

PARTNERING TO MAKE BUDGETS WORK FOR THE PEOPLE

Coalition des Alternatives Africaines Dette et Développement (CAD) – Mali

CAD-Mali is a national coalition established in 1998 as part of the international Jubilee Debt Campaign. In 2004 CAD-Mali began its engagement with budget-related issues through a study to evaluate the implementation of the country’s poverty reduction strategy (PRS) and the use of Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) debt relief funds for the health sector. In 2006 CAD-Mali and other organizations involved in these analyses formed the National Observatory of Civil Society on the Management of Health Sector Funds (ONSC/Health), through which they started monitoring the allocation and distribution of funds to the health sector. With the financial support of Diakonia (a Swedish faith-based organization), the ONSC/Health has established and supports Local Monitoring Committees (CSBs) in six communes (local administrative units) of Bamako district and the urban communes of Koulikoro region, including the town of Kati. The CSBs monitor the utilization of health funds at the local level, raise the local population’s awareness of health budgets and governance issues, and form an advocacy network with the ONSC/Health at the national level. In collaboration with Oxfam/Solidarité (Belgium), CAD-Mali also directs a citizen’s mobilization program to ensure equal access to quality health, education, water, and electricity services in four communes of Koulikoro, the poorest region in the country.

CAD-Mali Monitors the Allocation and Use of Debt Relief Funds for Health

Through its various studies on health budgets, CAD-Mali has found that inefficient and ineffective spending of health funds has resulted in limited improvements in health outcomes. The same studies also reveal a lack of transparency in the use of funds from the HIPC debt relief initiative, which limits the extent to which the effectiveness of these funds can be monitored. CAD-Mali has presented these findings to various high-level government bodies over the last few years.

In 2006 the ONSC/Health, of which CAD-Mali is a member, presented its findings from the monitoring of health funds and the use of HIPC funds in the health sector in Koulikoro region and Bamako district. The meeting was attended by an official from the parliamentary anti-corruption

office (who also represented the Ministry of Health), as well as representatives of a number of civil society organizations (CSOs). At this public forum, ONSC/Health members explained that the funds allocated to Mali through the HIPC initiative are not spent efficiently and that the budget information available does not allow civil society to properly monitor

the use of the funds. They explained that using the available information, it is very difficult to verify how funds are allocated through HIPC to three priority health areas – HIV/AIDS, malaria, and the development of human resources for health.

CAD-Mali and its partners went on to describe how this inefficiency in spending



MALI
Open Budget Index 2010
Overall Score: 35
Government provides minimal information to the public on how it manages public resources.

Availability of budget documents critical for effective public input:	
Pre-Budget Statement	No
Executive’s Budget Proposal	Yes
Citizens Budget	No
Enacted Budget	Yes
In-Year Reports	No
Mid-Year Review	Yes
Year-End Report	Yes
Audit Report	No
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leads to poor access to health services, as well as to poor quality services. Another major problem raised by the ONSC/Health was the lack of transparency in the distribution of funds for the health sector, in that it was not clear which funds go to HIPC projects and which funds go to other Ministry of Health projects and programs. Through its research, the ONSC/Health also found that the transfer of funds from one level of government to the next was complex and, hence, inefficient and difficult to track. Although another main goal of the HIPC initiative in Mali was debt reduction, the ONSC/Health found no evidence that the country's debt was reduced, suggesting that this was due to the inefficient allocation of funds. Lastly, the ONSC/Health commented on the government's Strategic Framework to

Fight Corruption (CSLP), the goal of which is to effectively fight corruption for the purpose of reducing poverty. CAD-Mali and its partners noted that there is not enough information available to allow civil society to monitor the implementation of this framework.

As a result of this and many other engagements with the national government, the ONSC/Health has gained the explicit support of a number of important government actors. The Health Committee of the National Assembly has pledged its support and committed to mobilizing the rest of government. The Ministry of Health also has committed itself to making available the information needed by CAD-Mali to track the effectiveness of health funds at the local level.

The formation of CSBs, which CAD-Mali facilitates, also plays a critical role in the Malian context. Since health is one of the sectors that the government is decentralizing, it no longer makes sense for civil society to monitor health spending solely at the national government level. For this reason, the bringing together of civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, trade unions, and agricultural associations into CSBs to monitor local health spending is of vital importance. A number of these CSBs have already organized public hearings at which mayors have had to explain their actions and respond to citizens' questions about local resource management.

CAD-Mali's Participation in the Partnership Initiative

The overall goal of CAD-Mali's work with the Partnership Initiative is to advocate for greater equity in the allocation of health resources to the Koulikoro region, with a particular focus on ensuring that the number of health facilities and midwives in the region are similar to the national average. To this end, CAD-Mali will undertake an exhaustive study on the impact of the budget on the region's midwife workforce in order to understand the relationships between current budget allocations and the distribution of midwives, the condition of health infrastructure, and health personnel training. CAD-Mali will broadly disseminate the findings of the study among its partners, the government, donors, and members of parliament. In addition, the Partnership Initiative will enable CAD-Mali to build the capacity of its secretariat and the local monitoring committees to engage in budget analysis and advocacy, which will be accomplished through a series of workshops with the national and regional staff of CAD-Mali and its advocacy partners. On the basis of the above analysis and increased staff capacity, CAD-Mali plans to lead a broad advocacy campaign with its civil society partners in the ONSC/Health, the objective of which will be to pressure the Malian government to allocate greater resources to the Koulikoro region. The campaign will target key committees and departments in the legislature and executive, as well as donors and international institutions such as the World Health Organization.

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The IBP's Partnership Initiative is a collaborative effort that seeks to enhance the impact of civil society budget work in selected countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The initiative strives to contribute to the development of sustainable institutions; to increase public access to timely, reliable, and useful information; to enhance the effective participation of civil society in policy and budget processes; and to establish a platform of good practices on which future generations of civil society can build.