

Mali



Panos/Dieter Telemans

Mali, in West Africa, is one of the poorest countries in the world. This landlocked, former French colony gained its independence in 1960 but has since suffered rebellions, two coups and a 23 year military dictatorship. From 1992 when the country's first democratically-elected president took power, Mali has remained relatively peaceful. Its press is now among the freest in Africa.

Two thirds of Mali is covered in desert and this harsh environment is deteriorating further as rainfall is reducing. Poverty is rife, with 64% of the population living below the poverty line – a situation hindered by few livelihood opportunities, limited basic services and the threat of HIV/AIDS infection.

Figures for the numbers of people with water and sanitation vary considerably. Official sources state that 48% of the population has access to safe water, but, as up to a third of all handpumps are likely to be broken, some estimates say a figure of 27% is more realistic. As a result water-related diseases are common and child mortality is very high, with one in five children dying before their fifth birthday.

WaterAid in Mali



WaterAid's programme in Mali began in 2000 and it now works with seven partner organisations providing water, sanitation and hygiene support to communities in five out of Mali's eight regions (Tombouctou, Gao, Mopti, Segou and Koulikoro) and in the capital city, Bamako. Communities are involved in all stages of these projects, from the planning through to building, maintenance and management.

In urban areas WaterAid's partners are helping to establish communal tapstands that are linked to the city's main water supplies. Community members pay a small amount to buy their water and this is used to pay for the upkeep of the water point and for the wages of trained community members who manage it.

In rural areas WaterAid's projects focus on helping communities to deepen and protect hand-dug wells and fit them with either handpumps or buckets and windlasses to ensure that the water is not contaminated. Where possible broken handpumps are also mended.

Sanitation schemes include household latrines and school sanitation blocks. Hygiene education is carried out in a variety of ways – one approach is community soap-making through which women not only earn money and a new skill but also encourage good hygiene among their communities. The simple act of washing hands with soap and

water at key times – such as after going to the loo and before eating – can reduce diarrhoeal diseases by over 40%.

Revolving credit schemes have also been introduced to communities and these enable women to buy buckets with lids which prevent water from becoming contaminated on the journey home.

WaterAid aims to target the most vulnerable sections of society in Mali – the poorest and the most marginalised, including women, the elderly, disabled and those living with HIV/AIDS. To assist with this, research into gender was carried out in 2005 and a project has also been developed to work with disabled people.

The vulnerability ranking system, initiated by WaterAid in Nigeria, has also been introduced in Mali to ensure projects are equitable. This system enables communities to decide how much each member pays for water, based on their financial situation, to ensure resources are allocated fairly.

Awa is treasurer of the water committee in Nafadji, an area of the capital city Bamako where WaterAid's partner JIGI has helped build community water points. She collects the fees that the community members pay for their water.



"I love my work. Doing this means our whole community is progressing. Before we had so many difficulties in getting access to water. The women of the village used to suffer enormously. Many of our wells would dry up in the hot seasons. When this happened we either had to buy water from the vendors or the women and children would spend the whole day collecting water.

Now we are free. We have time to do the housework, cleaning and also small business. Now Nafadji women can go out first thing in the morning to go to market and sell things. Some women sell vegetables and some make soap to sell.

Children used to get water and they didn't have time for learning. Now they love going to school. Children used to get diseases because the water we drank wasn't clean. It was not unusual for children to die. Malaria was a much bigger problem before we had sanitation, when the streets were always full of stagnant water and the mosquitoes and flies were terrible. Before we had proper latrines the old ones would sometimes overflow so we were walking in the run-off from the latrines too. There was so much illness and everything was on the shoulders of women. There was so much stress, which can lead to conflict.

Now there is lots of training and the whole village is so much more dynamic. We want to act. And the whole process of getting access to safe water and toilets has made us feel like more of a team. If women work, everything works."

Plans: 2006-2011

A new strategy running from 2006 – 2011 sets out the plans and activities for this period.

The key aims are to:

- Help 41,000 people gain access to water, sanitation and hygiene every year by 2011
- Support local partner organisations to raise their own funds, while keeping a strong advisory role on how these funds are spent to ensure a further 20,000 people gain access to water, sanitation and hygiene every year by 2011

To ensure the success of these projects WaterAid will investigate key issues and problems that prevent poor people from accessing water and sanitation services in both urban and rural areas. In urban areas work will focus on informal settlements, which are growing as increasing numbers of poor people move into towns and cities looking for work. Typically these areas are without any essential services like water and sanitation.

Future projects will also look at the issue of water resource management to ensure that water is used and managed in a sustainable way.

Reducing poverty

Mali faces massive challenges to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), targets agreed by all governments of halving the proportions of people without access to water and sanitation between 1990 and 2015. Both targets are off-track – with sanitation lagging way behind. The monthly number of people gaining access to water needs to increase by 130% while the number gaining access to sanitation needs to increase by 950% each month to reach the MDGs.

To achieve this, annual spending needs to increase by \$44.8 million. Currently over 80% of available funds come from external donors and so WaterAid is lobbying the Malian Government and decision makers to prioritise water and sanitation so that more money is available through the national budget.

As some communities have higher levels of access to water and sanitation than others the issues of equity are also crucial. Water needs to be made available to the poor as well as the rich and financial resources must be allocated so that all regions can enjoy the same levels of service.

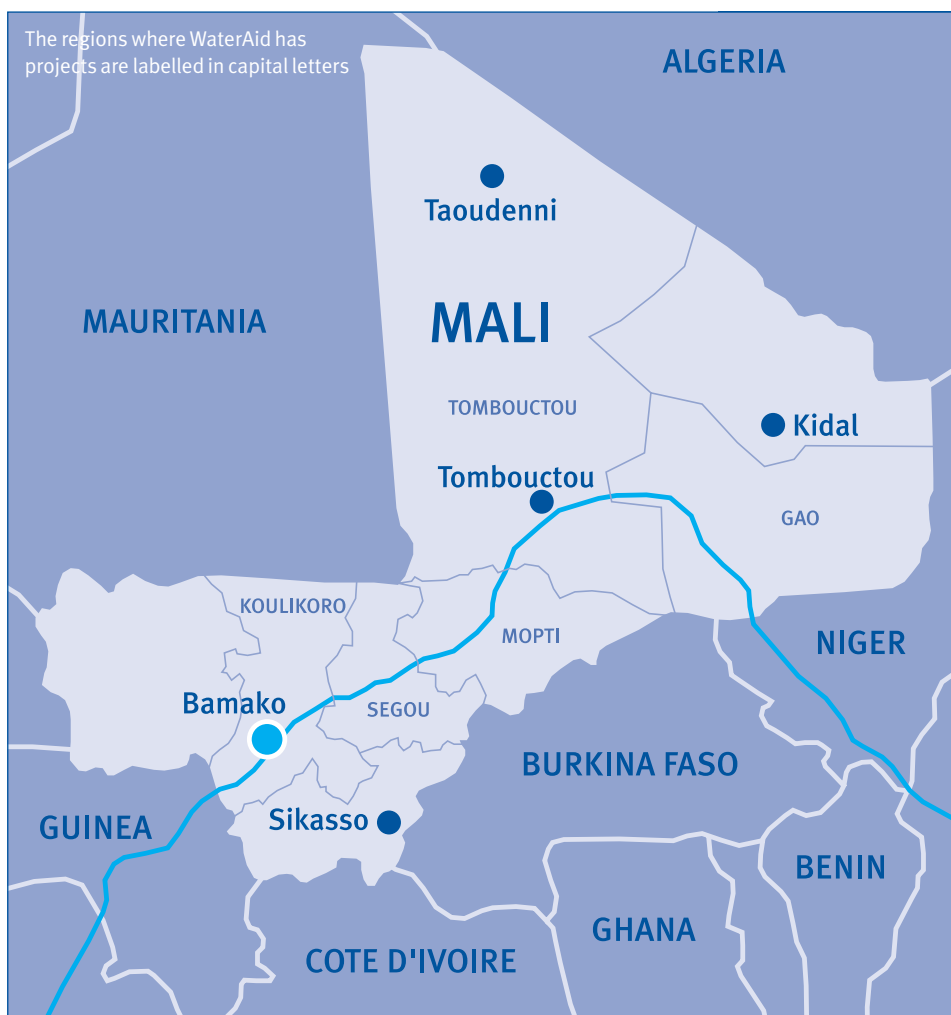
The responsibility for water and sanitation is being decentralised to local governments

and while this does have the potential to improve the targeting of new investments and the sustainability of supplies – they currently lack the resources and the technical skills to carry out this crucial role.

Therefore, to help reach the MDGs the targets are being localised with each local government working towards providing specific numbers of people with water and sanitation every year in their area to reach the 2015 goal. To help achieve this, WaterAid will expand to work in 20 local government areas, where it will work with partner organisations and support local governments in their new responsibilities to help them plan, coordinate and implement projects effectively.

WaterAid's advocacy work will also continue to grow. To date, as well as building networks and relationships within the West Africa Water Initiative and other international partner non governmental organisations (NGOs), WaterAid has formed a coalition with national NGOs and local communities to have a stronger voice on water and sanitation issues.

The Malian Government has been extremely supportive of WaterAid's work and it is hoped in the future that its project and advocacy work will help influence national policies to ensure that one day everyone gains access to safe water and sanitation.



Mali

Area: 1,241,021 km²

Capital: Bamako

Other main cities: Koulikoro, Kares, Ségou, Tombouctou, Sikasso, Mopti, Gao

Population **12 m**

Infant mortality **222/1000**

Life expectancy **47.9 yrs**

Water supply coverage **48%**

Sanitation coverage **45%**

Below poverty line **63.8%**

Human development index **174**

Adult literacy **19%**

Sources: World Development Report 2005 and the Human Development Report 2005.

NB. Official statistics tend to understate the extent of water and sanitation problems, sometimes by a large factor. There are not sufficient resources available for accurate monitoring of either population or coverage. Varying definitions of water and sanitation coverage are used and national figures mask large regional differences in coverage.

Achievements to date

- Helped nearly 19,000 people gain access to safe water
- Set up three centers selling spare parts so that local communities can repair their own water and sanitation facilities
- Helped nearly 5000 people gain access to safe sanitation in 2004/5
- Formed and developed two pressure groups calling for policy changes in water and sanitation provision in Mali

£57 pays for one pit latrine for two households

£280 pays to rehabilitate a traditional well

£360 pays for the annual salaries of six hygiene educators

£600 pays for a block of six school latrines in Bamako

£1000 pays for one improved traditional well

£3500 to £5000 pays for a stand pipe in an urban area serving 400 people

WaterAid

WaterAid – water for life

The UK's only major charity dedicated exclusively to the provision of safe domestic water, sanitation and hygiene education to the world's poorest people.

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Charity registration number 288701 January 2006



Panos/Dieter Telemans

Badialo Coulibaly from Korofina Sud in Bamako.



WaterAid/Daniel O'Leary

"We've all had malaria, and I lost two children to it. The last time, I had it for three months. I wasn't able to do anything – people had to look after me and my children. I've spent so much money on medicines."

Mouriba Coulibaly from Korofina Sud in Bamako.



WaterAid/Daniel O'Leary

"We've got a lot of water problems, and of course we get sick – usually malaria. If we had the money, we'd love to be able to put taps all round the village. If this water and sanitation project comes, it will be all our dreams come true."

Moussa Samake from Dialakoroba has been trained as a hygiene promoter.



WaterAid/Therese Mahon

"I go around the wells to check that they are clean and that the buckets are hung up properly. If a well is not clean then we will call the committee members to come and clean it (each well has a committee of two women and one man).

In the afternoon I go to visit families. I have pictures explaining hygiene and sanitation – how to wash hands and how to use and clean latrines. I use pictures as they have more impact. I show them pictures of good and bad hygiene and explain why children need to wash their hands before they eat and why food should be stored in covered containers. I tell people they should cover latrines otherwise flies will come and spread dirt around and make them sick. Most people accept the practices but others are reticent until they know what it is about. But it is not only one session – I go every day! I am very patient and explain things a lot of times.

Before this project it was like any other village here but now everyone uses latrines and it is clean. Before we had open wells and just after the rainy season we had outbreaks of cholera.

I like my job very much. I am getting a salary and I am from this village – there is nothing better than helping your own people."