mission entrusted to them so the ball is in the court of the authorities now. Young graduates see this as a betrayal and those who have not been to school or who have dropped out of school think that they are also neglected by the state because they are Malians like all the others. Some feel betrayed, others as victims of neglect. These social issues should not be neglected because they are ticking time bombs.”

Interview with village chief advisor, Djenné cercle, November 2020.



EDUCATION

Education in Mali has been in a very difficult situation for years: while literacy rate has been rising continuously since the mid-70s, reaching 35% of people aged 15 or older in 2018, 2020 estimates were at 31%, equivalent to the situation in 2010 (World Bank and UNESCO UIS 2022). This decline is also visible among young people aged 15 to 25, where the illiteracy rate drops from 50% in 2018 to 46% in 2020 (World Bank and UNESCO UIS 2022).

In addition to the structural weaknesses of education in Mali – teachers’ strikes particularly disrupted school at the beginning of the project – there is also the issue of the security crisis, with the closure of schools by armed groups and the departure of teachers from certain areas when their lives are threatened. In central Mali cercles, school closures affect at least 325 200 children (Save the Children and UNICEF 2022). The most affected cercles are those of Bankass, Douentza, Koro, Ténenkou and Youwarou.

Schools closed due to security issues.



Percentage of schools closed due to security issues.
November 2019.
(Save the Children and UNICEF 2019)

Percentage of schools closed due to security issues.
May 2020.
(Save the Children and UNICEF 2022)

Rate of change
(in percentage points)

	Percentage of schools closed due to security issues. November 2019. (Save the Children and UNICEF 2019)	Percentage of schools closed due to security issues. May 2020. (Save the Children and UNICEF 2022)	Rate of change (in percentage points)
Bandiagara	23%	23%	0
Bankass	22%	60%	+38
Douentza	66%	68%	+2
Djenné	14%	22%	+8
Koro	29%	47%	+18
Mopti	29%	27%	-2
Ténenkou	78%	58%	-20
Youwarou	84%	84%	0
Baraouéli	0%	0%	0
Macina	0%	4%	+4
Niono	5%	14%	+9
Ségou	9%	10%	+1
Bla	No data	No data	No data
San	No data	No data	No data
Tominian	No data	No data	No data

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION IN MALI

Education is a sector particularly affected by the security crisis, and the educational institution — both buildings and staff — has become a target. To understand the situation, qualitative research **on the state of education** was conducted by a team of four researchers, from 15 to 29 January 2020, in Bandiagara, Mopti, Macina and Niono cercles.

Educational institution in Mali

Several types of educational institutions co-exist: so-called classical public schools, private schools, community schools (or 'basic schools'), madrasas and Koranic schools.

Classical school, largely reformed by Law 99 — 046 of the 28th of December 1999 on the orientation law on education, implements the methods decided by the National Directorate of Teaching (DNP) and provides teaching according to the national curriculum, namely all the methods, themes and materials validated by the Ministry of National Education (Loua 2017). School management is entrusted to city councils and is supported by the Ministry's technical services, particularly the Educational Animation Centres (CAP) and the Teaching Academies (AE).

The madrasas are Franco-Arab schools which offer a curriculum focused on teaching the Arabic language and culture. French is taught as a second language. They do not depend on the public system, and the state exercises only a supervisory function, in particular through a state secretariat for bilingual education.

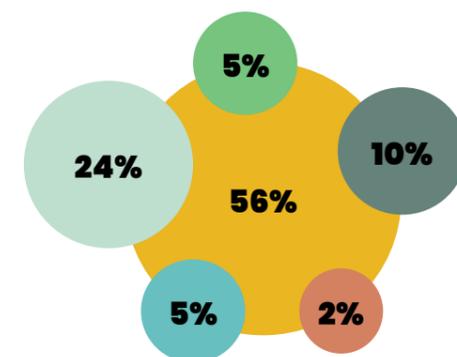
Private schools are recognized by Law No. 94 — 032-AN-RM of the 25th of July 1994 on the status of private education. The establishment of private schools has been especially encouraged to compensate for the shortcomings and inadequacies of public schools. These schools are required to comply with national pedagogical guidelines.

Community schools are covered by Law No. 94 — 032-AN-RM of the 25th of July 1994 on the status of private education, but these schools are managed by communities or associations at the community level. Their mission is to enable children to access to 'minimal education'. Teachers are recruited at the national level and receive a salary from the state, particularly through the CAP and the AE, or contributions in kind (cereals, animals) from the beneficiary communities.

Koranic schools are based on the teaching of the Koran, and all courses taught are related to the study and memorization of the Koran and the *Hadith*. The state has no control over these schools, which often operate in a relatively informal context and which depend on the Koranic teacher. In addition, these schools are not required to present a curriculum or maintain a school calendar. Classes often take place close to the teacher's residence, early in the morning or after dusk.

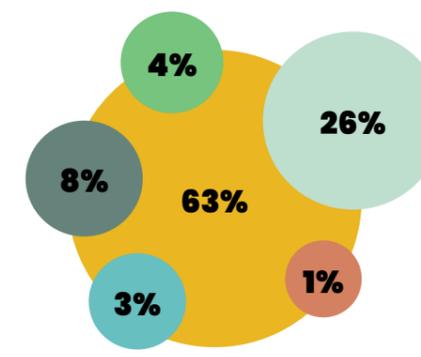
Level of education

Average education level of respondents between 2019 and 2022



- Non-literate
- Primary, first cycle
- Koranic/Madrasa
- Primary, second cycle
- Secondary
- Higher (University)

Type of institution attended by respondents between 2019 and 2022



- Formal (French)
- Koranic
- Both (Koranic and formal/madrasa)
- Literacy Centre
- Franco-Arab Madrasa
- Development Education Centre (CED)

Between October 2021 and September 2022 (the distinction was added from Q9), girls and boys are enrolled in school in similar proportions:



The vast majority of children attend the 1st and 2nd cycles of primary schools (67% for girls and 70% for boys) or both primary and Koranic schools (18% for girls and 19% for boys).

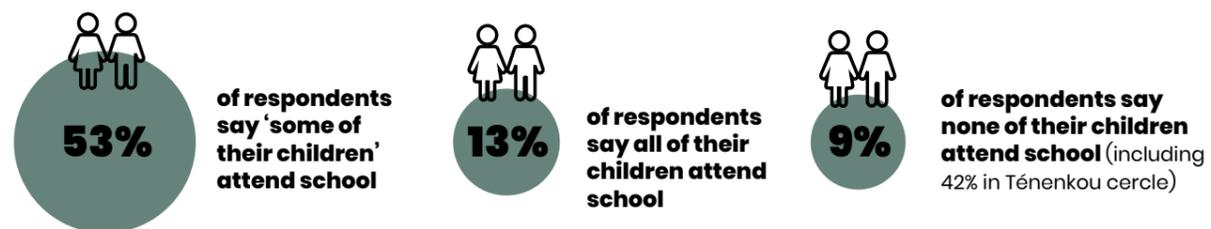
Girls are as numerous as boys among the pupils, but they are more likely to drop out of school after the 1st cycle.

“ There are many girls in the classes for the 4 – 5 years of the first cycle. However, there is a break starting from the 6th grade. Many girls give up. One of the reasons, as far as my school is concerned, is the lack of family support. A woman who has 3-4 girls enrolled in a school located at a distance sometimes of 2 km. The mother is only a housewife and she does not have enough means to dress, look after and even feed her children. So she encourages the older ones to go look for their wedding trousseaux that the mother considers as a financial support for the home... With the current security issues, mothers are also afraid that their older daughters will be raped or assaulted by armed terrorist groups. As a result, parents decide to keep them at home. Others are victims of early marriages too...”

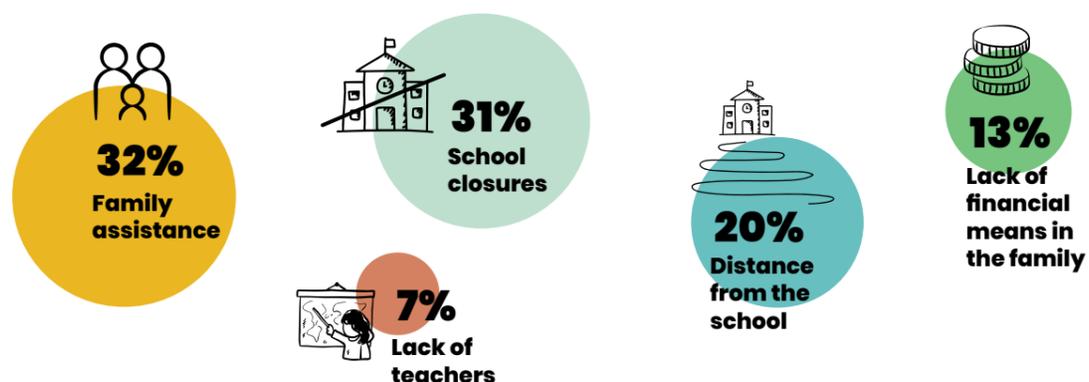
Interview with a teacher, Bandiagara cercle, January 2020.

‘WITH THE CURRENT SECURITY ISSUES, MOTHERS ARE ALSO AFRAID THAT THEIR OLDER DAUGHTERS WILL BE RAPED OR ASSAULTED BY ARMED TERRORIST GROUPS. AS A RESULT, PARENTS DECIDE TO KEEP THEM AT HOME.’

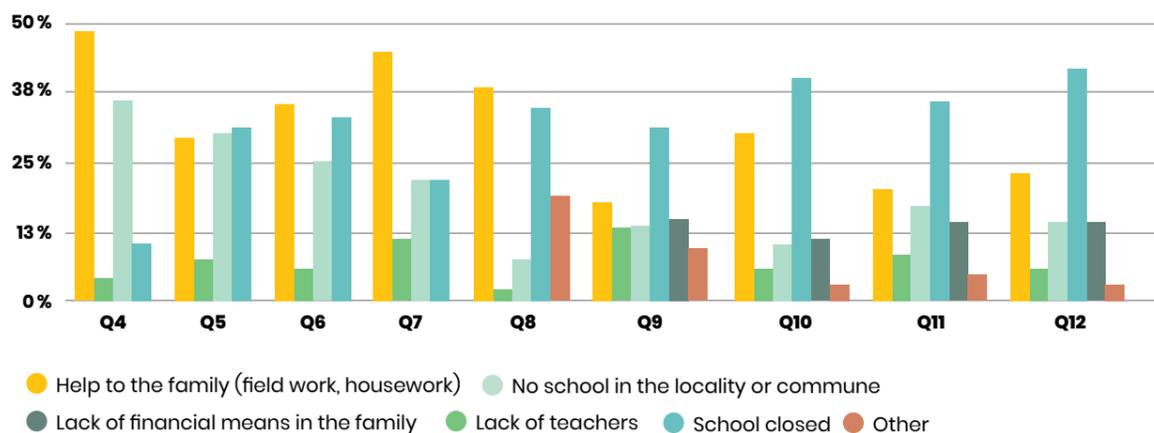
For school-age children (6-18 years old), between October 2021 and September 2022:



Between 2020 and 2022, the reasons for children not attending school are varied:



Main reasons for children not attending formal schools by survey phase:



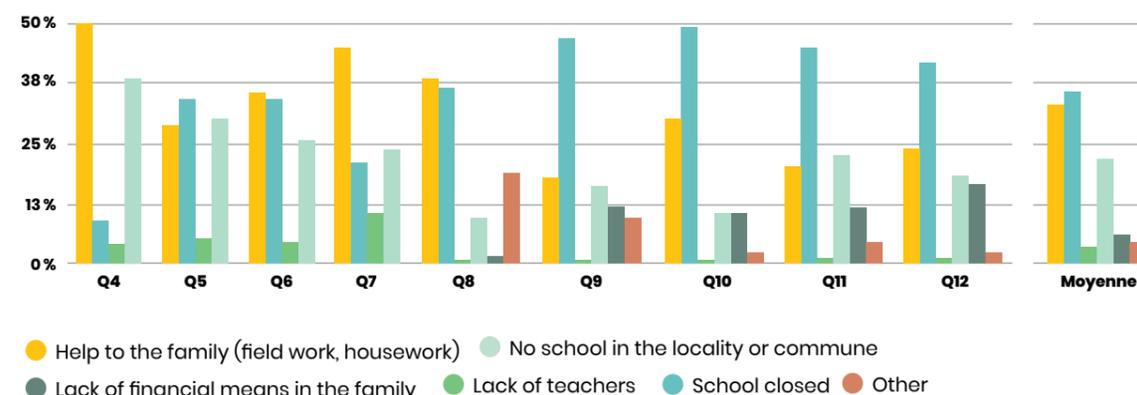
IN THE LAST FOUR SURVEYS, SCHOOL CLOSURES WAS THE MAIN REASON FOR CHILDREN NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL.

Reasons for children not attending school, however, differ at the cercle level. While family support remains the majority motive in many cercles, such as Ségou, Macina and San, in Mopti, Bandiagara and Koro cercles, it is the closure of schools by armed groups.

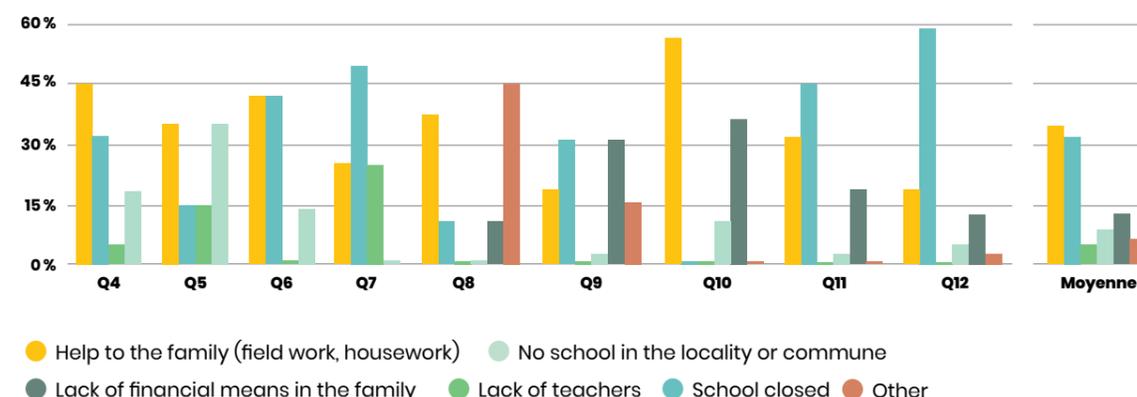
Security issues accentuate the difficulties as is particularly reflected in Douentza cercle where, between January and November 2020, the main reason for not attending school was the absence of schools, for more than 70% of respondents. In the same cercle, in September 2022, more than 80% of respondents indicated that the closure of schools by armed groups was the main reason for children not attending school.

Main reasons for children not attending a formal school by place of residence

IN RURAL AREAS



IN URBAN AREAS

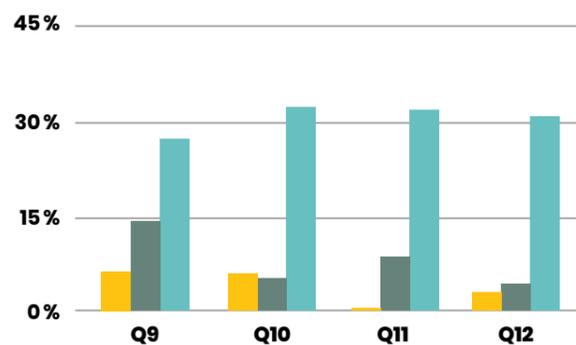


- Q2 – July 2019 – Rainy season
- Q4 – January 2020 – Winter holidays
- Q6 – June 2020 – Summer holidays
- Q12 – September 2022 – Rainy season

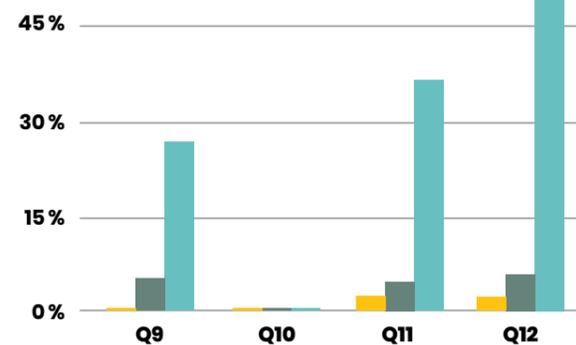
There are differences between urban and rural areas. In both cases, help to the family and school closures are the most important reasons for not attending school. Urban populations are better served by the presence of schools and between January 2020 and September 2022, the absence of schools represents on average 21% of reasons for not attending school in rural areas, compared to 10% in urban areas. However, urban populations seem to be more severely limited by the lack of material means: 12% of families in urban areas between 2020 and 2022, compared to 5% in rural areas.

Reasons for school closures between October 2021 (Q9) and September 2022 (Q12)

IN RURAL AREAS



IN URBAN AREAS



● School closed (defective or destroyed building)
 ● School closed (lack of teachers)
 ● School closed by non-state armed groups



Between October 2021 and September 2022, the main reason is the forced closure by armed groups in both rural and urban areas. Since October 2021, the closure of schools by non-state armed groups accounts for 25% of children not attending school in urban areas, compared to 26% in rural areas. As of September 2022, this represents 52% in urban areas and 34% in rural areas. In one year, urban areas have experienced rapid deterioration linked to the presence of armed groups, particularly in Douentza and Mopti cercles, as well as Ténenkou and Ségou.



Teacher situation

Education in the centre of the country suffers from a lack of teachers mainly due to security issues. Teachers are particularly threatened by armed groups and many are forced to take refuge in the main towns of communes or cercles.

These departures significantly affect the functioning of schools. For example, the CAPs group teachers in secure areas and replace them with volunteer graduates from the villages to ensure the continuity of classes, but then the question of the qualification of the people recruited in this way arises.

In some localities, the communal authorities recruit those who failed the baccalaureate or ask communal councillors to provide classes:

“ We transferred teachers who were scared to other villages. Thanks to our young brothers who are in the villages, we have reopened these schools. Today these classes are held by them. We had to make some sacrifices. Because we asked all councillors who can teach to do so. We have turned some councillors into teachers.”

Interview with a mayor, Bandiagara cercle, January 2020.

• Attacks on buildings

Acts of violence that particularly target educational premises and facilities. Overall, the educational infrastructure is very degraded, unfenced and, today, destroyed by armed groups.

“ The infrastructure was all destroyed, broken, and burnt down by these alleged jihadists. They entered the classrooms, burnt school desks, books, instructions. They destroyed almost everything. Nothing is left there except the buildings. Even if these schools are to be reopened, the state must make a double effort.”

Interview with deputy mayor in charge of education and health, Niono cercle, January 2020.

The state of infrastructure varies according to geographical area: for example, in rural areas, schools that are often built of mudbrick or straw are not fenced. In cities, schools are more often built of hard materials, but, everywhere, the number of classrooms is insufficient and therefore there is overcrowding.

The problem of integrating displaced children

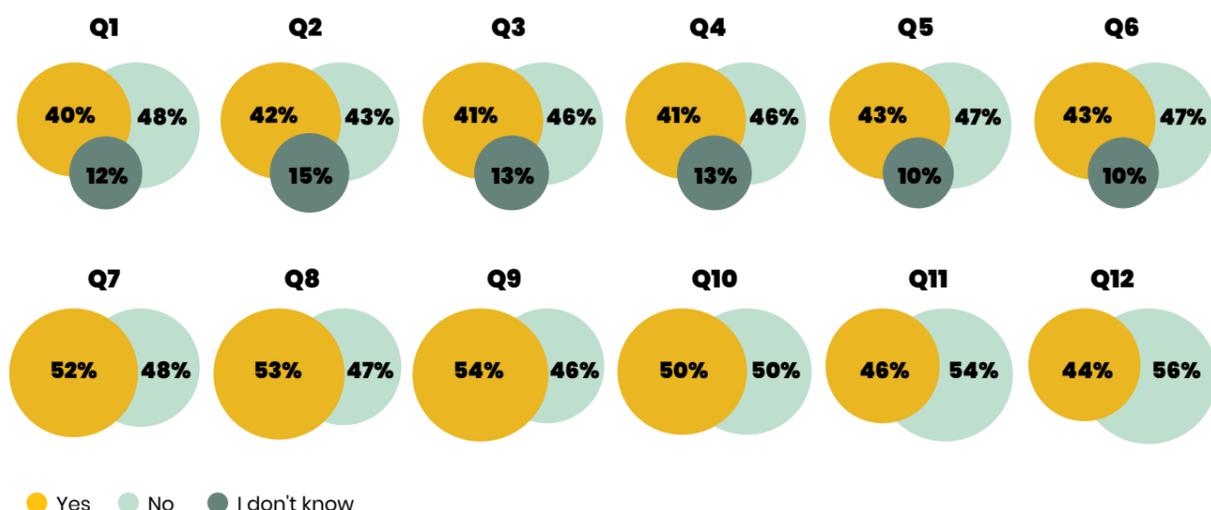
One of the consequences of insecurity is the displacement of the population, including school-age children. The influx of students from villages to the main towns of communes and cercles requires protection, welcoming and integration services in educational structures:

“Not only have we received displaced children, but also children from other communes where schools have been closed.”

Interview with a municipal councillor, in charge of education and health, Niono cercle, January 2020.

Schools in Macina welcome, for example, displaced students from Ténenkou, Diafarabé and other villages in Ténenkou cercle. The closure of schools in rural areas increases pressure on those in main towns of communes or cercles, which leads to overcrowding.

Does your village/neighbourhood take in displaced people? by survey phase.



The increase in the number of students in public and private schools in the host localities requires support from education actors. Children are often accommodated with foster families and sometimes benefit from refresher courses. However, no regulatory measures have been formalized to facilitate the integration of these displaced students. On the contrary, it is the responsibility of each school principal to make arrangements with the student and their parents in order to integrate them into the school groups. Problems also include food and accommodation for these students.



Factors of school drop-out and school wastage

The reasons for school closures are diverse: it may be due to the departure of teachers because of threats to them; in some localities, schools remain open, but classes are no longer provided due to lack of staff. Finally, overcrowding makes it difficult for the students to follow lessons, and many children drop out.

All these difficulties observed in conventional public schools can encourage parents to opt for an alternative educational model whether in madrasas or in private classical schools. Some also chose the apprenticeship option. Teachers who leave public schools and start private classes are also worth mentioning.

“[...] If things don't go well (in public schools), some parents take their children out of school and make them take blue-collar jobs (mechanics, carpentry). They think that this is not a barrier to education. Others permanently take their children out of school. It's recurrent.”

Interview with a communal councillor in charge of education and health, Niono cercle, January 2020.



Impact of security issues

Students and teachers are afraid to go to school due to the current security issues.

“ I still remember the threatening messages I received a few weeks before the attack. I remember telling my teachers to go back to Bandiagara or Sangha. On the day of the attack, we were among the survivors after the terrorists left. I can't get the bodies of fourteen of my students who were burnt alive after taking refuge in the rooms with their parents out of my mind. It's hard... The school has been closed ever since... I was transferred here to Bandiagara.”

Interview with a former school principal, Bandiagara cercle, January 2020, in reference to the massacre committed on the 9th-10th of June 2019.

• Resilience mechanisms

Different strategies are used to limit risks, such as not marking schools to avoid their identification by armed groups.

“ There were shots fired, so we don't hoist the flag to avoid them seeing that this is a school from a distance.”

Interview with teacher, Macina cercle, January 2020.

“ After the signing of the Agreement of Understanding on the 3rd of August, 2019 between fulani communities and hunters in Macina cercle, hunters facilitated the extraction of children from conflict zones and escorted them by truck to Macina.”

Interview with teacher, Macina cercle, January 2020.



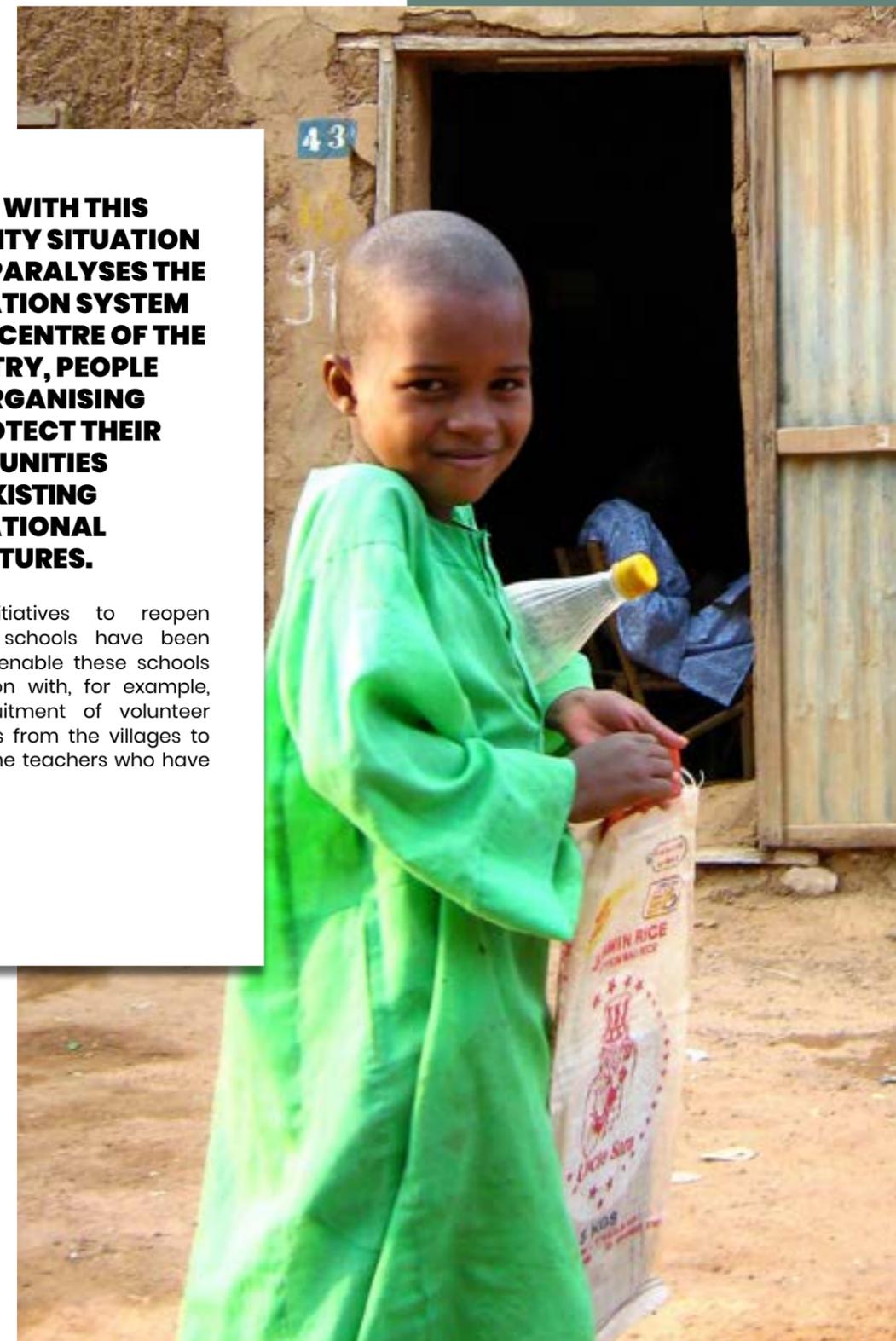
Just like in Konna, the population of Niono resists insecurity in schools and in the city:

“ We will deal with it (security situation), because we are all Malians. We can't all run away.”

Interview with the mayor, in charge of education and health, Niono cercle, January 2020.

FACED WITH THIS SECURITY SITUATION THAT PARALYSES THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE CENTRE OF THE COUNTRY, PEOPLE ARE ORGANISING TO PROTECT THEIR COMMUNITIES AND EXISTING EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURES.

Local initiatives to reopen classical schools have been taken to enable these schools to function with, for example, the recruitment of volunteer graduates from the villages to replace the teachers who have left.



INCREASING RESOURCE SCARCITY AND MIGRATION

Perception survey on resource scarcity and migration in central Mali (July 2019).

3 main results:

1. People in the central regions of Mali have limited access to both natural resources (halieutic resources, water points and agricultural land) and consumer products (cereals, fruits, milk, vegetables, fish and meat). This unavailability is explained by climatic (irregular rainfall, dryness, flooding and high water, erosion and impoverishment of the soil etc.) and security constraints (presence of armed groups). The scarcity of natural resources and consumer products raises the fundamental question of food security for the predominantly rural populations who livelihood depends on from agriculture, livestock and fishing.



2. Despite the scarcity of resources and precarious living conditions, 78 % of the populations surveyed do not plan to leave their localities. This does not mean that populations are not mobile. On the contrary, 43 % of respondents reported that a member of their household had lived more than 3 months outside of the community. Those who decide to leave do so mainly for economic reasons, including unemployment and limited access to employment in their locality. For youths in particular (including graduates looking for work) migration is a way to escape their socially unrewarding status as 'job seekers'. In general, mobility is motivated by the need to find an income-generating activity in localities offering more employment opportunities in order to support families.

3. Mobility is mainly inter-regional and of short duration, often between rural areas, from a rural area to an urban area or, again, between urban areas. Bamako remains the main destination as the capital offers greater access to basic social services and various employment opportunities. But increasingly, people are moving to the southern regions of the country that have become attractive because of the economic opportunities offered by the gold-bearing sectors. This economic migration to Bamako and gold panning sites is different from the transhumance practiced by breeders and pastoralists who generally go to the ecological zones of the Niger Delta, especially during the dry season. International migration remains limited and involves movements to African countries rather than to European and Middle Eastern countries.

THE REGIONS OF CENTRAL MALI ARE MARKED BY SIGNIFICANT INTERNAL MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS.

Understanding the reasons that motivate the mobility of populations, their main destinations and length of their stay was the main objective of this survey.



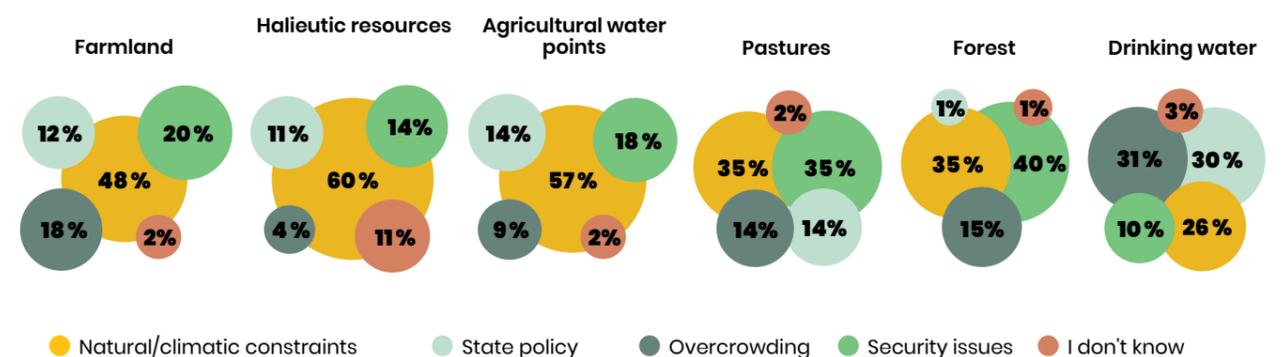
Scarcity of natural resources

People in central Mali have limited access to natural resources and consumer products. Indeed, climatic and security constraints affect economic activity in these agropastoral regions and where the mostly rural populations live from agriculture, livestock and fishing.

Natural resource scarcity: security issues and poor governance

This survey showed that the scarcity of natural resources affects forest resources, pastures, agricultural land, agricultural water points, halieutic resources and drinking water. The reasons given to justify this scarcity are, in order of importance: natural/climatic constraints, security issues, overcrowding and public policies.

Reasons given for the scarcity of natural resources:





Natural and/or climatic constraints relate to the irregularity and poor distribution of rainfall, drought, flooding and high water, soil erosion and impoverishment etc. They particularly affect halieutic resources, agricultural water points and land.



If we're talking about land, we're talking about farming. But we don't have enough land to grow rice, millet or sorghum. On the other hand, there is not much land in the Sonikoura farm to practice market gardening. There are more than two hundred families who farm there, and this farm is threatened with extinction. This farm cannot be considered a place to grow, but it allows a family to earn a few bags of vegetables.

A tailor speaking during a discussion group, Ségou cercle, July 2019.



Security issues particularly affect forest resources, which include fruit trees (tamarind, baobab, shea and others), animal feed and especially wood, the exploitation of which represents the main source of income for populations who practice lumbering and charcoal.



Some forests and grazing areas are now controlled by armed groups. A participant in a focus group held in Douentza cercle reported that:

'In those days, at the end of the harvest, I used to go out into the bush to fetch feed for my cattle. With all the current security issues, we can no longer go very far. But in order to find animal feed, you have to go far from Douentza.'

Interview with a youth during a discussion group, Douentza cercle, July 2019.

As demand for pasture is superior to supply, feed prices have increased considerably, making the practice of animal husbandry very difficult:



We do not have access to grazing areas because of the security issues. You cannot drive your herds outside Douentza because armed people are everywhere in the vicinity of Douentza. These are bandit groups, jihadists etc. When you let your animals go into the bush, these people collect them to supply the market with meat. Even if you see them, you can't go and explain that they belong to you; no one can help you. Keeping animals at home is currently difficult if you can't afford it. Feed is expensive. A stalk of grass cost 100 to 150 CFA francs; because of the security issue, these days it costs 450 to 500 CFA francs. Those who go into the bush to look for animal feed are afraid because when you leave and you run into these bandits, you will be in danger. They kill people very often. It is difficult to raise livestock when we do not have access to feed.'

Interview with a youth during a discussion group, Douentza cercle, July 2019.

Public policies are also cited as a cause of the scarcity of halieutic resources (11%) and agricultural water points (14%), but the drinking water is more greatly affected (30%). Among the reasons given, the inadequacy of connections and the obsolescence of water supply systems are blamed.



ARMED PEOPLE ARE EVERYWHERE IN THE VICINITY OF DOUENTZA



Imagine, Tiemena has only 1 water tower thanks to the non-governmental organization (NGO) VISION plus. 'As you can see, this is far from enough to supply water to the people and livestock who have alternative access to it. In other words, people are allowed to use water from the castle during the rainy season. Starting in October, the castle water is exclusively dedicated to cattle. In short, the people of Tiemena have no access to drinking water for household consumption.'

A farmer speaking during a village focus group, Bla cercle, July 2019.

Various factors are responsible for the scarcity of natural resources: **the scarcity of cultivable land** is a direct consequence of increasing urbanization, public policies and the security issues, which have pushed some farmers to abandon the most remote fields. To respond to demographic growth, the urbanization policy resulted in the expropriation of cultivable land and the consequences of these policies were numerous, including: pressure on agricultural land (especially in the Segou and Baraouéli cercles) or the disappearance of certain water points that served as drinking troughs for livestock. Population growth affects the supply of quality water and would require state investment in water and institutional infrastructure, which is essential to store and distribute water efficiently and permanently.



THE SCARCITY OF CULTIVABLE LAND IS A DIRECT CONSEQUENCE OF INCREASING URBANIZATION, PUBLIC POLICIES AND SECURITY ISSUES, WHICH HAVE PUSHED SOME FARMERS TO ABANDON THE MOST REMOTE FIELDS.



Availability of consumer products

The majority of respondents felt that consumer products are 'not enough' or 'not at all' available. These products include fruits, milk, vegetables, fish and meat. The only exception is cereals (including rice, millet, sorghum and maize, which are subsistence commodities), which 54% of respondents believe they will find in sufficient quantity, despite some deficit areas in the Mopti, Bankass, Bandiagara and Douentza cercles.

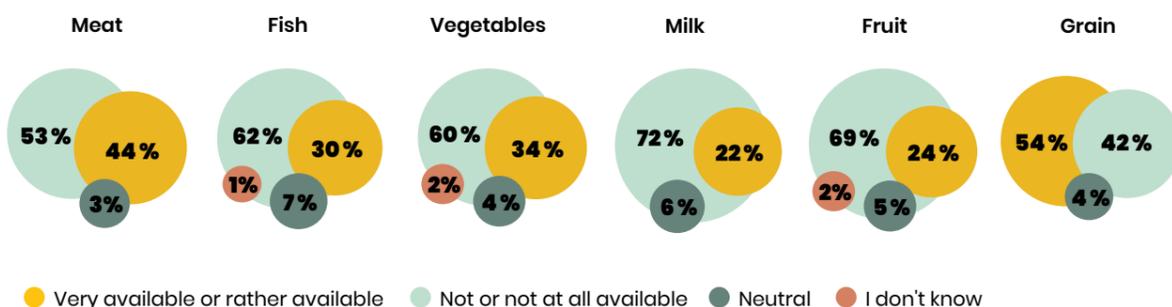


I can say that cereals are available. There is the Office du Niger in the Ségou region. But there are times when the price of grain goes up. Sometimes, the kilo of rice climbs up to 425 CFA francs whereas in normal times, it does not exceed 300 CFA francs. This price increase can last up to 4 to 5 months. Otherwise, cereals are generally available.'

Remarks of a student during a focus group, Ségou cercle, July 2019.

The availability of consumer products varies by cercle. Thus, fruits are considered rare in most cercles with the exception of Ségou, a vegetable and fruit production area thanks to the existence of the vast hydroagricultural area of the Office du Niger and, to a certain extent, Baraouéli, an agricultural production basin south of the Niger River.

Availability of consumer products:



Scarcity of natural resources and consumer products

“The availability of halieutic resources depends on the water level in the river. We have a lot of fish in high water years (flooding). Thus, species such as tilapia, catfish and captain were fished during the last rainy season (2018). Fish is a big part of family consumption. When there is a surplus, as was the case last year, we sold some to cover the cost of condiments. Here, all activities are related to rain, be it agriculture, livestock or fishing. So, if there is no rain, poverty sets in. Good rainfall years like 2018 are rare.”

Words of a young housewife during the discussion group with women, Djenné cercle, July 2019.

“Water is life, it's health. In our neighbourhood, the taps are insufficient. During the dry season (March, April, May) we suffer a lot. Women are forced to get up at 3 a.m. to queue in front of public taps for the daily amount of water. And even then, not everyone is served. Many people are forced to resort to well water. Others also use river water, when we have been advised not to drink river water. What else can we do? Human beings cannot live without water! Not everyone can get a tap at home. People can't afford it. They are forced to drink water from the river. Normally drinking water should be within everyone's reach. If the state can deal with this water problem, we would be happy to let them.”

Remarks of a rural facilitator during a focus group, Ségou cercle, July 2019.

The migration phenomenon in central Mali

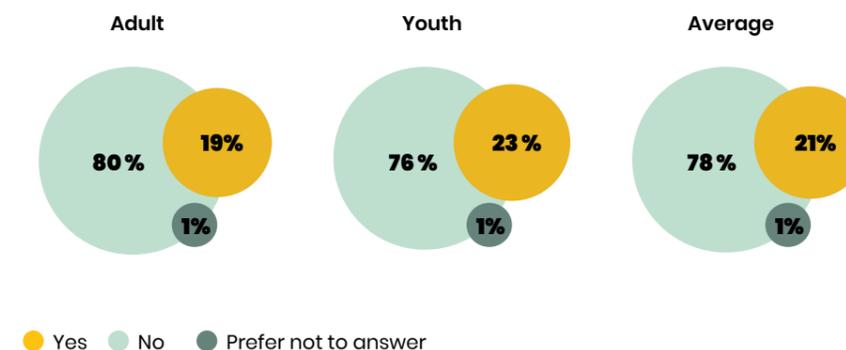
Despite the scarcity of resources and precarious living conditions, the populations surveyed are reluctant to leave their localities. It is the economic variable (particularly unemployment and limited access to employment in their localities) that weighs most heavily on the decision to migrate.

General information on migration in central Mali

When asked 'Have you lived more than 3 months outside the village/ neighbourhood?', 78% answered 'no' (80% adults and 76% youth). However, disparities by cercle are noted: Bla (50%) and Mopti (46%) have the highest proportion of respondents who say they have lived away from their locality for more than 3 months. These 2 cercles are also the cercles most affected by the scarcity of resources for natural or climatic reasons (Bla cercle) and security (Mopti cercle).

DESPITE THE SCARCITY OF RESOURCES AND PRECARIOUS LIVING CONDITIONS, THE POPULATIONS SURVEYED ARE RELUCTANT TO LEAVE THEIR LOCALITIES.

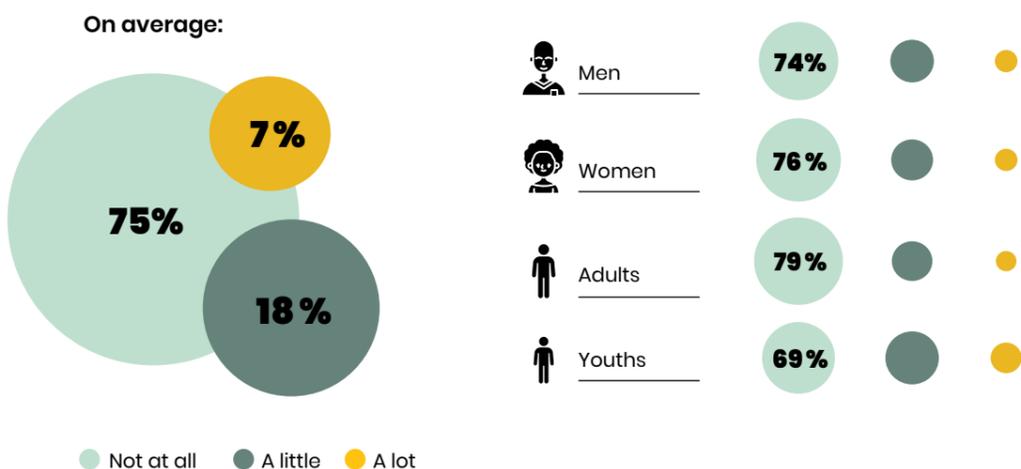
Have you lived more than 3 months outside the village/neighbourhood?



When respondents are asked how much they have thought about emigrating or moving, 75% say they have not considered it at all. Among them, adults (79%) outnumber youths (69%) and more women (78%) than men (74%).

75% OF PEOPLE SAY THEY HAVE NOT CONSIDERED MIGRATING OR MOVING AT ALL

How much thought have you given to emigrating/moving in the past year?



Initial factors

More than 85% of respondents cite economic factors as the reason for migration. Security issues are far behind (6.5%). The other reasons (governance (2%) or climate reasons (1%)) are not cited as decisive by respondents. Moreover, the answers regarding the main reasons why people leave do not vary by age and gender.

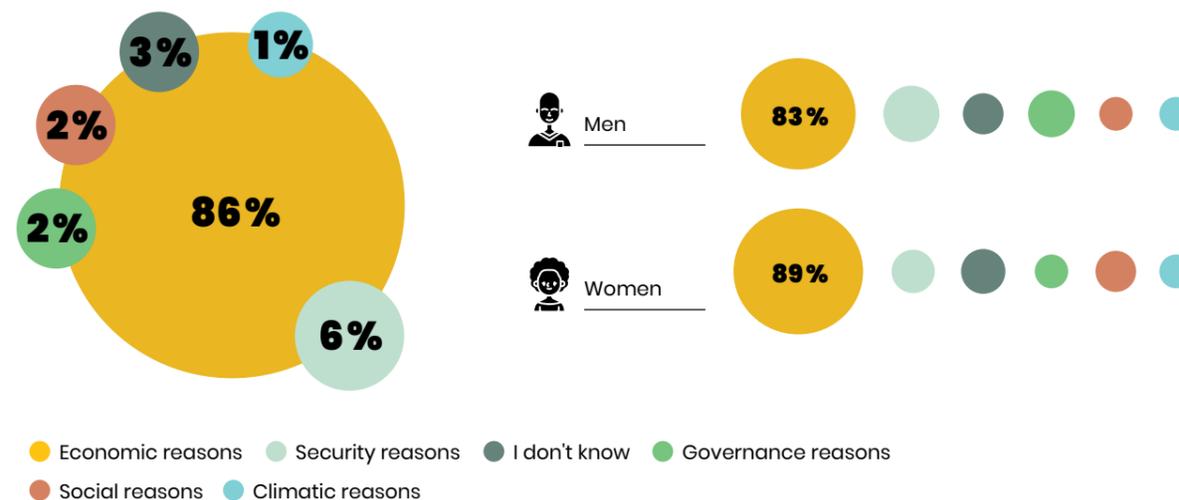
+85% OF RESPONDENTS CITE ECONOMIC FACTORS AS THE REASON FOR MIGRATION.

54% of respondents say that a member of their household has lived outside the village/ neighbourhood for more than 3 months. In most cases, these are youths who migrate on the seasonal basis for economic reasons.

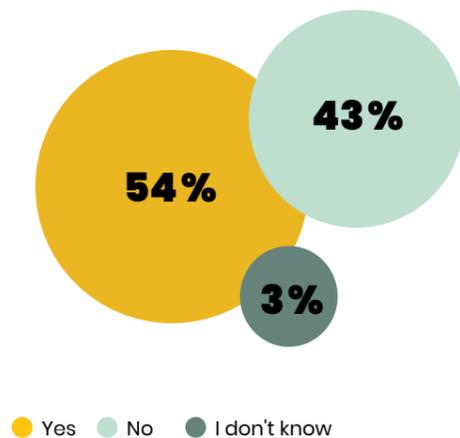
We each have at least 1 member of our family in rural exodus. These migrants include both men and women. But women migrate internally to serve as domestic servants, especially in Bamako. We ourselves are former internal migrants. For example, I went to Bamako where I spent 5 years and to Sikasso where I stayed for only one dry season. It was for the purpose of building my wedding trousseau, but not to help or feed a family.'

Words of a housewife during the focus group with women, Djenné cercle, July 2019.

Main factor that pushes people to emigrate/move, on average and by gender:



Has a member of your household lived outside the village/neighbourhood for more than 3 months?



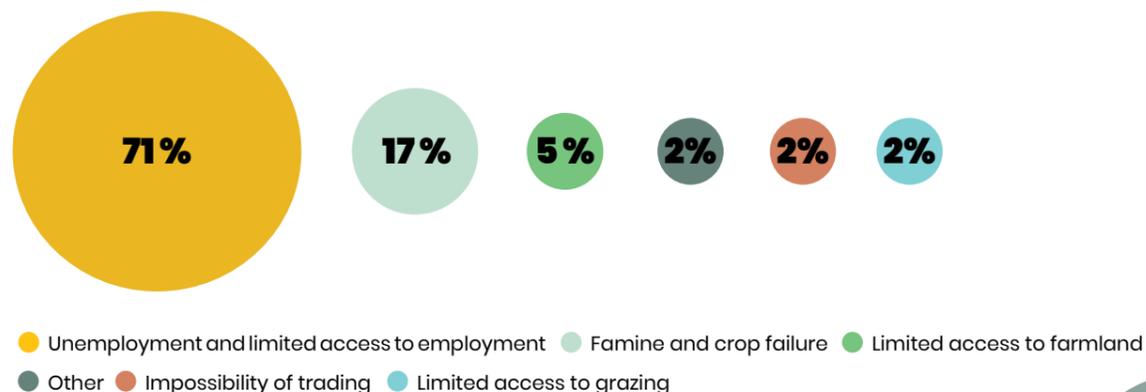
Economic factors mainly explain the migration phenomenon: unemployment or limited access to employment are at the top of the list of concerns (72% of respondents), followed by famine or crop failures (17%) and limited access to farmland (6%).

The causes of departure are therefore various, but the financial contribution of migrants is crucial for family support, especially during lean seasons, i.e. the period before the first harvests when the grain from the previous harvest begins to run out.

Migration is what feeds us today. Without the contribution of migrants, it would be a disaster. In the past, we used to produce so much rice that we could sell it and buy other capital goods (oxen, carts, etc.), but now we can't even feed ourselves, let alone buy capital goods. This means that our children have to migrate. It is their income that is used to buy the grain supplement at the local markets.'

Remarks of a participant of a discussion group, Djenné cercle, July 2019.

Economic reasons for migration



To obtain food during the lean periods, which are usually accompanied by a rise in prices, people who have run out of family stocks are forced to take on debt in kind or in cash. Temporary migration is then considered as an alternative to cope with a more difficult economic situation. This option is all the more attractive as many people, especially youths, lack satisfactory employment opportunities in local markets with low labour absorption capacities.

However, other reasons were mentioned during the focus groups, especially from youths, including graduates looking for work.

"I haven't travelled, but I have a brother who left more than 3 years ago. And my other brother goes back and forth, sometimes 2 to 4 months. One of them left due to family pressure because when you're not working, it's embarrassing for the family. The other brother, on the other hand, has left to pursue a professional career, and he only comes home for holidays or for social reasons. We are all tempted to leave, but the economic situation is tough everywhere. I think it's better to stay in the country, find a small job and feed your family."

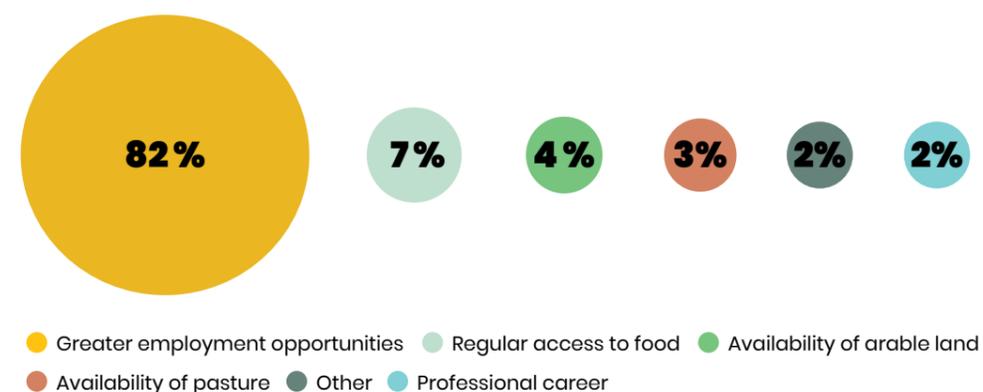
A worker speaking during a discussion group, Ségou cercle, July 2019.

• Migrants seeking economic opportunities

People are migrating to places that can offer employment opportunities in search of better economic opportunities. The results of the survey show that the choice of destination is very rarely motivated by the availability of arable land, pasture or a professional career, which would imply, on the contrary, the need to settle down for a long time.



Main economic motivation in places of arrival



Push and pull factors for migration

"I think it is mainly for economic reasons that people go to these cities. Unemployment and lack of opportunities, especially for youths, push them to migrate. With a demographic growth of the population in the village, unemployment is dangerous for stability and social cohesion. People emigrate in the hope of improving their living conditions and those of their families in the village. Because it's easy to find paid employment opportunities in these cities. While the village has no opportunities to offer anyone."

Remarks of a farmer during a focus group, Baraouéli cercle, July 2019.

"We don't like our children migrating because they suffer a lot. In the course of this adventure, some end up in prison, while others die on the gold panning sites. But we have no choice because it is the only alternative left. Without the contribution of our migrants, there would be famine because production is no longer sufficient to meet the family's cereal needs. Imagine among Fulani, in the past, women did not go on a rural exodus. But today, they go because everyone must make their contribution for the survival of their family."

Interview of a focus group participant, Djenné cercle, July 2019.

"What attracts youths to these destination areas is first and foremost the lack of work in their home locality and the search for money. Let's take an example of ourselves here: we spend all day drinking tea for lack of work. If you have the will and the heart to work, you jump on any job opportunity, even if you gain nothing. You're going to work just so people see you working. But if this possibility of work does not exist in the village, what are you going to do? The little that parents earn is spent on the food you eat and you yourself do nothing. In reality, everything is linked to the employment problem. When you go to Algeria or to the gold panning sites, at least you can work there."

A student speaking during a discussion group, Baraouéli cercle, July 2019.

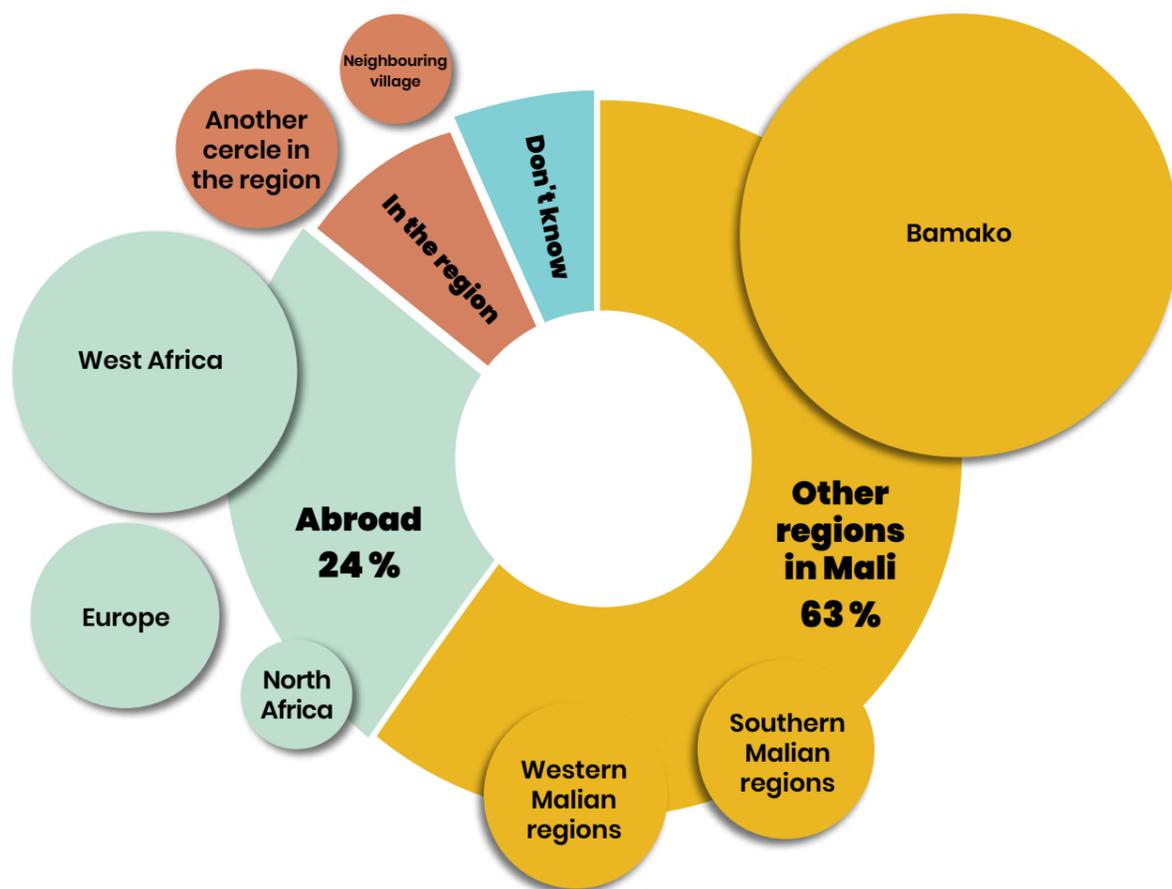
Destinations and length of stay of migrants

Frequent, dynamic and varied, internal mobilities are generally short-term and occur in a circular manner between rural areas, from a rural area to an urban area, or between urban areas. Bamako remains the main destination, even if mobility is increasing towards the southern regions of the country that have become attractive because of the economic opportunities offered by their gold-bearing sectors.

Internal versus international migration

Most migration takes place within the country. Bamako remains the main destination for 45% of migrants from the centre. For many, the capital offers greater access to basic social services (education, health and other infrastructure), but above all greater employment opportunities.

The main destinations of migrants/displaced persons in 2021:



“

Bamako is the biggest destination for our migrants. Every time we go somewhere, we stay a while to look for work. Otherwise, we go to another destination. Some youths go directly to gold panning areas. But in reality, we are constantly looking for jobs. We move a lot, we go from one area to another, until we find a fairly remunerative job. They say that luck is at the tip of your toes. As long as you don't stay in one place, you can hope to find a good job one day.

Remarks of a participant of the youth focus group, Koro cercle, July 2019.



Other preferred destinations are the western (8%) and southern (10%) regions of Mali, with a high proportion of respondents from the Ténenkou and Macina cercles. During the group discussions, respondents indicated that the traditional gold panning areas of Southern Mali (the regions of Koulikoro, Kayes and Sikasso) had become places of affluence for people in search of resources.

It is important to distinguish economic migration, towards Bamako and gold panning sites, from transhumance practiced by breeders and pastoralists whose preferred destinations are the ecological zones of the Niger Delta. Surveyed population reported that, during the dry season, animals converge on these places with high forage potential and on those, which have important water points for watering livestock.

Some breeders say they go to neighbouring countries by relying on family and/or community networks:

“

There are some of my children who have not been able to continue their studies; they're gone. My husband rarely stays a month in the household. He travels a lot. Our youths who left, went to drive the herds to their uncle's house in Burkina Faso. After that, they will sell the cattle to buy merchandise and bring it home.

A housewife speaking during a discussion group, Ségou cercle, July 2019.

International migration remains limited: 15% of respondents say they plan to migrate to a West African country, particularly Mauritania, Senegal and the Ivory Coast, especially for the fishing season, and also Equatorial Guinea. The fishing season runs from October to February, when the fish trade is at its most important. From May a long lean season begins that lasts until the fishing season resumes in October. In the meantime, youths travel to countries like the Ivory Coast where fishing is consistent almost all year round.

A DISTINCTION SHOULD BE MADE BETWEEN ECONOMIC MIGRATION TO BAMAKO AND GOLD PANNING SITES AND THE TRANSHUMANCE PRACTICED BY BREEDERS AND PASTORALISTS.



Outside the countries of the sub-region, only 6% of respondents cite Europe as a destination. The Maghreb and Gulf countries are rarely mentioned, 3% for the former and 0.3% for the latter. The panel discussions revealed that the Libyan crisis has limited the movement of people to North African countries.

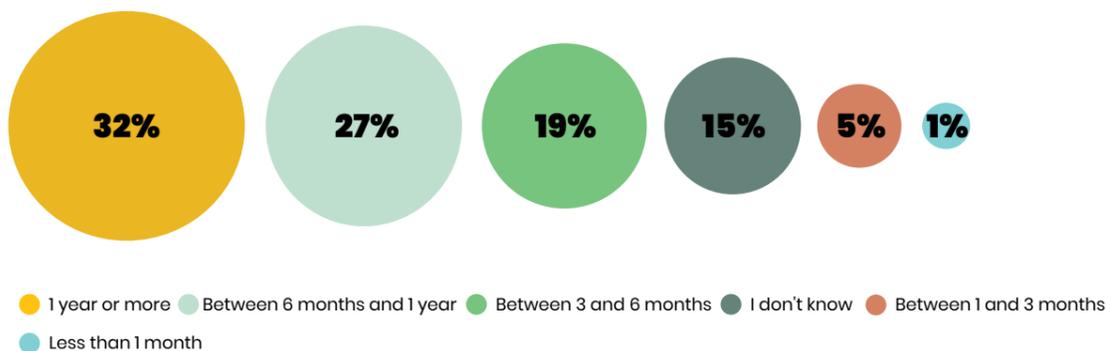
“ People from here no longer go to the Maghreb countries: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia. They prefer to migrate to Bamako and Abidjan. Since the Berbers started mistreating our people there, they have abandoned that country. Otherwise they went to Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. When our youths migrated some could stay there for 5 to 6 years. Some didn't return. On the other hand, others go for 1 to 2 years and return to cultivate.”

Remarks of a participant in the women's discussion group, Douentza cercle, July 2019.

• Duration of stay of migrants

A relatively large proportion (32%) of respondents estimate the average length of stay to be 1 year or more. For 27%, this duration is between 6 months and 1 year. Responses on length of stay do not vary by gender, but length of stay and destination of migrants depend on the reasons for leaving.

Average length of stay of emigrants or displaced persons



“ Those who go to gold panning sites do not exceed 5 to 9 months. But those who go outside can do up to 8 years. Others remain there permanently.”

Remarks of a farmer during a focus group, Douentza cercle, July 2019.

In areas where the search for pasture and water for watering animals is the main reason for transhumance, the periods of departure or return of pastoralists and herds vary. For example, the early drying up of water points in some areas of the Mopti region is forcing transhumant herds to descend to the rice fields of the flooded areas in the south of the country. On the other hand, these early returns of herds usually coincide with the harvest season, which regularly causes conflicts between herders and farmers who (for some respondents in the Mopti region) have annexed land formerly reserved for pastoralism.



Experience feedback

“ The main destinations for migrants here is Bamako. Then others continue to the mining or gold panning areas, which are the regions of Kayes and Sikasso. For Bamako, the shortest duration is often 3 months and the longest duration is 6 months. For the mining area, it's just a matter of luck. The shortest duration is 1 month, but others can be up to more than 1 year or even 5 years.”

Remarks of a villager, Tominian cercle, July 2019.

“ Our migrants go inside and outside our country. Those who remain in Mali go to the gold panning sites in the regions of Sikasso and Kayes. On the other hand, those who go abroad usually go to the Ivory Coast and Senegal. In these countries, they work as fishermen and agricultural labourers, in particular clearing land and panning for gold. Their stay often does not exceed 1 to 2 years. The women who go there do not go outside. They usually go to Bamako.”

A housewife speaking during a focus group with women, cercle of Djenné, July 2019.

“ Migrants have no fixed destination. They settle where they get well-paying jobs. Some do 6 months, and others do 8 months. Some stay for 2 or 6 years. Finally, some settle there permanently. For example, my father's younger brother spent fifteen years on migration in gold mines. My father went to pick him up and came back without money.”

A focus group participant, Ségou cercle, July 2019.

SUMMARY

The mobility of populations in the central regions is mainly internal (seasonal, transhumance etc.) and sub-regional, even if some may attempt to leave for Europe.

It is therefore important to consider internal mobility in the central regions of Mali as a structural and regular element, a consequence of the very precarious economic conditions, the scarcity of employment and the difficult subsistence of the populations.

The phenomenon is long-term and economic reasons are more responsible for migration than the security context. Migration keeps an essentially localized profile; it is limited in time, and is mainly economic.

However, security issues exacerbate the economic reasons and change the dynamics. These migrations are survival options, which allow families left behind in the villages to meet their basic needs. They testify to an ever-increasing impoverishment of populations in central Mali.



BEING YOUNG IN CENTRAL MALI

From the thematic, quantitative and qualitative survey conducted between April and May 2019 among a representative sample of youths, three main results were highlighted:

1. Analysis of opinions and perceptions on current governance, socio-economic development and security issues shows that adults have a more negative view of the situation than the youth.

2. Decision-making at the local level belongs mainly to men over 35 years of age, *in contrast* to their demographic weight in society. Therefore, the possibility for the youngest to participate in decision-making processes (public and/or private) remains largely determined by the political and cultural context and, in particular, the patriarchal and gerontocratic norms that continue to dictate the community organization in Mali.

3. Results show a number of concerns about current and future situations. Reasons are diverse, but the education crisis and the lack of economic opportunities are most often cited. Employment appears to be the most common problem, with the overwhelming majority of respondents (90%) wanting to own land and get involved in agriculture, own a herd and practice animal husbandry (89%) or start their own business in their locality (82%).

This demographic weight of the youth implies major challenges in terms of education, access to resources, socio-professional integration, access to decision-making bodies, civic commitment and the achievement of personal or family aspirations.

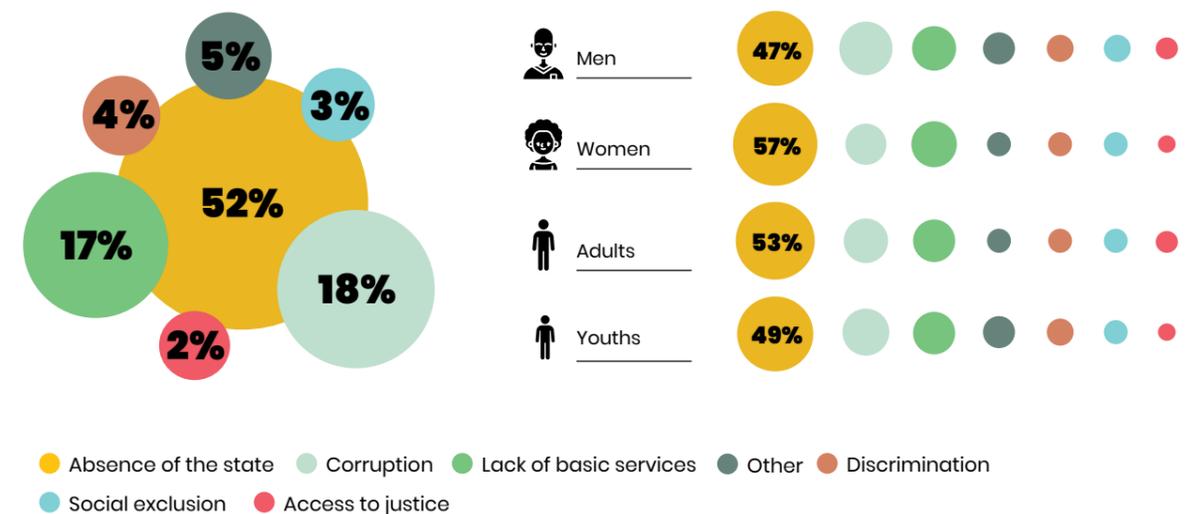
Definition of 'youth'

In sub-Saharan Africa in general, and Mali in particular, 'youth' refers to the social conditions that mark the beginning of adolescence until adulthood. Thus, a woman in Mali is no longer considered as a youth when she marries and/or after the birth of her first child, while a man loses his status as a youth when he enters professional life and/or starts a family. As elsewhere, the boundary between the two age groups tends to blur due to the youth transitioning to working and family life later and later. The Employment and Training Observatory in Mali defines as a youth anyone between 15 and 40 years old. In this study, we targeted youth aged 18 to 34.

Governance issues

At the top of the list of governance issues, 52% of respondents mentioned the absence of the state first. Unequal state presence on the territory and structural weakness in the delivery of basic social services, coupled with a deteriorating and volatile security situation, accentuate this perception of the state's absence, which refers mainly to the absence of the defence and security forces.

Most important governance issues



The second concern is corruption (18%). Mali is ranked 136th on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, which found that 60% of the Malian population perceived corrupt practices in 2021. Despite initiatives to encourage transparency in public life, persistence of this phenomenon at the national and local levels reinforces populations' negative perception of public authorities.

The third concern (17%) is the lack of basic social services — drinking water, education, health care, etc. The consequences of limited access to basic social services are experienced in a differentiated way, with women being more affected, particularly for access to health care.

“Concerning health, we have a lot of difficulties because of insecurity. At the community health centre in Koubéwel Koundia (Douentza cercle), we received a lot of support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and technical and financial partners. Health equipment and medicine were received from these projects. But, because of the state of our roads and insecurity, these projects have been stopped. We no longer receive aid, neither from the state nor from these projects (...). Pregnant women came regularly for pregnancy monitoring, because they had access to free or cheaper medicine. Currently, with the crisis, this is no longer possible. We are out of medicine and many pregnant women prefer to stay at home and resort to traditional treatments for their pregnancy. This is not without consequences (for their health).”

Remarks of a midwife during a focus group with young women, Douentza cercle, April — May 2019.

Among the consequences of insecurity, the temporary closure of health facilities due to attacks, the temporary halt of interventions by the state and health partners or the immobilization of emergency vehicles in conflict zones have also been reported.

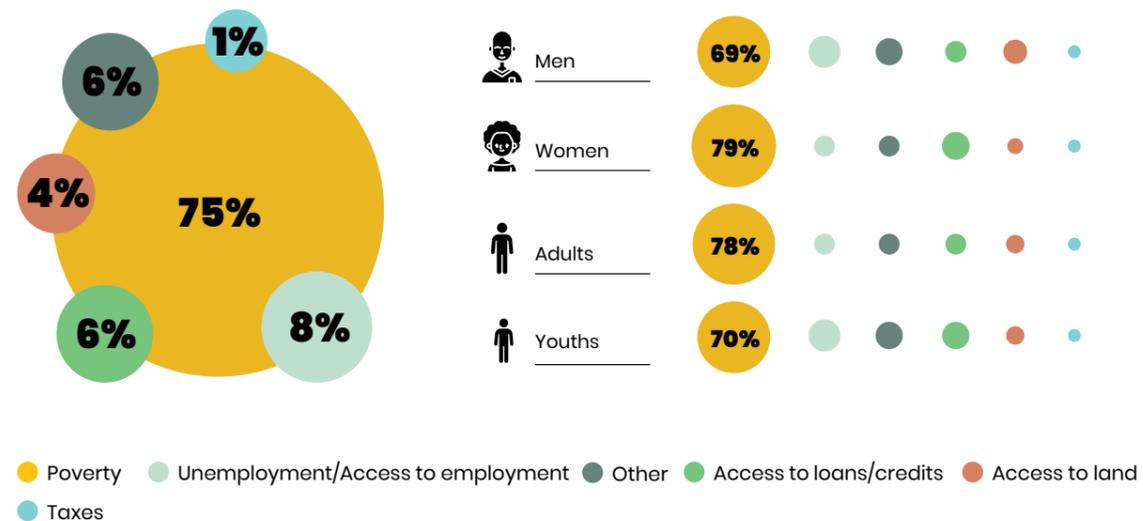
Economic issues



75% of people perceive poverty as the most important economic issue.

This is largely due to the precariousness of household economic activity, which is highly dependent on the production or sale of agricultural products. This production is itself highly dependent on natural water resources (rain, canal and river water), and is mainly intended for family food.

Most important economic issues



Insecurity prevents the cultivation of remote fields and disrupts not only production, but also the transport and commercialization of products. Recurrent motorcycle bans in some localities increase the economic vulnerability of households.

“Everything has become expensive at the market. If you don't have money, you can't buy anything at the market. Whether it's food, spices: everything is expensive right now. Our husbands are not working now and there is no salary. In Mopti cercle, the majority of civil servants are teachers. If there is no work and no salary, how can people rest easy? (...) We have no alternative, except to do small trade. We manage with small trade. Often, you go to the market, but you don't sell anything. And men have nothing to give to women.”

Participant in the focus group with young women, Douentza cercle, April-May 2019.



One of the aggravating factors of poverty is the difficulty of access to employment, to which the youth (11%) refer more than adults (5%), and men (12%) more than women (4%). On the other hand, women are more likely to report access to loans as a significant problem (9%, compared to about 4% of men).

“We, young women, don't have jobs. Even if you want to take a loan at the bank to start your business, the bank asks you for security. A person who has nothing, what will they use as security? Unless you give the deeds to your house! And what man is going to give the deeds to his house to his wife to use as security? So it's not easy! We need to have funding so we can work.”

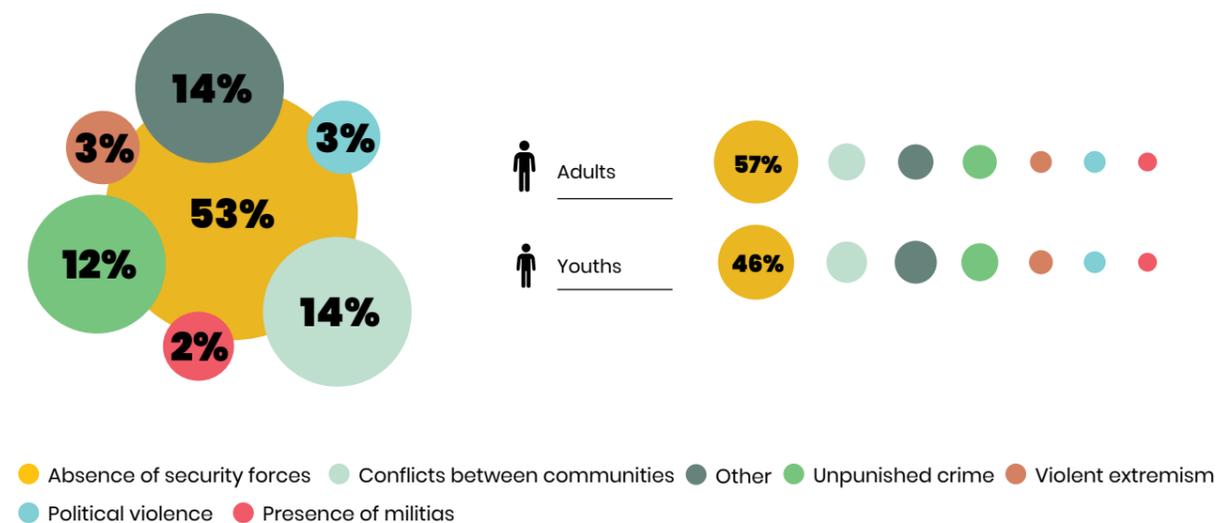
Remarks of a participant in the focus group organized with young women, Baraouéli cercle, April – May 2019.

Due to the rigidity of the private banking and financial system, populations resort to informal financial circuits, including tontines. These tontines make it possible to meet at more or less regular intervals to pool contributions of a fixed amount, distributed in turn to each of the members, generally by lot.

Security issues

Respondents believe that the most important security issue is neither violent extremism (3%), nor political violence (3%) or the presence of militias (2%), but the absence of security forces (about 53%).

Most important security issues



In most survey locations, youths who participated in the focus groups attributed the emergence of non-state actors to the absence of defence and security forces.

“Since there is no national security force in our commune, we are the ones who provide security. The country is vast, the state does not have the means to ensure security in all villages. It is in this context that we had a local initiative to set up committees and brigades of traditional hunters in our respective villages. Dozo hunters came from Macina and Djenné cercles to clearly explain the dangers that populations are facing in northern Mali. These hunters, in the name of their Dozo brotherhood, proceeded to set up security units in villages. These hunters stand guard day and night so that people sleep peacefully. Before, people's property, especially animals, was stolen daily without the slightest reaction from administrative authorities. Populations in the centre of the country were left to their own fate. Since hunters went into action, we no longer see any cases of animals being stolen or lost in our forests. Since the Dozo began securing, populations and their property have been safe.”

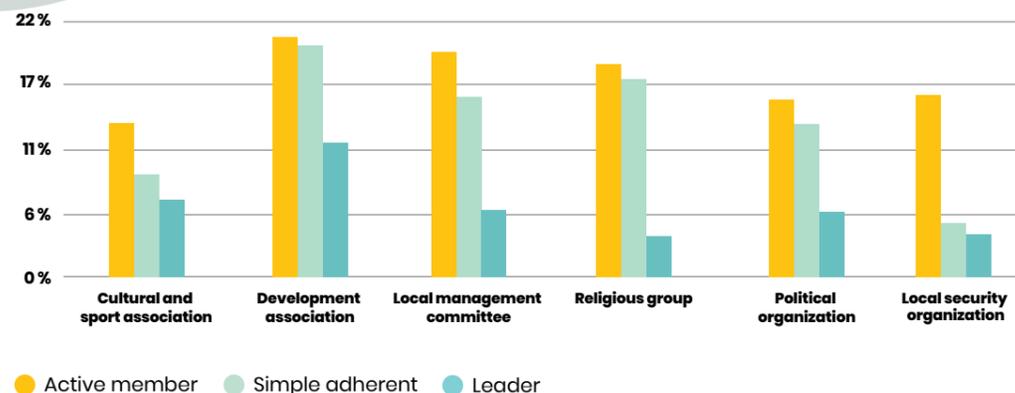
Remarks of a participant in the focus group with young men, San cercle, April – May 2019.

These remarks reflect the security dilemma faced by populations and tend to explain, to some extent, their willingness to welcome non-state security actors, such as self-defence groups, which provide security functions and with which populations sometimes negotiate their security.

The youth and decision-making

Involvement of the youth in decision-making at both the local and national level can influence how they envisage their future.

Associative commitment and level of responsibility



It can be seen that the youth are particularly involved as active members in cultural and sports associations, development associations and local security organizations.



The youth are less involved than adults in associations and they occupy fewer positions of responsibility.

Women are more involved in development associations (47%), but they occupy fewer positions of responsibility than men.

All respondents also indicated that influential people in the village (traditional and religious leaders) listen to and support the youth who participate in the meetings to decide the affairs of the village/neighbourhood.

THE YOUTH HAVE A MORE FAVOURABLE OPINION OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL.

Views of the youth in decision-making

% of youths surveyed who agree with these statements:



They can run for elected office without any problems



They participate in meetings to decide on the village/neighbourhood



They are encouraged to move abroad



They are encouraged to play a role in protecting the population



Various focus groups with youths and field observations showed that their inclusion in the management of their community could take several forms:

- Participation in advocacy or awareness-raising actions initiated by non-governmental organizations
- Participation in meetings of their village to learn about current affairs
- Collaboration with municipal authorities on public utility initiatives such as sanitation or for the development of socio-economic and cultural development plans, etc.

“ The youth also set up ‘patrols to protect people and their property, especially animals.’
Remarks of a participant in the focus group with youths, Baraouéli cercle, May 2019.



The youth in public life

77% of respondents say they accept that a youth from their locality run for elected office, and 53% of youths ‘agree’ and 25% ‘strongly agree’ with this answer.

Young people feel heard (68% agree), can participate in meetings to decide the future of the village (69% agree) and 60% consider that they can influence decisions.

“ As a municipal councillor, I think the youth want to get more involved in local governance, but the obstacles that prevent them are illiteracy, lack of training and lack of awareness. I am the only youth representative on the village council and at the same time on the communal council. But I admit that my opinion is not taken into account within the village council. My word is hardly taken into consideration; Old people think of me as a child. It is much the same at the level of the municipal council. A few elderly people monopolized the floor and always have the final say on decisions.’

Remarks of a young city councillor and participant in the focus group with young men, San cercle, May 2019.

While people say they accept youths running for elected office, reality doesn’t seem to reflect this since most of the youth interviewed denounce the occupation of positions of responsibility by older people. The youth show a tendency to be self-exclusive in order to avoid rivalries with adults who seem to underestimate the ability of youths – and women – to assume public responsibilities.

77% OF THE POPULATIONS SURVEYED SAY THEY ACCEPT THAT A YOUTH FROM THEIR LOCALITY RUN FOR ELECTED OFFICE.



“We don't have youths who are responsible, we don't have youths at the town hall. All the workers at the town hall of Douentza are old people. The youth are not involved in the public services of Douentza (...).”

Remarks of a participant in the focus group with young women, Douentza cercle, April – May 2019.

Economic and social poverty can explain the dependence of the youth on their families and elders. 48% of youths say they are not able to marry the person of their choice without parental consent, and 43% of young people surveyed report that they are encouraged to move abroad to support their families financially.



PLACE OF THE YOUTH IN PUBLIC LIFE

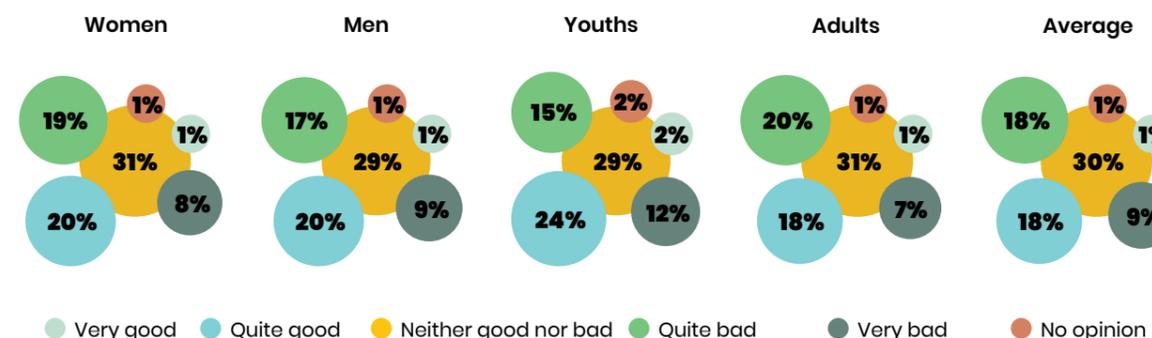
“The involvement of young people in politics is weak here because there are difficulties (...). Everyone involved in politics is the same age as our dads. We are afraid to engage in the political arena in the same way as these old people and to be their opponents.”

Participant in the focus group with young men, Bankass cercle, May 2019.

THE YOUTH FACING THE FUTURE: SHEDDING LIGHT ON ASPIRATIONS

Perceptions of the current situation

31% of respondents perceive their current situation as ‘neither good nor bad’, compared to 27% who consider it ‘quite bad’ (18%) or ‘very bad’ (9%) and 21% who, on the contrary, consider it ‘quite good’.



“I had more peace of mind before the security crisis in the country. I wasn't rich, but there was enough food in the family. I used to sell some agricultural products, but now to make money, I pick tamarind leaves that I turn into powder and then sell at the San market. I am afraid when I go in the bush, because bandits or terrorists can attack me at any time. The area is not secure.”

Remarks of a participant in the focus group with young women, Baraouéli cercle, May 2019.

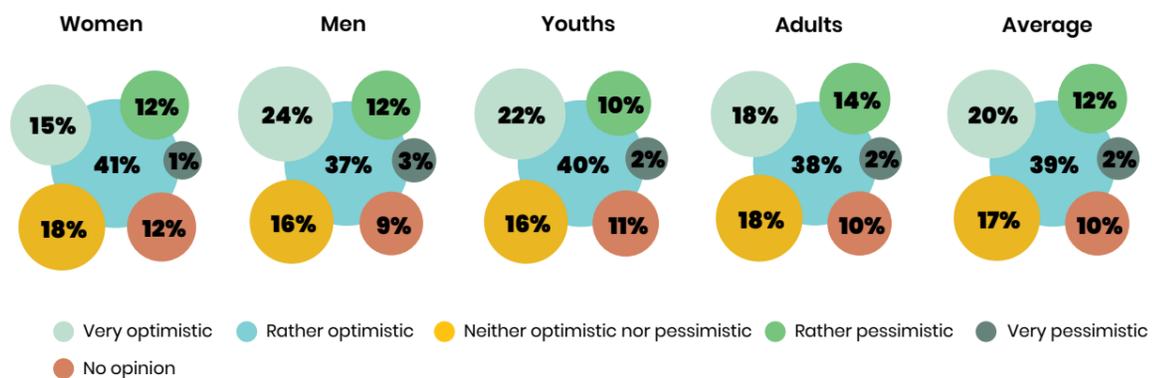


• Perceptions about the future

Despite the deteriorating situation in central Mali, the survey results show that populations say they are ‘rather optimistic’ about their future (about 39%), with similar rates between young and adult respondents (38% and 39%).

On the other hand, while women are more likely to say they are ‘rather optimistic’ (41%) than men (37%), 24% of men say they are ‘very optimistic’ compared to 15% of women. Finally, 22% of youths say they are ‘very optimistic’ compared to 18% of adults.

Perceptions about the future



When the discussion goes deeper, several participants nevertheless express their pessimism about their situation. To the question **'How do you see your future?'**

“ *Anw ka sini niaya sigui be dibi la.* ”
 ('Our future is in the shadows, in the dark'). San, May 2019.

Professional and economic aspirations of the youth

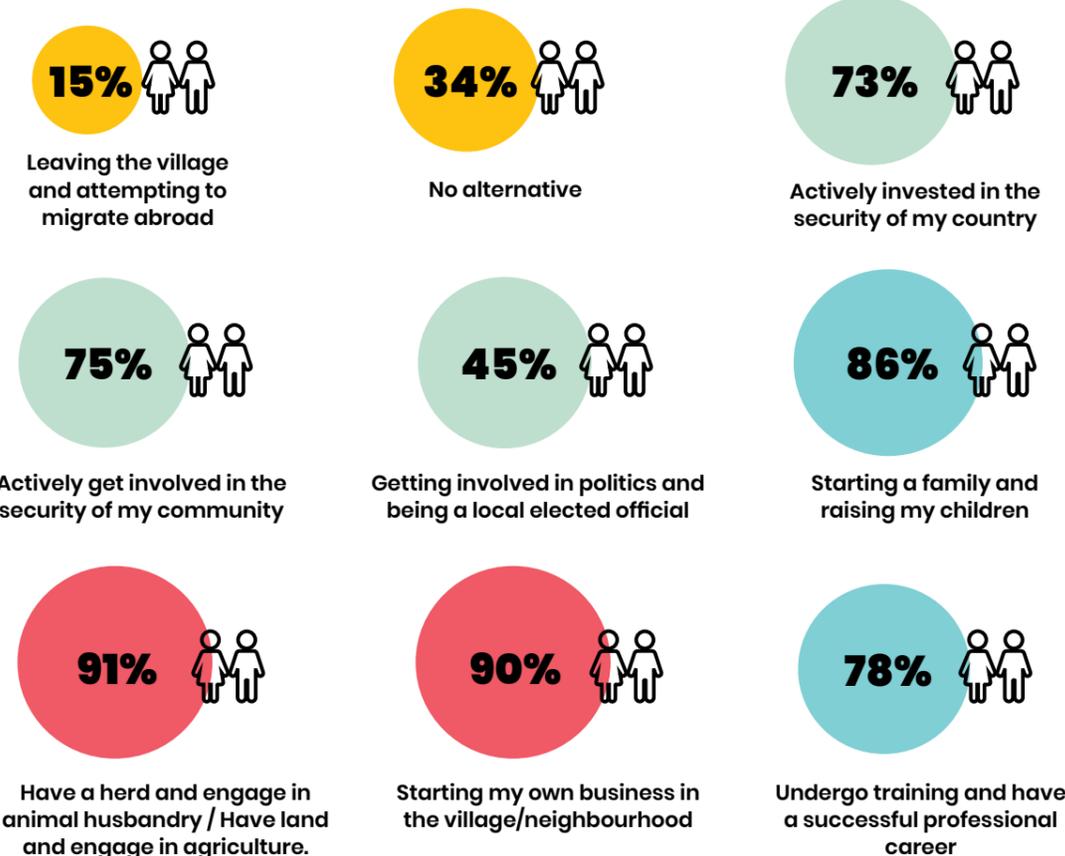
The majority of respondents expressed a desire to find a job and/or undergo professional training. To the statement *'to train and succeed in one's professional career'*, 69% express their agreement ('agree' or 'strongly agree'), including 78% of youths.

Regarding employment, 90% of respondents want to *'have land and engage in agriculture'*, 89% would like to *'have a herd and engage in animal husbandry'* and 82% *'create (their) own business in (their) locality.'*



Youth aspirations and future plans

% of youths surveyed who agree with these statements



Social aspirations: between migrating and starting a family, respondents show a clear preference for the second option (79% 'agree' or 'strongly agree'), especially the youth (86% against 72% for their elders). Only 13% of respondents say they want to migrate compared to 73% who do not want to.

The migratory phenomenon exists, but it is generally limited to seasonal activities and in a certain geographical proximity:

“ *To be able to get by, young people are forced to immigrate to Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and inside Mali, especially in gold-bearing areas to practice traditional gold panning. It is this gold panning that saves our lives. After the end of the harvest, all youths go on an exodus to gold panning sites and return only at the beginning of the rainy season.* ”

Remarks of a participant in the focus group with young men, San cercle, April – May 2019.

Civic and community aspirations: Respondents of all ages also overwhelmingly indicated their desire to serve their community and country.

82%
 of respondents indicated that they wanted to stay in their locality and work with basic community organizations.

- Youths outnumber adults (86% versus 78%)
- Men outnumber women (84% versus 79%).
- It is interesting to note that about 74% of respondents (adults and youths combined) want to be actively involved in the security of their communities.

IN SUMMARY

Youths under the age of 35 are impacted the most by concerns, even threats. However, this research paints a more contrasting picture of this category, which is strongly affected by the crisis, but is also relatively confident and wants to get involved in communities.

This field survey thus highlighted the integration of the youth in their villages and localities through the practice of a subsistence professional activity (mainly agriculture and animal husbandry) and a desire to participate in local life.



HEALTH

Health is another sector heavily affected by insecurity. If childhood vaccinations continue, insecurity has consequences on the availability of staff, the supply of medicines and, more generally, on the access of populations to health facilities.



The health sector in Mali

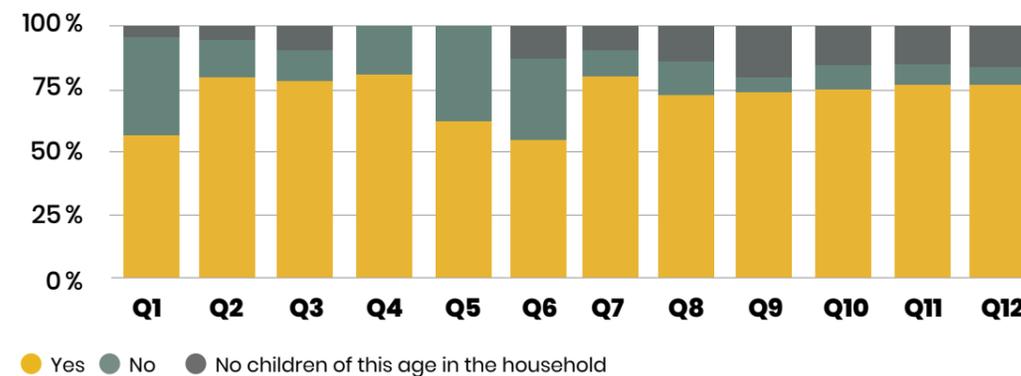
In Mali, healthcare is based on the following services:

- **Community Health Centres (CSCOM)**, municipal health services, dispensaries with maternity clinics that deal with primary health care.
- **CSREF at the cercle level**, which deals with urgent or complex cases beyond the level of competence of CSCOMs.
- **At the regional level, hospitals** that receive patients transferred by CSCOMs and CRSEF for cases they cannot treat.

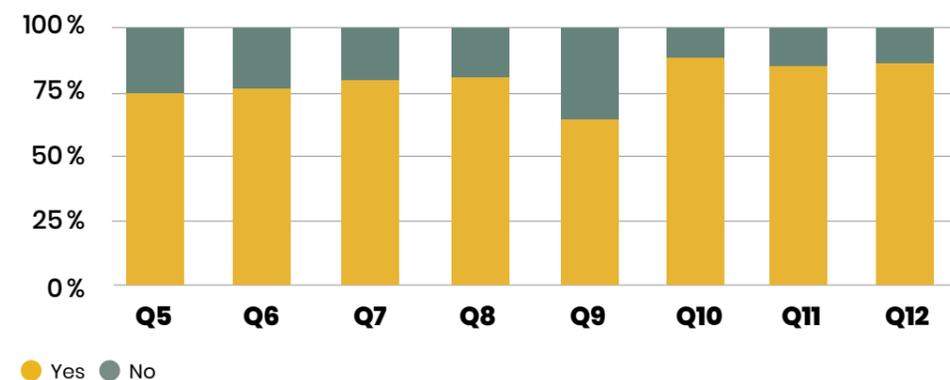
Administratively, each cercle corresponds to a health district; each health district has several CSCOMs, managed by Community Health Associations (ASACO).

National and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are supporting community players in recruitment, caring for displaced people, freely distributing impregnated mosquito nets or paying of salaries for certain community health workers.

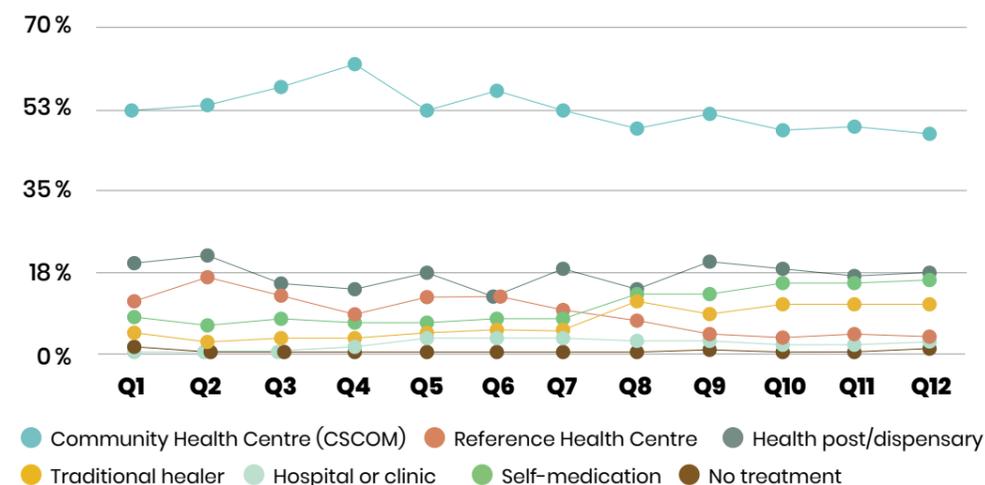
Have children (of age to be vaccinated, 0-5 years) in your household received vaccination recently?



Availability of an operational health centre in the locality



In the case of illness, who do the members of your household contact first?



In case of illness, people first go to the CSCOM, in rural and urban areas, or to the dispensary. However, at the village level, traditional healers are often the first (or only) recourse for a good number of people, especially for fevers, malaria, rheumatism, liver problems, fractures cases of diarrhoea etc.

“Many of them start with traditional healers. Then they go to pharmacies. It is the family members who request treatment with traditional medicines first. When I say family members it depends on the family members. It is the head of the family who requests treatment with traditional medicines first. If that can't treat them, they go to the health centre.”

Interview with a user, CSCOM of Djenné, January 2020.

Regarding the collaboration between the various health actors, the president of the regional federation of Segou believes that:

“Modern providers work in collaboration with traditional healers. In this collaboration we have informed traditional healers that in case of complication of certain diseases they must be sent to modern health facilities. Each locality has its own realities, and here in Saminè, traditional healers and health workers work hand in hand.”

Interview at the regional health federation of the Ségou region, January 2020.

Another category is people who, after resorting to modern medicine, then return to traditional healers. These are usually people who are either not satisfied with the results of modern medicine or who have been influenced by their relatives, claiming that their disease is not curable by modern medicine.

“In our country, people generally say that diseases are not the same. There are some that can be treated by modern medicine and others by our traditional healers. There are some diseases, when even if we take them to the doctors, some parents end up referring to traditional healers. These kinds of pressures are so strong that it's hard to refuse.”

Interview with a user at the CSCOM of Djenné, January 2020.

“In any case, for us, it is not the health centre that is our first resort. We always try traditional medicines first. If it doesn't work or if the patient's condition worsens and we are afraid, that's when we go to the health centre.”

Interview with a displaced person, Bankass cercle, January 2020.

We find the same attitude to medicines among those who go to the pharmacy, while others rely on self-medication. In the areas studied, the first resort is also often the 'pharmacy on the ground', that is to say the medicines at good prices, easily accessible. Indeed, fear of the cost of prescriptions and tests pushes many people to look for cheaper medicines, but without the quality control. According to a doctor in Mopti, many people resort to self-medication in the case of illness, by buying the medicines on the ground on the black market.

PEOPLE FIRST GO TO THE CSCOM, IN BOTH RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.



“If they see that there is no improvement in health, they go to the health centre.”

Interview at the Regional Health Directorate of Mopti, January 2020.

“Very generally many self-medicate or they often go to see traditional healers. If they see that in any case the treatment has not given effect, they come to us. As the population is semi-literate, let's put it that way, there are not enough civil servants, otherwise the children who have parents who are civil servants, in any case, are brought in at the very early stages of disease. In the case of a strong suspicion of fever or other less serious symptoms they bring them in, but the rest of the population really always try self-medication first. As you know, our markets are full of pharmacies on the ground level. The market is behind us. People are going off to get supplies indiscriminately, so that's it.”

Interview at the CSCOM of Sévaré II, January 2020.

“The health business is a money issue, so if you have nothing, you are forced to see our traditional healers first. It is when it no longer works that's when we go to the dispensary.”

Interview with a patient, Ségou cercle, January 2020.

Conditions of access to health services

Access to health facilities differs depending on whether you live in urban or rural areas. Distance is an obstacle to attendance at health centres, as is the lack of means of travel or money to pay for them. As for rural communes, access is very difficult, as a patient told Djenné:

“If a pregnant woman reaches the CSCOM for her delivery in the event of a complication, she must pay 5000 CFA francs to be referred by ambulance to the CSREF of Djenné. Without the 5000 CFA francs, the ambulance will never make the trip. Patients who must be referred to Bamako, not counting the price of diesel, must pay 250 000 CFA francs.”

Interview at the CSCOM of Djenné, January 2020.

Users have often reported that the staff are very dedicated, especially for complicated cases, however, they complain about the lack of equipment and infrastructure.

THE EVACUATION OF PATIENTS TO BAMAKO IS EXPENSIVE AND MANY PEOPLE ARE UNABLE TO TRAVEL TO CARE FOR THE PATIENT THERE.



In rural communes, some populations have difficulty accessing health centres, a situation aggravated by insecurity. For example, the situation of rural communes located on the left bank of the Mopti cercle seems more worrying:



“ Sometimes we negotiate with some gun owners to gain access to the population, but often others do not allow us at all, which makes the situation very complicated.”

Interview at the Regional Health Directorate of Mopti, January 2020.

Insecurity is manifested by multiple attacks taking place in villages and on various roads.



“ Since the beginning of the crisis, people have suffered a lot. Especially when it was forbidden to ride on two-wheeled vehicles; it was during this time that things really changed. Because you have to admit it was very difficult for people; that's because motorbikes are the ultimate means of transport for everyone. Now when we ban citizens from riding motorcycles you can see what it does.”

Interview at the local federation of community health associations, Djenné, January 2020.

On the other hand, in urban areas, populations have no major difficulties in accessing the various health facilities:

“ We are not far from the health centre, about 2 km. We do not have an ambulance in our CSCOM, it is at the CSREF level. The patients who attend the CSCOM use the means they have in their possession; generally they come by motorcycle and cart especially the people who are in our villages and are far from the CSCOM. These patients who come from different villages face difficulties such as insecurity, distance... I would have preferred them to also think about building CSCOMs in their villages, it would facilitate their care and there would be less expensive.”

Interview with a user at Tominian central CSCOM, January 2020.



The cost of health care

For rural populations, the lack of means of transport or financial means is a problem. Without means, they resort to traditional medicines while those who have a little means come to the CSCOM for treatment.

The cost of health would explain, for some of the respondents, the low attendance at modern health centres. Normally, as reported opposite, the 'entry' cost should be limited and the same for all users:

“ The costs of service depend on the illness but to access the providers, you take a ticket at the door that costs 1000 CFA francs and then you have to pay for your prescription or examinations, if necessary. Not long ago, I went to hospital twice, and apart from my prescriptions and the entrance fee, I haven't paid for anything else. As far as I know, in the case of hospitalization the cost of the room is 2000 CFA francs per day.”

Interview at the regional hospital of Mopti, January 2020.

The difficulties of access to health facilities can be explained by two major factors: poverty and the state of infrastructure. The increase in poverty caused by the stagnation of the local economy is a brake for many people who can no longer bring their patients to the dispensary.

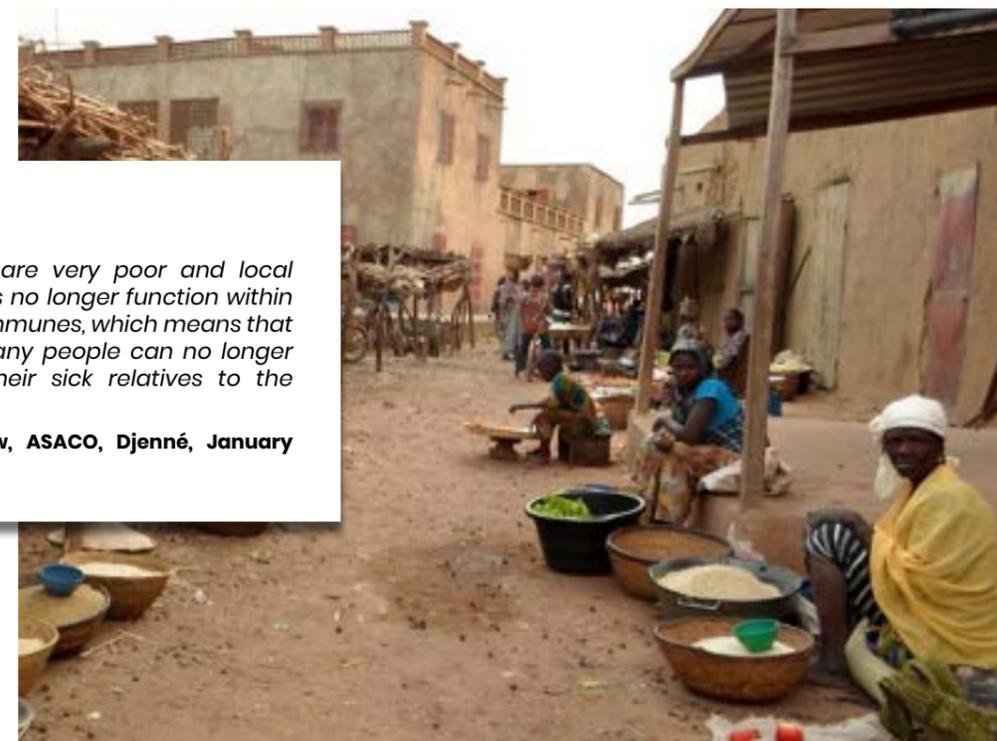
2 MAIN CONSTRAINTS: POVERTY AND THE STATE OF INFRASTRUCTURE.



“

People are very poor and local markets no longer function within the communes, which means that now many people can no longer bring their sick relatives to the centre.”

Interview, ASACO, Djenné, January 2020.



The impact of structural weaknesses on quality of care

In the cercles of Mopti, Djenné, Tominian and Ségou, the problem of technical facilities was regularly highlighted. The following words show the concern of health workers:

“The technical facilities are not up to our expectations. It's in the operating theatre, where we don't have a caesarean section unit as high as our expectations, or a hernia unit. Sometimes in maternity wards, especially today, we have 47 maternity wards that need to be renovated, especially in terms of delivery facilities. That is to say, to renew the delivery units at the level of the maternity wards which are at the commune level and at the CSRef. We also have needs for rolling logistics. We have only 1 vehicle in good condition for supervision for 23 community health centres.”

Interview with health personnel at the CSRef in Djenné, January 2020.

The quality of healthcare is assessed in different ways. For some, the decline in the quality of care is linked to the insecurity that reigns everywhere in the cercles. Many health centres in the Dogon country (Bankass, Bandiagara, Douentza and Koro) and in the communes of the flooded area (Mopti, Youwarou, Ténenkou) do not have enough health workers on site, as they are often located in urban centres.



“God forbid because, in the event of an epidemic, the health workers living in these areas can do absolutely nothing. Even jihadists will suffer, which is what they are told every time we meet to discuss access to health care.”

Interview at ASACO, Mopti, January 2020.

The quality of health care is often linked to the presence or lack of qualified personnel in health facilities.

The impact of insecurity on the supply of care



Insecurity weakens the health system and people's access to care. Among the main problems reported were the closure, sometimes temporary, of certain health facilities, some of which were looted and ransacked; the suspension of interventions by the state and health partners and the immobilization of vehicles in conflict zones where access has become very difficult.

In general, attendance at health facilities declined in all cercles studied, including structures in urban centres. Agents are moving less and less to provide care to rural populations or in the most remote areas, including the vaccination of children. A health worker at the central CSCOM in Tominian said:

“We cannot risk the lives of our officers.”

Interview at Tominian central CSCOM, January 2020.

A deputy mayor of Djenné in charge of health issues adds that:

“No agent now dares to venture beyond 5 to 10 km from urban centres, otherwise one can lose their life.”

Interview at the CSCOM of Djenné, January 2020.

Many health workers retreated to city centres. The fear of attacks and anti-personnel mines on the various roads prevents not only the population from frequenting health facilities but also the supply of medicines to remote communities.

“We are also faced with a problem of staff mobility. It must also be understood that no one wants to work in an area of insecurity, which is why we often rely on indigenous people of the village who are matrons to do certain activities even if they are not qualified, so there is an issue of qualified personnel.”

Interview with non-governmental organization (NGO) worker, Djenné, January 2020.

The case of internally displaced persons was raised in many localities. Their presence is sometimes seen as a problem. In Mopti, the displaced came from Sofara, Koro and Douentza to settle in a neighbourhood near a new CSCOM:

“The CSCOM does not have the resources to provide care for the displaced people, many of whom use the centre without paying for consultations or treatment.”

Interview at the CSCOM of Sevaré II, January 2020.

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



The world has been hit by the Covid-19 pandemic and, from March 2020, more or less strict lockdowns have affected populations. Like all countries, Mali has informed populations through various radio and television campaigns and has taken measures to protect them.

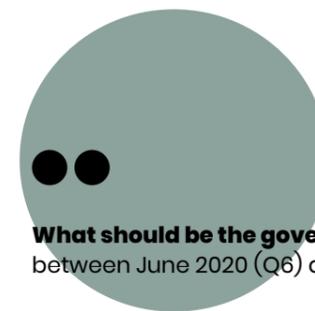
The Central Mali Project integrated Covid-19 questions for Q6, Q7 and Q8, between June 2020 and February 2021, to understand populations' perceptions of this pandemic.

THE PANDEMIC HAS IMPACTED ALL OPERATIONS AND LED TO A DROP IN REVENUE.

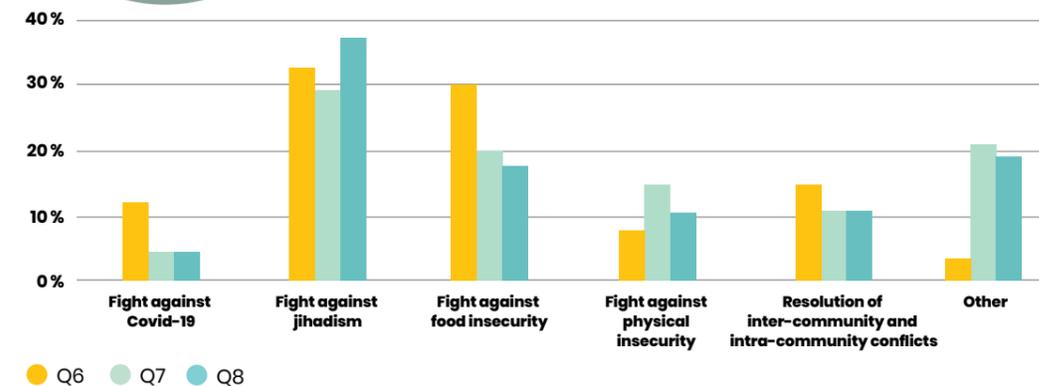


Key results include:

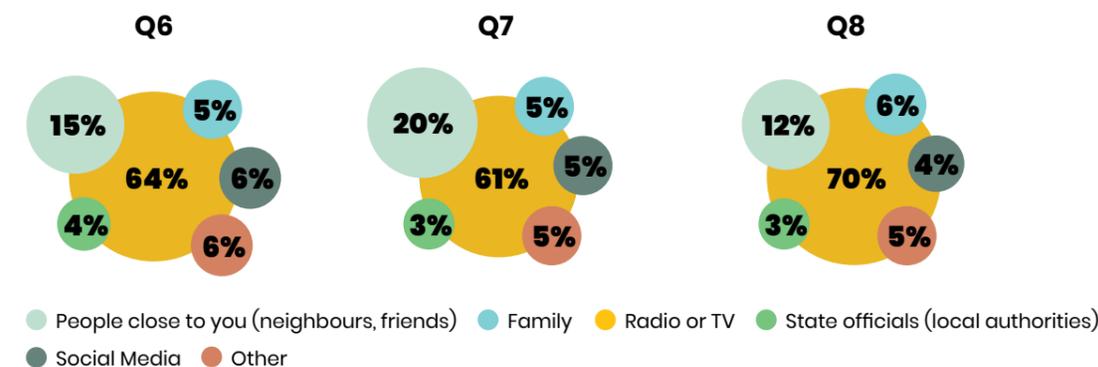
- The main measure was more frequent hand washing, but people complained about the lack of availability of masks.
- Severe cases were treated in CSRef.
- School was the most affected social activity.
- Trade was the most affected economic activity.
- The pandemic has impacted all activities and led to a drop in income.



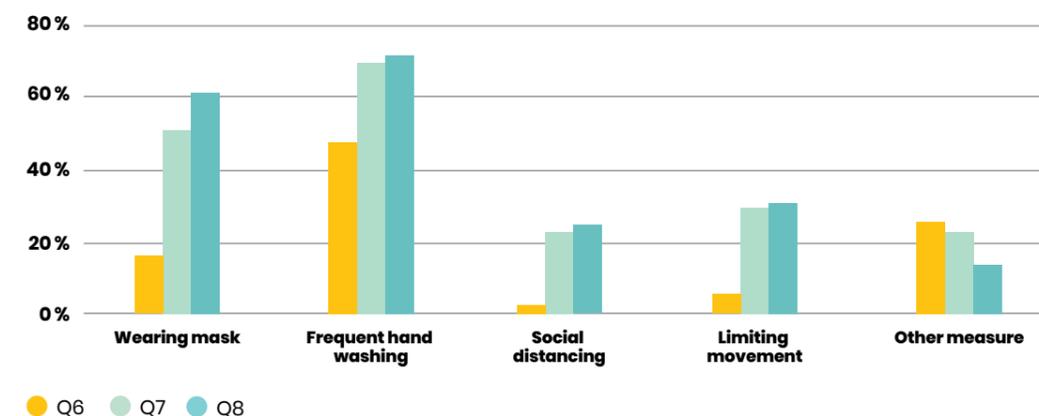
What should be the government's priority? between June 2020 (Q6) and February 2021 (Q8)



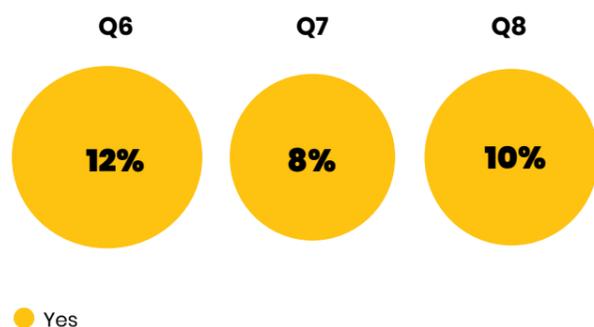
How were you informed about the pandemic? between June 2020 (Q6) and February 2021 (Q8)



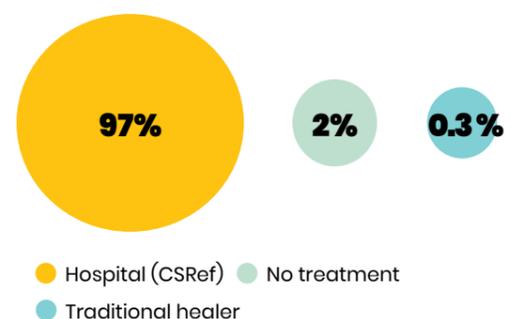
How did you change your habits? between June 2020 (Q6) and February 2021 (Q8)



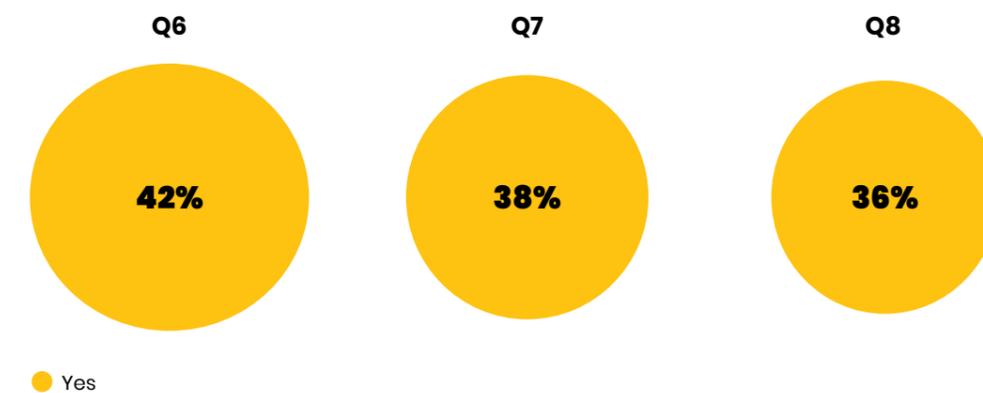
Are you aware of any cases in your locality? between June 2020 (Q6) and February 2021 (Q8)



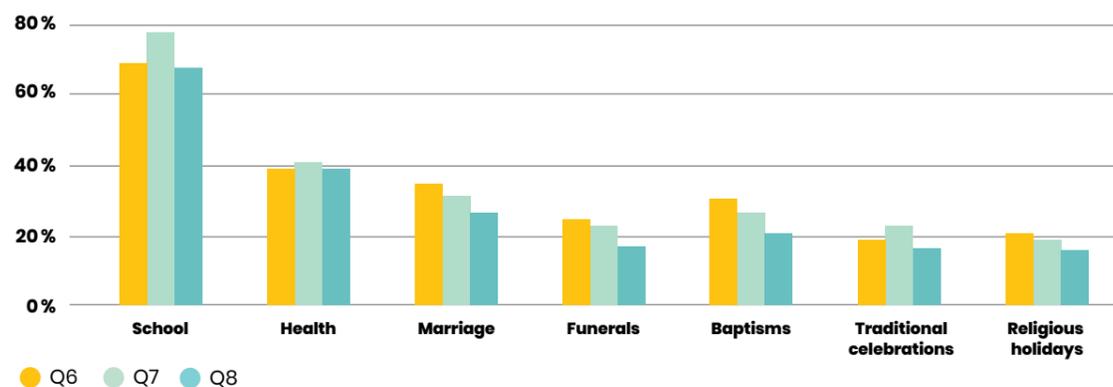
Do you know where these Covid-19 cases were being treated?



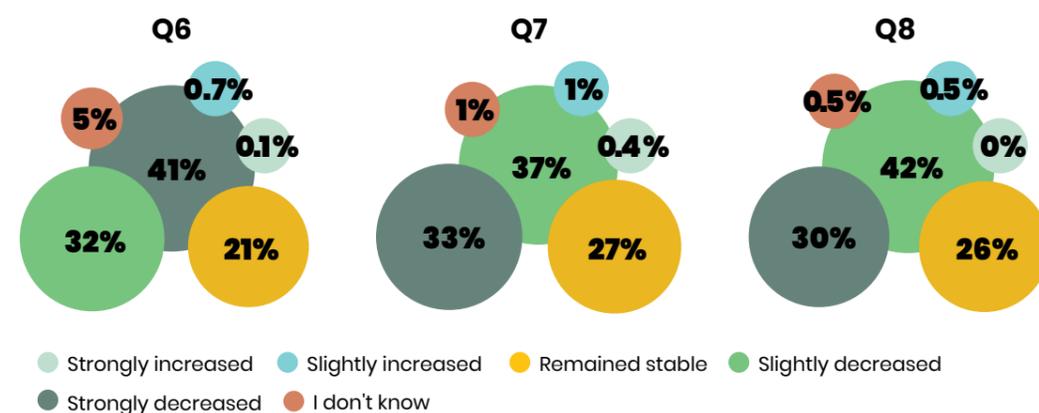
Has your professional activity been affected by the pandemic? between June 2020 (Q6) and February 2021 (Q8)



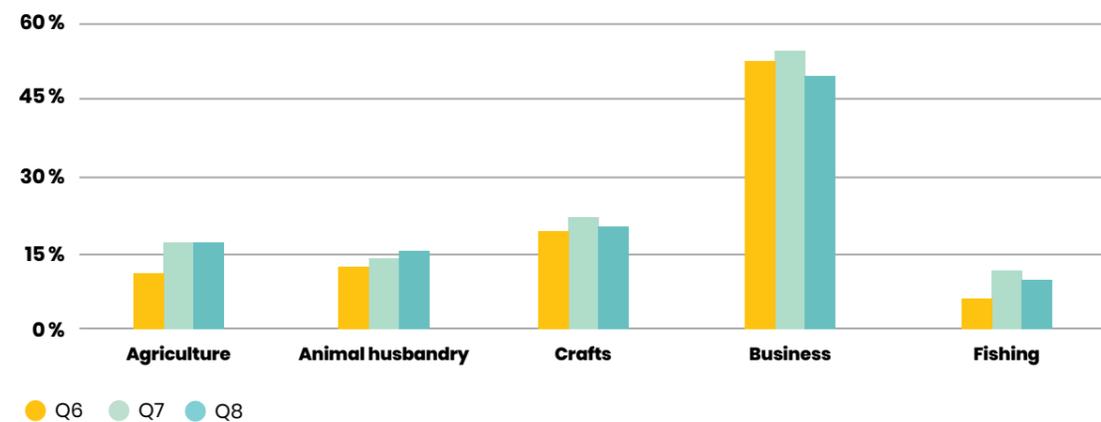
Which social activities are affected by the Covid-19 pandemic? between June 2020 (Q6) and February 2021 (Q8)



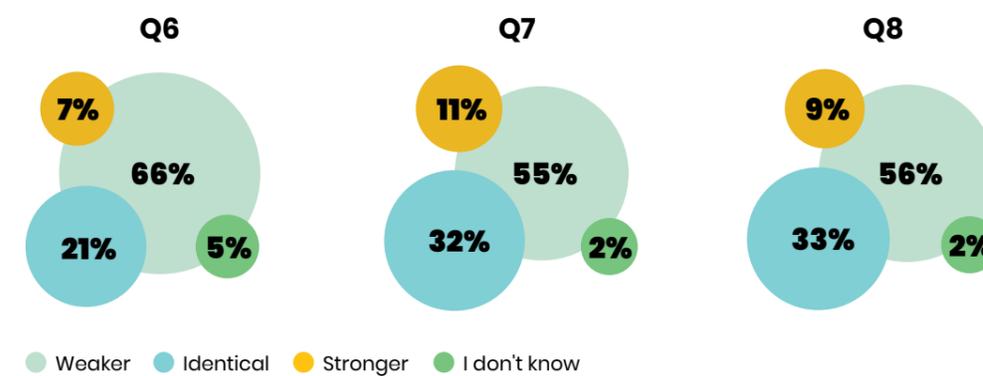
Impact of the pandemic on household income. Has your income:



Which economic activities are affected by the Covid-19 pandemic? between June 2020 (Q6) and February 2021 (Q8)

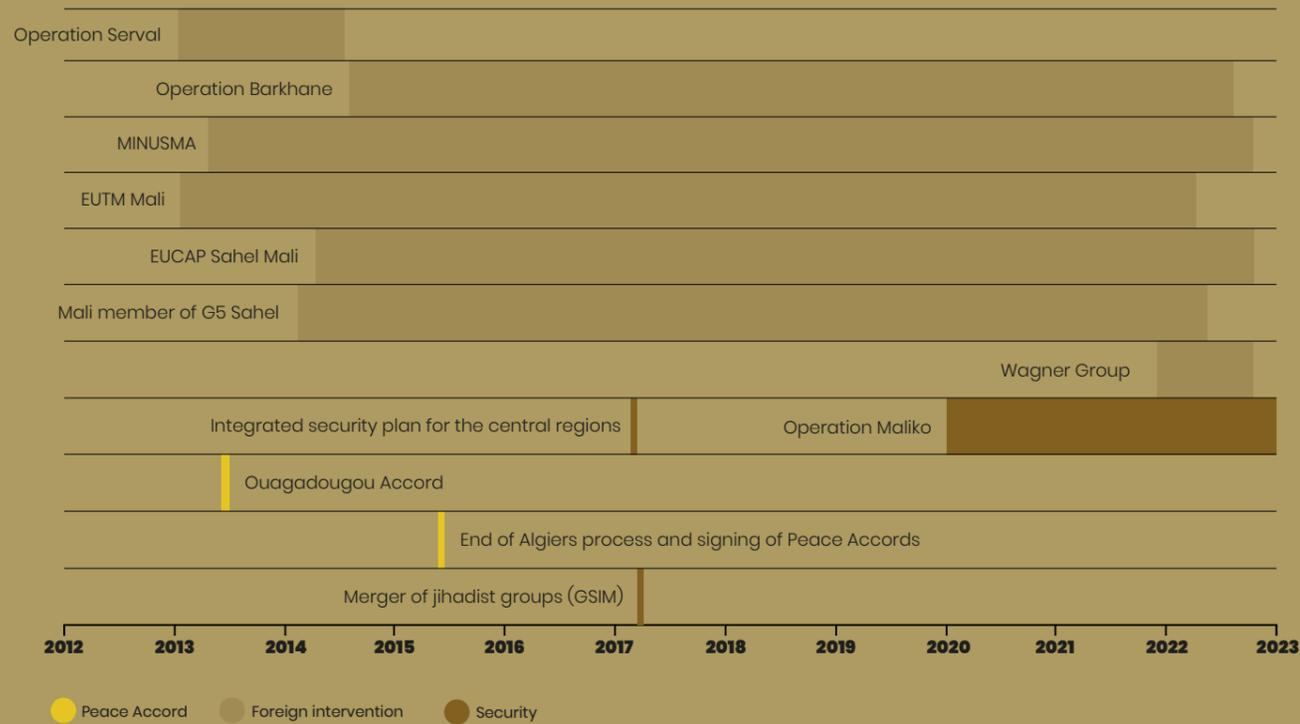


Evolution of household income surveyed compared to the previous year between June 2020 (Q6) and February 2021 (Q8)



3. SECURITY INDICATORS

Timeline of strategic and security developments in Mali (2012 – 2022)



168. Security

- Perceptions of (in)security
- Presence of security actors
- Trust in security actors
- Discrimination
- Perceptions of actions taken by the state
- Threats facing localities
- In summary

200. Social cohesion

202. MINUSMA

From 2019 to 2022, we asked households about their perceptions of (in) security, defence and security forces, foreign forces, the threats they face and the means of exiting the crisis.

SECURITY

Since 2015, violence has spread to the central regions of Mali, which have experienced episodes of intercommunal violence and are under daily attacks by armed groups against civilian populations.

Until 2022, despite the presence of many security actors — the security forces, peacekeepers, G5 Sahel Joint Force, Operation Barkhane, Takuba — the situation continued to deteriorate.

While the civilian population is the first victim, the security forces, state officials and traditional and customary authorities are particularly targeted by armed groups, and violence continues to escalate. According to ACLED, the first six months of 2022 are deadlier than the whole year 2021, with the majority of incidents localized in the centre of the country (Nsaibia, 2022).



In 2017, the Malian government developed an integrated security plan for the central regions (PSIRC, Decree No. 2017 — 0701/P-RM of the 17th of August 2017) and, in January 2018, a national policy to prevent and combat violent extremism and terrorism and its action plan (PNLEVT, 2018 — 2020). The former focused on the identification of secure poles of development and governance (PSDG) and the latter aims to 'strengthen institutional, organizational and operational capacities to prevent the development of ideology and acts of violent extremism' and to restore trust between the army and the populations (Ministry of Religious Affairs and Worship, National Policy Document for the Prevention and Combating of Violent Extremism and Terrorism and its 2018 — 2020 action plan, January 2018). Crisis management is now carried out by the Political Framework for Crisis Management in the Centre, under the coordination of its permanent secretary.

On the one hand, the Malian army's history — in particular the harsh repression carried out against populations in the post-independence years — has created a gap between the army and the populations; On the other hand, the lack of equipment, training and the resentment of the troops towards the top brass

increased the divisions within the Malian armed forces, until the coups of 2012 and 2020. The expansion of jihadist groups in 2012 strongly exposed the weaknesses of the Malian army, its under-equipment, the lack of coordination and command problems. The army suffered very heavy losses and it was a defeated army that took control of the country in 2012. With the support of partners, particularly European partners via the EUTM and EUCAP missions, a long process of reconstruction of the Malian army began.

If the army still suffers very heavy losses today against enemies who have more powerful weaponry and who have a better command of the terrain, the army is in better shape in 2022 than it was 10 years earlier. The deterioration of the security situation, first in northern and then in central Mali, and now in the south of the country, shows that the threat is still as strong as ever. When they took power in August 2020, the military authorities highlighted the lack of results in the fight against terrorism and announced measures to restore the security situation. In fact, from the end of 2021, the MaAF were redeployed on the ground (Operation Keletigui-Maliko) with a more visible activity for the populations, who denounced their inaction more in the early years of the project. Another consequence of the regime change following the overthrow of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta (August 2020) and tensions between Mali and its traditional partners, Operation Barkhane ended, and Mali, by withdrawing its troops from the G5 Sahel Joint Force and political bodies, led to the suspension of G5 Sahel activities.

In 2019, the security landscape was dominated by MINUSMA, the G5 Sahel JF, Operation Barkhane and the European missions EUTM and EUCAP. From 2021, following the strategic choices made by the transitional authorities towards the Russian Federation, partnerships have changed: Operation Barkhane officially ended on the 8th of November 2022, the EUTM and EUCAP missions are suspended, more than a dozen countries have announced their withdrawal from MINUSMA (Côte d'Ivoire, Czechia, Sweden, etc.) and the G5 Sahel JF is no longer operational. Arrived in December 2021, the Wagner Group is present in Mali and supports the MaAF on the ground, as reported during our surveys. This is undoubtedly the security landscape that has changed the most during these four years of survey. The civilian population is paying a high price for the conflict, targeted by all the armed groups operating in the Centre, radical groups or self-defence groups, and by the defence and security forces and their allies.

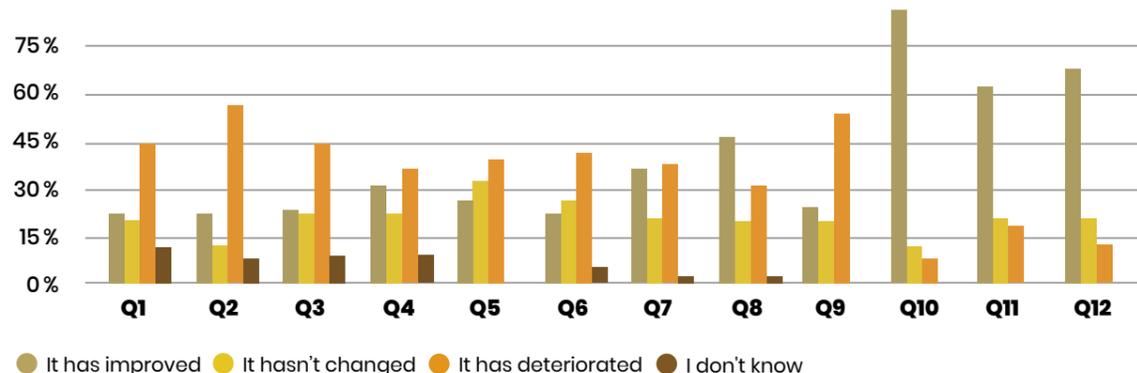
THE SECURITY LANDSCAPE HAS CHANGED THE MOST DURING THESE FOUR YEARS OF SURVEY.

Perceptions of (in)security

• Security at the national level

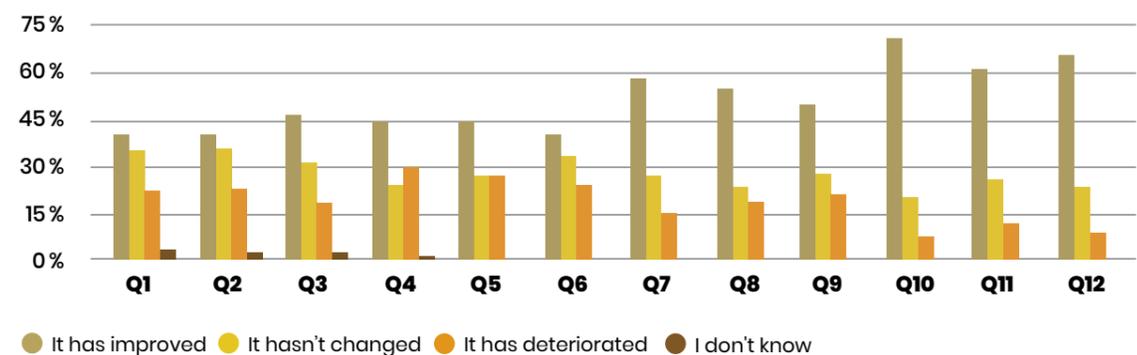
During the surveys, perceptions of security were measured at the national and local levels. It was important to understand the difference between the perception of the situation at the local level, which is usually much better than at the national level. Overall, a majority of respondents consider that the situation at the level of their locality is improving or not changing, while at the national level, a majority of respondents believe that the situation is deteriorating. However, from February 2022, the situation reversed and a majority of respondents considered that the situation at the national level was improving.

What do you think of the security situation in Mali?



As can be seen from the graph below, the perception of the situation at the local level tends to be better. Questions on perceptions of security change in Mali, and in the communities concerned by the study, show the role of communication and subjectivity in interpreting the security situation. If respondents believe that the situation has deteriorated at the national level, they are more likely to report an improvement in their immediate environment. However, insecurity is a major concern for a large proportion of people and a significant proportion of them say they feel personally unsafe.

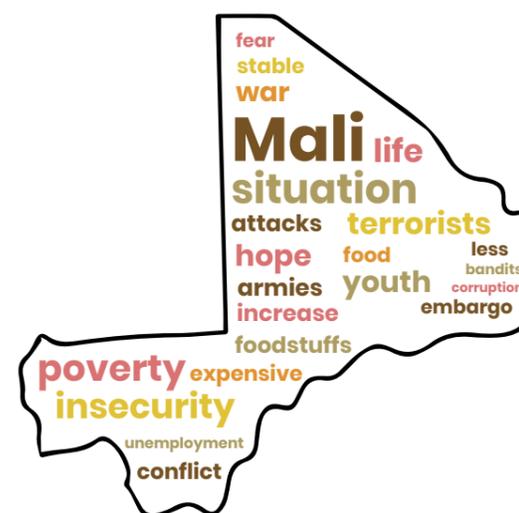
Over the past three months, what do you think of the security situation in your village/neighbourhood?



Q9



Q10



Q11



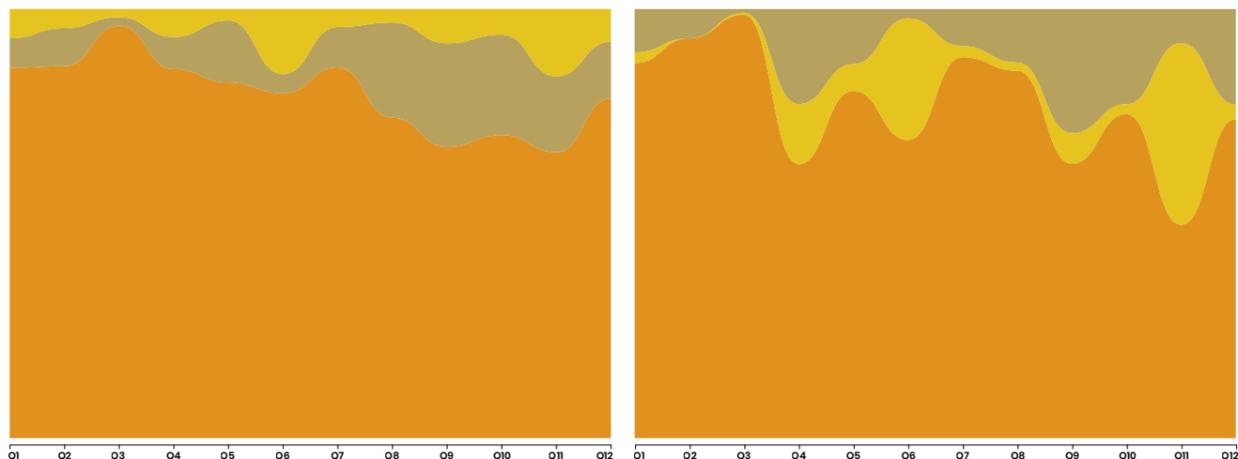
Q12

The river represents a border between areas under state control and those under the influence of radical groups, such as Ténenkou (Diondori for example) or Youwarou cercles.

Changes in the distribution of violence by area according to:

Number of incidents:

Number of deaths:



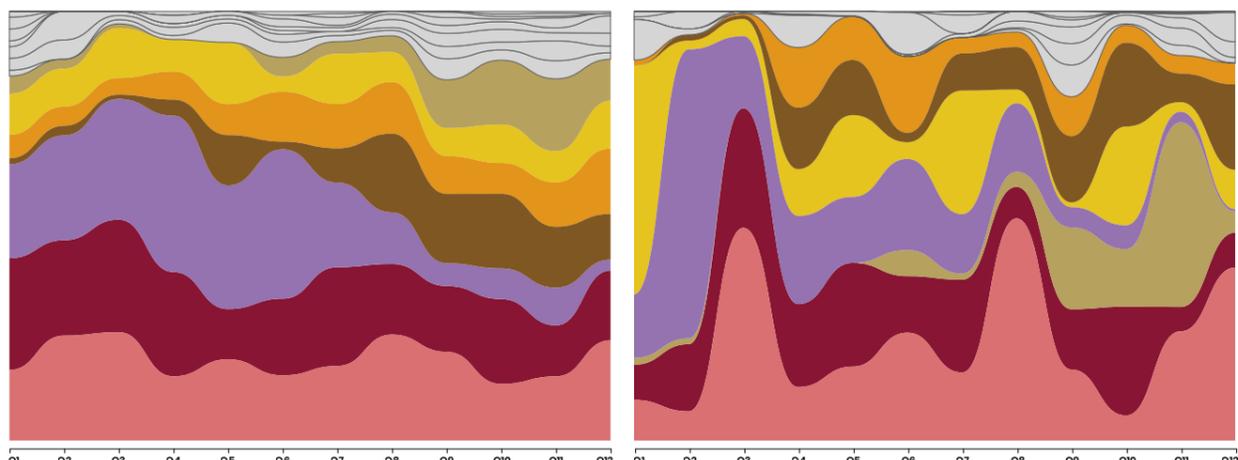
● Left Bank ● Delta ● Right bank

ACLED data — Realization: Joseph Benita, March 2023

Changes in the distribution of violence by cercle according to:

Number of incidents:

Number of deaths:



● Djenné ● Mopti ● Bankass ● Niono ● Koro ● Bandiagara ● Douentza ● Other cercles

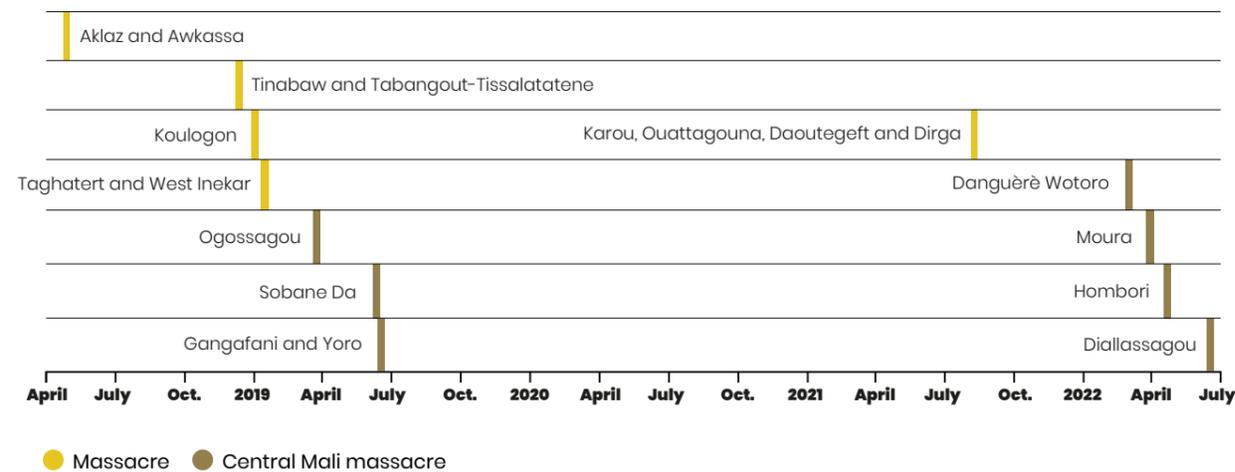
ACLED data — Realization: Joseph Benita, March 2023

Distribution of perpetrators and victims of violence by type and number of deaths, over the entire survey period Feb. 2019 > Sep. 2022



ACLED data — Realization: Joseph Benita, March 2023

Timeline of massacres in Mali (2018 — 2022):



• Security at the local level

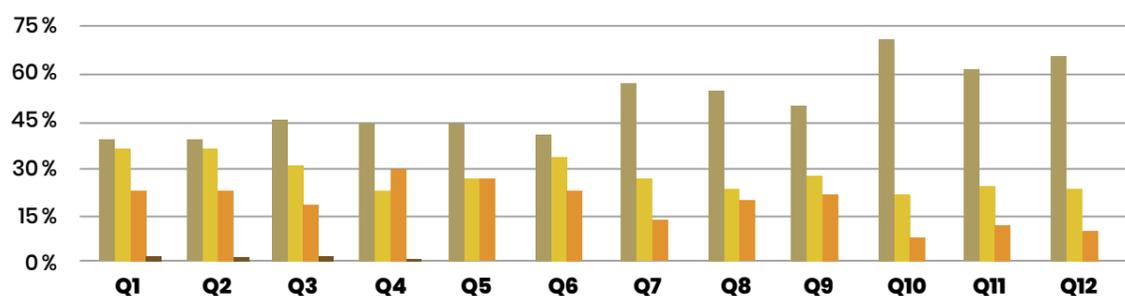
Perception of the situation at the local level tends to be better than that at the national level.

While perceptions are most often the same for different population categories (men/women, youths/adults), we noticed variations according to place of residence (urban/rural) and cercles, generally reflecting the specific situation of the locality and which can have changed during the project. Perceptions at the local level are related to the immediate environment and events that occur in the weeks leading up to each survey.

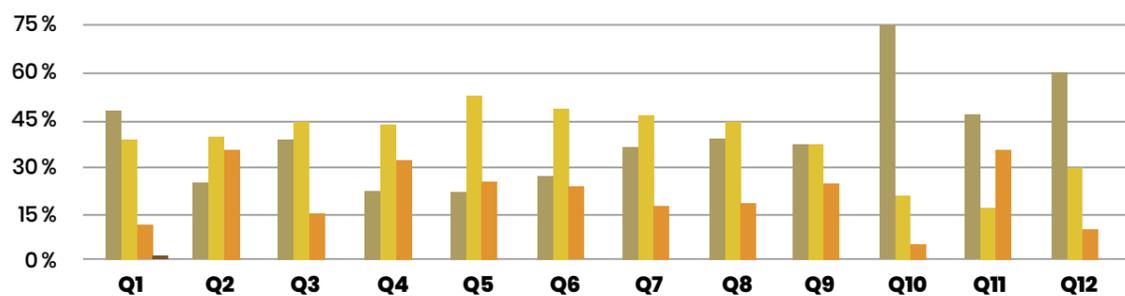
PERCEPTION OF THE SITUATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL TENDS TO BE BETTER THAN THE PERCEPTION OF SECURITY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL.

Over the past three months, what do you think of the security situation in your village/neighbourhood?

General

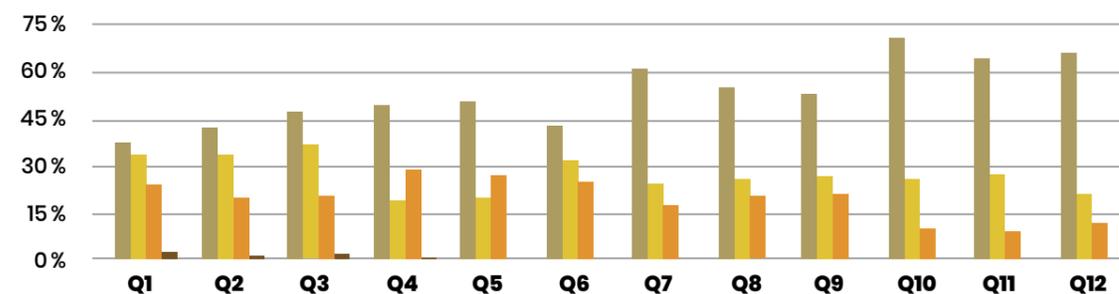


Urban



● It has improved ● It hasn't changed ● It has deteriorated ● I don't know

Rural



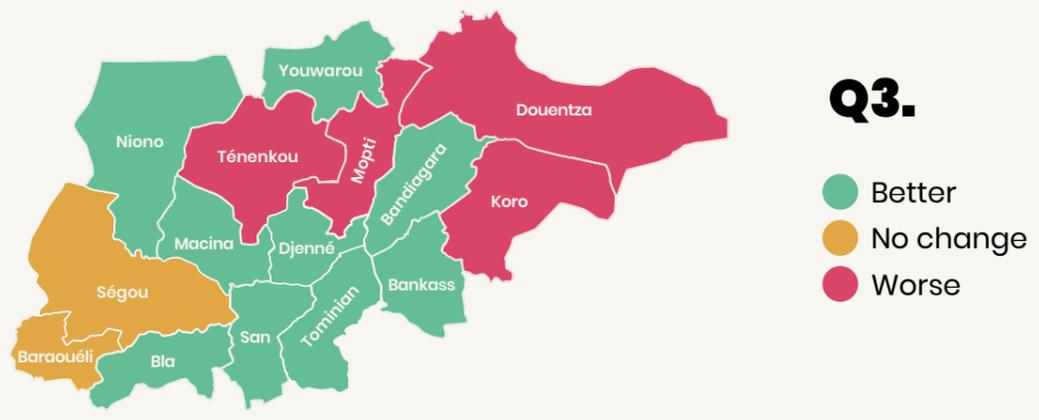
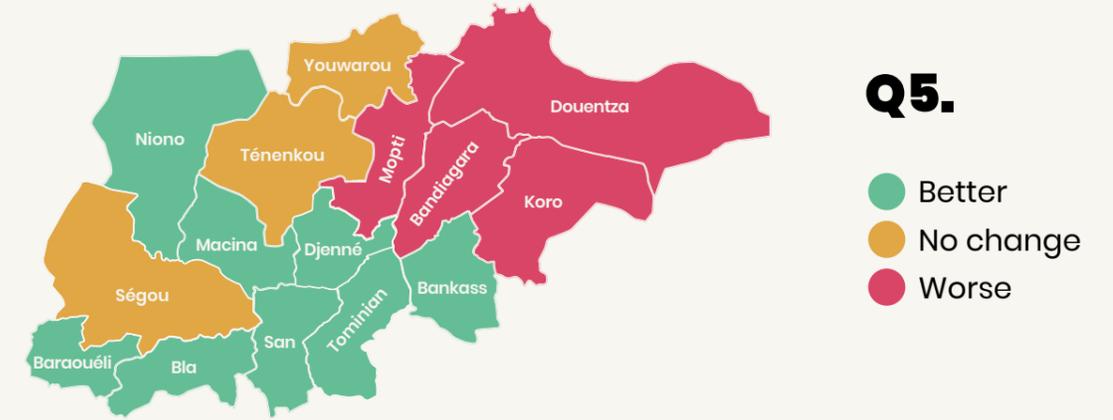
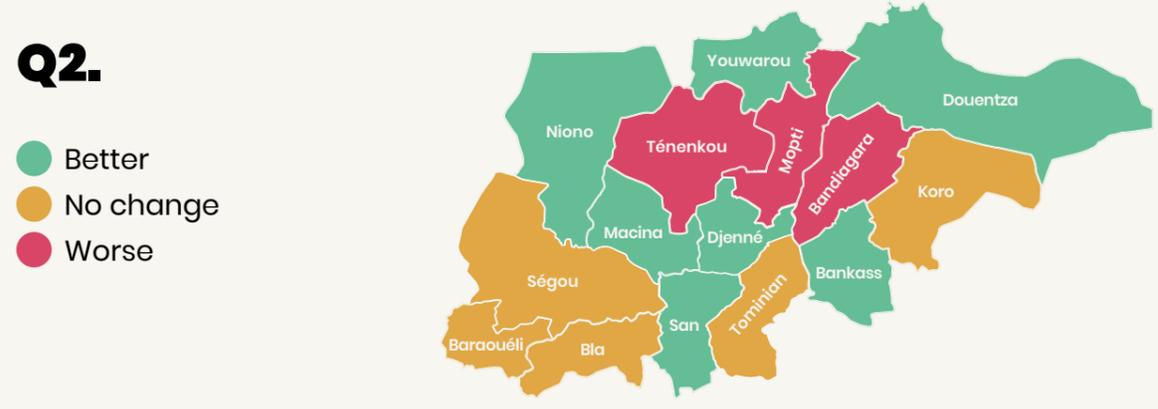
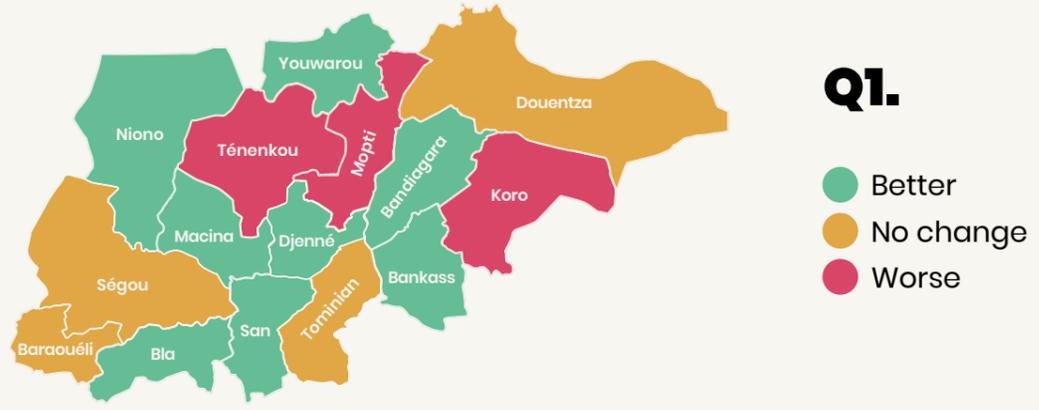
● It has improved ● It hasn't changed ● It has deteriorated ● I don't know



In this project, 'perception of security' refers to the subjective interpretation of objective security conditions. Security is a feeling and a reality, and an assessment of security is mathematical and is based on the probability of various risks and the effectiveness of the countermeasures. In contrast, the perception of security is based on the psychosocial responses to risks and countermeasures (Schneier, 2008). The perception of security is subjective and should not be confused or used as a substitute for objective security indicators. Research indicates that there is often a substantial difference between objective security and perceived security, which is influenced by personal experiences and identities (Stoetman, 2020)

●●
Security situation in the cercles

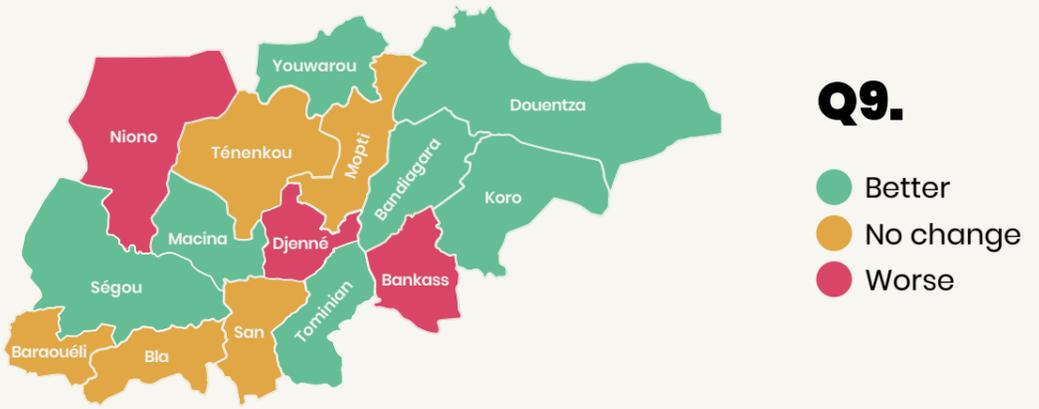
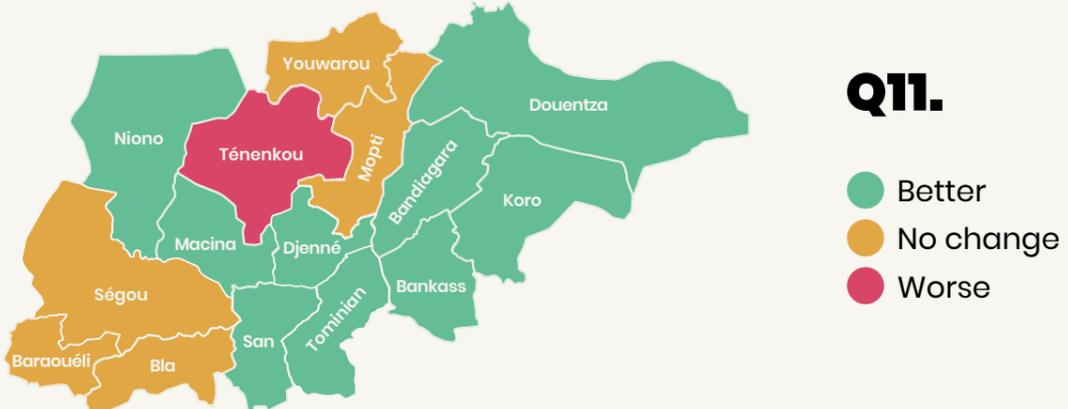
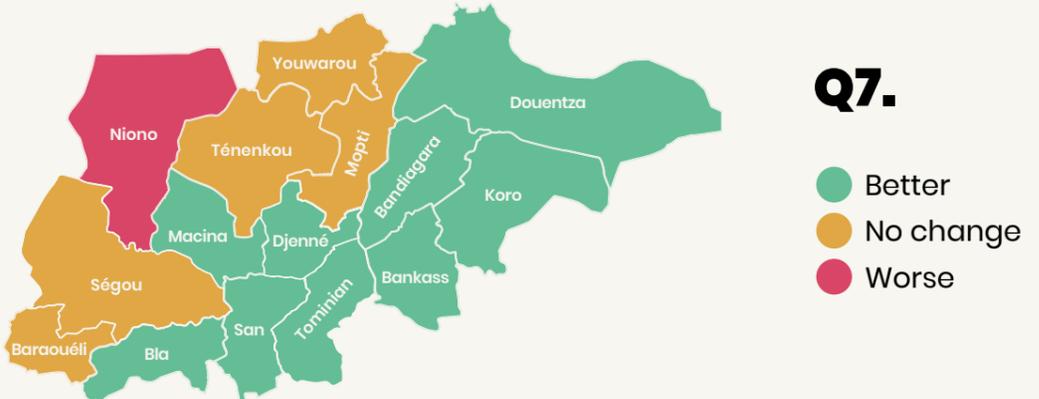
Q1.	Q2.	Q3.	Q4.	Q5.	Q6.	Q7.	Q8.	Q9.	Q10.	Q11.	Q12.
May 2019	Jul. 2019	Oct. 2019	Jan 2020	April 2020	June 2020	Nov. 2020	March 2021	Nov. 2021	Feb. 2022	June 2022	Oct. 2022



Source: Decentralization/mapping of Mali, carried out by O. Dembélé, coordinator of the Central Mali Project.

●●
Security situation in the cercles

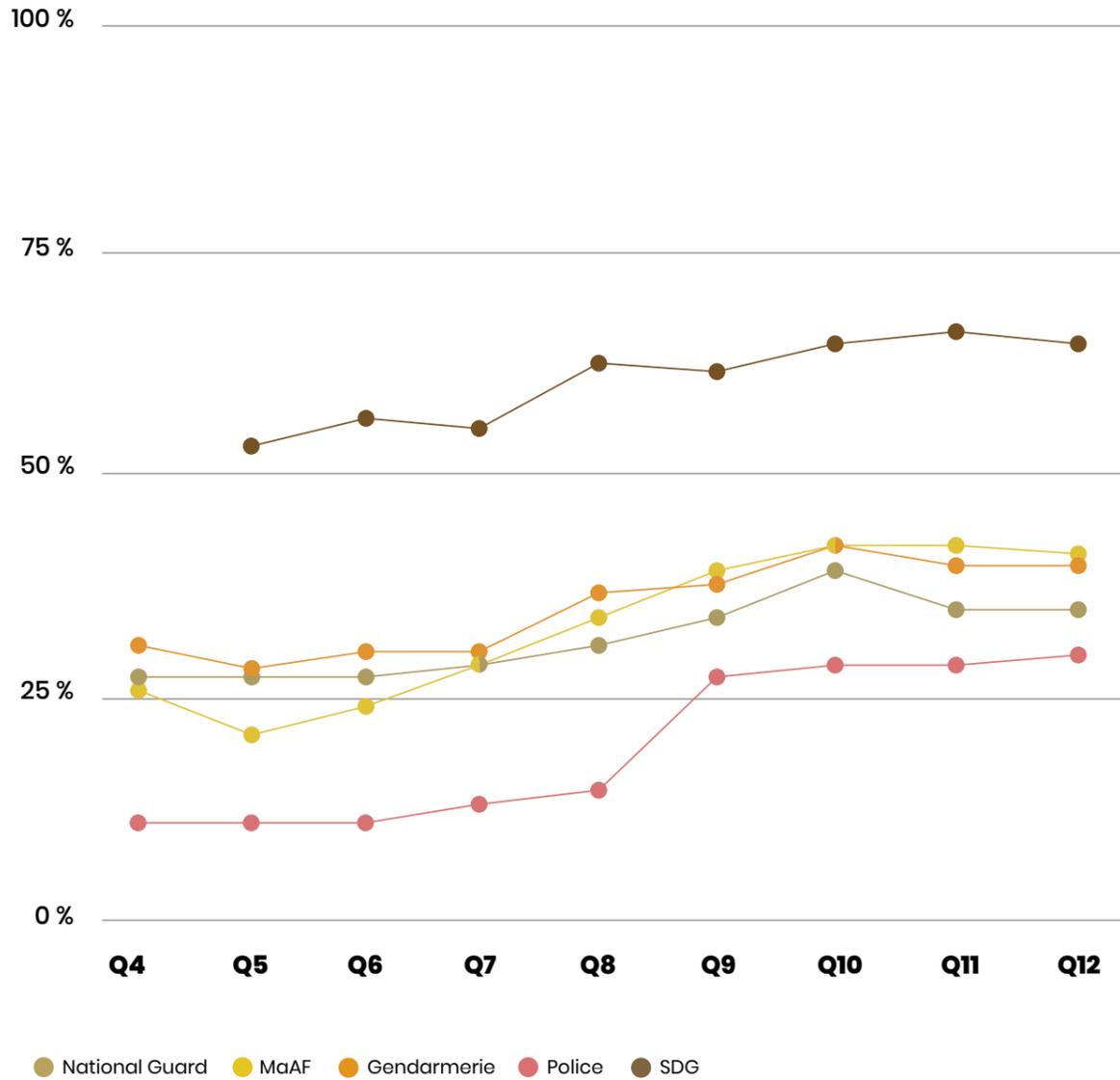
Q1.	Q2.	Q3.	Q4.	Q5.	Q6.	Q7.	Q8.	Q9.	Q10.	Q11.	Q12.
May 2019	Jul. 2019	Oct. 2019	Jan 2020	April 2020	June 2020	Nov. 2020	March 2021	Nov. 2021	Feb. 2022	June 2022	Oct. 2022



Source: Decentralization/mapping of Mali, carried out by O. Dembélé, coordinator of the Central Mali Project.

Presence of security actors

Do you perceive the presence of the following security actors? 'YES'



●● Generally, respondents can identify the MaAF, the National Guard, the gendarmerie and the police. On the other hand, with regard to international forces, the population has difficulty recognising them, including MINUSMA since the battalions patrol little in rural areas.

MINUSMA occupies two camps in the central sector: the first between Sévaré and the city of Mopti and the second in Douentza. A third base existed in Diabaly, Niono cercle, until December 2019. A battalion was to be deployed in Bandiagara, but in the face of hostility from the local population, the base was not built. In the first questionnaires Barkhane and the G5 Sahel were mentioned, but these forces were not visible in central Mali, less than 5% of respondents were able to identify them.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FORCES — AND BETWEEN UNIFORMS — IS NOT ALWAYS OBVIOUS TO THE POPULATIONS INTERVIEWED.



Brotherhood of hunters

The customary institution of the brotherhood of hunters is very present in the localities of Koro and Bandiagara, with a militia called 'Da Na Amassagou' ('to God, we entrust'), and one in Djenné called 'Dozo-ton' ('group of hunters'). In the current context of insecurity, these Dozo groups have multiplied, they provide protection, escort and security activities for people and goods. The regular absence of defence and security forces has given them the opportunity to fill the security vacuum.

Hunters continue to rely on the symbolism linked to hunting and traditional knowledge, but they have become the most present security actors, in some cases becoming auxiliaries of the army on the basis of informal arrangements (Helweg, 2012; Quidelleur, 2022). If the state has requested the dissolution of the militia in 2019, this was not followed up.

These groups maintain close relations with village chiefs, who sometimes coordinate the actions of the groups:

“The Dozo cannot work without us, village chiefs. The Dozo respect village chiefs, who respect them as well. As proof, when the Dozo arrest a thug, they take him to the village chief first for consultation before doing what should be done. The village chief gives his opinion and more generally this opinion is respected.”

Interview with village chief, San cercle, September 2020.

Nevertheless, hunter groups have been accused of violence against civilian populations. Populations, although they often consider the presence of Dozo indispensable, do not feel completely safe:

“We feel insecure since it is the Dozo alone who secure the village, so we can't say that we don't feel the insecurity. (...) Some Dozo often do things that are contrary to our culture and values. For example, some Dozo require the population to give a lump sum and others steal livestock without their superiors knowing. Otherwise, the Dozo do remarkable work to secure goods and people, and without the Dozo, we would not be here today.”

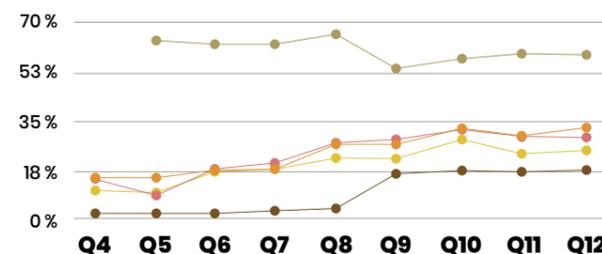
Interview with a pastor, Bandiagara cercle, September 2020.



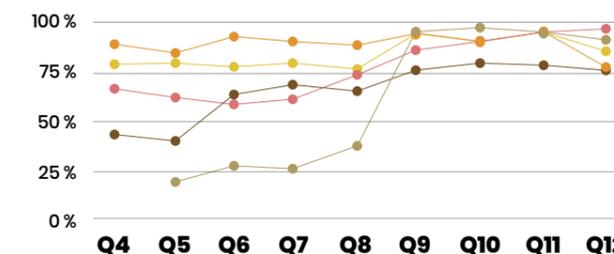
At the local level, the security landscape is different in urban and rural areas: in urban areas, most actors are present with patrols by the defence and security forces and MINUSMA. Patrols are much rarer in rural areas and self-defence groups, often village groups and youth brigades, are responsible for defending the population.

Perception of the presence of security actors by place of residence

Rural



Urban



Legend: SDG (grey), National Guard (yellow), MaAF (pink), Gendarmerie (orange), Police (brown)

The Malian state has lost the monopoly of legitimate violence and, in some cases, there is a co-construction of security at the local level aimed at defending communities against the 'Nkunko kônô mōgōw' which means 'the people of the bush'. Hunters have assumed the role of protectors of villages and communities. In some situations, self-defence groups gain more legitimacy than state security forces.

“The self-defence group intervenes promptly and in time if there is an attack, which is why we appreciate them more than the MaAF. They are available and entirely at our disposal, for our safety.”

Interview with a farmer, Bankass cercle, January 2020.

Disputes between the security forces and self-defence groups are sometimes settled by village chiefs:

“Before, there were misunderstandings between [the MaAF and the Dozo], but since they [the MaAF] came here to discuss and unite with them, everything is fine. Even now, the operations that are currently being carried out are with our groups [Dozo], because they are the ones who have a good command of the area. This operation is taking place in the bush with the support of our soldiers and white people. Currently there is nothing serious between them, and if there is a meeting in Mopti, [the MaAF] inform our Dozo of everything that has been decided.”

Interview with a farmer, Mopti cercle, September 2022.

“We had encountered difficulties related to decision-making with self-defence groups about the travel ban during the security crisis. The unilateral decision by self-defence groups without the involvement of the youth has created overlaps between the two community actors. The youth were not against this decision but wanted to make a contribution by changing the hours of the village curfew from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. While hunters decided to [impose] it from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., with unprecedented bans. However, we tried to manage small disputes to work together hand in hand. Because it is the youth who stand guard during the night to protect the village.”

Interview with a president of a youth organization, Macina cercle, September 2022.

IT IS THE YOUTH WHO STAND GUARD DURING THE NIGHT TO PROTECT THE VILLAGE.





In some contexts, collaboration between security forces, self-defence groups and youth groups has been reported. Often, members of the military communicate with the leaders of these groups to coordinate actions, discuss division of duties and obtain information.

“ Together with the current transitional authorities, gendarmes returned to Kimparana. Gendarmes patrol villages to reassure the population. These gendarmes work closely with the Dozo. There is regular contact between the gendarmes and the Dozo. For now, we thank God, everything is going well between the Dozo and these gendarmes.’

Interview with village chief, San cercle, September 2022.

The security forces are mainly present in the main towns of cercles or regions. Urban areas are best provided with security forces, while rural areas are neglected. Forces — national and international — patrol little on secondary roads, which is regularly denounced by rural populations.

Security forces' camps are most often present either in the locality, when it is a commune or cercle main town, or less than a day's journey away, but forces are regularly accused of 'not intervening when called.'



“ The MaAF and other security actors don't react in time when called for help. They are called when a village is threatened with attack, they come 24 or 48 hours later. What's the point? Security actors have never reacted immediately in our locality. We don't know the reason for the silence of the authorities.’

Interview with men, Bankass cercle, January 2020.

“ In time of attack or threat, security forces don't come. I was once the victim of a threat, we called the security forces, they didn't react until 1 am. They say that from 6 p.m. they will never come to intervene. (...) The attack the other day in Synda wasn't far from the MINUSMA camp, but they didn't come out. I have learned that security forces have said that, from 6 p.m., they are not allowed to go out.’

Interview with residents, Douentza cercle, January 2020.

‘THE MAAF AND OTHER SECURITY ACTORS DON'T REACT IN TIME WHEN CALLED FOR HELP.’



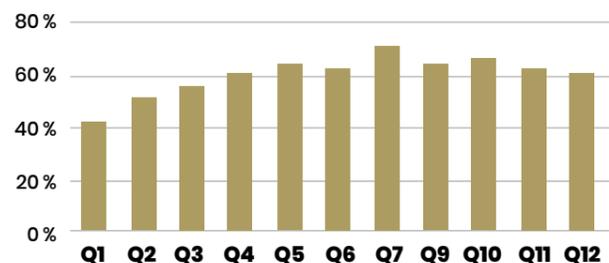
Trust in security actors

Trust in the security forces has always been positive, good towards the SDG and average towards MINUSMA.

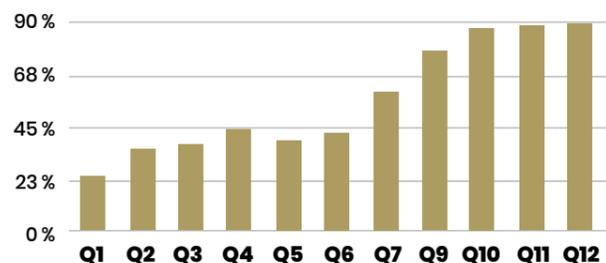
If people turn to informal actors, it is mainly because they are more present at the local level and considered more effective. However, data show that trust in SDGs is lower in cercles where they are more present (notably Mopti and Ténenkou). This trend further reinforces security risks, highlighting the lack of state control over security interventions and the risks of abuse.

Trust in security forces

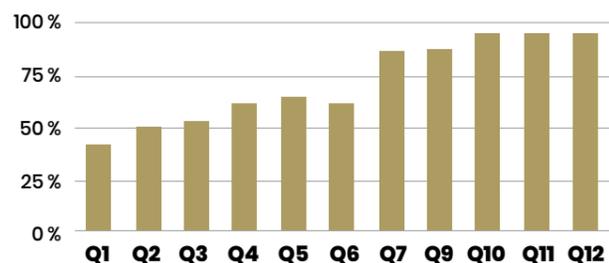
Self-defence group



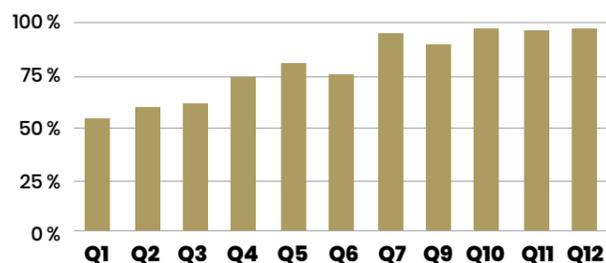
Police



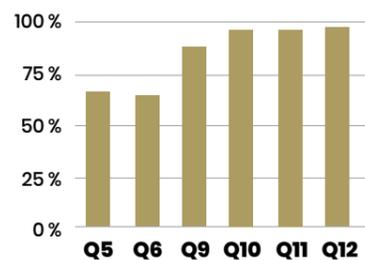
Gendarmerie



MaAF



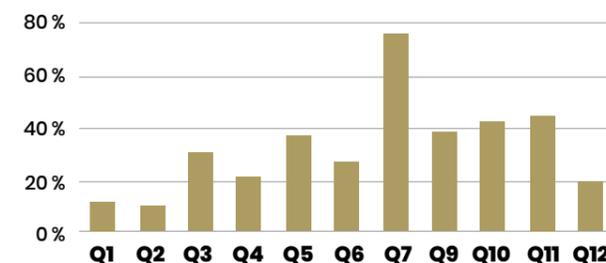
National Guard



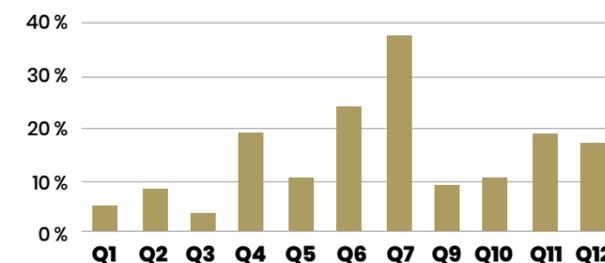
● Trust

Trust in self-defence groups in Mopti and Ténenkou cercles

Mopti

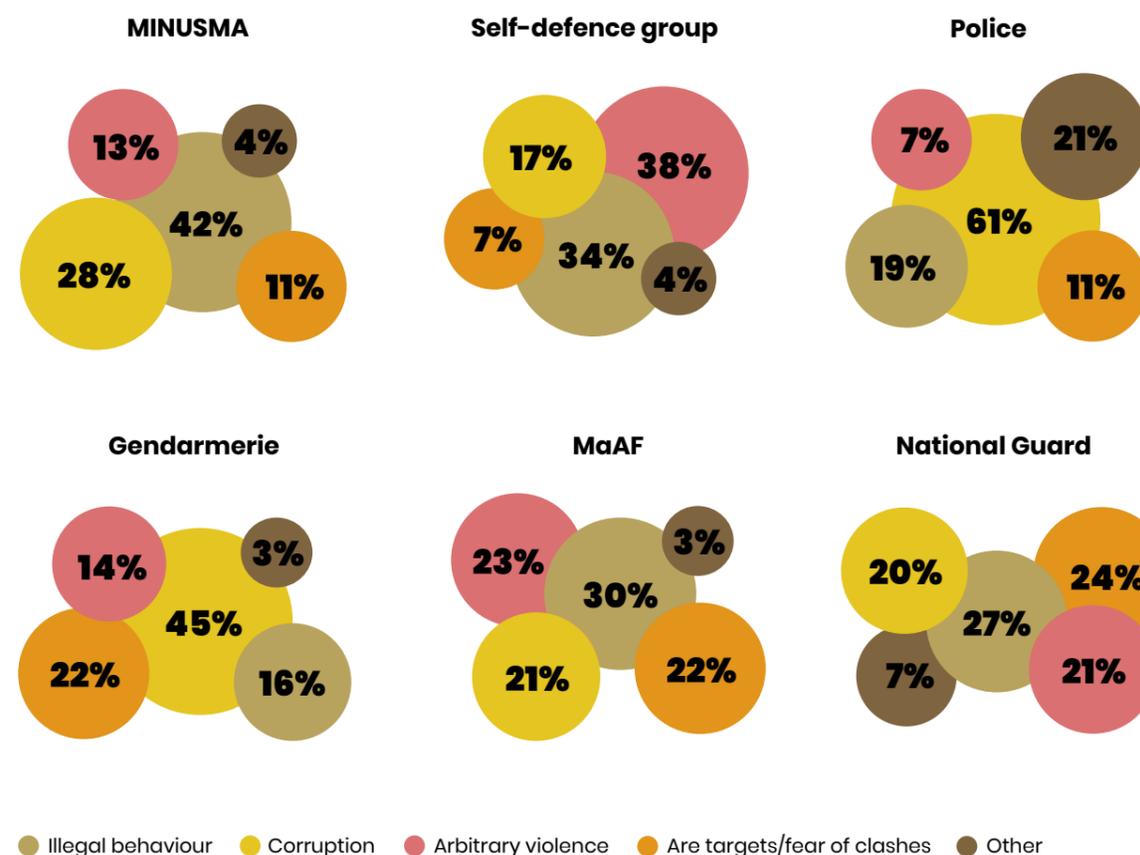


Ténenkou



These forces can also be seen as potential sources of insecurity, but the reasons are different depending on the force. For those who consider them to be potential sources of insecurity, the reasons are as follows:

Why do you say that this actor is a source of insecurity? by security force, average of all phases of survey.





Discrimination

Despite acts of violence committed against certain population groups and human rights violations perpetrated by the national armed forces (MINUSMA reports), trust remains high. Generally, while people say they don't perceive discrimination on the part of the defence and security forces, nearly 40% of the population considers that self-defence groups may be the cause of discrimination. Thus, the Dozo may adopt a different behaviour with people with 'white skin' or 'light':

“ Yesterday I was going to Bankass, the Dozo militia stopped us and checked our identity cards (...). When they saw a light-skinned person named Maiga, they put him aside, they threatened him in order to find out if he really is Maiga or not. This kind of conflating behaviour can often lead to death, abduction, corporal punishment and other violence.

Interview with a youth, Mopti cercle, January 2020.

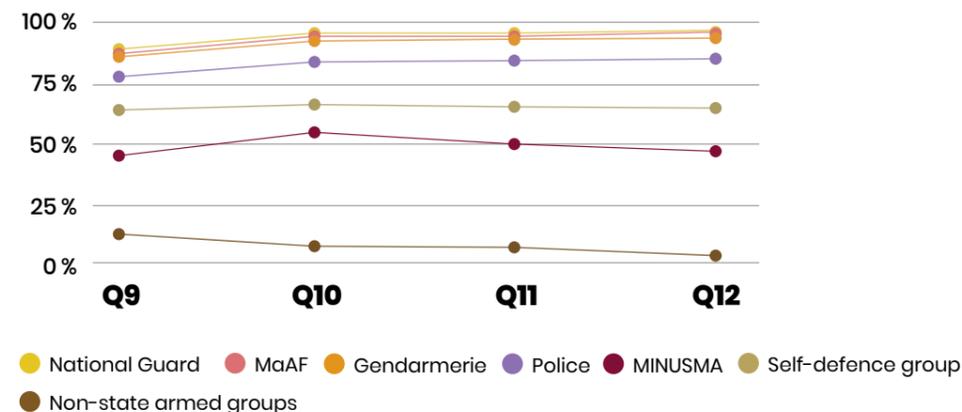
Jihadist groups are the ones that cause the most concern and whose violent behaviour is most reported.

Generally, people have a rather negative opinion of MINUSMA, especially because peacekeepers often don't respond to calls for help from the population. While no concrete cases of discrimination were reported, respondents often indicated that they felt peacekeepers don't take them into consideration and don't want to make an effort to protect them.

TRUST REMAINS HIGH, DESPITE THE ACTS OF VIOLENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS PERPETRATED.



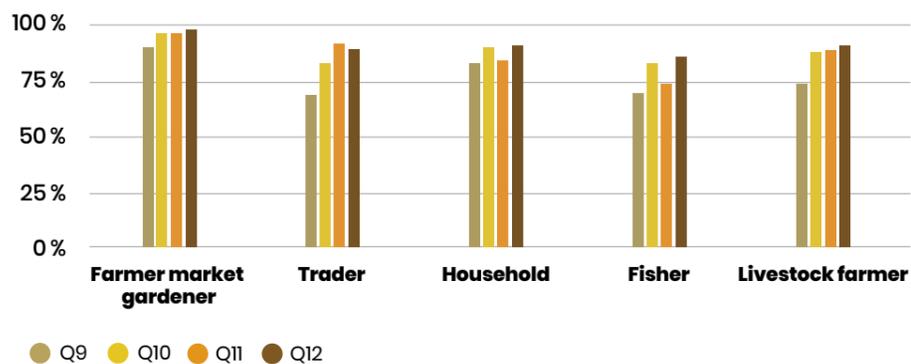
Do you think that these actors respect populations without discrimination? by actor and survey phase



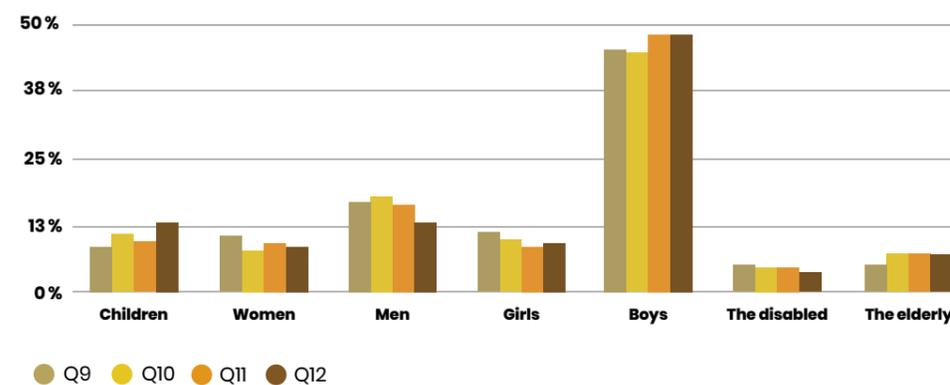
According to respondents, young men are the main victims of discrimination, followed by adult men, women and young women. Open-ended questions revealed that men appear to be discriminated against by security forces, who often target people they deem suspicious and/or associated with armed groups, but also by self-defence groups and jihadist groups. Women and young women are mainly threatened by men in their localities, but also by the Dozo, with cases of rape reported by populations.

WOMEN AND YOUNG WOMEN ARE MAINLY THREATENED BY MEN IN THEIR LOCALITIES.

Do you think the MaAF respect populations without discrimination? % of 'yes' by socio-professional category

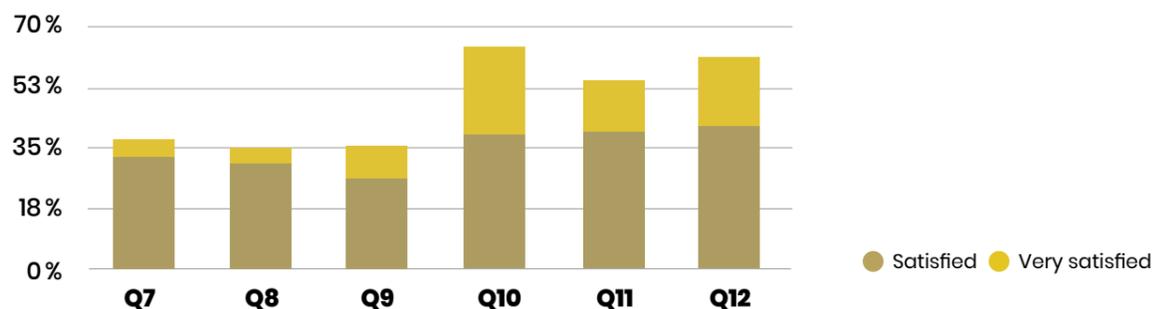


Which category of the population seems most at risk of discrimination or violence? by phase of survey



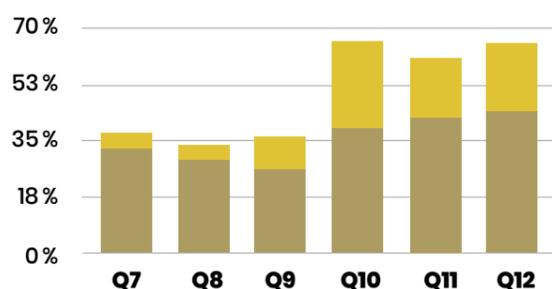
Perceptions of actions undertaken by the state

Are you satisfied with the actions undertaken by the state to combat insecurity?

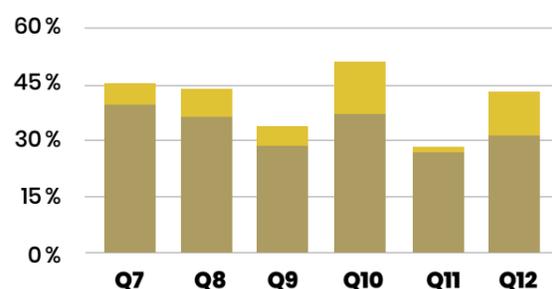


Are you satisfied with the actions undertaken by the state to combat insecurity? by phase of survey, by type of place of residence and by sex.

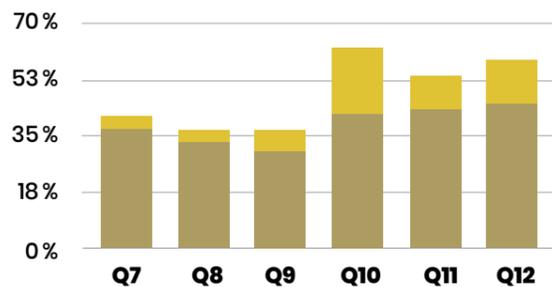
Rural



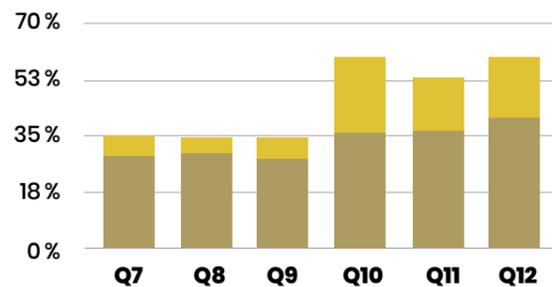
Urban



Female



Male



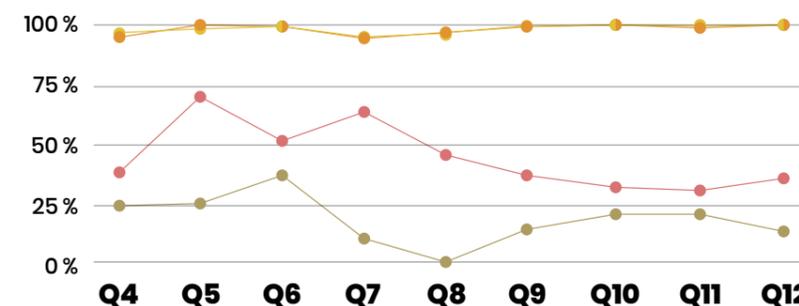
Satisfied Very satisfied

Threats facing localities

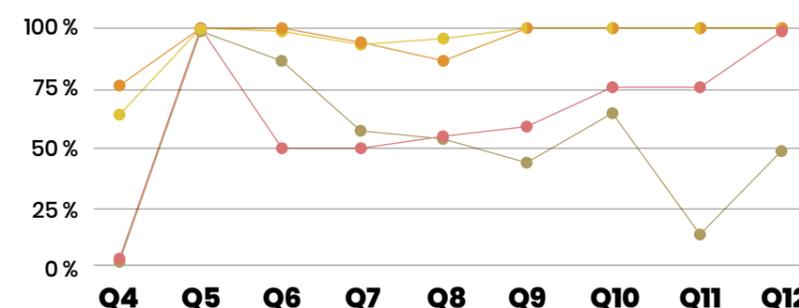
All surveys have shown that poverty/unemployment and food insecurity are the two main threats perceived by populations. On average, between 2020 and 2022, they are perceived as threats by 96% and 88% of respondents. In the same period, physical attacks are perceived as threats by 42% of respondents and farmer-breeders conflicts by 36%. It is therefore issues of human security that are the most important.

Importance of threats for respondents

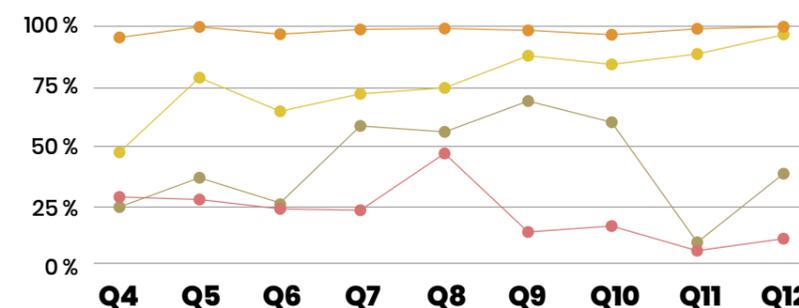
Bandiagara



Bankass

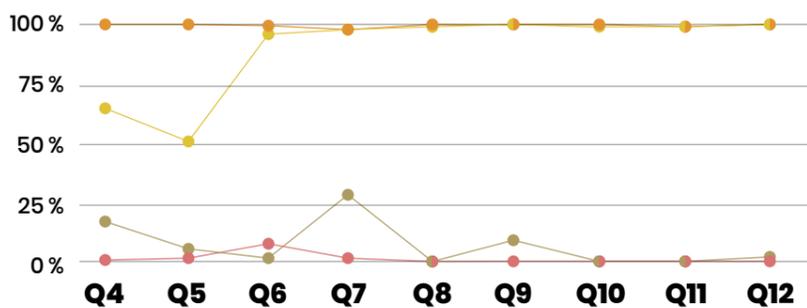


Baraouéli

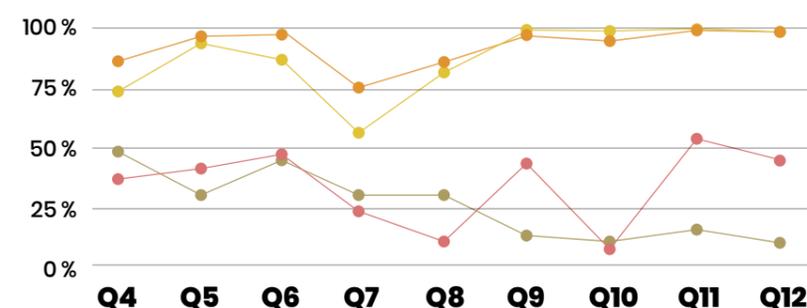


Food insecurity Unemployment and poverty Physical assault Farmer-breeder conflict

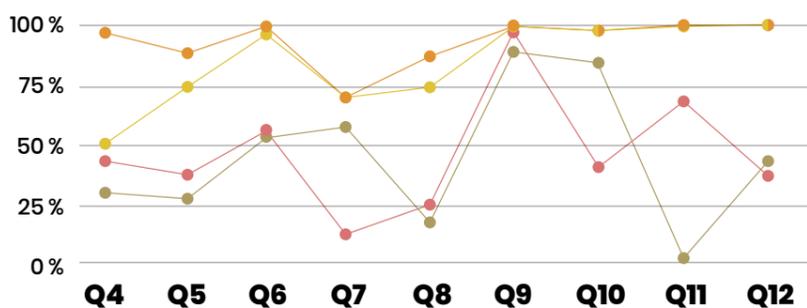
Bla



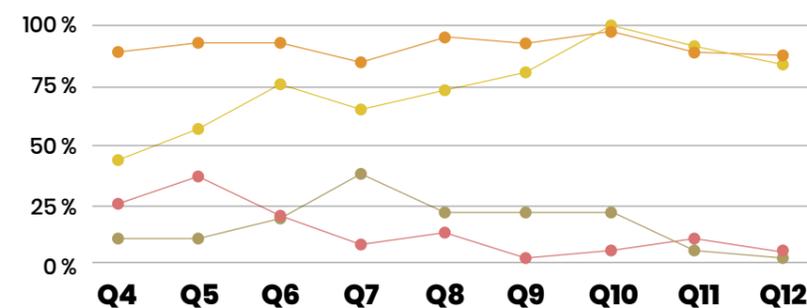
Koro



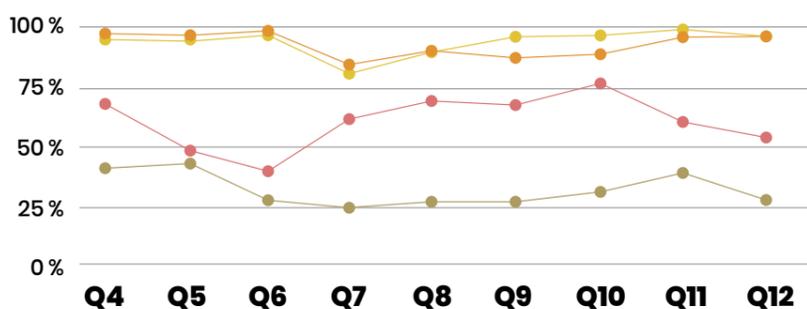
Djenné



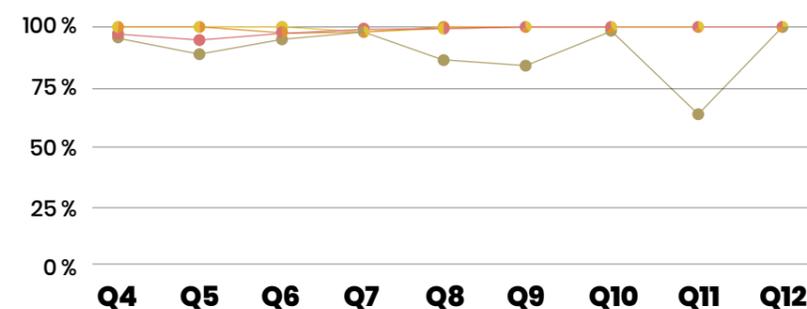
Macina



Douentza



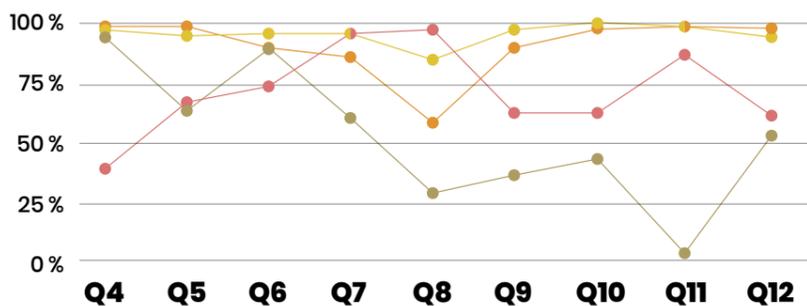
Mopti



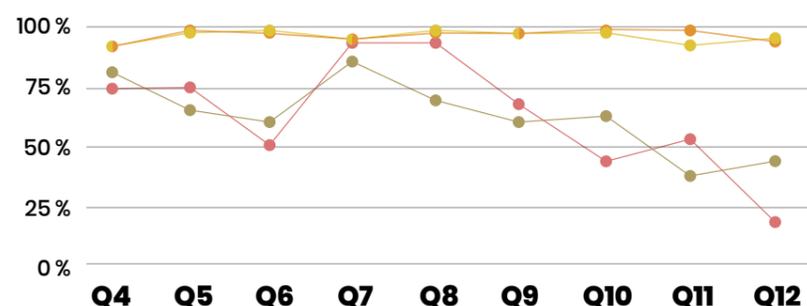
● Food insecurity ● Unemployment and poverty ● Physical assault ● Farmer-breeder conflict

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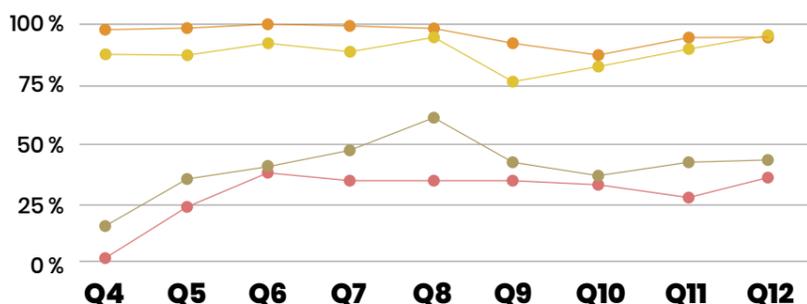
Niono



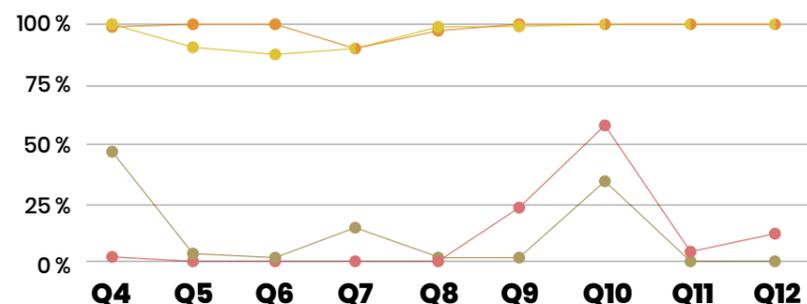
Ténenkou



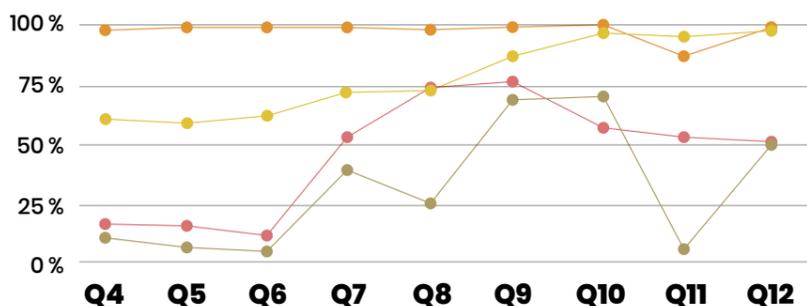
San



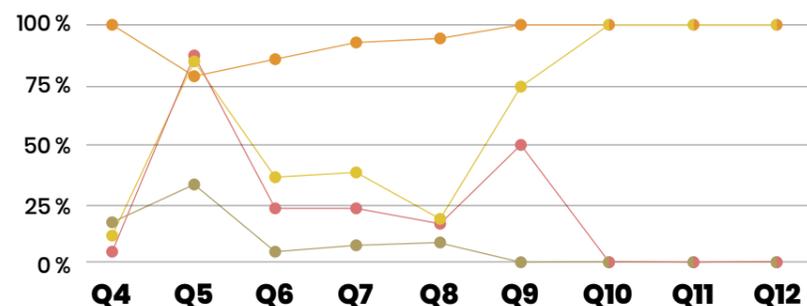
Tominian



Ségou



Youwarou

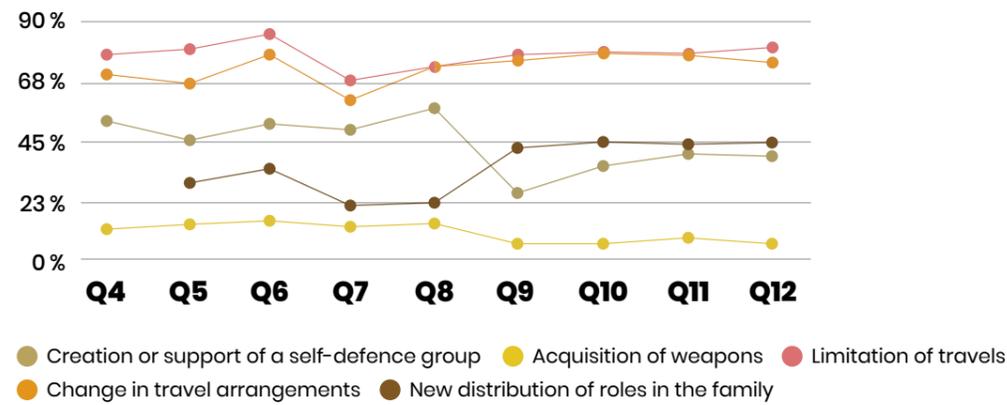


● Food insecurity ● Unemployment and poverty ● Physical assault ● Farmer-breeder conflict

● Food insecurity ● Unemployment and poverty ● Physical assault ● Farmer-breeder conflict

Insecurity severely limits the travels of populations, which has significant consequences on access to services or the conduct of their economic activities (access to markets, trade in goods). To cope with threats, people adapt their behaviour.

Coping mechanisms for populations to adapt to insecurity



To deal with insecurity, the modalities most used by populations are the limitation of travels, which concerns about **75%** of people, and changes in travel arrangements, for more than **70%** of people. New distributions of tasks in the family can also be reported and have increased significantly during the survey period. Acquisition of weapons remains a marginal coping mechanism, restricted mainly to members of self-defence groups. In the absence of tangible results from the actions undertaken by the state, the creation of self-defence groups appears to be an important modality used by populations to cope with insecurity. **44%** of respondents use it, particularly in Koro and Djenné cercles, but also in Bankass and Macina.

It appears from the various discussions organized in the localities that more and more youths are forming watch groups to protect their villages, especially at night, against possible attacks.

“ We had agreed we would set up a brigade to secure the village with the youth. (...) These security instruments are only used to secure at night. No one sees them. When it comes to security, we rely on ourselves and security forces. We are the ones who can secure our village. Before security forces come, we, the village youth, must be present on the front line. We have to be armed at all times.”

Interview with a trader, Ségou cercle, September 2022.

Youth groups can sometimes be supervised by the Dozo:

“ We don't have peace of mind where we are. We are afraid every day here. We sent youths from the village to the Dozo group, and the youth formed a youth brigade to secure the village in case of attacks.”

Interview with a farmer, Douentza cercle, September 2022.

IN SUMMARY

ALL SURVEYS HAVE SHOWN THAT FOOD INSECURITY AND POVERTY/UNEMPLOYMENT ARE THE TWO MAIN THREATS PERCEIVED BY POPULATIONS.

It is therefore issues of human security that are the most important. Physical insecurity manifests itself in many forms: conflicts between farmers and breeders, inter-communal conflicts and robberies and thefts with violence. Populations then use several mechanisms to cope and adapt to the situation in their locality.



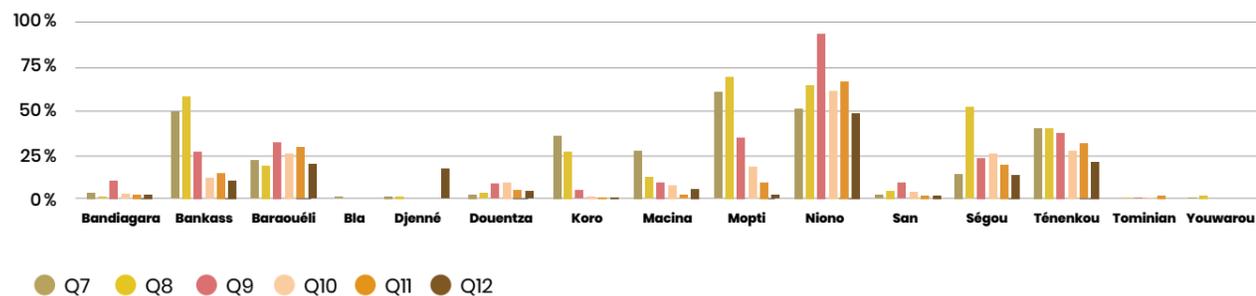
SOCIAL COHESION



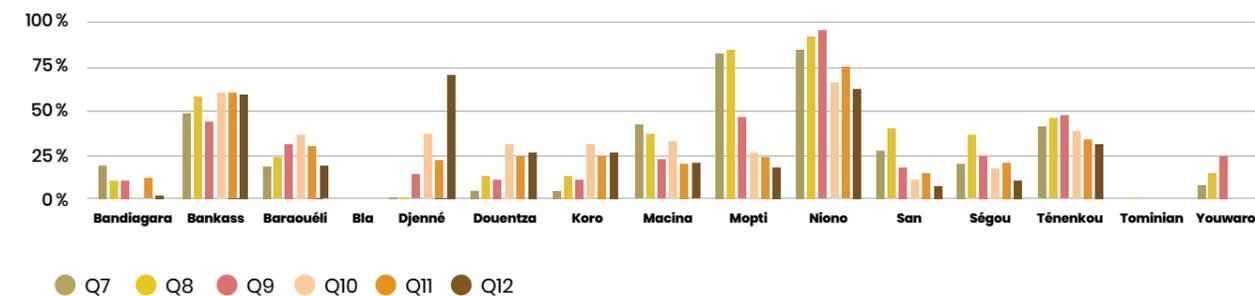
The populations regularly participate in community activities: these are mainly baptisms, weddings and funerals, collective harvesting activities or traditional festivals. In the cercles most affected by security issues, such as Ténenkou, weddings now last 3 days instead of a week, which was customary just a few years ago, the number of people is limited and the party stops at 6 p.m. In areas under jihadist influence, gatherings can simply be banned. In 2022, the large collective fisheries in the cercle of San and the cultural days of social cohesion in the cercle of Koro were held.

In terms of social cohesion, relations between members of the same community, or of different communities, varied according to the survey periods. Niono's cercle has often been an exception, relations being worse than in other cercles. Relations in Bankass's cercle have deteriorated.

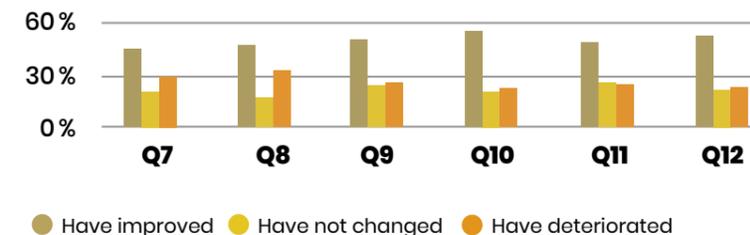
Relations with members of the same community have deteriorated.



Relations with members of other communities have deteriorated.



Relations with other communities.



“ They say that the jihadists mostly kidnap residents from the Bankass cercle as compared to the cercle of Koro, because the entire Bankass cercle has not signed the peace agreement.”
Interview during the survey, Bankass cercle, June 2022.

The negotiation of pacts between the communities themselves or with armed groups (Dozos or jihadist groups) has been reported in some localities. These agreements are accepted to the detriment of the state by imposing the closure of schools or the refusal of any collaboration with the army (including the establishment of a security post) or any intervention by the state.

“ The signing of agreements with the jihadists is not their fault; it is rather to avoid starving to death or being needlessly killed by these armed bandits that the village chiefs generally accept the signing of agreements with the jihadists.”
Interview in Bankass cercle, February 2022.

Non-compliance with the pacts often leads to retaliatory measures or attacks on recalcitrant villages, but it also allows to resume the activities and traffic for some localities. The signing of these agreements is a matter of survival.

“ You can no longer do anything in the area without consulting the armed groups. We are subject to their laws and regulations.”
Interview in the cercle of Ténenkou, June 2022.

MINUSMA

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

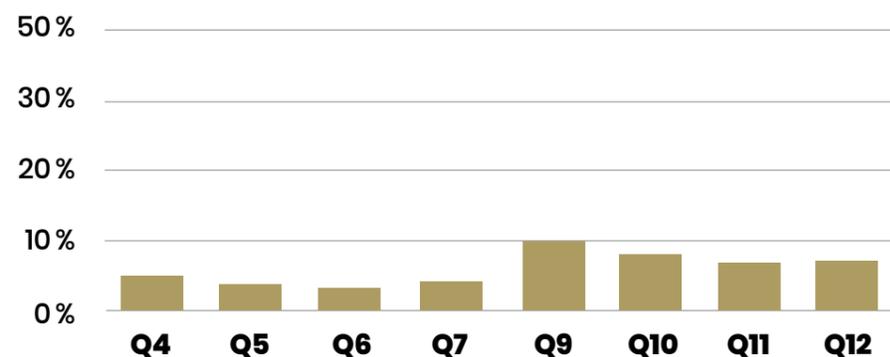


Deployed in Mali since 2013, MINUSMA has extended its mandate to central Mali since the adoption of Resolution 2295 (2016).

Several contingents were then deployed in the Mopti region, Sévaré and Douentza, as well as in the Ségou region, in Diabaly. In central Mali, MINUSMA's mandate focuses on stabilising and restoring state authority and supporting the redeployment of Malian security forces and protection of civilians.



Perception of MINUSMA's presence in the cercles surveyed



Most of the contingents deployed in central Mali were from West African countries, including Senegal and Togo, as well as Burkina Faso, until the handover of the Diabaly base to the MaAF in 2019. Indeed, the Burkinabe units present in the camp were recalled in 2019, when Burkina Faso reduced its contributions to MINUSMA. Other countries, such as Egypt, have deployed contingents to central Mali, but the units are responsible for the logistics and security of the camp, while the Senegalese and Togolese contingents are mostly represented by infantry units, and are therefore responsible for patrols and interventions in their respective sectors.

MOST OF THE CONTINGENTS DEPLOYED IN CENTRAL MALI ARE FROM WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

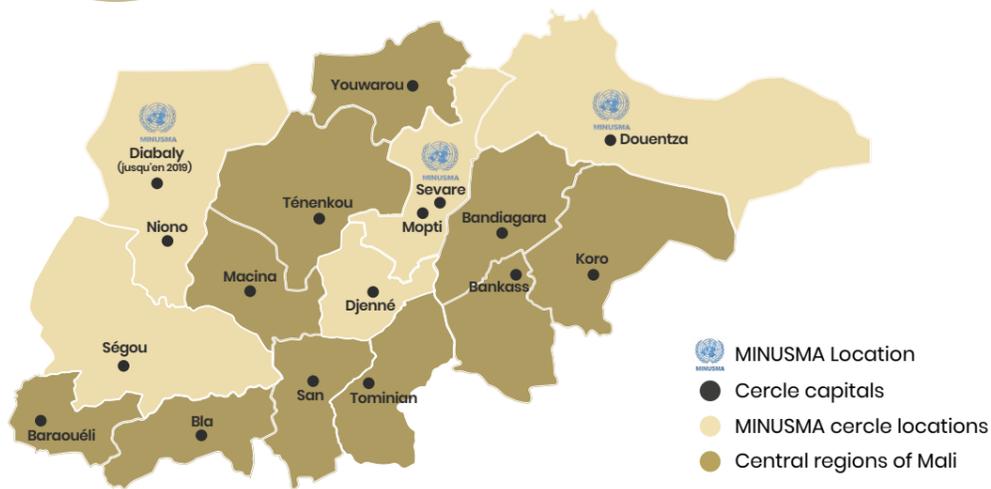


The Mandate

According to Resolution 2640 (2022), MINUSMA's priority tasks are:

- Support for the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and full implementation of the political transition.
- Support for the stabilization and restoration of state authority in the centre of the country, including protection of civilians, reduction of inter-communal violence, support for restoration of the presence and authority of the state, and basic social services in central Mali.
- Protection of civilians: (i) To ensure, without prejudice to the overriding responsibility of the Malian authorities in this area, the protection of civilians threatened with physical violence; (ii) To take active measures, in support of the Malian authorities, to anticipate and deter any threat against the civilian population, particularly in northern and central Mali (...) To take robust and proactive measures, with mobility and flexibility, to protect civilians, including by maintaining the deployment of a mobile task force and deploying ground and air assets as a matter of priority, as available, to areas where civilians are most at risk, while relying on the Malian authorities to fulfil their responsibilities in the areas concerned (...).
- Promotion and protection of human rights.
- Humanitarian aid.

Forces deployed within MINUSMA in the central regions of Mali, according to the UN Secretary-General reports on Mali



MINUSMA Central Sector

	Sévaré – Mopti (Headquarters)	Douentza	Diabaly
March 2019 (Situation in Mali – Report of the Secretary-General of 26 March 2019)	2 x Togo 4 x Senegal 1 x Cambodia 1 x Egypt	4 x Togo 1 x Egypt	4 x Burkina Faso
September 2020 (Situation in Mali – Report of the Secretary-General of 29 September 2020)	5 x Senegal 1 x Egypt 1 x Ivory Coast 1 x Togo 1 x Cambodia	5 x Togo 1 x Egypt	Non-operational/ ceded to the MaAF.
May 2021 (Situation in Mali – Report of the Secretary-General of 1 st June 2021)	5 x Senegal 2 x Egypt 1 x Ivory Coast 1 x Togo 1 x Cambodia	5 x Togo 1 x Egypt	

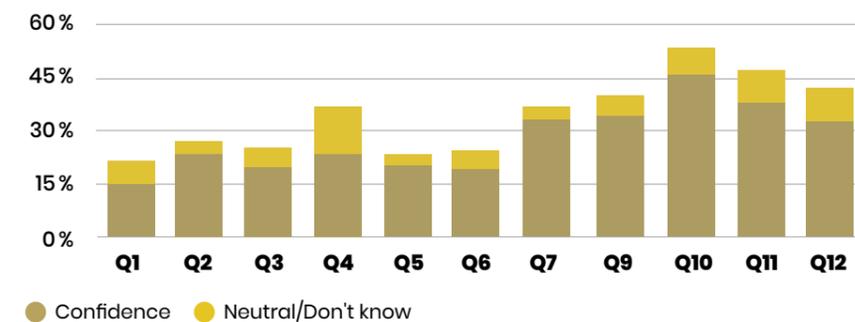
September 2022

(Situation in Mali – Report of the Secretary-General of 3 October 2022)

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 5 x Senegal
2 x Egypt
1 x Ivory Coast
1 x Togo
1 x Cambodia
1 x Bangladesh
1 x Pakistan | 5 x Togo
1 x Egypt |
|---|-----------------------|

The presence of forces from neighbouring countries, however, has very little impact on the confidence of the populations of central Mali.

Trust in MINUSMA



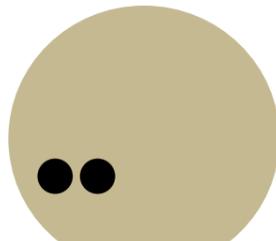
PEACEKEEPERS DO NOT RESPOND TO PEOPLE'S CALLS FOR HELP.

In general, people have average confidence in MINUSMA. The main criticisms reported by the populations are the lack of intervention or reaction to the calls for help from the populations. While people do not feel discriminated against by peacekeepers, respondents report that peacekeepers do not consider them and do not protect them from armed groups.

“ MINUSMA soldiers have never come to us at the time of conflicts or disasters. We call the mayors, they come; we call the doctors, they come. After them, in the event of a problem, disaster or conflict, no one will come to our bedside.
Interview with a farmer, Douentza cercle, January 2020.

This is mainly indicative of a lack of knowledge of MINUSMA's mandate in its military aspect. In fact, MINUSMA's mandate is defensive, which the population may regret, and which impacts the legitimacy of the Mission:

“ Attacks on the population occur almost daily, as do assassinations, kidnappings and robberies. MINUSMA is described as a peacekeeping façade mission because it is not offensive towards jihadists and armed bandits.
Field report of February 2019, Mopti cercle.



On the other hand, the civil aspect seems to be better appreciated, the aid being more concrete. This support was not measured quantitatively, but qualitative interviews allowed us to measure the impact of civilian activities mainly related to humanitarian aid (distribution of water, food aid etc.). It should also be noted that MINUSMA is an employment provider.

“ I have nothing to say about MINUSMA because they say that they are not there to fight but rather to (create) jobs and projects. That’s all I know about MINUSMA, and I see that they are in contact with some populations of Mopti.”

Interview with a breeder from the Mopti cercle, September 2022.



The failure to protect the civilian population is a reproach generally addressed to all international forces, but also to the MAAF. The continuing deterioration of the situation is raising questions among the population and supporting the spread of false information:

“ Before MINUSMA was there, security issues had not reached this level, but now that we have MINUSMA and the military, despite everything, security issues are rather worrying to say the least.”

Interview with a woman, Douentza cercle, January 2020.



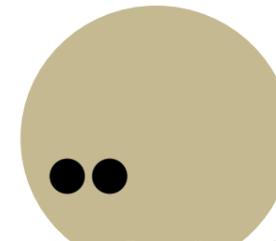
The battalions, although originating from neighbouring countries, are seen as completely foreign. Disinformation and fake news spread especially on WhatsApp, damage their image:

“ If you ask me, I was going to say that it is the Togolese (MINUSMA) who are inflaming the conflicts. The bandits who come to attack us live in the forests. We wonder how they do that? Do they feed themselves? How do they get weapons? I can say that it is the Togolese who supply the bandits with food and weapons.”

Interview with a mason, Douentza cercle, January 2020.



In the current context, the Mission is struggling to deal with disinformation. In order to avoid the deterioration of relations with the government, MINUSMA uses its public radio to rectify incorrect information, without addressing large-scale disinformation (Trithart, 2022). Nevertheless, MINUSMA is engaging with village chiefs to contain the spread of fake news at the local level.



“ Every 3 months we meet MINUSMA and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at the town hall of Douentza. We discuss the security issues that the municipalities of Douentza encounter. We also talk about strategies and solutions. We have set up a commission of 7 people in each commune, which is responsible for collecting information on the security problems of the villages. We came to the conclusion that there is a lot of false information circulating around the villages. We must take measures to prevent the circulation of false information.”

Interview with a youth president of a village, Douentza cercle, September 2022.

However, MINUSMA’s presence has been essential in central Mali. In 2019, residents of several localities reported that MINUSMA was the only armed force present and the only one that carried out regular patrols.



“ In terms of security in the village, MINUSMA patrols the village and the Malian army never comes to secure the village of Diondiori. (...) For over 3 years I have not seen the police or the Malian army in the village.”

Interview with residents, Mopti region, February 2019.

‘THERE ARE NO SECURITY FORCES PRESENT IN OUR COMMUNE.’

“ Because, as I speak, there is no security force present in our commune. We often witness the visits by MINUSMA forces. We don’t have a national guard, gendarmerie, or any other security forces.”

Interview with a woman, Douentza cercle, March 2019.

In accordance with its mandate, MINUSMA supports Malian forces in the central regions, including the construction of 5 military camps (MINUSMA, 2019). The Mission has also built or rehabilitated police stations, such as in the village of Fatoma, but has remained empty due to the security issues:

“ It has been more than 3 years since MINUSMA built a police station in the village of Fatoma, but the police do not occupy it, only on the day of the fair every Tuesday; during the other 6 days of the week the premises remain unoccupied and unsecured.”

Interview with residents in the Mopti cercle, March 2019.

KEY FINDINGS

of the 12 rounds of surveys conducted in central Mali

Governance indicators

1. Surveys have shown a variable state presence across cercles, time periods and security levels. In the localities most affected by security issues, threats to state officials force them to take refuge in the cercle capitals and regions and to administer the populations remotely, with more or less regular trips to the localities. Radical armed groups particularly target the state and its symbols, including its representatives and the defence and security forces. In addition to the structural weaknesses of the Malian state, there have been issues with security.

**RADICAL
ARMED GROUPS
PARTICULARLY
TARGET THE STATE
AND ITS SYMBOLS.**

2. The level of trust in local authorities varies from one locality to another: people generally say they are satisfied with their authorities and in particular, with the mayors and councillors they work with on a daily basis. While people nevertheless feel abandoned by the state, they recognize the efforts of local authorities, particularly in welcoming displaced populations and, more recently, in seeking food aid.

3. Local authorities complain about the lack of resources granted by the state to ensure the functioning of municipalities. However, people expect their mayors to take action on aid and infrastructure. In the absence of resources, people tend to be dissatisfied with the action of the mayor and councillors.

4. Traditional and customary authorities, the dominant figures of local power, are the most present bodies at the local level, and they enjoy a high level of confidence. Traditional legitimacy is often less contested (or questionable) than electoral legitimacy. Expectations are different for traditional and customary authorities, who do not have the means to act outside the mediation and protection of communities and who remain the guarantors of social cohesion.

5. Services of general interest are mostly available in the localities surveyed, but the presence of the service does not prejudice its functionality or quality. Where services are not available, they are usually less than a day's journey away. The feeling of remoteness from the service is more strongly felt because of the security issues, as people are forced to limit their movement.

6. Most services are concentrated in urban areas, while some rural localities have no services at all. The withdrawal of educational and health bodies to secure areas is a reality and populations denounce the lack of human and material resources, infrastructure, trained and qualified personnel, the absence of functional schools, the remoteness of the courts etc.

7. With regard to justice, in the absence of state institutions, people turn to traditional and customary authorities. People say they have more confidence in customary and religious justice, which is perceived as more impartial than state justice, which is seen as slow, corrupt and inaccessible. However, the use of these bodies varies according to place of residence, with judges and magistrates being cited more frequently in urban areas than in rural areas where there are courts. Lack of security represents an additional constraint, limiting travel opportunities. In addition to these bodies, the 'people from the bush' are also involved in resolving conflicts at the local level, especially between herders and farmers. People consider their mechanisms rather expeditious and prefer to approach problems through local mechanisms.

Development indicators

8. The economy of the central regions of Mali is based on the primary sector (agriculture, fishing, livestock). In the context of this precarious economy, the main incomes of the populations are derived from products related to agriculture and then from those of livestock. Tourism, an important activity in the cercles of Djenné and Bandiagara in particular, is now at a standstill, forcing many workers to often convert to agriculture and market gardening.

9. The threats to the rural world are very important: the main source of income is linked to agricultural production. The ban imposed by jihadist groups on cultivating fields far from villages, the burning of fields, theft of livestock, payment of *zakat* on agropastoral activities and the lack of security are major constraints. Farm incomes are barely enough to cover the needs of families and animals can no longer graze freely, with access being regulated by jihadist armed groups.

**ECONOMIC
ACTIVITIES ARE
REGULATED BY
JIHADIST ARMED
GROUPS.**

10. Cattle theft is very widespread, involving thousands of head of cattle. Some herders prefer to sell their livestock or send them to more secure areas. In the localities where the insecurity is greatest, self-defence militias are created among breeders and herders to protect their herds.

11. All economic activities are affected by insecurity and price increases, which requires the accumulation of several professional activities, including civil servants.

12. The economic precariousness of populations is very marked and accentuated by the security issues that push populations to turn to a subsistence economy, making them very vulnerable to exogenous shocks. For example, people are increasingly selling their livestock due to lack of financial means or fear of theft, yet livestock was a form of savings, making it possible to cope with certain hazards.

13. People complain that they cannot feed themselves and that they have to prepare rice without condiments. The increase in the prices of basic necessities (milk, oil, sugar, rice and millet) has been continuous during the surveys, with an acceleration since 2021, whether this increase is considered, depending on the period, as a consequence of the security issues, embargo or war in Ukraine.

14. Travel has become very dangerous and people fear attacks on the roads. Bridges are often destroyed by armed groups that cut off supply routes between cercles, further isolating populations and depriving them of supplies of various products, including from the neighbouring Burkina Faso. Traders are escorted, trips are no longer spontaneous but scheduled. The restriction of movement, the risk of robberies, anti-personnel mines and introduction of curfews have a profound impact on commercial activities. Banditry is reported on many roads, and fair vehicles are particularly targeted. The threat is directed at merchants who also suffer attacks at home.

15. The security issues undermine social cohesion, whether between the state and its citizens, members of the same community or different communities. When the state struggles to materialize and assume its sovereign functions, it is the social contract that is weakened.

16. Security issues slow down activities and increase poverty and isolation. It also led to the withdrawal of humanitarian and development bodies, effectively limiting income-generating activities, which supported the incomes of local populations.

Safety indicators

17. The 2012 crisis highlighted the weaknesses of the Malian army. Defeated in the north, the army has been rebuilt since 2013 thanks to various programmes, including the EUTM and, above all more recently, has been strengthened with regard to men, means and equipment with the support of new allies such as the Russian Federation. The year 2021 marked a turning point with the redeployment of defence and security forces in central Mali with an impact on people's perceptions.

18. In the context of security, proximity is the determining factor. The weak deployment of the security forces has pushed the populations to set up (in-)formal protection structures (militias, self-defence groups, monitoring committees) that are supported by the local people in terms of men, food and equipment. The day-to-day management of security is, in fact, carried out by (male) members of the communities, especially youths who occupy a prominent place as security providers in the villages. The protection of people, fields and livestock is provided by self-defence groups and other village militias in exchange for livelihoods. Self-defence groups are the major actors in the local security landscape, ranging from structured groups like the Dozos to local village groups or youth brigades. The establishment of such groups obeys first of all the logic of self-sufficient law enforcement forces.

THE INCREASE IN THE PRICES OF BASIC NECESSITIES WAS CONTINUOUS DURING THE SURVEYS.

TRAVEL HAS BECOME VERY DANGEROUS, AND PEOPLE FEAR ATTACKS ON THE ROADS.

IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS SECURITY CRISIS, THE PROXIMITY OF THE SECURITY FORCES IS A DETERMINING FACTOR.

19. Self-defence groups are the most present security bodies, protecting livestock and populations. Clashes between these groups, the Dozos in particular, and jihadist armed groups have been regularly reported, which also makes these bodies potential sources of insecurity. Whether self-defence groups or the security forces, abuses against civilian populations are regularly reported by human rights organizations.

20. The state is threatened, with violence directly targeted against civilians, local authorities, and public officials, including teachers and national security forces. Radical armed groups attack state symbols and also traditional authorities suspected of collaborating with the state. The state is expected to act. The use of non-state security actors is more a sign of aiming to be protected rather than a sign of rejecting Malian forces, who have the confidence of the populations.

21. Travel has become increasingly difficult due to the security issues, curfews and poor roads. People in urban areas believe that they are at a greater risk than those in rural areas, who face a wider range of threats, including physical attacks and gender-based violence.

22. The lack of economic opportunities, as well as poverty and unemployment, are seen by people as sources of insecurity. People expect measures against the increase in basic prices of fertilizers and animal feed.

FOOD INSECURITY AND UNEMPLOYMENT ARE CONSIDERED BY PEOPLE TO BE TWO MAIN SOURCES OF INSECURITY.

THE PRIMARY REASON FOR SETTING UP SELF-DEFENCE GROUPS IS TO ENSURE PEOPLE'S OWN SAFETY.

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VIDEO. SIPRI REFLECTIONS
Political reactions and future prospects in central Mali.

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Acronyms and meaning

- AE**: Teaching academies
- IGA**: Income-generating activity
- ANPE**: National Employment Agency
- APEJ**: Youth Employment Agency
- ASACO**: Community Health Association
- CAFO**: Coordination of women's associations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Mali
- CAP**: Educational animation centre
- CED**: Centre for Education Development
- CNT**: National Transitional Council
- CSCOM**: Community Health Centre
- CSREF**: Reference Health Centre
- DNE**: National Employment Directorate
- DNFP**: National Directorate of Vocational Training
- DNP**: National Directorate of Pedagogy
- EDM**: Mali Energy
- EUCAP**: European Union Civilian Mission in Mali
- EUTM**: European Union Training Mission in Mali
- MaAF**: Malian Armed Forces
- CFA franc**: CFA Franc — African Financial Community Franc
- FDS**: Security Forces
- FELASCOM**: Local Federation of Community Health Associations
- FNEJ**: National Youth Employment Fund
- GAD**: Self-Defence Group
- GANE**: Non-State Armed Group
- GSIM**: Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims
- IFM**: Teacher Training Institute
- MINUSMA**: United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
- NGO**: Non-governmental organization
- PGRL**: Accountable local governance programme
- PSIRC**: Central Regions Integrated Security Plan
- SIPRI**: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
- SLPIA**: Local service of animal production and industries



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