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A young and dynamic social enterprise, Mouvement Malivaleurs is a Malian association bringing together a wide range of experts from across Mali, including sociologists, anthropologists, historians and lecturers at the University of Bamako and the Institut des Sciences Humaines et Sociales. Malivaleurs' convening capacity is widely recognised among academics and intellectuals in Mali as well as among community leaders, and young men and women who are regularly regrouped by Malivaleurs to debate about their vision for Mali and their role in building a democratic state.

SUPPORTING PEACEFUL SOCIAL, POLITICAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE IN MALI

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Acknowledgements

Executive summary

The 2012 crisis revealed deep fractures in Malian society, politics and culture that contributed to the apparently sudden disintegration of the state. The Danish Embassy in Bamako, Mali, commissioned this research in the midst of the crisis to improve understanding of the current social, political, cultural and institutional context in Mali and to identify entry points for donors to use development aid as a tool to support processes that could lead to positive change.

This research has identified a hunger for debate on every aspect of what it means to be Malian. There is a desire for a new Mali, a Mali of the 21st century: where the old systems of 'consensus' politics, *mousalaka*, clientelism, corruption and the divisions between the *nyèmogow* and the *brousse konomogow*, the leaders and the led,[1] evolve into a more inclusive participation; where public institutions and the political class are reformed and reinvigorated. However, the desire for change does not imply agreement: there are deep fractures between communities, between citizens and the state, between generations, and between men and women, rural and urban, rich and poor, conservative and progressive, traditional and reformist. The challenge for the donor community is to engage sensitively, supporting a process of long-term reform and inclusion. Avoiding difficult issues may leave tensions festering, only to erupt again, as they did in 2012.

This report draws on fieldwork conducted in November 2013 in a range of locations across Mali, with additional input from northern-based researchers. It draws on the views and opinions of a range of Malians to identify key processes that donors and other internationals could support to contribute to long-term, peaceful and sustainable development. The recommendations are clustered in thematic areas: reforming state institutions and state-society relations; restoring security and public safety; fostering transitional justice and reconciliation; supporting citizenship through education; promoting conflict-sensitive, inclusive economic growth. The thematic recommendations are complemented by more universal recommendations to the international community in Mali.

The research identifies the following key processes – some of which are underway, others still aspirational – that may contribute to positive social, political, cultural and economic change in Mali:

- Shifting from consensus to participation in the political culture;
- Improving relations between traditional, local and central government;
- Improving access to justice;
- Restoring security and public safety;
- Building a legitimate, credible transitional justice process;
- Supporting citizenship through education;
- Improving economic governance;
- Promoting inclusive and conflict-sensitive development.

In each case, the research identifies which actors are (potentially) particularly important within each process. The recommendations are summarised in Table 2 on page 28.

In addition to the thematic findings, the paper also presents a range of recommendations that are more generally applicable. This report recommends that international organisations and donors facilitate open, inclusive debate (with room for diverse voices) and dialogue. This should include

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1   I. Samba Traoré, H. Kéïta Traoré, M. Koné, R. Diané and B. Konaté (2014). *Culture politique, citoyenneté et crises au Mali: Quels processus et acteurs pour le changement.* International Alert/Malivaleurs: London/Bamako.

helping to address fundamental obstacles to development by commissioning studies on and discussion of practices such as slavery, which remain widespread and taboo. It should also include finding culturally sensitive ways through which awareness and understanding of violations of women's human rights, including through harmful cultural practices, can be raised.

The research shows how conflict analysis is central to any development project. In areas as diverse as education and security sector reform, underlying structural conflicts impair effective development aid. Worse, aid programmes may reinforce social, political and economic cleavages. Development aid is never only technical; it always deals with people and therefore people's power. Development interventions based on analysis, rather than providing only technical support, are more likely therefore to be effective and to contribute to positive change.

The project repeatedly identified the critical importance of engaging people, communities and leaders at the local level (a 'bottom-up approach') in development programming at all levels. However, engaging a representative array of local people (at national and local levels) from the design phase through implementation and monitoring is likely to improve programming only if partners are carefully chosen. Reinforcing exclusive patterns of governance, whether at local or national level, is likely to exacerbate conflict. All development projects should engage women and other marginalised groups in each stage, and donors will need to find innovative and culturally acceptable ways to include women and young people's views and needs.

International agencies including donors should help to build the democratic accountability of aid over the long term. For example, they should seek to engage parliament and find innovative ways to engage a representative array of local people at national and local levels. Promoting the inclusion of marginalised groups in all aspects of development programming is also of key importance.

We also recommend that donors reflect carefully on how aid can best contribute to Mali's development, perhaps drawing on experiences from elsewhere that could contribute to reform in Mali. They should also rigorously overhaul their own systems to help tackle corruption. Malian and international actors are engaged in reform processes as a result of the crisis; the latter need to move relatively quickly, albeit within a long-term perspective, to capitalise on this opportunity. There are no shortcuts: the processes identified in this report should be supported quickly, recognising that they have the potential to lead to profound, positive change in the long term.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide guidance to donors and other international organisations supporting Malians to recover from the security crisis they experienced in 2012, and to avoid similar crises in the future. It is a modified version of a report commissioned by the Danish Embassy in Mali, which was delivered in February 2014. Our guidance is designed to promote an integrated peace and development agenda.

Mali's future directions must be decided and undertaken by Malians themselves. But our assumption in publishing this report is that donors and other international actors can and will continue to play a supporting and advisory role. The report contains a large number of mostly broad recommendations, but it is mainly intended to stimulate and promote strategic, creative thinking, rather than act as a prescription.

1.1 Context

After the end of authoritarian rule in the 1990s, democracy and the rule of law seemed established in Mali. This illusion was shattered in 2012, when the spillover from the Libyan conflict and the presence of international terrorist groups such as *Al-Qaeda au Maghreb Islamique* (AQMI) combined explosively with existing conflicts. Armed groups took control of two-thirds of the country and the government was ousted in a coup d'état. The French operation *Serval* contributed to maintaining Mali's territorial integrity from January 2013, and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) now provides military, police and civilian assistance.

External factors – including the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, the Arab Spring, the war in Libya, the presence of international terrorist groups such as AQMI, and the illicit international trades in people, drugs and arms – have destabilised Mali and the Sahel region. Aggravating factors in Mali include the failure to decentralise, a regionalist, patrimonial style of governance by *grins* unaccountable to parliament and the citizen, corruption, and impunity. Demilitarisation of the north, an army weakened and infiltrated by poorly integrated rebels, northern separatism and the absence of the state in the north all contributed to the crisis.[2]

However, the events of 2012 revealed deep fractures within and across Malian society as a whole, not just in the north, that contributed to the apparently sudden disintegration of a state. This research focuses on these internal conflict dynamics.

1.2 Crisis and conflict in Mali

Mali's history since independence has been turbulent. Amadou Toumani Touré led the coup that ended decades of authoritarian rule and ushered in multi-party democracy in 1991. The three northern rebellions of 1963–1964, 1990–1995 and 2006–2007 seemed to have been settled, partially at least, by the Accords of Alger. In January 2012, however, the rebellion led by the *Mouvement national de liberation de l'Azawad* (MNLA), along with the *Ansar Dine*, the *Mouvement pour l'unicité du jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest* (MUJAO) and AQMI took control of the northern regions of Mali, including Douentza. The population was subjected to extensive human rights abuses during the occupation and during fighting between the armed groups and Malian security forces resisting them. All parties have allegedly committed serious human rights violations.[3]

2   Ibid.
3   Human Rights Watch (2013). 'Mali: New abuses by Tuareg rebels, soldiers. Kidal offensive heightens need for discipline, accountability by all sides'.

In March 2012, a coup d'état led by Amadou Sanogo seized power and suspended the Constitution. This was quickly followed by a roadmap for transition, mediated by President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, to retake the territory lost to the armed groups in the north and to elect a legitimate president. The French military operation *Serval* was launched in January 2013 and restored state authority over the territory, in principle at least. Security remains highly precarious and dependent on military assistance from the United Nations and France. In the elections of August 2013, Ibrahim Boubaker Keita was elected president and legislative elections were held later in the year.

The crisis was further fuelled by a range of other factors: generalised instability in the Sahel region and the presence of terrorist groups and traffickers; the emptying of the Libyan arsenals and the return of predominantly Tuareg fighters from Libya; extreme poverty, food and water insecurity, and desertification. The northern rebellion may have been the catalyst, but the conflicts are not limited to the north. Mali suffers from a multitude of interconnected crises that affect the country as a whole: of institutions and politics, representation, social values, development and territory. The country is divided between the *nyèmogow* and the *brousse konomogow* – the leaders and the led.[4] Public institutions and the political class lack credibility and legitimacy. Decentralisation is both critical and highly controversial. Some young people and women try to realise their rights while the authority of traditional leaders is eroded; young people are excluded from political, economic and social life. The gulf between rich and poor, rural and urban widens. Corruption is endemic and organised crime goes largely unchecked. These institutional, social, territorial, democratic and developmental crises feed latent and overt tensions across the country and pose a fundamental challenge to sustainable development.[5] Yet, it is also true that many parts of the country remained free from violence, even at the height of the crisis: the majority of young people did not, for example, rise up against the state or each other.

1.3 Methodology

Commentators have identified ways in which development aid in the past has contributed to conflict in Mali;[6] these findings resonate with parts of the international donor community in Bamako.[7] It is beyond the scope of this project to evaluate the impact on conflict of previous development aid. This report aims rather to stimulate thinking about the role of development aid in Mali, including by identifying areas for further research. It does not attempt to provide a blueprint for development assistance aid – broadly understood, excluding military intervention and humanitarian assistance – in Mali in the coming years. Instead, this project used a highly participatory field-based research methodology to draw out the views of Malians – experts, members of local or central government, traditional and religious leaders, professionals, business people, young people, women's associations and civil society members in a wide range of locations. From these views and opinions of a range of Malian actors in different places, the project suggests concrete ways in which development assistance may support processes that contribute to conflict-sensitive, pro-peace and sustainable development.

International Alert and Malivaleurs implemented this research project in partnership. The research team was led by Dr Laura Davis (independent consultant) and comprised Zahed Yousuf (International Alert), Ismaila Traoré (Malivaleurs), Ndeye Sow (International Alert) and Badou Traoré (magistrate and independent consultant). Sidi Alamine Ag Doho, Hanane Keita, Mariam Koné, Mohamed Ag Erless, Brema Dicko and Abdoul Karim Doumbia provided substantive contributions, particularly during fieldwork. Thirteen researchers, 10 of whom are Malian, contributed to the project.

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4   I. Samba Traoré et al (2014). Op. cit.
5   B. Sangaré (2013). *Revue de la literature*. Bamako.
6   See for example: N. van de Walle (2013). 'Foreign aid in dangerous places: The donors and Mali's democracy', in D. Resnick and N. van de Walle (eds.) (2013) *Democratic trajectories in Africa: Unravelling the impact of foreign aid*. Oxford University Press: Oxford; I. Bergamaschi (2013). *The fall of a donor darling: The role of aid in Mali's crisis*. Unpublished paper.
7   Interviews with members of bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, Bamako, November 2013.

International Alert's (hereafter Alert) definition of 'conflict' is that conflicts are not necessarily inherently bad, and that they are an inevitable part of living in society – a result of the differences and tensions between people and between groups. A certain degree of conflict is essential for progress, because progress requires change, and change generates conflict. Violent conflict, rather than conflict itself, is seen as a problem. The challenge is to channel conflicts in peaceful ways to constructive ends and to manage differences without violence.[8] While the word conflict in this report has been used to describe both violent and non-violent conflict, the recommendations proposed are inspired by the concept of interdependent, positive peace. Alert's definition of peace is when people are anticipating and managing conflicts without violence, and are engaging in inclusive social change processes that improve the quality of life. They are doing so without compromising the possibility of continuing to do so in the future, or the possibility of others doing so.[9]

This view of peace fed into the methodology developed for the report, based on the Driver of Change method, to focus on actors, processes and entry points for conflict-sensitive, pro-peace development interventions, and a common research framework. A participatory seminar with Malian experts in Bamako in August 2013 identified four thematic focus areas, which were validated and refined during a three-day seminar in Bamako (8th-10th November 2013) that included a workshop with experts on the four thematic areas. Informed by the seminar, the research team further refined each thematic area and developed research questions. The thematic focus areas and priority sub-themes are:

- Economic determinants of change
  - Economic governance
  - Inclusive development

- Political culture, citizenship and crisis
  - Consensus and participation
  - (Civic) education

- Social and cultural changes
  - Women
  - Young people

- Conflicts, security crisis and justice
  - Reform of the justice system
  - Transitional justice
  - Traditional mechanisms

Laura Davis conducted interviews in Bamako from 11th-15th November. The four thematic teams' fieldwork between 11th-23rd November covered the following sites:

- Bamako, Kita, Banamba, Segal, Mopti, Sevare, Konna, Selingue, Ségou, Kangaba – Zahed Yousuf and Brema Dicko (economic determinants of change);
- Ouélesébougou, Selingué, Bougouni, Kumantu, Sikasso, Fôh, Ségou, Bamako – Ismaila Traoré, Hanane Keita and Mariam Koné (political culture and citizenship);
- Sikasso, Bougouni, Zangasso (Koutiala), Ségoum Diable (Nino), Gao, Kidal, Tessalit – Ndeye Sow and Mohamed Ag Erless (social and cultural changes);
- Mopti, Konna, Sévaré, Fatoma (Kounari), Douentza, Ségou, Bamako, Ouélesébougou, Kati (Koulikoro) – Badou Traoré and Abdoul Karim Doumbia (conflicts and justice).

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8   International Alert (2010). *Programming Framework for International Alert. Design, monitoring and evaluation.* London.
9   Ibid.

Due to time constraints, adverse security conditions and limited transport options (a situation exacerbated by the elections on 24th November), Mohammed Ag Erless was the only member of the research team able to conduct fieldwork in the north (Gao, Kidal, Tessalit) within the timeframe of the project. Sidi Alamine Ag Doho from Tarkint joined the team in the mid-term feedback seminar in Ségou (16th November) and provided additional research data from the north. Salem Ould El Hadj contributed additional material by email from Timbuktu. The limited time available for research and the lack of access to the north shape the analysis that follows.

Fieldwork was conducted through interviews and focus groups with local or national officials, religious and traditional leaders, groups of women and young people, business people and members of the international community.[10] The research team met twice once fieldwork was underway in Ségou (16th November) and Bamako (25th November) to discuss overarching themes, compare initial findings and prepare recommendations. The findings of each thematic team were presented in four thematic reports;[11] interested readers are encouraged to consult these for more detail.

This report draws on the four thematic reports, findings from expert seminars and key informant interviews, additional key informant interviews conducted in Bamako by Laura Davis, an internal workshop of Alert staff in London on 14th January 2014, and a discussion of the main findings with representatives of the Malian authorities and members of the international community in Bamako on 22nd January 2014. The project was managed by Marco Simonetti with support from Mana Farooghi. Quality control was carried out by Henri Myrttinen. The report benefited from the insights of reviewers from International Alert (Summer Brown, Phil Champain, Marco Simonetti and Phil Vernon) and two external reviewers (Isaline Bergamaschi and Catherine Woollard).

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2. Envisioning a role for aid

Mali's imperial past informs discussions of Mali's future. The nostalgic view invokes past glory days of highly structured, tightly-knit diverse states, in which traditional forms of resolving conflict flourished – usually overlooking the violence, autocratic rule, inequality and slavery on which such empires were based. As Traoré argues, the image of imperial Mali is also divisive as it is understood to exclude the Tuareg. The historical impulse also legitimises calls for an independent Azawad and, therefore, the dismantling of the Malian state. However, an imagined past in which Mali's many peoples lived and prospered together, combined with critical engagement with Mali's different histories, can surely contribute to the process of envisioning and building a modern Mali.

This research identifies a hunger for inclusive public dialogue on all aspects of political, social, cultural and economic life; on the role of the state, traditional leaders and civil society; on the changing roles of men, women and young people. In short, it is about imagining what it means to be Malian in 21st century Mali. The country suffers from a multitude of deep, complex conflicts, explored in the thematic reports, which have in the past often been brushed aside or dealt with superficially. This 'consensus' model was a source of pride but it has also fed *mousalaka* – a form of hypocrisy and impunity that lets conflicts fester. Addressing these conflicts will be a difficult, lengthy and crucial process. Events such as the *États généraux de la décentralisation*, the *Assises du nord*, peace accords, elections and truth commissions may help – but only if the energy from these events feeds ongoing processes, locally, nationally and regionally.

Malians will drive change, but not alone. Mali is part of a globalised and interconnected world and an integral part of a closely-knit region that straddles geopolitical fault lines. Outsiders will help or hinder them. Development assistance is one of the many tools that may contribute, or not, to positive change. The influence of external actors in Mali is undeniable, even if one only considers the role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union in negotiating agreements, the security provided by French and UN troops, the long-term reliance of Malians on development aid and humanitarian relief, the recent establishment of the UN's MINUSMA, and the ongoing influence of various international Islamic extremist networks and organised criminal networks. Each actor – and there are many besides these few – carries its own logic and dynamics. Supporting counter-terrorism efforts may act directly against democratisation and/or inclusive development approaches. Efforts to provide short-term military security may inadvertently fuel longer-term conflict between groups. Failure to provide physical security may cause state collapse and intense suffering.

Just as Malians undertake the difficult process of envisioning what modern Mali could look like, donors also need to envision a role for aid. This process cannot be postponed. The experience of other countries suggests that enthusiasm for reform wanes once a legitimate government is in place and is faced with the formidable task of reforming a state and society riven by violence and dependent on outside help to maintain basic security, whilst also running the country. Events that may be far away and unconnected to Mali may also distract the international community.

This report argues that there are no shortcuts; aid should be considered not in terms of sponsoring events but in terms of supporting processes over the long term. The *Programme d'actions du gouvernement 2013–2018* (PAG) identifies the Malian government's six priority areas (*axes*) for development: setting up strong, credible institutions; restoring the security of people and goods throughout the territory; implementing an active policy of national reconciliation; reconstructing Malian schools; constructing an emerging economy; and implementing an active policy of social

development.[12] There are no shortcuts to achieving these objectives. This project identifies key Malian processes that could contribute to sustainable, positive development in the long term. This report structures the findings and detailed recommendations for processes to support into the following areas, which feed into the priorities identified in the PAG:

1. Reforming state institutions and state-society relations;
2. Restoring security and public safety;
3. Fostering transitional justice and reconciliation;
4. Supporting citizenship through education;
5. Promoting conflict-sensitive, inclusive economic growth.[13]

The paper then draws together more global findings on how development actors could support positive change in Mali.

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12   Primature, Cabinet du Premier Minister (2013). *Orientations et prioritiés du gouvernement pour la periode 2013–2018*. Bamako.

13   The aspects of social development – the sixth priority area of the PAG – that this report addresses are integrated into these five thematic areas.

3. Processes and actors: analysis and recommendations

This section presents the findings of the thematic reports in relation to the aforementioned five thematic areas, which feed into the PAG. After a brief analysis of the theme, each section presents a number of key change processes to which donors and other internationals can contribute, and makes recommendations in relation to each of these. A summary of the main recommendations is presented in Table 2.

To help guide the reader, the following is a summary of the key themes and change processes discussed in this section.

Table 1: Key themes and change processes addressed in this report

Theme	Change process
3.1 Reforming state institutions and state-society relations	• From consensus to participation • Improving relations between traditional, local and central government • Improving access to justice for all
3.2 Restoring security and public safety	• Restoring security and public safety
3.3 Fostering transitional justice and reconciliation	• Building a legitimate and credible transitional justice process to contribute to reconciliation
3.4 Supporting citizenship through education	• Supporting citizenship through education
3.5 Reforming the economy for conflict-sensitive, inclusive growth	• Improving economic governance • Promoting inclusive development

3.1 Reforming state institutions and state-society relations

Effective and responsive state and social institutions which deliver services and are accountable have an important role to play in resolving past conflict, preventing future conflict and enabling sustainable development. Reform policies should be based on understanding what Malians expect from the state and on what the state can reasonably deliver.

Delivery of public services is crucial. The structural crises underpinning the health, education and social services systems have compromised the quality of service delivery in the past.[14] Indeed, conflict over access to public services is a major thread running throughout the thematic reports on which this document is based. The reports illustrate in different ways the importance of extending the state's authority and also fundamentally changing the relationships between the state and society, the leaders and the led. They show how a more political, rather than purely technical, conceptualisation of reform is necessary.

3.1.1 From consensus to participation

Donors and other internationals can play an important role in stimulating and supporting public dialogue at the national and local levels on visions for Mali of the 21st century. The 'consensus' politics that dominated Malian public life was hailed as effective conflict resolution, but it also

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14   I. Samba Traoré et al (2014). Op. cit.

stifled opposition, nurtured corruption and nepotism, and made a game of politics. According to Sidibé and Diallo, radio presenters in Ségou: "Lack of interest in politics and derisory participation are the consequences of 10 years of consensus under Amadou Toumani Touré. This explains why citizens reject public institutions and politicians." This rejection can take extreme forms, such as the demonstrations by soldiers, women and children and the armed rebellions that preceded the coup of March 2012.[15] Traoré argues that the political class, civil society and intelligentsia have had their heads in the sand and, ignorant of history, are condemned to repeat it.[16]

Reforming political life and breaking the culture of consensus is a strong theme running through this research. The politics of consensus and clientelism have undermined meaningful political opposition and thus parliament, as illustrated by the way electoral lists were drawn up in the legislative elections in November. Civil society leaders and the political class are intertwined and connected. The *Haut conseil islamique du Mali* (HCIM) is seen as the only credible counterweight to the government.[17] This suggests that increasing parliamentary oversight and scrutiny is very important, even if parliamentarians may be reluctant to play this role,[18] as is reform of political parties. Parliamentary scrutiny is arguably a culture to be learned, and development programmes may have overlooked the role that parliamentary committees should play in designing, overseeing and monitoring reform programmes, especially when the capacities of parliamentarians and parliamentary structures seem inadequate. One area where this is both difficult and necessary is in ensuring adequate civilian oversight of security sector reform (SSR).

Democracy in Mali has contributed to opening up the public space. However, while for some democracy has broken down the ancient social values at the heart of Malian identity,[19] it has done little to reduce social inequalities. Women and young people are kept firmly down as '*cadets sociaux*'.[20] Young people face unemployment; they cannot access basic services (such as health and education), sport, recreational and cultural facilities and do not participate fully in political and civic life. Democracy has not led to the eradication of feudal practices such as slavery, discussion of which remains taboo. Among the many rights denied to slaves is the right to vote – their 'masters' fill in the ballot for them.

Traoré argues how corruption corrodes political, economic and social life in Mali. The loss of civic values and trust in public institutions and political leaders is caused in part by corruption and in turn feeds it. Public service and pride in a job well done are undermined by a culture of fiddling and racketeering. Mohammed Diarra, interviewed in Sikasso, recalled the expression: "*A ka tignèjalanfo de ya to a y'a shi kè sègèn na* [He tells the truth and has integrity, that's why his life is wretched]."[21]

In the absence of the state, fundamentalist religion has become an unavoidable factor in political life and poses an increasing threat to human rights and the secular nature of the state and its institutions.[22] The power of the HCIM is of great concern to many Malians and observers.[23] Some, such as Kanda K., *Grin* of Ségou, suggest engaging religious leaders in political life: "Politics is open to all, religious leaders have their role to play. If they are on the margins of politics, they may adopt inappropriate ways to gain power. If they are in the game, it will be easy to make them toe

15   Ibid.

16   Ibid.

17   Interviews, Bamako, November 2013; Contributions to expert seminar, Bamako, November 2013.

18   Ibid.

19   M. Sow (2013). 'Variations sur le thème de la démocratie par temps de crise politique', in D. Konaté (ed.) (2013) *Le Mali entre doutes et espoirs: Réflexions sur la nation à l'épreuve de la crise du Nord*. Editions Tomboutou: Mali. Cited in N. Sow et al (2014). *Société et culture au Mali: Problématiques du changement*. International Alert: London.

20   This project considers 'women' and 'young people' to be heterogenous groups not monolithic blocks. The challenge of defining 'youth' in Mali is discussed in N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.

21   I. Samba Traoré et al (2014). Op. cit.

22   N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.; I. Samba Traoré (2014). Op. cit.

23   N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.; Interviews, National Commission for Human Rights, civil society activists, Bamako, November 2013.

the line. Let's remember that the greatest political leader is the Prophet Mohamed himself, peace and blessings be upon him".[24]

Although Mali has adopted legislation promoting gender equality, the concept has met fierce resistance. According to one interviewee, "[it] is taken into account in development programmes, but not everyday life. The standard bearers for gender are always women. Men don't care. How can we get a critical mass of men to support gender? Women get into trouble at home for trying to get involved in politics, or work outside the house."[25]

Even if women's participation in public life, particularly in rural areas, has increased since the 1990s, women's participation in politics seems to be dropping. Of 1,100 candidates in the legislative elections in November 2013, only 148 were women compared with 248 in the previous elections. The government comprises 34 ministers, of whom four are women; women make up 10% of the national assembly and 7.6% of councillors at commune level. Although Mali has adopted UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, only a dozen women joined the 80-strong delegation at the meeting in Ougadougou in April 2012 to determine the roadmap for the transition.[26] The national gender policy (PNG) has never been properly institutionalised and the budget of the ministry for the promotion of women represents only 0.6% of the overall budget. The ministry itself is seen by some as a way of marginalising gender: it is "the 'First Ladies' cabinet' more than a ministry", said one interviewee.[27]

Young people make up nearly 60% of the Malian population and have been at the forefront of the movement for democracy since the 1990s. They play a central role in politicians' strategies to attain and keep power. All the political parties court the youth vote, even if young people remain largely uninterested in politics and their turnout at elections has never topped 10%.[28] Malian youth have often denounced the 'gerontocracy' and the monopoly of the elders in decision-making. The *Réseau des jeunes des partis politiques du Mali* (RJPM), for example, demands better positions on the electoral lists for young candidates. Rappers like *Les frères de la rue* have emerged as spokespersons for young people, demanding 'work and jobs' from the president.[29]

A national youth policy and action plan was adopted in 2012 after a long consultation process, but has not been implemented. Since the crisis, the government has announced plans to reform and revive an institutionalised dialogue between the government and young people.[30]

The crisis revealed deep malaise in Malian civil society. This research suggests that civil society organisations (CSOs), often created and/or largely financed by international partners, are highly politicised, frequently closely linked to one or other political leader, and largely discredited as they have been seen to govern the country in 'consensus' with the political class.[31] Many young people see the national youth council as the 'right arm of power'.[32] Nonetheless, established organisations are still able to block the emergence of new, alternative forms of CSOs.[33] Some women's associations have successfully lobbied for policies that promote sexual equality,[34] but renewing the state and society pre-supposes that the Malian citizen is able to overhaul the culture of participation.[35]

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24   Interview cited in I. Samba Traoré et al (2014). Op. cit.
25   Interview, Bamako, 20th November 2013. Cited in N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
26   N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
27   Interview, Bamako, 22nd November 2013. Cited in N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
28   N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
29   Ibid.
30   Ibid.
31   I. Samba Traoré et al (2014). Op. cit.
32   N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
33   I. Samba Traoré et al (2014). Op. cit.
34   N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
35   I. Samba Traoré et al (2014). Op. cit.

3.1.1.1 Recommendations

Donors and other internationals can play an important role in helping to develop and bring about a vision for institutional change in Mali. This will entail the establishment of strong, credible and effective institutions and a fundamental reform in the nature of Malians' participation in public life. Institutional reform must therefore involve civil society, diverse local actors and parliamentary oversight mechanisms. Relying only on actors that are currently prominent, such as traditional, religious or cultural leaders and established civil society organisations, risks sustaining the politics of exclusion, particularly of women and young people. Engaging with new or hitherto overlooked partners will also help to develop their oversight capacities. Donors and other internationals should:

- Facilitate public debate on:
  - Gender roles in a modern Mali – this debate should identify areas in which greater participation and decision-making roles for women are acceptable to women and men. Radio programming and local development organisations could provide good platforms for engaging rural communities in the debate;
  - The influence of religious leaders in political life – this could help Malians to explore options for more transparency regarding the power of religious leaders and the different roles of religious institutions and the state. At the same time, it is important to protect the secular nature of the state and to encourage greater participation, particularly by women, young people and other marginalised groups;
  - The roles young people can play in Malian society today and on intergenerational problems.
- Apply UNSCR 1325, along with support measures to raise awareness of its provisions. This should occur alongside the implementation of national gender policies, including launching the process of defining a national gender action plan that takes into account the changed context.
- Recognise that 'gender' is not a technical component of the development toolbox, but a dynamic political concept that leads to social transformation. Thus, donors should routinely address this at the highest policy levels and in all dealings with social and political bodies and institutions (government bodies, universities, development stakeholders, civil society), also integrating it into their programmes.
- Develop the capacity of women and ensure their participation in mediation processes at the local, national and regional levels. They should also initiate work now on preparing women and developing their capacities to stand as candidates in the next legislative elections.
- Contribute financial and technical support for implementation of the national youth policy.
- Engage directly with young people in designing development programming, and assist the government in establishing and maintaining meaningful consultation mechanisms and involving young people in decision-making.
- Build incentives into project funding mechanisms to support the emergence of independent CSOs, and the reform and renewal of existing CSOs that are tied to the status quo. Donors could support reform by requiring grantees to show evidence of sound internal governance and by discouraging organisations with presidents for life, for example, while encouraging better management practice as well as CSOs with membership that cuts across ethnic identities.
- Develop the capacities of women's associations – particularly those that work for gender equality and women's participation in political, economic and social life, especially in advocacy, management, networking, fundraising and documentation.

3.1.2 Improving relations between traditional, local and central government

There is insufficiently clear delineation of authority between different powers in any given place. Even within the district of Ségou, interviews with *chefs de village*, *chefs de quartier* and imams revealed considerable disparities between the roles of different local leaders. Some blame the rise in powers for elected leaders, to the detriment of traditional leaders, for the increase in uncivic behaviour; these frustrations are heard in urban as well as rural settings.[36] Improving the relations between traditional, local and central government is necessary for better public service delivery.

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36   Ibid.

Local government structures have important roles to play, but in a number of regions the authority, legitimacy and capacity of the local government to carry out these tasks effectively are weak. The division of roles and coordination between decentralised and local authorities still remains to be clarified and the budget and governance systems remain highly centralised. There are also accusations that the decentralisation process has simply become a tool used by local elites to expropriate funds from local budgets and tax receipts as well as donor funds allocated for specific regional projects.[37] Research for this project identified a clear advantage in transferring skills and resources from central to local government, developing greater oversight of the disbursement of funds to local government and improving monitoring of the implementation of development projects. This includes building the capacity of local government to engage more effectively with traditional systems of governance, such as the *chefs de quartier* and vice versa.[38]

3.1.2.1 Recommendations
Donors and the international community can support improved clarity of roles, as well as better integration among different levels and types of governance bodies, within a perspective of increased decentralisation and local governance. Among other measures, they should:

- Build the capacity of local governments to develop and manage their own short-, medium- and long-term development plans – particularly their ability to manage budgets more transparently, develop proposals for attracting greater private and public investment, and promote greater cooperation between central government and local government on local economic development plans.
- Promote greater engagement between local government and local businesses and business associations on how to promote the local economy and increase tax revenues from local businesses.
- Support local authorities' efforts to collect resources from local sources and central government, promoting greater transparency in revenue collection and expenditure, e.g. through greater involvement of trusted traditional chiefs, independent civil society and local community representatives.
- Support associations of chiefs of villages and *quartiers* and their advisers, as well as officials and elected representatives, through exchanges and training on the law, their respective roles and how to improve the relationships between them.
- Build the capacity of traditional governance structures in developing plans, monitoring the implementation, engaging with local communities, and promoting greater cooperation between state structures and the local population.
- Engage local expertise in the form of grassroots associations to contribute to effective development at the local level.
- Seek out and act upon the expertise of women at the grassroots to identify solutions to critical needs.

3.1.3 Improving access to justice for all
Even before the crisis, justice sector reform was a pressing priority as the justice system does not serve the whole country. Moreover, where it is present, it lacks legitimacy and credibility. These problems are magnified when dealing with organised crime. The crisis has underscored the urgency of reform. For day-to-day justice, problems include insufficient human resources and capacities, slow procedures, corruption, political interference, insecurity, and a disconnection between customary and formal law. Justice is not easily accessible,[39] particularly by women,[40] and is denied to slaves.[41]

37   Z. Yousuf et al (2014). *Drivers of change: A political economy analysis of post-crisis Mali*. International Alert: London.
38   Ibid.
39   B. Hasseye et al (2014). *Conflits, crise sécuritaire et justice au Mali*. International Alert/Malivaleurs: London/Bamako.
40   N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
41   Ibid.

The system is unlikely to be able to address the upsurge in human rights violations during the crisis.[42] The system struggles with ongoing abuse: no legislation has been adopted that prohibits either female genital mutilation (FGM)[43] or other violence against women;[44] the rights group TEMEDT is campaigning for the new national assembly to adopt a bill criminalising slavery.[45]

The crisis has also highlighted the importance of ensuring that all parts of the country have – and are seen to have – equal access to justice, and that the demands for justice by some communities or regions are not prioritised over others.

Protecting the rights of all citizens is a fundamental component of democratic culture. National commissions for human rights can make an important contribution to this objective if they are independent, credible and legitimate. The present national commission for human rights is currently undergoing reform and could play such a role in the future.[46]

Currently, atrocities perpetrated in the north overshadow in discourse other human rights violations – for example, those committed against *berets rouges* and *berets verts* during the coup and unconnected from the politico-security crisis of 2012.[47] This distinction is also sharply evident in reports of violations of women's human rights: violations committed in the north overshadow more commonplace abuse. Reliable statistics are hard to come by, but women's rights organisations believe that there are high rates of violence against women, harmful cultural practices such as FGM, early or forced marriage and sexual harassment.[48] In 2012, there were 2,400 reported cases of violence against women, of which 200 constituted rape. This number rose to 3,000 in 2013, of which 320 were rape. The organisation Wildaf-Mali had documented 166 instances of violence, of which 71 were rape of women and children in Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal.[49] Discussion or acknowledgement of rape and sexual violence more broadly remain largely taboo in Malian society. Victims guard their silence,[50] with the partial exception of violations committed by armed groups in the north.[51] Strategies to identify and raise awareness of sexual violence and encourage (women) victims to seek redress will need to be extremely sensitive (see also the sections on justice sector reform and transitional justice below).

There is a strong tradition of dispute resolution in Mali.[52] Different communities have different ways of settling disputes (internal or with other communities). Examples include the Cadi in Timbuktu, the Bambara/Malinké leaders who make disputants in land conflicts 'eat the earth' in regular meetings, and the Dioro in the Central Niger Delta who manages access to land, water and pasture and mediates between pastoralists, fishermen and farmers in conflict. More recent community-based mechanisms have also been established, such as the commission to prevent and mediate conflicts supported by a network of paralegals, set up in Kounari (Mopti) by the mayor and supported by the *Association Eveil.*

Both types of mechanism have considerable potential, but also face challenges. Decisions are often not recognised by the courts. Corruption and politicisation undermine the legitimacy and

42   B. Hasseye et al (2014). Op. cit.; Interviews with civil society members, Bamako, November 2013.

43   Rates of FGM vary considerably – Sikasso (92.2%), Kayes (98.3%), Koulikoro (97.4%), Bamako (92.6%) – but rarely in the north, apart from certain parts of Gao and Tomboutou regions, and between certain families. The Songhai and Tamasheq do not practise FGM (Assemblée Nationale du Mali (2011). *L'expérience du Réseau des parlementaires maliens pour la lutte contre les violences faites aux femmes et aux enfants.* Bamako. Cited in N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.).

44   N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.

45   Ibid.

46   Interview with the National Commission for Human Rights, Bamako, November 2013.

47   Interviews with the National Commission for Human Rights, women's association, Bamako, November 2013.

48   Interview with the *Association pour le progrès et la défense des droits des femmes et des filles* (APDF), Sikasso, 13th November 2013. Cited in N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.

49   Studio Tamani. 'L'ignorance, principale source des violences faites aux femmes au Mali', *Fondation Hirondelle, URTEL*, 3rd December 2013. Cited in N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.

50   N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.

51   Ibid. Interviews with the National Commission for Human Rights, women's association, Bamako, November 2013.

52   I. Samba Traoré et al (2014). Op. cit.

authority of some traditional mechanisms. Women, young people and their associations have no recognised status in rural areas and traditional approaches are likely to resist reform.[53]

3.1.3.1 Recommendations

International actors including donors can contribute in several ways to increasing accessibility to justice, supporting reform throughout the justice chain as well as efforts to make justice more accessible, particularly to the poor and uneducated. For example, they can:

- Support the return of the justice system to all areas, while reforming the way justice is delivered.
- Contribute to improved governance of the justice sector, including by supporting implementation of the recommendations of the *États généraux de la lutte contre la corruption et la délinquance financière*. Specifically, the structures intended to address corruption should be implemented, along with adoption and implementation of the draft law on illicit enrichment.
- Support continuous professional training, adequate human and material resources within the justice sector. The operational capacities of the security sector should also be developed in addressing crime and insecurity.
- Support the creation of a pool of specialists tasked with addressing terrorism and transnational organised crime.
- Support strengthening of civil society to contribute to improved justice, security and the fight against corruption, including through raising awareness of what corruption is and how it can be countered.
- Support the *Programme national de lutte contre l'excision* (PNLE), women's associations and the *Réseau des parlementaires maliens pour la lutte contre les violences faites aux femmes et aux enfants*, which work to raise awareness on different forms of violence – including rape, forced marriage, domestic violence and harmful cultural practices – and campaign for criminalising FGM.
- Support efforts to reform the National Commission for Human Rights into a credible, independent body that investigates and documents human rights violations by state and non-state actors across the territory, and protects the rights of all.
- Support the work of human rights organisations, UN agencies and other bodies in investigating and documenting all forms of human rights violations, including violations of women's human rights.
- Work with Malian, regional and international women's associations to consider how issues of sexual violence may be better understood by women and the general public. This should be done in ways that are culturally sensitive, respectful to women and do not stigmatise and/or re-victimise those who have suffered abuse.
- Support adaption of existing traditional mechanisms and innovative new approaches to make them more inclusive and effective in mediating and resolving local-level conflicts.
- Encourage exchange and collaboration between administrative, customary authorities, and innovative conflict resolution mechanisms. Over time, this could develop into a permanent space for exchange and potentially clarify how customary and formal law may complement each other.

3.2 Restoring security and public safety

This research identifies significant challenges to restoring security and public safety. Impunity may pose a serious threat to peace initiatives. Providing genuine alternatives to participating in organised crime and armed groups will also be key to reintegrating former combatants into society.

53   B. Hasseye et al (2014). Op. cit.

3.2.1 Restoring security and public safety

One of the main challenges facing the Malian authorities and the international community is balancing pressing security needs in the face of armed groups and terrorism with measures to ensure public safety for all. Understanding the different motivations of combatants will be crucial for successful disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR). Providing alternatives to organised crime for past or potential combatants also remains a key challenge. Impunity may undermine efforts to establish peace and security.

Operation *Serval* was launched against jihadist groups in January 2013 and will hand over its responsibilities to the Malian authorities and the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA). The operation is credited with driving back the jihadist occupation of the north. However, it is also accused of exacerbating inter- and intra-ethnic tension, and of allowing an unspoken special status for Kidal.[54] As the analysis in these reports shows, the presence of international terrorist groups and the jihadist insurgency in the north constitute one strand of a complex web of conflict factors affecting the north, and Mali more broadly. Other armed groups, mainly Tuareg but also Arab and Songhai, remain in the north.

The inability of the Malian state – including its security forces – to maintain control over its territory and protect all its citizens pre-dates the events of 2012.[55] The army has been weakened by decades of corruption and nepotism, as well as by collusion with drug traffickers and other organised criminal gangs.[56] Malian soldiers, as well as members of armed groups, have been accused of serious human rights violations during military operations in the north,[57] worsening relations between the state and the local population.[58] If fighters from armed groups are integrated (back) into the army with the implementation of the Ouagadougou Accords, this will pose an additional, significant challenge for SSR. DDR is an important challenge, and successful reintegration will depend on understanding the motivations of different combatants for fighting. For the Malian state to resume its authority and prevent future conflicts, the security forces will need to undergo radical reform to improve their ability to protect all Malians and ensure public safety. Organised crime must also be brought under control. The EU training mission's programme includes a core module on human rights. It also screens potential participants on a range of criteria, including age (to identify minors) and for allegations of human rights abuse.[59]

Organised crime remains a critical obstacle to peace and development in Mali. One respondent from the north highlighted his fear that his children would become involved in organised crime and, through this, in armed groups.[60] In addition to strengthening the judicial responses to organised crime (see above), understanding the motivations of people – particularly young men – in becoming involved in organised crime, and providing realistic alternatives, will be crucial for public safety and security. Experiences from elsewhere, such as Latin America, in developing community resilience to organised crime and related violence may inspire innovative approaches in Mali.

The plan for disarming, demobilising, reintegrating, reinserting and/or repatriating fighters from the armed groups is not yet clear.[61] Desertion of some troops, integrated under the terms of earlier peace accords, was an important factor in the fall of Tessalit[62] and the occupation of the north more generally. Bourgeot characterises the pattern of rebellion in northern Mali as "rebellion-desertion-peace agreement-integration-rebellion-desertion".[63]

54   Group discussion, workshop, Bamako, November 2013; I. Samba Traoré et al (2014). Op. cit.
55   The EU training mission, for example, was planned before the events of 2012. Interview, EU officials, Bamako, November 2013.
56   W. Lacher (2012). 'Organised crime and conflict in the Sahel-Sahara region', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Interviews with EU officials, senior Malian army officer, Bamako, November 2013.
57   Human Rights Watch (2013). Op. cit.
58   Interview, Bamako, November 2013.
59   Interviews with EU training mission, Bamako, November 2013.
60   Participant in workshop, Ségou, 16th November 2013.
61   As of November 2013; Interview with UN official, Bamako, November 2013.
62   M. Ag Erless and D. Koné (2012). *Le patriote et le Dijadhiste*. La Sahelienne, L'Harmattan: Paris, p.14.
63   A. Bourgeot (2013). 'Rébellions et dijhadisme dans le septentrion malien', in D. Konaté (ed.) (2013) *Le Mali entre doutes et espoirs: Réflexions sur la Nation à l'épreuve de la crise du Nord*. Editions Tomboutou: Mali, p.29.

The National Commission for Combating the Proliferation of Small Arms adopts a community-based approach to controlling small arms and light weapons. This could make an important contribution to greater public safety.[64]

3.2.1.1 Recommendations
International organisations including donors are very much involved in the security sector following Operation *Serval,* and can do a great deal more to contribute to the restoration of long-term public security. They should:

- Focus on the rehabilitation and reintegration of combatants, taking into account the various motivations for joining armed groups (such as economic incentive, protection, ideology). Money alone is unlikely to be successful; more research is needed to inform responses that are specifically tailored to the context and therefore more likely to work.
- Consider the experiences of projects working on resilience to organised crime and associated violence in other places, such as Latin America, to inform approaches in Mali.
- Support the emergence of policing which works with all community members and understands and reflects their different security needs, including through increased engagement of civil society in researching and articulating community needs.
- Ensure that any training which they provide to increase the operational effectiveness of the security services is accompanied by training in compliance with human rights standards and the military code, and a strengthening of disciplinary mechanisms.
- Include the development of parliamentary oversight of the security system in any SSR projects they support.
- Implement the human rights due diligence policy of the UN mission, without exception, when engaging in SSR projects.
- Support an overhaul of recruitment practices as part of SSR efforts, in order to break the culture of nepotism and to encourage diversity within the military.
- Support initiatives aimed at increasing public trust in the military, including efforts to bring soldiers accused of human rights violations swiftly to a fair trial. Consider supporting forums for exchange on public safety concerns between local populations and the local command, in order to improve public safety as well as trust between the population and the security services.
- Reflect on lessons learnt from integrating ex-rebels (back) into the army from different contexts around the world, in an effort to see how the cycle of integration-desertion-peace agreement can be broken.
- Support the community-based approach to small arms and light weapons control adopted by the National Commission for Combating the Proliferation of Small Arms.

3.3 Fostering transitional justice and reconciliation

Transitional justice may contribute to reconciliation in Mali. The findings of this research suggest that to do so, transitional justice efforts will need to be legitimate and credible and must deal with the long-term structural causes of conflict in Mali, as well as atrocities committed during the crisis.

3.3.1 Building a legitimate and credible transitional justice process to contribute to reconciliation
Since the crisis, the concept of 'transitional justice' has emerged in Mali. There is no single definition for transitional justice, although practitioners and scholars generally subscribe to the definition put forward by the UN Secretary General that identifies three components: judicial approaches (such as prosecutions); non-judicial approaches (such as truth commissions and reparations programmes); and reform of public institutions, with the aim of helping a society to

64   Interview with National Commission for Combating the Proliferation of Small Arms, Bamako, November 2013.

deal with the legacy of large-scale human rights abuse.[65] There is no blueprint for 'transitional justice', although experience worldwide since the 1990s suggests lessons learnt and best practice. The most salient of these recommendations is that the different mechanisms are usually more effective when used together than separately.

There is not yet a clear picture of what transitional justice as a whole might look like for Mali, although there is discussion of how Morocco's *Instance equité et réconcilitation* might influence Mali's Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC).[66] The creation of a TJRC was announced in December 2013 to replace an earlier Commission for Reconciliation and Dialogue (CRD); the latter was widely felt to be weak and would encourage impunity rather than addressing the past. According to people interviewed for this research, the CRD's credibility and legitimacy were further undermined by the lack of selection criteria for the commissioners and an opaque appointment procedure. "We do not trust it", said one interviewee.[67]

The TJRC could make an important contribution to national reconciliation, so long as it reflects the expectations of victims and meets their needs.[68] Given the multiple conflicts Malians have suffered, this will be no small task. It may be difficult to strike a balance between dealing with violations committed in the north by all parties and countrywide structural causes of the conflict. Human rights violations, particularly cases of sexual violence, are at times presented as only connected to the occupation of the north.[69] Prosecutions and truth commissions must by nature be selective of the cases they investigate. However, if this means partiality in how violations, victims and perpetrators are determined, this is likely to stoke conflict.

Extensive public consultation, not limited to civil society or technical committees, has been crucial in other countries for establishing credible truth commissions. Public debate on the proposed mandate and role of the TJRC will be useful in giving it the legitimacy and credibility it needs for the difficult task ahead.[70] Consultation should also include criteria for membership of the TJRC – a major criticism of the previous CRD was that the selection procedure for the commissioners was not transparent and that appointments were not representative.[71]

Establishing the truth will be difficult and face challenges, not least due to connections between certain jihadists and religious leaders, and due to corruption more broadly. To contribute to national reconciliation, it will also need to lead to action to prevent future conflict. A crucial aspect to this will be the adoption of a social, institutional and legal framework in which all citizens are recognised and their rights protected.[72]

The terms of agreements with leaders of armed groups will also have an impact on broader transitional justice processes and the fight against impunity. The suspension of the international arrest warrants for leaders of the *Haut conseil pour l'unité de l'Azawad* (HCUA), including Hamada Ag Bibi and Alghabass Ag Intalla, allowing them to stand in legislative elections, suggested to some that impunity for leaders would prevail and that the foot soldiers would have to carry responsibility for all the crimes committed.[73] Beyond the fate of individual leaders, ways in which armed group fighters are demobilised or integrated into the armed forces may also have lasting consequences.

65   UN Secretary General (2010). *Guidance Note of the Secretary General – United Nations Approach to Transitional Justice*. United Nations: New York.
66   Interviews with government official, civil society experts, Bamako, November 2013.
67   Interviews with members of civil society organisations, Bamako, November 2013.
68   B. Hasseye et al (2014). Op. cit.
69   Interviews with National Commission for Human Rights, civil society member, Bamako, November 2013. See also N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
70   B. Hasseye et al (2014). Op. cit.
71   Interviews with civil society members, Bamako, November 2013.
72   B. Hasseye et al (2014). Op. cit.
73   Interviews with civil society members, Bamako, November 2013.

Transitional justice in Mali should not solely rely on a judicial approach.[74] It should also integrate aspects of truth-seeking and reparation, consulting the population widely and drawing on international best practice and lessons learnt. It should avoid any approach based exclusively on community or ethnicity. This research identified examples of 'reconciliation' meetings, such as that organised in Mondoro by Ginna Dogon and Tabital Pulako between the Peul and Dogon communities. This type of meeting could complement broader transitional justice measures, so long as the agreements reached were consistent with the law and broader transitional justice objectives, and implemented.[75]

Historical memory has been an important component of transitional justice initiatives in many countries. Different historical narratives figure prominently in conflict discourses in Mali, as does the sense of reliving the past. Experience from other contexts, particularly in Latin America, could help to inform a Malian approach to historical memory, so that such a process does not harden social, ethnic or regional cleavages, and engages critically with the past.

Specific activities could include mobilising historians and researchers to study religious wars in Mali and the process of constructing the Malian 'nation-state'. Other activities could include documenting memories of all categories of conflicts from 1960, from the perspectives of all actors, and publishing the results in French and Malian languages as well as broadcasting them widely.

Targeted development in the north is also considered part of a transitional justice approach, as is encouraging the return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Both of these undertakings could contribute to or undermine national reconciliation, depending on how they are designed and delivered. Targeting specific regions for additional aid, however necessary, has not ended conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Moreover, mismanagement of funds destined for northern Uganda has undermined reconciliation there. Aid that does not take into account causes of structural as well as physical violence is also likely to reinforce cleavages in society. Of the 1.5 billion francs committed for reconstruction in the north,[76] only 60 million are allocated to women.[77] Many of the women's centres set up by the government in these regions to respond to women's needs have been destroyed.[78]

3.3.1.1 Recommendations

International actors including donors have played an important role in supporting transitional justice in other conflict-affected contexts. To do so in Mali, they can help Malians define what kinds of transitional justice are appropriate – for example, in managing the difficult balance between addressing atrocities that were committed in the north and longer-term structural issues that contributed to the crisis, but which are not limited to the north. They can also help to ensure that crimes committed by both sides are addressed. They should:

- Support public consultation and debate as soon as possible on aspirations for transitional justice in Mali, the role, mandate and composition of the TJRC, and options for reparations for victims.
- Help draw on international best practice and lessons learnt in developing a Malian approach to transitional justice that is rooted in the context, credible and legitimate in the eyes of the population, and that does not further entrench social conflict and exclusion. This could include a critical analysis of the Moroccan *Instance équité et réconciliation* and other truth commissions. It could also include considering how traditional and/or inter-community processes and/or a historical memory initiative could form part of a broader transitional justice approach.

74   B. Hasseye et al (2014). Op. cit.
75   Ibid.
76   US$3,120,759 as at 11th February 2014.
77   US$124,826 as at 11th February 2014.
78   Interview, Bamako, 22nd November 2013. Cited in N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.

- Help ensure that marginalised groups, including women and young people, are engaged in consultation processes. They should ensure that their different, specific needs and constraints are understood and respected. In addition, they should take into account these groups' experiences of Mali's conflicts and crises, and ensure that culturally appropriate ways are found to guarantee their full participation in all transitional justice initiatives.
- Ensure that targeted development assistance for the north does not exacerbate existing or latent tensions in the north and in the country as a whole.
- Organise a roundtable to identify the specific needs of women who have remained in the north, or who are now internally displaced or refugees.

3.4 Supporting citizenship through education

This research found that education through formal structures – as well as through informal and non-formal ways outside of schools – is critical for developing a culture of participation and a society that can manage its differences non-violently.

3.4.1 Supporting citizenship through education

There has been significant progress in educational enrollment over the last 10 years, according to the *Taux Bruts de Scolarisation* (TBS). However, problems still remain, notably in accessibility, the quality of teaching, and the mismatch between a growing student population and funding. The authorities admit that: "the education system is not able to meet the needs of the growing population, particularly in terms of human and financial resources."[79] Others argue that the education system is dire and in urgent need of reform. Students talk of "sexually transmitted grades" and observe that "selling your conscience starts at school. Some pass their university year without ever setting foot in the place, and at the end their parents buy them a degree".[80]

Poverty and a lack of accessible schools contribute to low school attendance rates: one in five children has no basic education.[81] Low salaries and staff shortages impair the quality of education.[82] In the north, the crisis has aggravated the situation: nearly 800,000 children affected by the crisis were at the time of our research thought to be out of school, 2,486 schools need to be repaired and around 15,000 teachers and school directors need to be trained urgently.[83] Only 29% of Malians aged 15–24 are literate (35.9% of boys and 22.1% of girls).[84] These figures hide considerable variation, and in Mopti, Sikasso and Kidal, levels of school attendance are lower than elsewhere.[85]

Despite progress in recent years, girls' school attendance remains much lower than boys', and girls' attainment falls behind boys', particularly in secondary and technical education. Of the student body at the University of Bamako, 28% are women.[86] However, the Ministry of Education is trying to correct the gender imbalance in schools, and the SCOFI (*Scolarisation des filles*) programme addresses girls' education.[87]

Strong cultural norms and values, particularly in rural areas, influence girls' education. Girls' domestic work leaves them little time to go to school, while forced marriages and early pregnancy interrupt education. Moreover, some families, especially the rural poor, give priority to their sons'

79   B. Hasseye et al (2014). Op. cit. *Politique nationale cadre de la jeunesse* – see N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
80   Interviews with student groups in Bamako, Ségou, November 2013. Cited in I. Samba Traoré et al (2014). Op. cit.
81   *Le document de politique nationale cadre de la jeunesse* – see N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
82   N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
83   Republique du Mali (2013). *Plan pour la relance durable du Mali 2013–2014*. Bamako. Cited in N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
84   *Document cadre de développement de la jeunesse* – see N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
85   *Cadre stratégique pour la croissance et la réduction de la pauvreté* – see N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
86   Ibid.
87   N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.

education at the expense of their daughters.[88] The link between education and girls' and women's social, economic and political standing is clear.

Education is not just about schools and other formal institutions. Yet informal and non-formal education is not sufficiently taken into account in youth policies. These formative experiences include a range of activities within schools and other institutions, such as youth clubs and centres, reception centres, and sports facilities. However, there are only 34 sports facilities in the country and maintaining those that do exist is a challenge. A young person interviewed in Diabaly told the project: "We have a youth club that is completely derelict and a football field in a bad condition."[89]

3.4.1.2 Recommendations

To support education as a peacebuilding measure, donors and others should:

- Support education reform in which syllabuses reflect the needs of peace, and that requires schools to teach and model good citizenship, based on the 'new', democratic features of meritocracy, honesty, participation and public service, replacing the consensus model with a culture of peace and dialogue.
- Support teacher training and building the capacity of the system to monitor the quality of teaching (materials and human resources).
- Reflect the needs of the economy in syllabuses.
- Support affirmative action to promote equal opportunities in education and to enable greater school attendance in rural areas.
- Support the role of religious leaders in addressing radicalisation through religious schools and institutions.
- Support exchange programmes, particularly through festivals and other cultural events, to build understanding and empathy between young people from different regions.

3.5 Reforming the economy for conflict-sensitive, inclusive growth

Economic growth is desperately needed to address the chronic poverty found across Mali. That said, certain kinds of economic growth may worsen existing divides, while development assistance that favours particular regions over others may exacerbate conflict. Conflict-sensitive, inclusive growth, however, may address both poverty and some of Mali's structural conflicts, also contributing to a more inclusive and stable Mali for the 21st century.

3.5.1 Improving economic governance

Mali has the lowest employment rate of ECOWAS, at 47% (2006–2008).[90] The precarious, desperately poorly paid informal sector comprises around 85% of the jobs in the country.[91] The divisions between leaders and the led, and the corrosive influence of corruption, nepotism and regionalism, have also affected Mali's economy. The business elite, political class, civil society and traditional leaders are deeply interconnected, monopolising resources that are then distributed through a clientelist system of patronage.[92]

'Modernising' reforms – such as privatisation, the introduction of agri-business and attracting foreign direct investment, often with few constraints – come into direct competition with more traditional, subsistence economic activity and contribute to increased social conflict. Grinding poverty, climate change, aid dependency and the large informal sector – not to mention the impact of economic policies, such as EU and US subsidies – point to the need for economic reform and

88   Ibid.

89   Focus group meeting with *Section jeunesse de la Coordination villageoise*, Diabaly, November 2013. Cited in N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.

90   Groupe de la banque africaine de développement (2011). *Mali: Profil du genre pays*. Tunis. Cited in N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.

91   N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.

92   I. Bergamaschi (2007). *Mali: Patterns and limits of donor-driven ownership*, GEG Working Paper No. 31. Oxford. Cited in Z. Yousuf et al (2014). Op. cit.

development. The 'Sikasso Paradox' highlights the failures of the model – poverty rates are high in a fertile region dominated by production of cash crops.[93] However, that is not to suggest that there is a model that Mali must adopt. The consensus model of politics has denied Malians the opportunity to debate and decide which values they wish to see at the heart of economic life and economic development. External actors have a role to play in facilitating that discussion. This could include drawing experiences from other countries and highlighting the positive and negative impact that economic reforms can have on social, political and institutional conflicts.

Assisting the Malian government in creating the opportunities for economic growth and job creation is a major development priority. Greater engagement between local business associations, local chambers of commerce, local authorities, development actors and foreign investment companies could enable foreign investment to support development assistance efforts which are addressing the short- and medium-term needs of the local population. At the same time, it could enable local authorities to gain legitimacy and develop long-term plans and strategies to promote economic growth in their regions.[94]

Discussions with mayoral offices, regional governors, local chambers of commerce, local population and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) suggested that, while many international development interventions have been technically proficient, they have not often been accompanied by efforts to promote greater transparency and improve cooperation between government structures and local representatives.[95] Combined with extensive corruption and racketeering,[96] this suggests that future development projects should incorporate, as a matter of course, local-level oversight mechanisms that include local government, traditional leaders, the local business community and members of communities concerned, as well as national-level parliamentary oversight.

Remittances – valued at US$217million for 2005–2006[97] – are a major source of income in some communities. In some areas, such as Kaniaga, religious organisations have funded extensive infrastructure projects and service provision (religious schools, clinics) from remittances. However, groups without a specific religious objective, such as local communities, do not typically pool remittances for the communal good in this way.[98]

3.5.1.1 Recommendations
Donors and other internationals can do much to support improvements in economic governance. They should:

- Help facilitate a broad, inclusive debate on what kind of economy Mali wants, on which values and principles will be based.
- Base development interventions on a clear assessment of the underlying structural challenges to economic development, paying particular attention to marginalised and vulnerable groups.
- Work with the government to help ensure that foreign investors, when deciding to invest in Mali, are sensitive to the context, locally, regionally and nationally, and have mechanisms in place to engage with local stakeholders. They should develop risk mitigation strategies, particularly in relation to potential conflicts such as those concerning land issues and (un)employment.

93　World Bank (2013). *Poverty, malnutrition and vulnerability in Mali*, Policy Research Working Paper 6561. Washington, D.C. Cited in Z. Yousuf et al (2014). Op. cit.
94　Z. Yousuf et al (2014). Op. cit.
95　Ibid.
96　I. Samba Traoré et al (2014). Op. cit.; B. Hasseye et al (2014). Op. cit.
97　F. Gubert, T. Lassourd and S. Mesplé-Somps (2009). 'Do remittances affect poverty and inequality? Evidence from Mali', Développement, Institutions et Mondialisation. Cited in Z. Yousuf et al (2014). Op. cit.
98　Contribution to expert seminar, Bamako, 8th-9th November 2013.

- Include in development projects, as a matter of course, local oversight mechanisms that include local government, traditional leaders, the business community and members of the local community. Innovative ways should be found to ensure that the views of marginalised groups – such as women and young people – are taken into account. Women's views must feed into every stage of all development programming, from design, implementation and monitoring, and women beneficiaries for each programme should be deliberately sought out.
- Support the establishment of multi-stakeholder dialogue forums in areas where there is large-scale foreign investment. This should include the foreign investors, local business associations, local authorities, chambers of commerce and government representatives. The aim of such forums should be to identify opportunities for local businesses to work with foreign investors to supply goods and services, as well as opportunities for foreign investors to transfer knowledge to local businesses.
- Develop the capacity of local government to engage with and assess the needs of the local population; develop a strategy to respond to their needs in the short, medium and long term; develop and manage their own short-, medium- and long-term development plans; and raise funds for these plans from local sources and central government.
- Commission research to explore ways in which remittances could be more strategically and effectively used, perhaps by encouraging communities to pool them as a form of co-funding for development projects. This could increase local ownership of projects as well as sustainability, as it would encourage more effective management of local resources.

3.5.2 Promoting inclusive development

Research for this project found significant regional disparities in wealth. Bamako generates 24% of gross domestic product (GDP).[99] In the region of Bamako, only 9% of the population are deemed to be below the poverty line, compared with 47% and 83% in Ségou and Sikasso respectively, 31% in Timbuktu and 26% in Gao.[100] Poverty has contributed to radicalisation in the north and participation in organised crime; however, southern Malians repeatedly point out that regions in the south are also chronically poor. Targeted development assistance for the north, however necessary, may exacerbate north/south tension if such assistance does not also take into account the needs of southern regions.

In the public and private sectors, women are underrepresented and generally occupy low-level jobs. Some 84.7% of women are employed in the precarious, desperately poorly paid informal sector.[101] Leaving the informal sector is a huge challenge for many. The women's cooperative COFPROSO-Trans is a good example: although the cooperative receives financial support from the government and international partners, it is still not enough to invest in land and equipment to make the cooperative commercially viable.[102]

In the agricultural sector, women produce around 70% of foodstuffs, yet lack access to land, tools, credit and micro-finance.[103] Local authorities, drawing on customary law, manage land use. The law grants men and women equal access to land, but only 20% of women had access to land in 2009. The *Office du Niger* awards land to heads of households (men), even though local women point out that: "there are also plenty of women heads of families, but the Office does not give them land."[104] Women's access varies considerably across regions. In Kayes, 30% of women have access to land, compared with 21% in Koulikoro and Sikasso and 5% in Gao and Ségou.[105]

99   S. Findley. 'Country profiles – Mali: Seeking opportunity abroad', *Migration Information Source*, 1st September 2004. Available at http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/display.cfm?ID=247. Cited in Z. Yousuf et al (2014). Op. cit.
100 World Bank (2013). Op. cit.
101 N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid.
104 Focus group meeting, women's group, Daoula, Commune rurale de Diabaly, November 2013. Cited in N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
105 Republique du Mali (2004). *Recensement général de l'agriculture*. Bamako. Cited in N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.

The 2012 crisis has had a devastating impact on the economy, particularly on women's production.[106] The combination of jihadist groups, the presence of soldiers and the departure of international aid organisations has wiped out economic activity in areas such as Kidal, as well as leaving producers with crippling debt. During a focus group discussion with one women's group, it was explained: "When the jihadists arrived in Diabaly in January 2013, we had bought seeds on credit. We couldn't go to work in the gardens and lost everything. Today many women struggle to repay the loans. We have completely stopped growing fruit, vegetables and rice."[107] Before the crisis, banks lent reluctantly to women. Since 2012, even this credit has dried up. Not one woman has received support from the Bank of Africa fund, which could benefit women's economic activities.[108]

Women's economic activity is not fully understood. The majority are active in agriculture, fishing, commerce, catering and domestic service. Women also make up 44% of the workforce in artisanal gold mining, but their experiences of working in and contributing to this sector remain poorly understood.[109]

The government's development plan provides 0.8% of the budget for the promotion of women in all sectors. Of this proportion, 25% is to be provided by the government, 4% by beneficiaries and 71% by donors. The only specific assistance for women is small-scale income-generating projects, which will not lead to greater female economic independence.[110]

3.5.2.1 Recommendations
International organisations can contribute to policies and programmes aimed at a better distribution of economic opportunities between different regions, gender and age groups. They should for example:

- Ensure by careful decisions and communications that development aid does not (is not seen to) target the north at the expense of poor southern regions.
- Develop the capacity of local government to engage with and assess the needs of the local population; develop a strategy to respond to their needs in the short, medium and long term; develop and manage their own short-, medium- and long-term development plans; raise funds for these plans from local sources and central government.
- Support the economic independence of women and young people as a deliberate measure in projects.
- Support CSOs that work with women to raise awareness of the investment and credit available. They should also monitor and support civil society monitoring of investment plans to encourage women's access to investment and appropriate credit.

106 UNDP and Ministère de l'Action humaine, de la Solidarité et des Personnes âgées (2013). *Effets économiques et financiers sur la crise politique et sécuritaire de 2012 au Mali: Analyse de la situation et énoncé des mesures conservatoires.* Observatoire du développement durable et la lutte contre la pauvreté: Dakar/Bamako. Cited in N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
107 Focus group with women's group, Daoula, November 2013. Cited in N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
108 N. Sow et al (2014). Op. cit.
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid.

Table 2: Summary of recommendations by theme

Process	Overall objective	Leadership, including central government	Women	Youth	Religious leaders	Local	Civil society	Economic actors
			ACTOR					
1. Reforming state institutions and state-society relations **Reform based on understanding what Malians want from the state, what and how the state can reasonably deliver**								
From consensus to participation	Support public dialogue at national and local levels on visions for Mali of the 21st century; engage the public in all stages of development programming, seeking out the marginalised	Support government and the political elite in leading public debate responsibly and encouraging participation	Support public debates on (potential) roles for women, youth and religious leaders in public life			Engage local communities in all aspects of development programming, including marginalised actors, e.g. women, youth	Support (renewal of) independent civil society organisations (CSOs), including women's associations and CSOs that cut across identity groups	Support local economic actors and local government in engaging communities in dialogue aimed at designing, delivering, monitoring development and services
			Support implementation of UNSCR 1325, participation of women in peace processes, preparation of women candidates for election	Support implementation of national youth policy, meaningful consultation mechanisms, increased participation of young people in decision making	Explore options for more transparency over the role of religious leaders and how religious and state institutions interact			
Improving relations between traditional, local, central government	Ensure better public service delivery by improving relations between citizens, traditional and government authorities locally and centrally	Support government initiatives to improve relations between central, local government and traditional authorities	Seek out women's expertise at local level on development needs and solutions			Improve relations between local traditional leaders/ officials; develop capacities of local authorities to develop, finance and implement plans	Support engagement of grassroots associations and independent civil society with local leaders and in monitoring implementation of development plans and public service delivery	Support local businesses and authorities in designing, resourcing and implementing local development plans
Improving access to justice for all	Support restoration of the justice sector to areas where absent; support improved governance and professionalism of sector; create specialised units for organised crime; improve access to justice for all; support independent human rights monitoring and addressing specific needs of women and slaves	Support government initiatives to tackle corruption; develop the capacities of the justice sector; initiate legislation on slavery, harmful cultural practices, sexual, domestic violence; support an independent national human rights commission	Support women's associations, women's access to justice, campaigns against and awareness of domestic, sexual violence and harmful cultural practices		Support traditional, innovative local-level conflict resolution mechanisms, and improve the relationship with the justice system		Strengthen civil society to combat corruption; support associations addressing harmful cultural practices and slavery	

2. Restoring security and public safety
Understanding how impunity hinders peace initiatives; facing the challenge of providing alternatives to organised crime and armed groups for combatants

Restoring security and public safety	Highlight the role of the security services in protecting the rights of all Malians as a fundamental aspect of security sector reform (SSR); recognise that disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) is based on understanding and addressing the different motivations of combatants	Support government initiatives to reform the security sector and address impunity and nepotism within it; support parliamentary scrutiny of SSR		Focus on rehabilitation and reintegration of combatants, based on motivations for joining armed groups; consider other experiences, e.g. from Latin America	Engage religious leaders in countering violent extremism	Build trust between communities and security services, including through ending impunity, local forums for exchange between civil society and security service providers	Support civil society programmes to encourage debate on security and justice, the role of civil society in monitoring security, justice provision, and citizens' rights and responsibilities relating to security, justice and the security/justice services	Present alternatives to organised crime, including through combating corruption

3. Fostering transitional justice and reconciliation
Dealing with Mali's legacies of atrocities and structural violence to contribute to reconciliation

Building a legitimate, credible transitional justice process	Support public consultation and debate on aspirations for transitional justice in Mali; draw on international experiences; ensure balance between the north and rest of country	Provide government and independent transitional justice bodies with experience from abroad	Identify culturally appropriate ways to ensure full participation by women, youth and other marginalised groups in all reconciliation and transitional justice initiatives		Consider how traditional and/or inter-community processes and a historical memory initiative could contribute		Recognise that injustice has been embedded in the economic settlements that prevail in Mali (e.g. access to land); ensure that businesses, farmers and pastoralists are part of these debates

4. Supporting citizenship through education
Supporting formal, non-formal and informal education to promote participation and conflict management

Supporting citizenship through education	Support education reform that requires schools to teach and model good citizenship, encouraging a culture of peace and dialogue	Support government initiatives to promote an inclusive concept of Mali and Malians, including through the formal education system	Support affirmative action to promote equal opportunities in education	Support exchange programmes and cultural events to build empathy between young people from different regions	Assist religious leaders in addressing radicalisation through religious schools and institutions	Enable greater school attendance in rural areas	Support informal and non-formal education initiatives from civil society that promote civic education, debate and good citizenship	Encourage education reform that reflects the needs of the economy

5. Promoting conflict-sensitive, inclusive economic growth Promoting development sensitive to underlying structural conflicts and supporting inclusive economic growth						
Improving economic governance	Ensure that donor assistance and foreign investment take account of analysis of underlying structural conditions; implement local, regional and national oversight mechanisms	Develop the capacity of local and central government to conduct analysis and integrate findings and oversight mechanisms into development strategies	Support women and young people to participate in designing, implementing and monitoring plans for economic growth; encourage analysis of economic marginalisation of groups to inform investment strategies		Strengthen the capacity of local leaders and civil society to participate in analysis, design and oversight of development plans to increase accountability, relevance and transparency; explore the opportunity to utilise remittances as project co-financing; develop the capacity of local government to assess needs; support civil society in promoting public debate on what conflict-sensitive, inclusive economic growth looks like and why it is important	Encourage multi-stakeholder fora to identify opportunities for investment and risk assessments
Promoting inclusive and conflict-sensitive development	Ensure that development aid is inclusive and sensitive to regional, social, economic and cultural cleavages	Develop the capacity of local and central government to conduct analysis and develop targeted development strategies for marginalised people and regions	Ensure that development assistance contributes to the economic independence of women and young people		Develop the capacity of local government to assess needs, including the needs of marginalised people	Raise awareness of credit and investment, especially for women; monitor the inclusiveness of growth	Move to transparent recruitment and investment practice

4. Development: aiding reform or business as usual?

Evaluating how past development aid contributed or not to the crisis of 2012 is beyond the remit of this project. There are perceptions among the donor/international community and Malians interviewed as part of this research that development aid has at least contributed to some of the key underlying conflicts by supporting a clientelist, consensus-based system that entrenched impunity, corruption and exclusion. In the words of one respondent: "The donors knew about it. They were complicit, because they could have traced where the money went. They can use transparent procedures and run audits. They knew very well that their aid built fortunes…if they wanted to stop it in an instant, they could."[111]

After the trauma of 2012, the government is in place and the international community has mobilised to assist recovery through numerous coordination mechanisms. The momentum of simultaneous domestic and international enthusiasm for reform must be exploited as soon as possible. Developments at home or far away completely unconnected to Mali will, sooner or later, divert attention and stamina. The donor community must act quickly, but with a long-term perspective.

This project has identified a range of processes, discussed above, that could contribute to conflict-sensitive and sustainable development in Mali, as people are not doomed to repeat their history. There are, however, other recommendations to donors and other international actors in Mali that are not tied to specific processes, but that involve ways of engaging with development that should be adopted across the board.

4.1 Recommendations

- Facilitate open, inclusive debate (including dissent) and dialogue, in recognition of the hunger for debate on every aspect of what it means to be Malian. This should include helping to address fundamental obstacles to development by commissioning studies into and discussion of practices, such as slavery, which remain widespread and taboo. It should also include finding culturally-sensitive ways through which to raise awareness and understanding of violations of women's human rights, including through harmful cultural practices.
- Engage in and support debates about how, and how fast, Mali's political economy can and should evolve from a clientelist system into one that is more open and merit-based, without stimulating 'spoiler' responses from those who might lose out – or fear they will lose out – from such changes.
- Recognise that conflict analysis is central to any development project. We have shown how in areas as diverse as education and security sector reform, underlying structural conflicts impair effective development aid. Worse, aid programmes may reinforce social, political and economic cleavages. Development aid is never only technical; it always deals with people and therefore people's power. Development interventions based on conflict analysis, rather than just on an assessment of the need for 'technical' support, are more likely therefore to be effective.
- Recognise how conflict and change are closely intertwined. The reforms identified in this research as being crucial for Mali's development will provoke conflict. The challenge for the donor community is to engage sensitively, supporting long-term reform and inclusion, ensuring that such conflict provokes positive change without turning into violence. 'Business

as usual' is not an option, as it reinforces festering conflicts that may erupt again, as they did in 2012.

- Increase awareness of the critical importance of engaging people, communities and leaders at the local level (a 'bottom-up approach') in development programming, as repeatedly borne out by the findings of this research.
- Choose partners carefully when engaging a representative array of people (at national and local levels) from the design phase to implementation and monitoring to help improve programming. Reinforcing exclusive patterns of governance, whether at the local or national level, is likely to exacerbate conflict. All development projects should engage women and other marginalised groups at each stage. This is likely to be resisted by existing leaders, so donors will need to find innovative and culturally acceptable ways to include women and young people's views and needs, over time transforming how marginalised groups participate in decision-making processes. There may be some thematic areas where, even in conservative parts of the country, women may contribute more easily than others; identifying these and strengthening women's participation in these fields could be a good first step.
- Acknowledge the clear need for an overhaul of the political culture, as borne out by this project, to encourage debate and dissent along with political checks and balances. Building up a tradition of democratic accountability, including at local level, as well as parliamentary scrutiny will be crucial in the long term, and has to start immediately. Even though capacities for scrutiny may be very low, projects should ensure they include the appropriate accountability mechanisms – for example, review of security sector reform plans by the appropriate parliamentary committees, or review of local development plans by traditional leaders, the business community, local civil society and representatives of local communities.
- Encourage further research on the nature and scale of corruption, in its different forms, and on how Malians perceive it. Donors must be far more rigorous and proactive in tackling corruption, starting with their own systems.
- Reconsider aid strategies to ensure that, if they have to suddenly suspend cooperation with a government, aid will still reach those dependent on it for their livelihoods in the short term, while an alternative form of delivery is identified until normal relations can resume. Cutting off aid, whatever the security and political concerns of the donor, has done harm in Mali, particularly to some of the most vulnerable people.
- Encourage international actors – particularly within the UN system, which is staffed by people with extensive experiences from elsewhere – to reflect on lessons learnt from other contexts, in order to maximise the effectiveness of the intervention in Mali. Mali is a highly complex environment, yet many of the challenges it faces – such as dealing with the legacy of human rights violations or the possibility of integrating former rebel fighters into the army – have also been encountered elsewhere.
- Work together to reflect on the role and vision they see for aid in Mali. Donor coordination and alignment with national priorities are of course key elements in effective aid delivery, but it is striking how many donor coordination mechanisms there are in Mali. Donors should make sure that their interventions are coherent with their vision for aid in Mali, rather than understanding coordination as an information sharing exercise. In this way, they are likely to have a far greater impact individually and collectively.

This paper argues that aid should be seen as a process, and not a series of events. There are many processes already underway that the donor community could effectively support, but only if that support is predicated on recognising that development aid programmes contribute to social and political transformation, which – if sensitively used – can enable sustainable social, political and economic development in Mali. There are no shortcuts: the processes identified in this report should be supported quickly, recognising that they may lead to profound, positive change in the long term.