



Participatory Research on Education and Agency in Mali

Final Report



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List of acronyms

AME – Association des mères
APE – Association des parents d'élèves
CAP - Centres d'Animation Pédagogiques
CGS – Comité de gestion scolaire
CNECE – Centre National des Examens et Concours de l'Éducation
DEF – Diplôme d'études fondamentales
DNDS – Direction nationale du développement social
EFA – Education for all
EMOP – Enquête modulaire et permanente auprès des ménages
EPT– Éducation pour tous
GBV- Gender-based violence
GCR – Gross completion rate
GER – Gross enrolment rate
HDI – Human development index
IDP – Internally displaced person
IFM – Institut de formation des maîtres
INSTAT – Institut national de statistiques
MEN – Ministère de l'éducation nationale
MESRS – Ministère de l'éducation supérieure et de la recherche scientifique
MDG – Millenium development goals
MVP – Méthodes visuelles participatives
NCR – Net completion rate
NER – Net enrolment rate
NGO – Non governmental organisation
OOS – Out of school
PDI – Personne déplacée interne
PREAM – Participatory Research on Education and Agency
Projet de Recherche Participative sur l'Éducation et l'Agentivité au Mali
PRODEC – Programme décennal pour le développement de l'éducation
PVM – Participatory visual methods
OMD – Objectifs du millénaire pour le développement
ONG – Organisation non gouvernementale
UNHCR – United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNOCHA – United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
VGB – Violence basée sur le genre

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Executive summary

Overview of the project

The Participatory Research on Education and Agency in Mali (PREAM) project is a three-year study conducted in six communes from Ségou and Mopti regions in Mali in partnership between McGill University and the Université des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Bamako (ULSHB) in close collaboration with Plan International Canada and Mali. It sought to investigate the relationship between the agency of adolescents (aged 11-18 years), especially girls, and their experience of primary education in conflict-affected settings in Mali.

The research design emphasised adolescents' participation using a mixed methods approach that integrated child-friendly participatory visual methods (PVM) workshops conducted in 2021 (Phase 1) and 2023 (Phase 3) and a larger scale quantitative survey conducted in 2022 (Phase 2). Phase 1 involved 120 young people across 6 schools with the data set including 120 drawings and 23 cellphilms. The Phase 2 survey built on adolescents' insight into agency and education obtained during the initial workshops and investigated the relationship between agency and education with 1000 adolescents. Phase 3 included participatory workshops with the same young people as the initial phase as well as youth-informed community workshops with both adolescents and adults.

Context of the study

Mali's has made great strides in education in the last two decades. However, important challenges remain. The 2022 households survey (EMOP) from Mali's Institute for Statistics reveals important disparities between urban and rural areas. Also, while enrolment numbers at the first cycle of fundamental are somewhat encouraging, primary completion rates, lower secondary schooling rates, and young people's literacy rates are still low. Another area of concern is gender differences. A higher percentage of boys attend both cycles of fundamental schools in Mopti and Ségou regions and literacy rates for young people and head of households are also lower for females compared to males (REACH, 2022). Despite an increased attention to education by both Malian and international actors, the schooling system keeps facing significant barriers that are exacerbated by the multiple crisis that the country faces. These include poverty, insecurity, the weight of domestic chores and field work that children are required to undertake – particularly for girls, social norms and attitudes of some parents towards education, distance and accessibility of schools and the quality of the provision of education (Sidibe et al., 2022; World Bank, 2019).

Mali's armed conflict began in 2012 and coincided with an escalation of inter- and intra-community tensions, as well as rough climatic conditions that led to crop and herd losses. The deterioration of living conditions was also accelerated by political instability, repeated trade union strikes, COVID-19 and inflation all of which contributed to increase households' vulnerability, especially for poor families and people living in conflict-affected areas who struggle to access livelihoods and basic social services. The multiple facets of the crisis have had a profound impact on Mali's education sector including numerous school closures, difficulties in recruiting teachers, insecurity around schools, and the destruction of schools' furniture and infrastructure. According to the 2022 joint education needs assessment, girls' enrolment in schools has suffered from the conflict more than boys' because parents are concerned for the safety of their daughters on the way to school and prefer to keep them at home in times of insecurity (UNICEF Mali, 2022; REACH, 2022).

Meaning of agency in the literature

According to the bibliometric analysis of Priya et al. (2021), agency is the fifth most important keyword used in women's empowerment literature. However, despite its wide use and long-standing literature, the concept of agency is framed and interpreted in various ways depending on the disciplines and epistemological backgrounds of the authors (Samman and Santos, 2009; Gammage et al., 2016). For instance, agency is associated to bargaining power in economics, consciousness, voice and action in gender studies, and autonomy and personhood in psychology. This means that unless researchers take the time to clearly specify what they mean by agency, they run the risk of discussing different things. There are various definitions of agency. Kabeer (1999:438)'s definition – the ability to define one's goals and act upon them – appears to be the most popular. It has been specified and expanded upon by various authors and organizations. While agency is a common concept in the anglophone literature, the same cannot be said in the francophone literature. In French, translations of the term agency have not yet reached a consensus and terms used by both academic ('agentivité' or 'agencéité') and practitioners ('pouvoir d'agir', 'faculté d'action' and others) somehow fail to evoke the same mental imagery that these concepts have in English. The main challenge for PREAM, however, lied in translating the concept of agency in Bamanakan and Dogosso, the local languages spoken in the researched areas. Organized reflection sessions with local language specialists at ULSHB were therefore conducted with the researchers to select adequate ways to talk about agency with young people in the local languages without defining it for them. After discussions between researchers and local language specialists, we

chose to formulate the prompts and questions in different ways including 'the capacity to act' and the 'capacity to help yourself'.

Research findings

Young people's understanding of agency

The drawings of the 120 young participants told powerful stories about adolescents' daily lives in the researched area and what helping oneself looks like in their eyes. Some participants drew something they felt they needed to have agency. Others drew a job or an occupation that they would like to pursue in order to earn money to help themselves. Throughout the study, participating adolescents expressed the desire not only to help themselves but also to help others for instance their families and their communities. Many also expressed the desire to work together to achieve their objectives, which suggests that collective agency may be more significant for them than initially assumed. The themes represented in the drawings include water, nutrition, housing, environment, transport, health care, education, teaching, agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing, sewing, justice and security, business, other occupations, and visions of life. The cellphilms also conveyed messages showing that young people are not only aware of the situation around them and the events affecting their communities, they also have ideas to address the challenges experienced and find solutions to the problems they face.

After the viewing of the artwork at community level, several adults expressed their surprise at the level of awareness that adolescents have of the conditions around them and their determination to make things better. During the phase three workshops, adolescent viewers classified the messages of the films in the following categories: health or sanitation issues, economic issues, moral and social issues, and educative issues. For them, the cellphilms present young people's concerns and worries but most importantly, they reflect adolescents' daily life in their communities as well as the values they consider important such as mutual assistance, peace, conflict resolution, solidarity, discipline, perseverance, and equality of opportunities. The young film makers said they wanted to raise awareness about the challenges they faced but also encourage reflections on values and positive behaviours.

Components of agency most important to adolescent girls and boys

During the survey, we asked the participating adolescents a series of open questions about agency. The similarity in the most frequent answers regardless of the wording of the questions, gender or location, indicates clearly that young

people have a precise idea of the factors contributing to agency. Even when survey respondents could give only one answer, for example “What is THE MOST important to be able to achieve your dreams and live the life you want?” the top twelve answers are the same. These were validated with a participatory exercise in the final workshops and include: education, money, advice, parental support and blessing, courage, job, determination, support from teachers, motivation, efforts/working hard, ambition, and health. Peace was also mentioned as a factor supporting young people’s agency during the survey.

Relationship between education and agency

Education and agency support each other. The young respondents see education – understood here as adolescent girls’ and boys’ participation in primary school – as an important factor to have agency. Their answers suggest that going to school increases adolescents’ capacity to help themselves and take action to achieve their objectives in life. The knowledge acquired in class, in particular reading and writing, mathematics and speaking French, are perceived to help youth achieve their dreams. Several respondents also mentioned that education helps to understand life, to resolve problems, to have good ideas and to behave well in society. Adolescents, however, also pointed out that education is not enough on its own to develop the capacity to help oneself and should be combined with the other components of agency mentioned above. Furthermore, the participating boys and girls think that agency can help adolescents to stay at school and to have better grades. The relationship between education and agency therefore goes both ways.

Young people’s experiences of education

The majority of school attending survey respondents said they were comfortable to participate in class, ask questions to their teachers, share ideas or answer when the teacher ask them something and make comments or complaints regarding their learning experience at school to an adult. What they mentioned liking most at school is learning, followed by mathematics and French. When young respondents were asked what they don’t like at school, chatter (bavardage in French) was mentioned the most followed by brutality, corporal punishment, and insults. The effects of the conflict on education reported most often by school attending adolescents include school closure, insecurity, the lack of teachers, fear of going to school (mostly in Mopti) and travelling difficulties.

Agency and gender

Although agency is a common term in gender studies, it tends to be used to

discuss the extent to which girls and boys display agency, how they do, and the reasons why they do or do not. Attempts to understand the gender differences within understandings of agency, even with gender disaggregated data, proved to be far more complex. First, because there are several different ways to comprehend agency even within scholars, second, because it has no equivalent in local languages, and finally, because understandings of agency are influenced by culture and positionality. The artwork produced by boys and girls during the first phase of the study reflected traditional gender roles and the division of labor in the research areas. Girls' cellphilms talked about their domestic work and different challenges encountered on matters of health and education. Boys' cellphilms, although some also portrayed health and education issues, had a stronger focus on the conflict and questions related to income generation activities traditionally assigned to boys such as agriculture, football, construction work, etc. Similar differences were also visible in the drawings although some girls drew non-traditional professions such as soldiers or lawyers.

The gender comparison of quantitative data revealed differences in the way boys and girls experience life. For instance, most boys and girls from both regions said it is more difficult for girls to attend and remain at school. When asked why they thought it was like this, the five reasons most mentioned are domestic tasks, early marriage, pregnancy and maternity, the need to work, and taking care of children. The occupations of out-of-school boys and girls are different. However, the main factors of agency identified in the survey are the same for boys and girls, the relationship between agency and school experiences is strong for both male and female participants and boys and girls see the impact of the conflict similarly.

Working with adolescents in times of crisis

Another interesting finding from the study is that young people want to talk about the crisis. The adolescents who took part in the study have concerns, experiences, and ideas that they wish to share about the conflict. Their level of awareness of the circumstances in which they live is higher than what adults might expect. This was highlighted in the discussions between adolescents and adults during the third phase of the study. Adolescents also want to share their solutions. Participatory visual methods are a relevant way to generate such exchanges, bridge inter-generational barriers and enable young people, especially girls, to express themselves freely. The study has shown that they well adapted to working with young people even in context of crisis.

Concluding words

Throughout the study, PREAM's young respondents showed that they understand what it takes to have agency. They have ideas, plans and life objectives, but the data also suggest that their aspirations often need to be accepted and validated by adults to be fulfilled. Advice, whether they are provided by a member of the family, a teacher or other adults play a meaningful role in the development and expression of agency. The importance of parental support should therefore not be understated.

Young people understand their environment. They have ideas and suggestions to address the problems around them and want to be involved. This, for us, is the essence of agency and something education systems should promote. However, culture and positionality influence what is perceived as agentic behaviour. Agency appears different depending on who looks at it and our positionality may influence what we recognise as agency and what we overlook. Perhaps NGOs and education partners need to reflect on the extent to which the way they see agency aligns with the visions of the local actors and whether it is ethical to impose foreign ways of interpreting agency.

Part 1: Introduction to PREAM

1.1. The context of Mali

1.1.1. Education in Mali

Education in the Republic of Mali, hereafter Mali, has come a long way since its independence from France in 1960. Series of reforms progressively transformed an education system which, under colonial rule, had focused almost exclusively on the sons of chiefs, into a decentralized system composed of different levels and types of instruction supporting different pathways to girls' and boys' socio-professional insertion. In this study, we were primarily interested in fundamental (or basic) education, which is under the purview of the *Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale* (MEN). Fundamental education is mandatory for all children from 6 years-old onward and lasts nine years. It is divided in two cycles: the first cycle includes grades 1 to 6. It corresponds to primary education. The second cycle, which is equivalent to lower secondary in other countries, comprises grades 7 to 9. At the end of grade 9, students can take state-wide examinations to obtain a *Diplôme d'Études Fondamentales* (DEF), which is necessary to access secondary schools (Republic of Mali, 2019).

Mali's education system is decentralized since 2003. While official curricula and national assessments are developed by the State, municipalities are responsible for the day-to-day management of schools, the recruitment of teachers as well as the financing and maintenance of schools. Each school has a school management committee (CGS) usually composed of seven elected members (president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, account manager, project officer, and girls' education officer) as well ex-officio members including the school principal and representatives from teachers, mothers' association (AME), parents' association (APE), students, city council and civil society.

Mali's has made great strides in education in the last two decades. For instance, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for the first cycle of fundamental (primary schools) went from 62.53 (52.8 for girls) in 2001¹ to 74.4% (74.9% for girls) in 2022¹ and the gross rate of completion for the first cycle of fundamental have also significantly improved from 19.27% (15.47% for girls)¹ in 2001 to 43%

¹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics's database accessed on June 29 2023 <http://data.uis.unesco.org>

(45% for girls) in 2022². However, such progress did not come without challenges. The first decennial program for the development of education or PRODEC (1998-2012) played an important role in bringing girls into the education fold (Loua, 2018). It coincided with global initiatives such as Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the resulting commitment towards achieving universal education worldwide. These initiatives created new opportunities for funding thus helping Mali to build schools across the country and address its low enrolment rates³. However, the sharp increase in schools' intake came hand in hand with two challenges: having enough qualified teachers and ensuring the quality of learning (Pryor et al., 2012; Akyeampong et al., 2013).

The level of qualifications of teachers in Mali is quite heterogeneous, especially in remote areas where qualified teachers are not eager to go. The usual path of teacher training in Mali is through teacher training institutes (IFM), a college-level training lasting 1 or 3 years depending on whether the applicant already has a higher education degree. However, insecurity has led many teachers to flee areas perceived dangerous. In such locations, fundamental schools have both teachers who have graduated from IFM or hold a technical diploma or a certificate of professional aptitudes and teachers who either hold a DEF or baccalaureate or have no diploma at all (Traore, 2018). The training of teachers has an incidence on the quality of the learning experience and even teachers who have attended IFM have pedagogical shortcomings. One of the reasons is that until recently the curricula of the teacher training institutes did not closely align with the needs of the schools⁴, another is that while Mali has received its fair share of international assistance to the education sector, that did not translate to sufficient support into teacher preparation and professional development (Lussier, 2015).

While PRODEC-2⁵ (2019-2028) now endeavors to enhance the quality of education, the 2022 households survey (EMOP) from Mali's Institute for Statistics reveals that important disparities between urban and rural areas still need to be addressed. For example, in 2022, the GER for the first cycle of fundamental education was 74.4% nationwide but only 68.9% in rural areas. Similarly, the net

² Institut National de Statistiques du Mali accessed on June 29 2023 <https://www.instat-mali.org/fr/publications/enquete-modulaire-et-permanente-aupres-des-menages-emop>

³ The gross enrolment ration in the first cycle of fundamental went from 57.85% (49.3% for girls) in 2000 to 75.68% (71.54% for girls) in 2015 (UIS database, 2021)

⁴ A new teacher preparation curricula for the IFMs has been elaborated and piloted but it is not fully implemented yet.

⁵ Programme Décennal de Développement de l'Éducation et de la Formation Professionnelle Deuxième Génération 2019-2028 de la République du Mali.

enrolment rate (NER) for the first cycle of fundamental in 2022 was 58.5% (73.8% urban and 54.2% rural) (Republic of Mali INSTAT, 2023). The significant difference between GER and NER also indicates a high ratio of overage learners in the system. See table 1 below for more statistics.

Table 1: National statistics on education and literacy from EMOP 2022⁶

Indicator	Female %	Male %	Mopti %	Ségou %	All %
Gross Enrolment Ratio Fundamental 1 / Primary	74.9	74.0	50.2	58.4	74.4
Net Enrolment Ratio Fundamental 1/ Primary	59.4	57.7	39.8	47.8	58.5
Gross Rate of Completion Fundamental 1/ Primary	45.0	41.0			43.0
Gross Schooling Rate Fundamental 2 /Lower secondary	57.6	59.0	37.3	59.9	58.3
Net Schooling Rate Fundamental 2 /Lower secondary	32.7	28.9	20.2	30.0	30.7
Literacy Rate 15-24 years old	45.5	59.2	43.5	40.4	51.7
Literacy rate of heads of households	32.1	39.1	38.4	21.9	38.5

As can be seen in the table above, although enrolment numbers at the first cycle of fundamental (Fundamental 1) are somewhat encouraging, primary completion rates, lower secondary schooling rates, and young people's literacy rates are low. The literacy rates of heads of households are also very low, which suggests that parents may not be able to help their children in their study. The success rate for the 2021 DEF exam was also low at 69.28 percent (68.72 percent for girls and 69.79 percent for boys) (République du Mali CNECE, 2021).

A study conducted by the MEN in 2018 identified several factors that could explain the low rate of success at the DEF. First, many young people reach grade seven without a mastering the knowledge and skills from previous years. Few adolescents read at home. Consequently, many of them do not read well enough to understand the class materials. Also, several students reach grade seven with a level of French that tends to be very low, particularly in rural areas. Since French is the only medium of instruction in the second cycle, the level of French severely undermines young people's chances of learning in the other disciplines. The living conditions of the families are another factor. Young people often have to work after

⁶ <https://www.instat-mali.org/fr/publications/enquete-modulaire-et-permanente-aupres-des-menages-emop>

school in order to bring money home. Many households have no light in the evening, making it difficult for adolescents to study at night. Most families lack the money necessary to purchase books and there is little supervision from parents when children are meant to study. Finally, schools lack resources such as books and teaching materials and the size of the groups can be very big thus making the teaching and learning conditions difficult. Table 2 below presents other factors influencing success at school identified in the ministry study (Republic of Mali MEN, 2018).

Table 2: Factors influencing success at school (RoM MEN, 2018)

External factors	Internal factors	Structural factors
• Motivation of the child • Socio-economic context & poverty • Relationships between school and community • Parental supervision • Distance to school • House & farming work	• Headcount in class • Teachers • Pedagogical practices • Problems of discipline in class	• Pedagogical supervision • Resources • Pedagogical innovations

Source of the table: PREAM literature review (Lussier, 2021)

The education of women and girls

Another area of concern in Mali's education sector is gender differences. As nationwide figures suggest (see Table 1 above), girls are now accessing and completing primary education on par with boys, but important regional differences remain. A joint study undertaken by REACH and UNICEF in 2022 for the Education Cluster reveals a higher percentage of boys attend both cycles of fundamental schools in Mopti and Ségou regions. For Mopti, rates are 51 percent boys and 49 percent of girls attending the first cycle of fundamental, and 53 percent of boys and 47 percent girls at the second cycle. In Ségou, there are 54 percent boys and 46 percent girls in the first cycle, and 53 percent boys and 47 percent girls in the second cycle (REACH, 2022). Also, as indicated in table 1 earlier, literacy rates for young people and head of households are lower for females.

In Mali, as in other countries from the west-African subregion, a patriarchal system persist that tends to concentrate the exercise of power into men's hands and often prevents women from significant decision-making. The division of labor differs between men and women, both at work and at home, and traditional norms maintain women in their role of mother and spouse rather than recognizing the

critical role they play in social, economic, and political changes. Stark gender differences also exist in the sharing of income, access to resources, and the level of schooling (Toukara, 2015; Loua, 2018). For instance, despite international commitments to improve girls' transition from basic education to higher education⁷, Mali still has lower effectiveness and rates of admission and completion for female students at secondary levels than that of their male counterparts. Also, women are highly underrepresented in higher education as well as in well paid jobs which deprives the country of considerable development potential (Loua, 2018). While Mali's parental awareness of the importance of girls' education has significantly improved in recent years, the perception of girls' education varies depending on the social and familial contexts and some parents still prefer to educate their sons.

Girls' education is also undermined by financial factors because families must assume several costs such as registration fees, school furniture, transport, parents' association fees, etc. The more a child progress in his or her education, the higher the costs and that reduces education opportunities for girls of low-income families since given the choice between educating a male child or a female one, parents tend to favor their sons. Girls are particularly vulnerable to dropping out of school at puberty due to lack of support with menstrual hygiene management (no sanitary wear, poor sanitation at school). Moreover, the weight of domestic tasks tends to be heavier for girls who must undertake many household chores and take care of younger siblings. Other factors influencing girls' education include gender-based violence, distance, pedagogical factors, early marriages and pregnancies, the weight of traditions and religious considerations, as well as insecurity. (Loua, 2018; Republic of Mali MEN, 2018).

Main barriers to education in Mali

Despite an increased attention to education by both malian and international actors, the schooling system keeps facing significant barriers that are exacerbated by the multiple crisis that the country faces. These barriers are summarized below.

The first major obstacle is **poverty**. Approximately 68 percent of the population in Mali is considered multi-dimensionally poor while 50 percent live below the poverty line of purchasing power parity of \$1.90 a day (UNDP, 2022). The economic downturn that resulted from the conflict, COVID 19, increased draughts and the economic sanctions of 2022 led to high inflation and soaring food

⁷ The association for the development of education in Africa (ADEA) made girls' transition from basic education to higher education its priority in 2008. It also recommended that more female teachers be hired at post-primary level.

costs. For many households, particularly in conflict-affected areas, this translated into increased poverty and food insecurity. In such circumstances families struggle to pay school fees and some cannot afford the necessary learning materials for their children. The situation is particularly difficult for internally displaced (IDP) families who have lost assets and livelihoods in their relocation. In some cases, parents must make the difficult decision of sending some of their children to school while the others work.

Insecurity, although its level varies constantly, is another major barrier to education and a significant deterrent to school enrolment and attendance. Insecurity led to school closures in both Mopti and Ségou and even when schools are open parents fear for the safety of their child. IDP children may also carry trauma and fear attending school. As of December 2022, there were 412,387 internally displaced persons (IDP) in Mali, 62 percent of whom were children under 18 years old (32 percent girls and 30 percent boys) and 54 percent women (UNHCR, 2022). According to the Direction Nationale du Développement Social (DNDS), the main reasons for displacement include armed conflict (66 percent) and intra-community tension (33 percent). Recent draught and floods also forced 24,000 persons to leave their homes (République du Mali DNDS, 2022).

The **weight of domestic chores and field work**⁸ that children are required to undertake constitute another obstacle to education. Girls are expected to do a lot of work around the house to help their mother while boys take care of animals or do agricultural work so parents can earn income outside the home. This is detrimental to education because it limits attendance, makes them late for class, and reduces the time and energy they have available to study at home. As mentioned earlier, girls are particularly affected (Republic of Mali MEN, 2018). In some families, adolescents are also required to work outside of their home and earn income.

Social norms and attitudes of parents towards education also represent a barrier because some parents do not realize the importance of education and may not see the relevance of schooling to prepare girls for their traditional role as wife and mother, or to help boys with subsistence agriculture or income generation. Many parents, especially if they have a low level of education themselves, feel that once a child can read and write that is sufficient and, especially for girls, education can expose them to values that may undermine traditional gender roles and expectations (Republic of Mali MEN, 2018; Loua, 2018).

⁸ Travaux champêtres

The barriers above are somehow external to the education system itself but other obstacles relate more closely to the **quality of the provision of education**. For example, teachers are often absent or on strike, some teachers lack positive classroom management skills, classes are overcrowded, school infrastructure is often in poor condition, classroom furniture is often inadequate, and most schools lack of teaching and learning materials. Moreover, distance and accessibility of schools can be problematic for younger children, girls and children with disabilities, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas (Sidibe et al., 2022; World Bank, 2019).

Diakite (2000), while recognizing that the State may have played a role in the situation, asserts that the problems of the education system are complex and somehow rooted into a societal identity crisis stemming from nearly a century of disconnect between the exogenous norms of a schooling system highly influenced by elites and prone to follow the lead of western countries on the one hand, and the traditional values so important to a vast segment of the population on the other.

1.1.2. Overview of the crisis

According to Traore (2015) Mali's history is scarred by different forms of crisis and the country has never known complete stability. For instance, Mali's empires had fratricidal wars, colonial times were turbulent and there were five rebellions since the country's independence. The last decade, however, has been affected by a multi-dimensional crisis that wasn't only a vector of instability, but also seriously undermined Mali's social and economic development as illustrated in the latest human development report in which Mali is ranked 186. Mali's human development index (HDI) is 0.428 (0.399 female and 0.450 male), the life expectancy at birth is 58.9 (60.3 for women and 57.6 for men) and expected schooling ia only 7.4 years (UNDP, 2022).

The armed conflict experienced today began in 2012 when the Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azaouad (MNLA) began its efforts to conquer the north of the country by aligning itself with jihadist groups (Traoré, 2015). The conflict coincided with an escalation of inter- and intra-community tensions, as well as rough climatic conditions such as draught, bush fires and floods that led to crop and herd losses. The crisis contributed to exacerbate poverty, increase food insecurity and undermine social cohesion. The country's humanitarian team and partners assert that 8.8 million people needed

humanitarian assistance in January 2023, an increase of 17 percent in one year (UNOCHA, 2023).

The deterioration of living conditions was also accelerated by political instability, repeated trade union strikes, COVID-19 and inflation all of which contributed to increase households' vulnerability, especially for poor families and people living in conflict-affected areas. Affected populations struggle to access livelihoods and basic social services due to violence from non-state armed groups, crime, the planting of improvised explosive devices and the destruction of infrastructure (UNICEF Mali, 2022; UNOCHA, 2022). Insecurity also affected population movements. There were 79,036 displaced households in Mali in December 2022 and only 35 percent of IDPs were considered productively active nationwide (République du Mali DNDS, 2022). There are also 182,000 Malian refugees in neighbouring countries, mainly in Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso and an estimate of 56,871 refugees in Mali (UNHCR, 2022).

1.1.3. Effects of the conflict on the education sector

The multiple facets of the crisis have had a profound impact on Mali's education sector. According to Mali's Education Cluster, at the moment of writing this report, 1,766 schools were closed because of insecurity, affecting 529,000 children and more than half of these schools were located in the region of Mopti (UNOCHA, 2023). Also, as mentioned earlier, conflict-affected areas suffer from a lack of qualified personal because teachers with the required certification and those with experience prefer to work in areas that are safe and in schools that have access to services⁹. Internal migration can deprive displaced children from their right to attend school or put additional pressure on schools from host communities contributing to the overcrowding of classrooms. According to the 2022 joint education needs assessment, girls' enrolment in schools has suffered from the conflict more than boys' because parents are concerned for the safety of their daughters on the way to school and prefer to keep them at home in times of insecurity (UNICEF Mali, 2022; REACH, 2022).

The conflicts have affected local populations in several ways. Insecurity and crimes committed by armed groups have led to migration, early and/or forced

⁹ In 2018, only 41.2 percent of teachers had the appropriate level of qualifications prescribed by law (République du Mali, 2020).

marriages, sometimes perceived as a mean to protect girls, as well as conscription of child soldiers (Traore, 2018). Another documented effect of the conflict is increased gender-based violence (GBV). In 2021, 9,540 incidents were reported, 39 percent of which included sexual violence (24 percent of rape) (UNICEF Mali, 2022). All these factors contribute to increase school dropout. Conflicts can also cause the destruction of school furniture and materials, contribute to the disengagement of educational actors, expose children to the presence of armed men near the schools, and lead to the closure of school canteens, a key feature to convince parents to send their child to school (Traore, 2015; 2018; Loua, 2018). In addition to human rights violation and the ransacking of school infrastructures, conflicts also deflect essential financial resources from education (UNESCO, 2011).

1.2. Description of the project

1.2.1. Purpose and Objectives

The Participatory Research on Education and Agency in Mali (PREAM) project is a three-year study conducted in Ségou and Mopti regions in Mali. It sought to investigate the relationship between agency and educational participation in conflict-affected regions of Mali. Agency is one of the concepts most mentioned in empowerment literature (Prya et al., 2021) yet youth agency remains understudied, particularly in contexts of crisis (Lussier, 2021). It is therefore important to better understand how adolescents in Mali perceive agency and the conditions that affect their agency (Mitchell et al., 2022). The purpose of PREAM was to identify ways to enhance the responsiveness of policies and programs to the educational rights and aspirations of adolescents, especially girls, in crisis-affected areas of Mali. More specifically, the objectives of the research as agreed in the E-cubed grant documents were to 1) Improve the availability of credible, crisis context-relevant and participatory research on the relationship between adolescent girls' agency and education; and 2) Strengthen the use of evidence on agency and education by advocates of quality education for adolescents, especially girls, in crisis-affected areas.

1.2.2. Research questions

To achieve its objectives, the study addressed the main research question "What is the relationship between the agency of adolescents (aged 11-18 years),

especially girls, and their experience of primary education in conflict-affected settings of Mopti and Ségou, Mali?” and the following sub-questions:

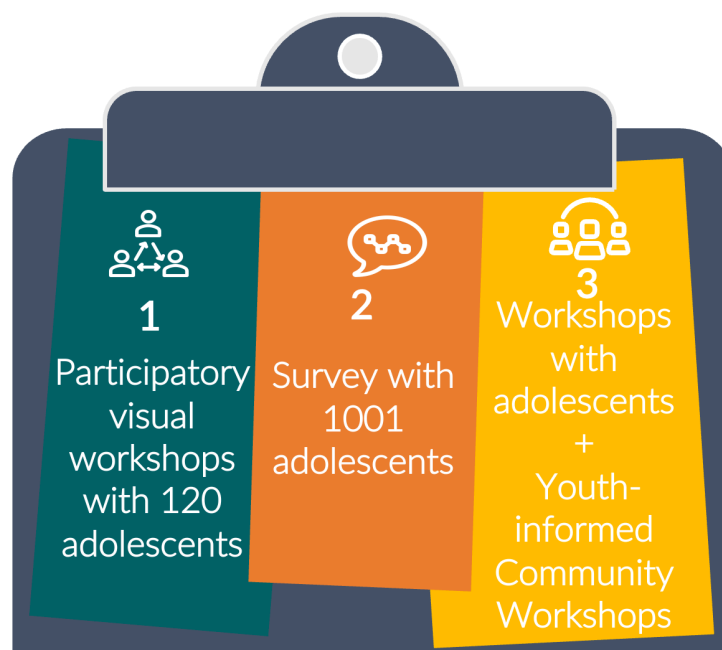
1. What components of agency are most important to adolescent girls and boys?
2. How does agency influence adolescent girls’ and boys’ participation in primary education?
3. How does adolescent girls’ and boys’ participation in primary education influence their agency?
4. How does the relationship between agency and experiences of primary education in conflict-affected settings differ between adolescent girls and boys?

1.2.3. Partnership

The project drew on a collaboration between McGill University and the Université des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Bamako (ULSHB) in close collaboration with Plan International Canada and Plan International Mali who are implementing an education in emergencies program in the research area.

1.2.4. Research design

Figure 1: The three phases of PREAM



The research design emphasised adolescents' participation using a mixed methods approach that integrated child-friendly participatory visual methods (PVM) workshops conducted in 2021 (Phase 1) and 2023 (Phase 3) and a larger scale quantitative survey conducted in 2022 (Phase 2). Phase 1 involved 120 young people across 6 schools with the data set including 120 drawings and 23 cellphilms. The Phase 2 survey built on adolescents' insight into agency and education obtained during the initial workshops and investigated the relationship between agency and education with 1000 adolescents. Phase 3 included participatory workshops with the same young people as the initial phase as well as youth-informed community workshops with both adolescents and adults. In discussing the artwork produced in the first year of the project as well as some of the findings from the survey, the participating adolescents brought an added layer of depth to the data and underscored the key messages that young people sought to communicate. In each commune, young volunteers were invited to present the artwork and share the insights from their peers during community workshops. The participating adults discussed the productions and engaged in discussions with the young people. The methodology of each phase is further discussed in part 3.

With a focus on equality, inclusiveness, capacity development, and

sustainability, this research project sought to engage adolescent participants as active research partners and co-producers of knowledge. It also prioritized the elevation of local voices, particularly adolescent girls, in shaping data collection instruments and analysis. The research design also helped participants to learn, by experience, how research is conducted, analysed, and communicated. While the study focused particularly on girls' agency, both girls and boys were consulted to identify the gendered differences in both agency and education participation. The different phases of data collection were conducted in local languages: Bamanakan in Ségou and Dogosso in Mopti.

1.2.5. Research location

The study took place in six communes: Baraoueli, Konobougou and Markala are in the Ségou circle situated in the region of Ségou. Dandoly, Sibi Sibi and Soroly are in the Bandiagara circle located in the region of Mopti. Both regions are in the ethnically diverse area of Sahel where the conflict is taking place. The circle of Bandiagara is located in the center of Mopti region and is mostly rural. Situated between Mopti, the region's capital, and Burkina Faso, the small town of Bandiagara lies at the heart of what is called the Pays Dogon, 63 km east of Mopti. The circle of Segou is located in the center of Segou region and has both urban and rural communities.

Figure 2: Map of Mali



1.2.6. Knowledge mobilisation and capacity development

One of PREAM's highlights was the academic collaboration between the researchers from McGill and ULSHB. This collaboration led to several joint communications in international conferences and academic events, publications, as well as capacity development activities such as online and face to face training courses. The knowledge mobilization and capacity development initiatives are detailed in Appendix 1.

Part 2: What's agency got to do with it? Agency in the literature¹⁰

2.1. Meaning of agency

According to the bibliometric analysis of Priya et al. (2021), agency is the fifth most important keyword used in women's empowerment literature. However, despite its wide use and long-standing literature in the social and cognitive sciences, the concept of agency is not always addressed with the depth it deserves. Agency is also being framed and interpreted in various ways depending on the disciplines and epistemological backgrounds of the authors. (Samman and Santos, 2009; Gammage et al., 2016). For instance, agency is associated to bargaining power in economics, consciousness, voice and action in gender studies, and autonomy and personhood in psychology. This means that unless researchers take the time to clearly specify what they mean by agency, they run the risk of discussing different things. Overall, there seem to be a general agreement that agency is temporally embedded and combines purpose, potential, and action. It can manifest itself differently in different domains of life (or realms of power) and needs to be interpreted within specific historical contexts and socio-cultural environments in order to adequately identify the normative and structural constraints to its exercise.

There are various definitions of agency. Kabeer (1999:438)'s definition – the ability to define one's goals and act upon them – appears to be the most popular. It has been specified and expanded upon by various authors and organizations and considering the particular focus of PREAM, the following two definitions agency may be of particular interest:

- “the capacity to make decisions about one's own life and act on them to achieve a desired outcome, free of violence, retribution, or fear” (World Bank, 2014:xv).
- “the capacity to effectively manage multiple and sometimes competing goals in ways that enable him or her to sustain functioning, repair any damage, avoid harm or threats, and to implement plans that are cohesive and responsive to any relevant contexts – social, physical, and cultural” (Durrant & Ward, 2015:192)

¹⁰ A more in-depth version of the literature review can be found in Lussier (2021) and is available in both English and French.

2.2. Agency and language

While agency is a common concept in the anglophone literature, the same cannot be said in the francophone literature. In French, translations of the terms empowerment and agency have not yet reached a consensus and terms used by both academic and practitioners somehow fail to evoke the same mental imagery that these concepts have in English. Two academic terms are frequently used to refer to agency, they are ‘agencéité’ and ‘agentivité’. However, many authors prefer to use the English term (see for instance Labrecque, 2001 who uses it alongside ‘agencéité’ and Montenach, 2012) or short sentences such as ‘pouvoir d’agir’ or ‘faculté d’agir’ (power to act) ou ‘capacité d’action effective’ (capacity to act) in order to capture what they mean by agency. This is because ‘agencéité’ and ‘agentivité’ are rarely used outside of academia and may lack resonance for practitioners and policy makers. Unfortunately, while such terms are more easily understood, they do not fully capture the full meaning of ‘agency’ and are sometimes used to talk about different things. For instance, Nagels et al. (2018) define a learners’ ‘pouvoir d’agir’ differently from ‘agentivité’¹¹ while Morin et al. (2019) use ‘développement du pouvoir agir’ as a translation for empowerment and ‘agentivité’ for agency. For this reason, authors sometimes prefer to talk about ‘agents’, which has a similar meaning in English and French rather than ‘agency’.

‘Agentivité’ or ‘agencéité’? Both terms can express the capacity to define goals and act in a coherent, purposeful manner to achieve them. They have also both been used to refer to individual or collective agency¹². According to Dubois et al. (2008), ‘Agencéité’ is used more in human and social sciences and emphasize the purpose of an action in relation to others. These authors suggest that ‘agentivité’ is more frequent in cognitive sciences and is interested in the mechanisms that define the action such as motivation, target, levels of decision, the process, etc. For example, Bulot et al. (2007) define ‘agentivité’ as “le fait de se vivre auteur de nos propres actions” (the fact of living yourself as the author of your own actions). However, a growing number of scholars in the fields of gender studies and education are also using the term ‘agentivité’. For example, Lang (2011) talks about ‘l’agentivité sexuelle des femmes’ (womens’ sexual agency). Nagels et al., (2018:4) define ‘agentivité’ as “la capacité d’intervention sur les autres et le monde où les individus et les groupes sont tout à la fois les producteurs

¹¹ For these authors le ‘pouvoir d’agir’ involves influencing one’s material and social environment through productive action and transforming oneself by thorough reflection and constructive action.

¹² See for example De Herdt and Bastiaensen (2009) on agencéité collective

et les produits des systèmes sociaux" (the capacity to intervene on others and the world, where individuals and groups are both producers and products of social systems) and Guilhaumou (2012) discuss the multidimensional paradigm of 'agentivité' with similar building blocks to those found in the anglophone literature. 'Agentivité' is also frequently used in linguistic where it relates to the construction of discourse and positionality. See for instance, Keïta (2020). The use of 'agencéité' is popular across disciplines as well¹³ but appears to be the most common term used in economics and anthropology.

The main challenge for PREAM, however, lied in translating the concept of agency in Bamanakan and Dogosso, the local languages spoken in the researched areas. As mentioned earlier, the need for participating girls and boys to define agency themselves and express their own views of what being an 'agent' means in their own context and lives is integral to PREAM's premises. In addition to not having a word for agency in Bamanakan and Dogosso, the idea of goal, central to the selected definitions of agency, does not translate easily. In her study of women's agency and the psychological domain in the urban fringe of Bamako, Klein (2016) began by asking women and men what was necessary to overcome hardship. The bamanankan word 'hèrè' was used to describe the desired state, that is 'good things' in the sense of general wellbeing and happiness. Informants understood this concept and did not need probes or examples of what 'hèrè' could look like. Her questions were asked using 'niè ta' when talking about improving well-being: 'niè' means "forward" and 'ta' means "go." Two other important concepts also emerged as central to Klein's study of agency: 'dusu' and 'ka da l yèrè la'. 'Dusu' refers to internal power, strength, courage and internal motivation and 'ka da l yèrè la' means believing in yourself. While helpful to initiate discussions about agency and how to talk about it in Mali, the researchers felt the terms used by Klein did not completely capture Kabeer's (2019) definition and therefore organized reflection sessions with local language specialists at ULSHB (see section 3.1.1.).

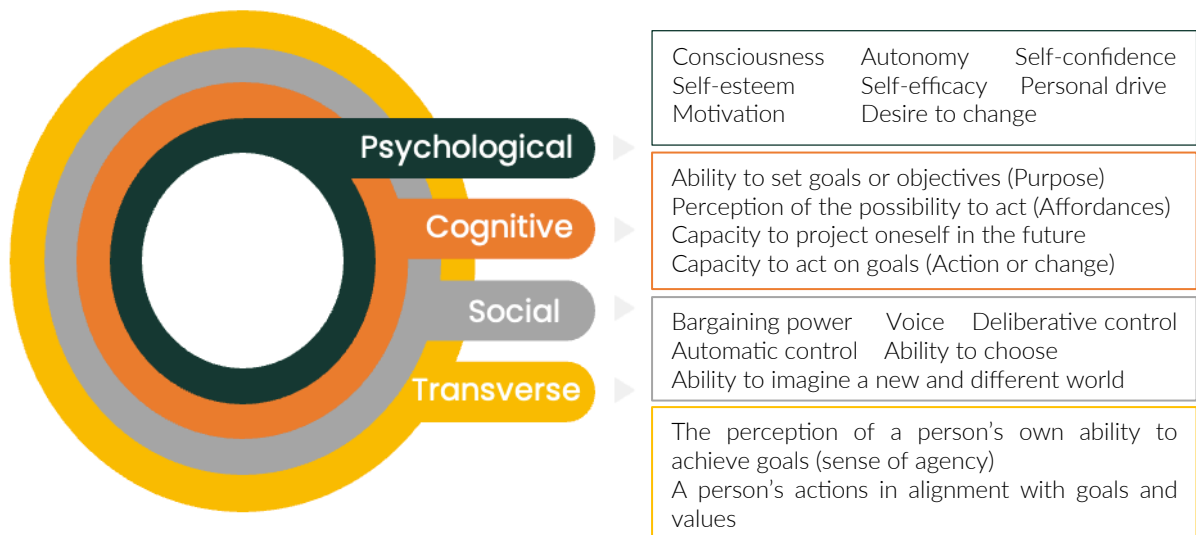
2.3. Components of agency

From the various definitions analyzed in PREAM's literature review (Lussier, 2021), different components of agency have emerged (boxes on the right of Figure

¹³ See for instance Chartrand (2017) in the field of cognitive informatic and philosophy and Labrecque (2001) in anthropology.

3). We present them here in four categories (cognitive, social, psychological and transverse) in concentric circles as it is our understanding that the components from different categories support each other's. We deem important to mention, however, that the authors who presented these components did not categorize them as such. We are also aware that the boundaries between the categories are somehow porous and that there may be overlap between the components.

Figure 3: Components of agency in the literature



One of the challenges faced in discussing women and girls' agency is that it may not necessarily be deployed towards ends that contribute to gender equity. A person may choose not to act or to conform with patriarchal stereotypes. For example, if girls do not use their agency in collaboration with others, individuals may improve their own situations, but systemic gender inequalities will remain unaddressed (Jeffery, 2001). How women's agency is perceived and interpreted therefore depends on who's looking at it. For instance, resistances celebrated by feminists may appear like a dishonor for family members. For Kabeer (2008), it is therefore important to differentiate between agency in small day to day actions and more consequential forms of agency that affect women's capacity to control their own lives strategically or to renegotiate their relationships with others. Some forms of agency are therefore considered '**non transformative**' because they maintain or reinforce existing power relations and decision-making structures while others are described as '**transformative**' in the sense that they seek to question,

challenge and transform the status quo. They contribute to shifting power dynamics (Kabeer, 1999; Gammage et al., 2016; Donald et al., 2017).

In her discussion of women education, Mary Ann Maslak builds on Jeffery (2001) to distinguish two types of women agency: oppositional and allegiant. **Oppositional agency** is “the act of challenge in which an individual, alone or in concert with others, acts and plans to act against the established norms in a system” (Maslak, 2007: XV). **Allegiant agency** is “the collective and collaborative movement of an individual or group that aligns with popular thought in order to achieve a purpose” (ibid). Oppositional agency is different from what Bordonaro (2012) and Bordonaro and Payne (2012) have called ‘ambiguous agency’, a concept used to frame the actions of youth considered at-risk without falling into traditional notions of victimhood. It is particularly helpful when young people demonstrate their agency in ways that challenge societal views of how youth should behave. Johnson et al. (2018:578) define **ambiguous agency** as “actions, which go against normative assumptions about the nature of childhood”. At the opposite side we have ‘**responsible**’ agency where children’s and youth’s conduct conform with morally and socially approved goals. Bordonaro and Payne (2012:368) argue that while child-rights actors advocate for youths’ right to exercise agency, child protection measures and other interventions aimed at youth ‘at-risk’, ‘in need’ or ‘out of place’ tend to be characterized by a “paternalistic, directive and supervisory approach” that bends children’s and youth’s conduct towards certain behavioral and social norms. In other words, youth are encouraged to be agents, as long as it is the ‘right’ type of agency.

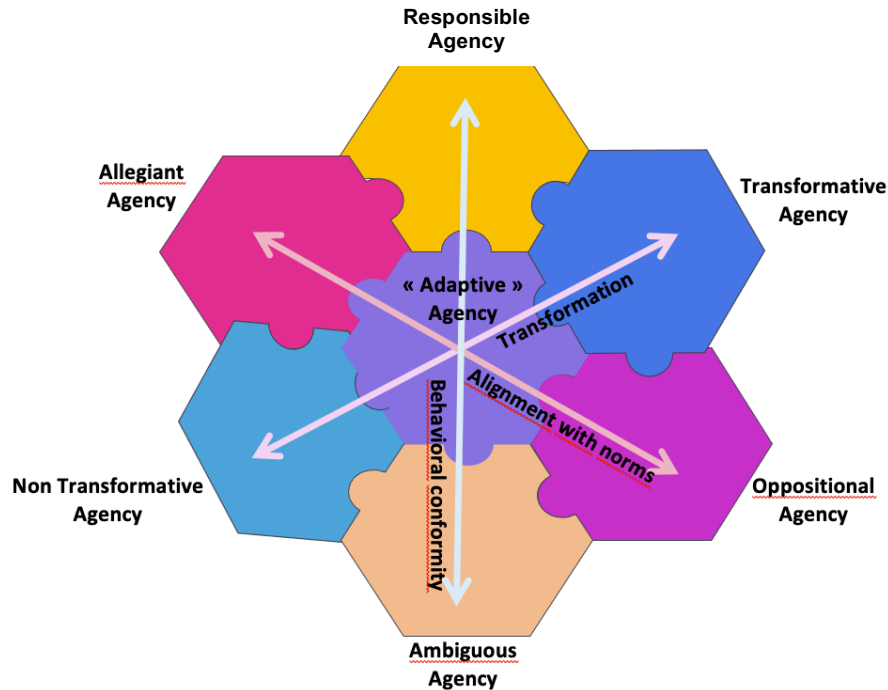
It transpires from the above discussions that the different forms of agency can be positioned on three continuums: *transformation* (from non-transformative to transformative agency), *alignment with norms* (from allegiant to oppositional agency) and *conformity with accepted standards of conduct* (from responsible to ambiguous agency). These continuums can be imagined as axes of a three-dimensional model. Therefore, a person’s agency can be located anywhere on the three axes therefore integrating to different extents different forms of agency.

Ndiaye (2010) introduced the term ‘agencéité située’ (situated agency) to remind us that freedom of wellbeing is contingent on the site where it is exercised. Labrecque (2001) underlines how agency carries with it a part of history because ‘it implies the capacity to consider oneself in the present (the experience of daily life), in the past (the structure constituted of multiples experiences) and the future

(the transformation of the structure, the resistance)' (translated from p.11). Nagels et al. (2018) show that learners' agency (l'agentivité des apprenants) can be manifested in three different ways: as the direct effect of a person's intervention; by procuration – when someone else's action is harnessed to achieve the desired goals; collectively, through a group's coordinated efforts. For these authors, agency is understood within a model of the agent systematically negotiating his behaviors and motivations with his physical and social environment. Learners' agency therefore enables them to create or cease opportunities to initiate or develop learning projects. Dembele's study (2018) of young people living in the street or growing up in institutions in Mali suggest that a good self-image and the capacity to project oneself into the future are complementary and that both of these dimensions matter for youth empowerment and social insertion. They can therefore also be considered components of agency.

Our work in PREAM led us to reflect on what happens when a person, while being fully aware of the context and power dynamics of a particular situation, chooses to remain in the center of one or more of these continuums as a form of adaptation mechanism. Mitchell et al. (2022) suggests that this is also a form of agency. We therefore chose to put in the center of this model a form of adaptive agency, that is the agency being exercised when internal and/or external regulations limit a person's level of control and autonomy but he or she act in a resilient manner adapted to the situation. The resulting model is the 'agency flower' (see Figure 4) below. While the two-dimensional graphic fails to fully represent the fluidity and interconnectivity of the different forms of agency, it still enables us to represent visually the continuums and forms of agency and can be used as a reflection tools that goes beyond standard views of agency.

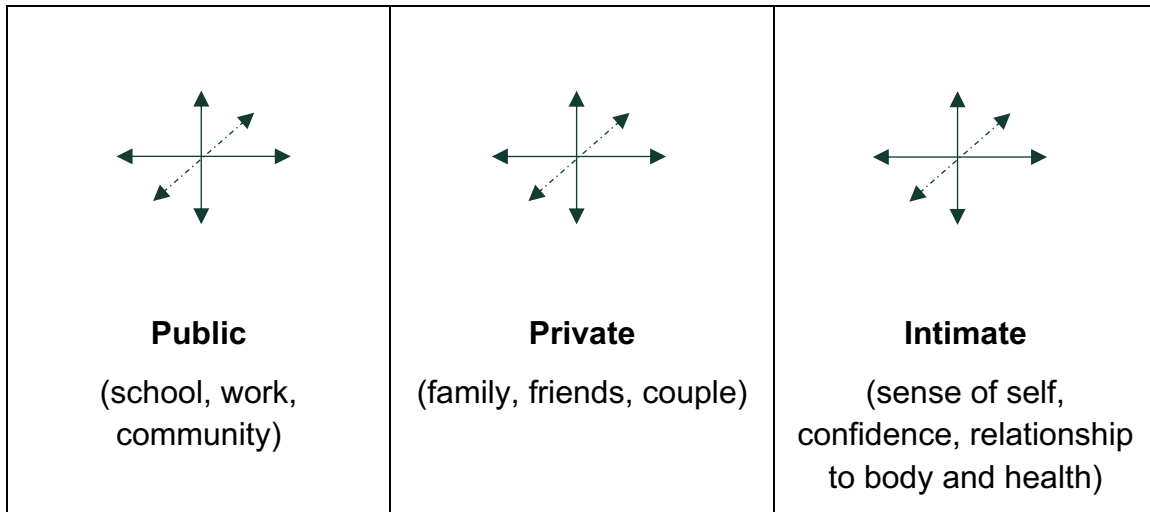
Figure 4: “Agency Flower”: Continuums and Forms of agency



PREAM's literature review suggests that when studying agency with children and adolescents, researchers should keep in mind their asymmetrical position with adults based on their level of autonomy and development but still regard them as being able to make decisions and influence their environment in their own unique peer cultures (See for instance Corsaro, 2005; Ballet et al., 2011; and Mayall, 2000. It may also be helpful to look at the influence of the different caregivers on agency as they can be 'autonomy supportive' or 'controlling' (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Agency, like empowerment, can be experienced in different domains of life (Ibrahim and Alkire 2007). For instance, a girl can demonstrate a certain level of agency at the local market where she works but feel constraint when attempting to do so at home or at school. Veneklasen and Miller (2002) write about three different 'realms' of power where agents can be active. The public realm refers to the visible face of power as it affects women and men in their jobs, employment, public life, legal rights, etc. The private realm of power refers to relationships and roles in families, among friends, sexual partnerships, marriage, and so on. The intimate realm of power has to do with a person's sense of self, personal confidence, psychology, and the relationship with his or her body and health. Figure 5, in which the arrows represent the three continuums mentioned earlier, shows how agency can be positioned in the different realms of power.

Figure 5: Positioning of agency



2.4. Individual vs collective agency

Another important distinction is between individual agency and collective agency. In social theory, agency is a distinguishing feature of being human and relates to the capability to originate acts. But the extent to which a person's exercise of agency generates individual transformations and social change is debated (Cleaver, 2007). According to Sen (1999) **individual agency** plays a central role in removing inequities that constrain wellbeing, but it is also limited by the social, political and economic opportunities that are available to us. It is therefore important to recognize the simultaneous contribution of individual freedom and the force of social influences. De Jaeger and Froese (2009:444) argue that "interindividual relations and social context do not simply arise from the behavior of individual agents, but themselves enable and shape the individual agents on which they depend". For these authors, individual cognition and interindividual interactions are two aspects of agency that mutually enable and constrain each other. Therefore, individual human agency is, to a large extent, determined by social factors¹⁴. Power is often regarded as a form of agency

¹⁴ In their study of agency and policy dynamics, Capano and Gabaldi (2018) suggest three types of personal agency patterns: brokers, entrepreneurs and leaders.

(McGee and Pettit, 2020). From that perspective, individual agency relates to what scholars of power call the ‘power to’ (choice and decision making) as well as the ‘power within’ that represents a person’s attributes such as self-confidence, desire to change, motivation and personal drive (Veneklasen and Miller, 2002; Gaventa, 2006; Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007; Trommlerova et al., 2015). **Collective agency**, on the other hand is closely aligned with the type of power referred to as ‘power with’ associated with the synergy that emerges when groups of actors come together to build alliances and act collaboratively. Collective agency can be expressed at the level of family and friends, the community and beyond (Oosterom, 2020). It has been discussed particularly in the context of social movements (Dubois et al., 2008; Cleaver, 2007).

Agency is frequently conceptualized as relational. It is exercised in a social world where appropriate ways of being and behaving are not just a matter of individual choice (Cleaver, 2007; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). The opportunities and resources available to exercise agency are shaped by factors such as social class, religion, gender, ethnicity, customs, social norms, rules and laws, etc¹⁵. These are often referred to as ‘structure’ (or social structure), a set of interconnected frameworks providing the social conditions for and requirements of action (Maslak, 2007). The dialectic relationship between **structure** and **agency** in social arrangements, conceptualized by Anthony Giddens (1984), is still relevant today because structures influence how power and agency are distributed among individuals and groups. “Structures shape the agency of individuals and groups, but the agency exercised by individuals and groups in turn shape structures, reproducing, modifying, or transforming them” (Gammage et al., 2016:1). Maslak (2007) distinguishes between two categories of structures: ‘Macroobjective’, which comprises institutions such as the state, the church, the community, and the family; and ‘macrosubjective’, that includes communal and societal values and norms, both secular and religious.

“Empowerment relies on a strategic and creative dance of agency and structure in reshaping the ways in which we engage in education, development, and social change. Lasting and meaningful empowerment depends on communities’ abilities to alter social and cultural structures that promote inequalities” (Monkman et al., 2007: 107).

¹⁵ In the capability approach, these are called ‘conversion factors’ (Sen, 1999; Alkire and Deneulin, 2009; Levey et al., 2018)

“Adolescent girls in the age group 13–17 years are in a critical phase of their life. During this phase, girls are either supported to walk along a path that allows them to thrive, or they will fall back on traditional roles that quash their capabilities, halt their aspirations, and increase their vulnerability to a variety of risks [...] [available data sources] do not address this age group sufficiently. Systematic study of younger adolescents is required to better understand what supports and holds back girls in this stage of life” (Berhane et al., 2019:S53).

“The problem for research, however, is that the concept of agency easily directs our attention to what is active and visible. The challenge is how to grasp agency in what is seemingly passive or hidden on the sidelines of the classroom activity. Since our culture still symbolizes activity as male and passivity as female, the question of agency often turns into a question of gender.” (Rainio, 2009:39)

For a more extensive review of the literature see Lussier (2011).

PART 3: Methodology and implementation

3.1. Phase 1 – Participatory Visual Methods Workshops

In each of the six communes, groups of 10 girls and 10 boys engaged in a four-hour participatory workshop facilitated by the Malian research team in Bamanakan and Dogosso, the local languages of the researched areas. During the workshops, the young participants shared their perspective on the idea of agency, how they experience agency in their lives and how it relates to educational participation. The participatory work drew on group discussions and 2 visual approaches: drawing (Theron, Mitchell, Smith and Stuart, 2011); and cellphilm – short videos produced with mobile phones or electronic tablets (MacEntee, Burkholder & Schwab-Cartas, 2016; Gurman et al., 2012; Mitchell & DeLange, 2013).

For the drawings, participants were asked “À quoi ressemble s’aider soi-même” (What does helping yourself look like?). They worked individually to produce simple drawings, and then worked in small discussion groups of boys and girls to consider the meanings of their drawing. Following the work of Theron et al (2011), the data consisted of the 120 drawings with short written captions, and audio recordings of the small group discussions and plenary session.

For cellphilm, participants worked in small single-sex groups using the project’s electronic tablets to create one to two minutes videos in response to the prompt “vous allez créer des cellphils sur avoir la capacité d’agir et de s’aider soi-même ou ne pas avoir la capacité d’agir et de s’aider soi-même” (Create cellphils on having the capacity to act and help yourself or not having the capacity to act and help yourself). Following the work of MacEntee et al, 2016, the participants had an opportunity to go through the basic steps in Cellphilm production (brainstorming, storyboarding, filming, screening, and small group reflection). In order to protect the identity of the young participants, the cellphils were created using a no-face approach, which means that young film makers used techniques such as filming actors from the back or from a distance; filming shadows, objects or body parts; framing the shots from shoulders down, etc. To know more about the no-face cellphils, see Lussier et al. (in press). The participating adolescents produced 23 cellphils in total. The data also include the recordings of discussions.

3.1.1. Formulating the prompts

In participatory research, the wording of the prompts can influence how participants understand their tasks and the artwork they produce. Even when acknowledging that no prompt is perfect, deciding on the specific instructions to give to produce drawings and cellphilms raised two challenges: first, making sure that everyone involved in collecting and analysing the data shared the same understanding of the prompts, and second, translating the prompt. We began the reflection process by drawing on Kabeer's definition of agency as "the ability to define one's goals and act upon them" (1999, p. 438), as well as Klein's (2016) work on agency in Bamanakan (one of the local languages of Mali). Since the term 'goal' does not translate easily in the local languages the Malian researchers consulted local language specialists and after discussions between the teams in Mali and Canada it was decided to use more open-ended prompts with a simple formulation to provide the research team with the necessary scope to explore adolescents' understandings of agency and facilitate discussions on contexts and factors influencing agency.

3.1.2. Sampling

An equal number of female and male grade 7 students aged 11 to 18 years old were selected randomly from each of the six schools. The schools were selected amongst the list of schools participating in Plan International's IMAGINE project¹⁶.

Table 3: Participants to the participatory visual workshops (Phase 1)

PVM Workshops			
Participants	SÉGOU	MOPTI	TOTAL
Boys	30	30	60
Girls	30	30	60
Total	60	60	120

3.1.3. Implementation of phase 1

¹⁶ The Improving Adolescent Girls Inclusive Education (IMAGINE) project is a four-year initiative delivered in Mali through a consortium led by Plan International Canada, together with World Vision Canada and Save the Children Canada, in partnership with the Government of Canada.

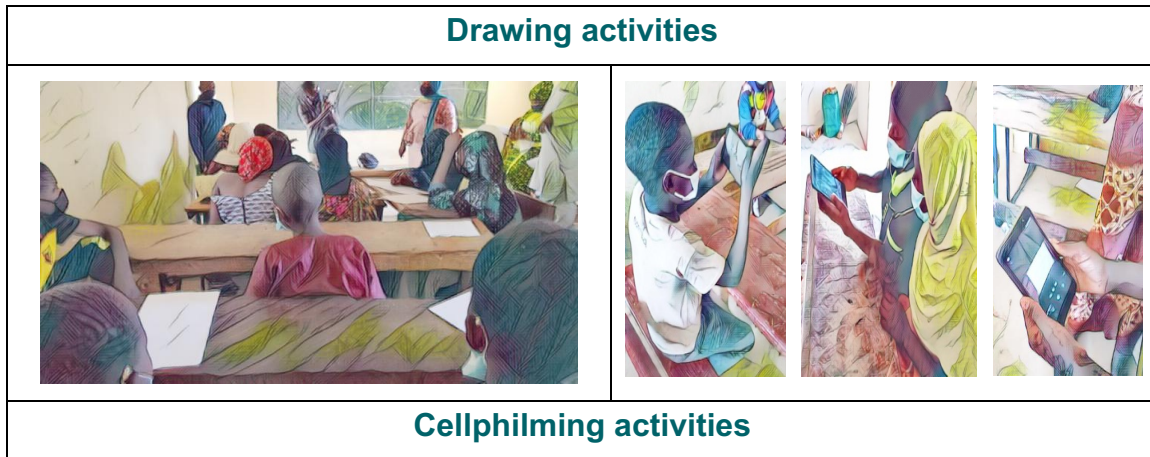
Before travelling to the research sites, a group of researchers piloted the research protocol and data collection tools with small groups of internally displaced adolescents from the research area near Bamako. These pilot workshops took place from May 26-30 and enabled the research associates involved in data collection to familiarise themselves with the protocols, tools and equipment and make recommendations to better adapt the methodology to the local context. These trials were particularly useful to identify how best to translate the prompts in local languages. During this activity, a number of challenges were encountered, including wording instructions to respondents without leading, technological issues with the tablets, and the use of local languages. Following the workshops, a meeting was held with McGill's team to identify lessons learned and ways forward. For example, researchers identified a need to better support the adolescents in the use of the tablets, and to develop strategies for facilitators to overcome communications difficulties and put respondents more at ease.

	
COVID protection measures before a workshop	Sample drawings from the fieldwork

The fieldwork took place from December 1-11, 2021. During the first three days, the research supervisors met with local education authorities (Centres d'Animation Pédagogiques) and had meetings with young people and their parents to explain the purpose of the research and the different activities that would be undertaken, answer questions, and obtain informed consent from parents and ascent from young participants. The questions from the parents mainly related to the use of the images from the activities (photos and videos). Some parents expressed concerns about those images ending up on the Internet. Other questions related to the potential impact of the activities of the participating adolescent's future and whether there would be any support program to implement the ideas and suggestions that would come out of the workshop to increase youth agency. All the parents who took part in the meetings agreed to the participation of their child and all the young people expressed willingness and enthusiasm in taking part in the workshops.

The workshops took place during weekends in order not to interfere with school. The teams were composed of two men and two women in each school. All the workshops in Ségou took place on December 4th and 5th and lasted between 4 and 5 hours each. In Mopti, the security situation in the Bandiagara circle was difficult due to recent terrorist attacks and a road closure imposed from 5PM onwards. For this reason, the workshops in Soroly and in Sibi-sibi were held simultaneously on the morning of December 4th and lasted approximately 5 hours. The workshop in Dandoli was held the following week due to an attack in a nearby community. The variations in Dogosso dialect between the different communes made translation somewhat more challenging in the workshops from the Mopti region compared to Segou. Nonetheless, the participating young people demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm. Although some girls were a little shy at the beginning, particularly in Mopti and in the medersa, they all participated well in the activities. To the researchers' delight, the initial fears about the use of electronic tablets in remote communities proved unfounded. Young people are used to handle their parents' mobile phones therefore taking pictures, making cellphilms and looking at videos on tablets was easy for them. The evaluation revealed that participating adolescents enjoyed taking part in the workshop and felt at ease and respected during the activities. They all expressed the desire for their artwork to be shown to adults. In total 120 drawings and 23 cellphilms were produced during the first phase of PREAM. The workshop protocol is in appendix 2.





3.2. Phase 2 – Survey

3.2.1. Survey questionnaire

In Phase 2, the team used the Youth Education and Agency survey, a PREAM project-specific and youth-informed instrument which draws on (a) items from the Women and Girls Empowerment Index survey from Plan International and (b) an analysis of key issues raised by young people in Phase 1 of the study. The development of the Youth Education and Agency survey was carried out by both the McGill and ULHSB teams. The ULHSB team field-tested the instrument with adolescents in Bamako in February 2022. The fieldwork took place between May 21st and June 5th 2022.

The challenge in conducting a survey on a concept as elusive as agency is two fold: first translating it in a way that resonates with the respondents without imposing a specific meaning; and second, formulating questions in a way that gives enough freedom to answer while still enabling quantitative analysis. In an attempt to overcome this challenge, the survey items were developed after a thorough analysis of what the 120 adolescents who had taken part in the participatory visual research workshops in phase one had said. The survey questions therefore built on the subjects brought forward by the boys and girls who took part in the workshops and expanded on the themes they addressed. For example, since the workshops were conducted in Bamanakan and Dogosso, they helped the researchers to come up with different ways to ask about agency that they knew young people would understand and to include questions on specific issues that they may not have considered asking otherwise. The qualitative analysis of the workshop data (drawings and cellphilms) also enabled the researchers to come up

with initial coding categories for the open-ended questions on the survey. The wording of the questions was refined through discussions with the teams in Mali and Canada after members of the Mali research team piloted the questionnaire with a small number of respondents and consulted local language specialists at ULSHB.

The questionnaires were administered orally by surveyors who spoke the same language as the respondents. Prior to field work, the surveyors received training with the researchers and national language specialists to ensure fidelity and reliability in translating the questions. Since there are variations in Dogosso dialects spoken on the ground, the training ensured that everyone involved in the survey process understood the questions in the same way thus was able to adjust the wording when needed without affecting the meaning of the questions.

The surveys were conducted using electronic tablets and the application SurveyCTO Collect. The data was uploaded daily on the researchers' laptops and verified by the field supervisors. All the persons involved in the data collection process received training on the use of the tablets and the administration of the survey with the application before going to the field. The tablets enabled the surveyors to code the most frequent answers given to the open questions immediately and easily (the workshops data had provided a good range of possible answers) and to type the other answers quickly. The tablets also enabled surveyors to see and ask only the questions that were relevant to specific categories of respondents which helped to gain precious time. Since the answers were collected directly on Survey CTO, there was no need to input the data thus no risk of transcription mistake. The database was analysed with SPSS.



3.2.2. Sampling

The choice of the communities where the survey took place was done in Phase 1 of PREAM. The rationale was to use the same cohort of young people = throughout the duration of the project. In total 1001 adolescents from 11 to 19 years old took part in the survey. They were randomly selected and included 556 boys and 445 girls. The mean age was 15,36 years old. The respondents comprised 70% of school attending youth and 30% of out of school adolescents. Amongst these, 170 respondents had never attended school. Some talibé children, receiving koranic education, are included in the out-of-school children.

All the school attending respondents from Segou were in grade 8. 69% of them attended formal public schools and 31% studied in a Medersa (koranic school). Due to the size of the classrooms in Mopti, the sample included respondents from grade 7 to grade 9. 83% of them went to formal public schools and 17% attended a Medersa. Amongst the out of school respondents who had previously been to school, 14% went to a Medersa, 77% to a formal public school, 8% to a formal private school and 1% to a formal community school (ECOM).

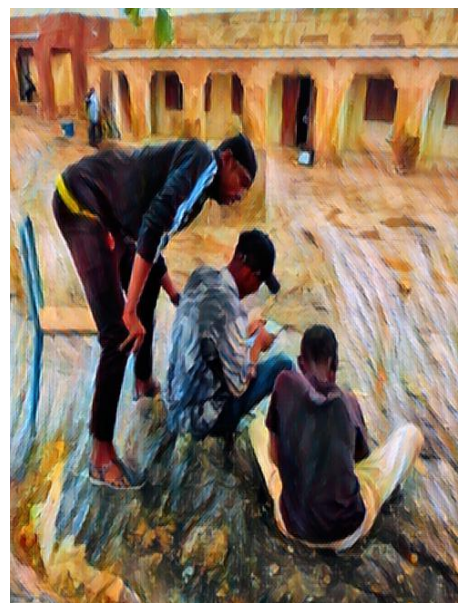


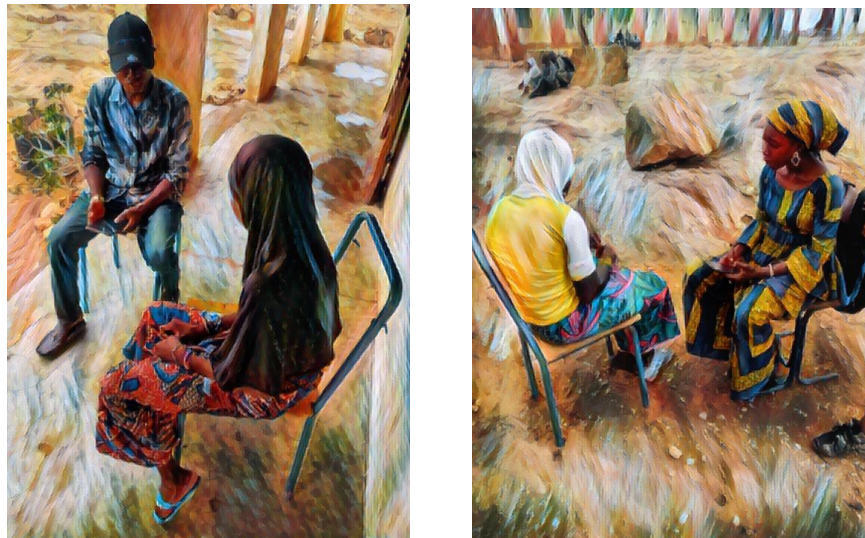
Table 4: Distribution of survey respondents by communes

	Segou				Mopti				Grand total	Total %
	Baroueli	Kononbongo	Markala	Total	Sibi Sibi	Soroly	Dandoli	Total		
Boys	111	101	88	300	105	74	77	256	556	55,5%
Girls	55	64	81	200	109	55	81	245	445	44,5%
Total	166	165	169	500	214	129	158	501	1001	

3.2.3. Implementation process

The supervisors of each site travelled first to meet with local education authorities, school principals and teachers from the targeted grades. They also met with young people and parents to explain the purpose of the study, the survey procedures, as well as the consent and ascent process. Adolescents' participation was entirely voluntary, and they could refuse to answer questions or withdraw from the study at any moment. However, all the adolescents who began the survey completed the questionnaire and instances of missing answers were rare. The

survey teams were composed of both men and women and surveyors were never alone with a child.



Carrying out the survey in phase 2

3.3. Phase 3 – Participatory Workshops and Youth-informed Community Workshops

The third phase of the study was organised in two consecutive parts undertaken in each of the six communes studied: one participatory workshop with adolescents only in the morning, and one youth-informed community workshop with both adults and young people in the afternoon. Before the teams' departure for the regions, all the personnel involved in the third phase of the study took part in a two-days training course facilitated by Dr. Kattie Lussier from McGill and attended a presentation from Dr. Fatoumata Keita on safeguarding. The training was meant to help researchers to familiarise themselves with the research protocol and the participatory tools they would use and to practice facilitating participatory activities in local languages. Modeling on how to reformulate questions and encourage participants to expand on their answers helped the researchers to develop their facilitation skills. The chore members of PREAM Mali team also provided guidance and support to less experienced researchers.

In the days before the workshops, information meetings were held in each commune with the young people and their parents. Parent consent forms were signed at that time. Adolescent's assent forms were signed the day of the

workshop. In Ségou, the workshops took place on the 6th and 7th of Mai 2023. In Mopti the workshops were conducted on the 13th and 14th of Mai 2023.

3.3.1 Workshops with young people only

The participatory workshops with adolescents only were conducted in each of the six communes studied in the same schools where the first series of workshops took place because schools are considered safe spaces to conduct such an activity. The young people involved were the same who participated in the first phase of the study although some of the original participants no longer attended school and were not able to attend. These workshops took place in the morning and lasted around 2 ½ hours. The sequence of activities included : Introduction; ice breaking activity; looking at posters of the drawings produced by adolescents from the six communes during phase 1; group discussions and reflections on the drawings and their meaning; screening of a composite videos of the cellphilms; small group reflections on the messages of the cellphilms, what they say about agency and who has agency in the situations depicted; plenary session; sorting activity on the ingredients of agency; facilitated group discussions. The session ended with preparation for the afternoon workshop (identifying the messages they wanted to communicate and designate spoke persons); evaluation of the workshop.



Young people viewing the posters of drawings

The small group discussions and the card sorting activity were conducted in same-sex groups and the main elements of discussions were presented in

plenary sessions in order to highlight the similarity and differences between the perceptions of the groups and allow discussions between boys and girls. During the screening of the cellphilms produced by young people during phase 1, the participating adolescents were given a viewing guide [see Appendix 4] and asked to reflect on the main message of the cellphilms and the characters demonstrating agency in the film. That was followed by a series of questions. One person per group was asked to capture the main ideas on flip chart paper and to report to the whole group after.



The ingredients of agency (card sorting activity)



Group discussions

3.3.2. Youth-informed community workshops

The workshops with adolescents and adults took place in the afternoon. The adults invited included school principals, teachers from grades 7, 8 and 9, a representative from the CAP, the parents of the young participants, members from the parents' association, local leaders such as village chiefs, imams, etc., as well as women playing an active role in the community.

The activities implemented included the welcoming of adults by young people and researchers; an exposition of drawings on posters; the visioning of cellphlms by parents while young people conducted peer interviews with each other's; small group discussions, a plenary session with adults only; plenary discussions with both adults and young people together; evaluation of the workshop.



Youth-informed community workshop



Adults evaluating the workshop

Table 5: Participants in the final participatory workshops with adolescents

Participants	SÉGOU	MOPTI	TOTAL
Boys	27	26	53
Girls	20	25	45
Total	47	51	98

Table 6: Participants in the youth-informed community workshops

Participants		SÉGOU	MOPTI	TOTAL
Adolescents	Male	27	26	53
	Female	20	25	46
Adults	Male	22	29	63
	Female	5	7	12
Total		74	87	161

3.3.3. Implementation of phase 3

Following a terrorist attack in Sévaré (Mopti region's biggest town) in April 2023, new security measures such as searches, checkpoints and the deployment of the national police have been put in place by the government in different areas, including the circle of Bandiagara where part of the study took place. While the team preferred to wait for the searches to be completed before undertaking fieldwork, the research activities were implemented in a climate of relative safety, an improvement from previous phases, and the researchers saw no sign of violence while they were there. The researchers who took part in the third phase of PREAM were all familiar with the terrain and the study, having participated in earlier research activities. All the workshops were conducted in local languages. Both adolescents and adults appreciated seeing the artwork produced in the different communes.

The young participants were excited to see their drawings on the posters and in the artbook. They also enjoyed watching their cellphilms again. They said they appreciated seeing the artwork of adolescents from other communes and could relate to their productions and the messages they conveyed. During the initial workshops in phase 1, young people had expressed the desire to show their drawings and cellphilms to adults. The final workshop provided them with that opportunity, and they did not waste it. The participating adults were surprised by the quality of the work and the messages expressed. Both adults and adolescents appreciated this rare space to engage with each other's. Adults were attentive to the messages of young peoples, and some expressed the desire to repeat the experience. One adult describe the workshop as "a beautiful experience that deserves continuity and follow up". The workshop protocol is in appendix 3.



Researchers preparing for the workshop in Sibi-sibi



Participants arriving at the workshop in Soroly

Part 4: Research findings on Education and Agency in Mali

In this section we present the findings of the research project based on the analysis of the data from the three phases of the study. What was particularly interesting in the way the data was analysed is that it allowed reflections between and across research teams and participants enabling us to contrast diverging understandings of the visual data and better take into account the positionality of the various research actors. The findings below are grouped around the main themes of the study, but we also felt the need to include an additional category of findings, more methodological, pertaining to working with adolescents in times of crisis because these learnings can be helpful to both practitioners and policy makers.

4.1. Young people's understanding of agency

As mentioned previously, studying youth agency can be challenging because in spite of the abundance of literature on the concept, the term is not conventionally understood, lacks resonance in non-academic settings and has no universally agreed translation in French nor in Mali's national languages (Mitchell, Lussier and Keita, 2022). For this reason, we paid particular attention to the wording of the prompts used in every phase of the study. These prompts built on existing definitions of agency but were adapted to local languages through discussions with national researchers and local languages specialists in order to be used instead of the word agency.

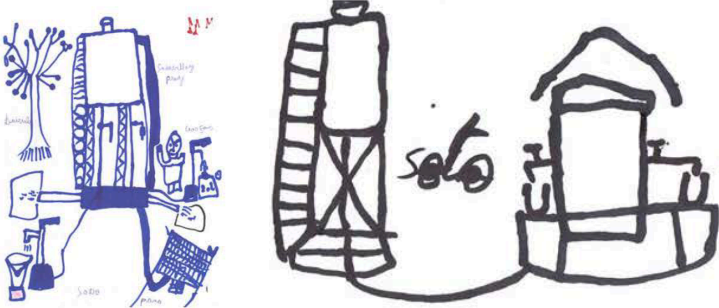
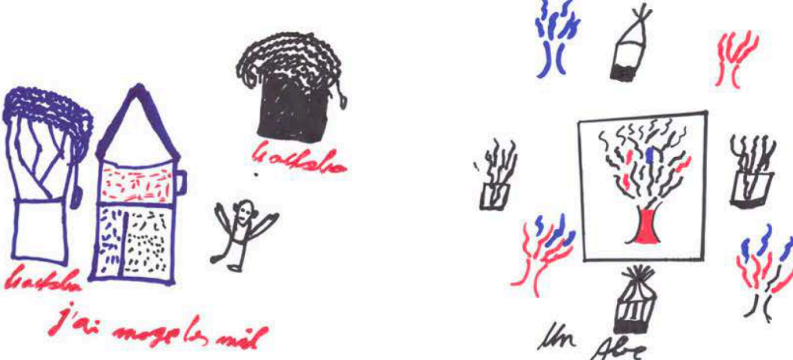
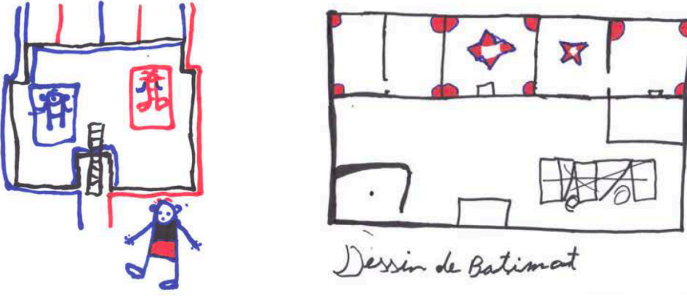
4.1.1 Visual representations of agency

Drawings

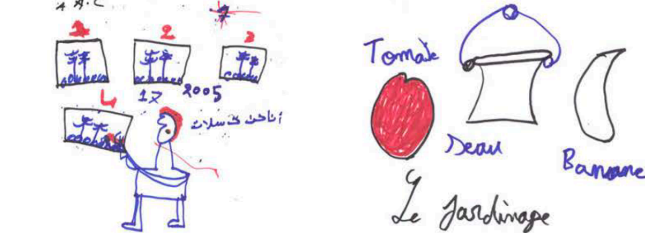
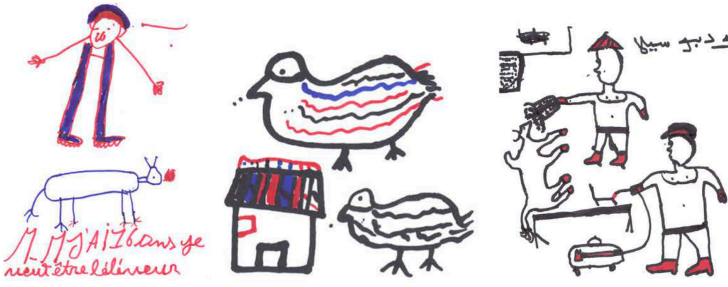
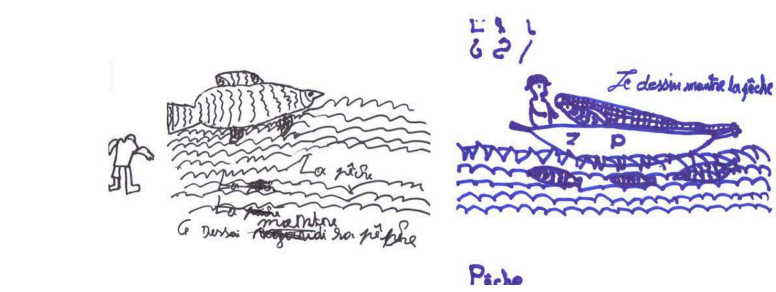
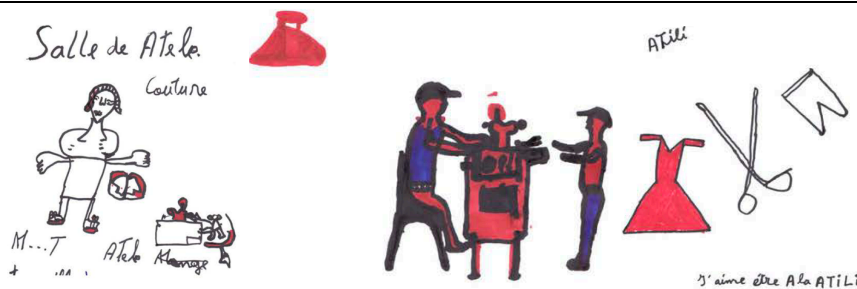
The drawings of the young participants told powerful stories about adolescents' daily lives in the researched area and what helping oneself looks like in their eyes (see samples of drawings in table 7). Some participants drew something they felt they needed to have agency. Others drew a job or an occupation that they would like to pursue in order to earn money to help themselves. Interestingly, in their captions as well as in the discussions, the participating adolescents expressed the desire not only to help themselves but also to help others for instance their families and their communities. This was consistent in the workshops of both phases 1 and 3 which suggests that collective agency

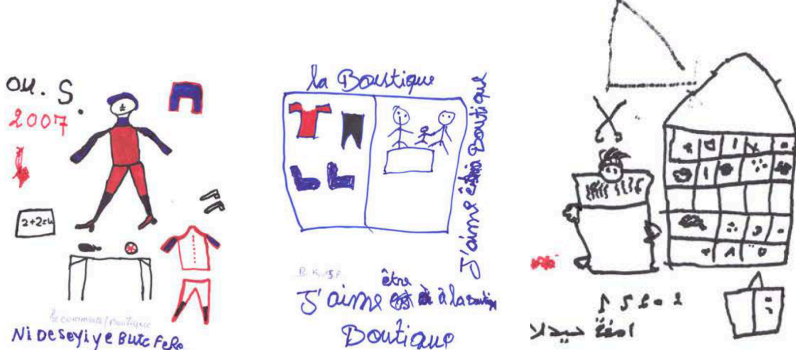
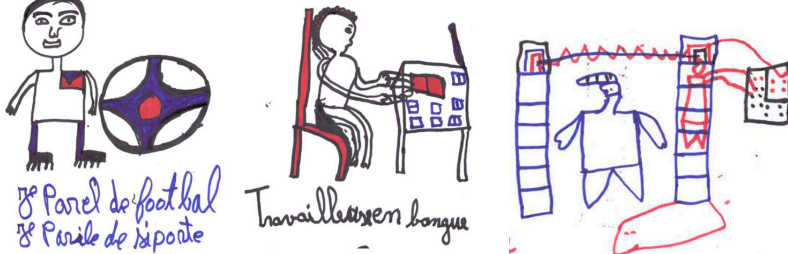
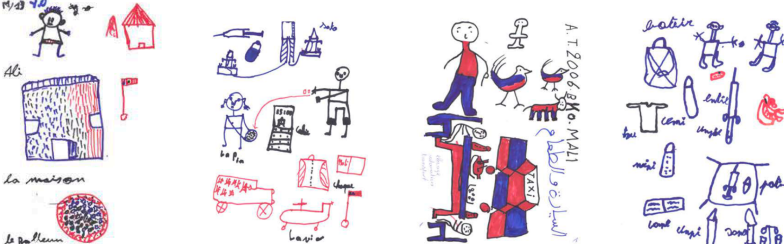
may be more significant for them than initially assumed. Table 7 below presents the main themes of the drawings and provides examples for each one. The themes in the table are in no particular order. All of the drawings produced during Phase 1 can be found in Participatory Cultures Lab (2023)¹⁷.

Table 7: Themes represented and sample of drawings

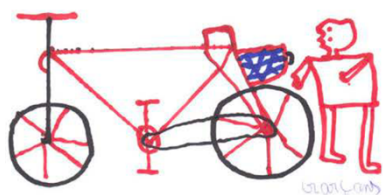
Water	
Nutrition	
Housing	

¹⁷ https://www.mcgill.ca/ihdw/files/ihdw/picturing_agency.pdf

Agriculture	
Animal husbandry	
Fishing	
Sewing	
Justice and security	

Business	
Other occupations	
Visions of life	

During the third phase of the study, the young participants had the opportunity to look back at the drawings from their own commune, but also those created by adolescents from other areas. The workshops also enabled them to explain further what these illustrations meant for them in terms of agency. For instance, one respondent said “the drawings illustrate means of helping ourself and what can help us to have the capacity to act”. Another said “the drawings show what we need to study, to succeed and help our parents”. The last round of workshops also created a space for adolescent to engage with the work of other young people as exemplified in the examples below.



Looking at a drawing from Sibisibi on which the young artist had written “I like a bicycle to go to school”, a boy from Dandoli explained that the drawing of the bicycle was more than just a mean of transportation, it was a way to get to school on time, and that being punctual in class was important in order to learn well and be able to help yourself to achieve your dreams.

Hand-drawn sketches of various objects and figures with labels in Malayalam:

- Top Left:** A drawing of a red envelope with a white cross, labeled "Kandilo" (Kandilo) and "sai".
- Top Right:** A drawing of a house with a red roof, labeled "Kandilo" (Kandilo).
- Middle Left:** A drawing of a blue box, labeled "Kandilo" (Kandilo).
- Middle Right:** A drawing of a person sitting on a chair, labeled "Kandilo" (Kandilo).
- Bottom Left:** A drawing of a person sitting on a chair, labeled "Kandilo" (Kandilo).
- Bottom Right:** A drawing of a person sitting on a chair, labeled "Kandilo" (Kandilo).

assistance (entraide), peace, conflict resolution, solidarity, discipline, perseverance, and equality of opportunities. The young film makers said they wanted to raise awareness about the challenges they faced but also encourage reflections on values and positive behaviours.

Table 8: Themes presented in the cellphilms on ‘having the capacity to act and help yourself or not having the capacity to act and help yourself’

	Segou	Mopti
Boys	The power cut Strike at school Animal husbandry Expensive life The agreement / reconciliation Peace	Football players Discipline in class Health problems School The conflict Bomb
Girls	Gardening War in the country Refusal to work at home Coronavirus Advisory on households’ chores Theft at school	Cleaning the house Looking for water Watering the garden Health of the child The girl doesn’t go to school

Below are some screenshots from the cellphilms. As mentioned earlier, the cellphilms used a ‘no face’ approach to protect the identity of the young actors.

Screenshot from Bomb

Boys, Sibi-sibi, Mopti



Screenshot from Advice

Girls, Markala



Screenshot from Housekeeping

Girls, Dandoli, Mopti



Screenshot from the agreement

Boys, Markala, Ségou



Girls from Dandoli emphasized the significance of parental advice to study well. For them, the cellphilms underline the importance of advisory and guidance from parents on matters of education. They emphasize the positive impact of parents' involvement in their educational path and wanted adults to hear that message in the hope that it would help to reinforce parents' educative support and accompaniment. The importance of parental blessing was also mentioned in the other communes. Boys hoped that the cellphilms would help adults to better understand adolescents' reality, preoccupations, and aspirations and take action to solve problems such as lack of water, children going to school hungry, and early marriage, amongst other issues.

Another key message mentioned by both boys and girls but perhaps emphasized more strongly by female participants, is the importance of providing enough time to adolescents to study at home and not give them housework or agricultural work during school hours. The heavy burden that domestic work puts on girls was presented in seven cellphilms and underscored in nearly all workshops. Adult viewers also understood the message. "There are difficulties with domestic work as far as girls are concerned" (Men). "The work of girls is not recognized at its true value. Girls do as much if not more than boys" (Woman,). "We should not give them work when it's time to go to school" (Woman).

When asked what they thought about the cellphilms from other communes, a girl from Sibi-sibi said that "the sufferings and the problems presented were similar". The cellphilms on the conflict resonated particularly strongly with boys from Dandoli who also appreciated the variety of issues raised in the cellphilms. "The cellphilms from other communes are talking about several things: fighting, health, water, arriving late at school. It's fighting that reflects our experiences the

most". Seeing the cellphilms from other communes also gave ideas to the young viewers. Some commented on the cellphilms in which a group of students get together to do schoolwork during the strike. Others were surprised by the solutions found by the characters in the cellphilms, for example the boys who find a bomb, or the examples of conflict resolution. In Sibi-sibi, girls mentioned that several cellphilms show the determination of adolescents to meet their dietary needs in various ways. That, for them, is a clear example of agency. Respondents from other communes also commented on the sense of initiative and the mutual assistance demonstrated by the young people in the cellphilms. They also talked about courage, determination, autonomy, and motivation. For the adolescents who took part in phase 3, the characters who demonstrate agency are those who have initiative and engage actively, those who understand the problems of others and are open to exchange ideas and experiences or provide practical advice, and those who listen.

4.1.2 Young people and agency in the survey

Perception of agency

When we asked young respondents the extent to which they felt able to set themselves objectives and do what it takes to achieve them, a higher percentage of girls answered 'fairly capable' or 'very capable' than boys in both regions (76% of girls compared to 64% of boys in Segou and 76% of girls compared to 69% of boys in Mopti). This indicates that a high majority of young girls feel agentic and that being a girl does not represent, in itself, a barrier to agency.

Persons who can help to develop agency

The respondents identified several persons who can help them to improve their capacity to set themselves objectives and do what it takes to achieve them. Parents (father and mother) are by far the most mentioned (895 and 872 respectively) followed by brothers and sisters (571 times) and teachers (355 times). There is relatively little difference between the answers from girls and boys to this question except that boys mentioned friends much more than girls (24% of boys compared to 16% of girls) and girls mentioned their mother more often (91% of girls compared to 84% of boys).

Parents

The survey data clearly show that parents have a role to play in the development of adolescents' agency. 97% of the young respondents (97% of girls and 96% of boys) said that parents were 'important or very important' to help young people to set themselves objectives and do what it takes to achieve them. In addition, having parents who believe in you and having parents who encourage and support you were reported as being 'important or very important' by 97% and 98% of the participating adolescents. When the different responses to the open questions on agency are considered collectively and that we pay attention to the words used by the participating youths, we notice that what adolescents call 'parents' blessing' is significant to them. This suggests a need of approbation from parents primarily but also more broadly a need for family approbation especially in relation to the idea of fulfilling dreams and achieving life goals¹⁸. This makes us wonder to what extent young people adapt their ambitions to their families' expectations and to the familial models they have. Unfortunately, our data do not allow us to answer this question for the moment.

Teachers

As mentioned earlier, teachers were identified as a person who can help adolescents to increase their agency by more than a third of our respondents in the open questions. In order to assess the extent to which teachers are important to help youth develop their agency, and considering the challenges related to the translation of the term in local languages, we asked the following two questions: To what extent are teachers important to help young people set personal objectives and do what it takes to achieve them? and To what extent are teachers important to help young people to help themselves? To the first question 26,7% of the respondents said they were rather important and 65,2% that they were very important. Combining the two levels of answer we get 92% of all young participants, including those out of school, saying that teachers are important to help set objectives and achieve them (93% of girls and 92% of boys). The answers to the second question are almost identical with 92% of girls and 92% boys saying that teachers are important to help youth help themselves.

¹⁸ For a discussion on the notion of responsible agency, which is exercised in conformity with social expectations, see Mitchell, Lussier an Keïta (2022).

Later in the survey, we asked all the participating youth more specific questions about what is important in teachers' attitude in class to enable them to take the necessary actions to achieve their objectives in life. 93% of all the respondents in both regions answered that having a teacher that supports and encourages them is important or very important (92% of boys and 94% of girls). 90% reported that having a teacher who believes in you is important or very important (89% of boys, 91 of girls), and 90% of the participating adolescents said that a good discipline in class was important or very important to enable them to take the necessary actions achieve their objectives in life (89% of boys, 92% of girls).

Considering those results, one could expect that talking with teachers can help adolescents to develop their agency but the extent to which they discuss topics that can help them to do so is hard to assess. We asked the respondents if they discussed of their expectations from education, the career they wanted, what they needed to achieve their dreams and the possibility to travel to pursue their studies with their teacher in the last 6 months (see figures 6 and 7). Girls reported doing so more than boys in both regions yet the percentage of adolescents having discussed those topics with their teachers is somewhat low. Of course, it is possible that the topics of discussions were simply different ones.

Figure 6: School attending respondents from Ségou who discussed of the following topics with their teacher in the last 6 months by gender.

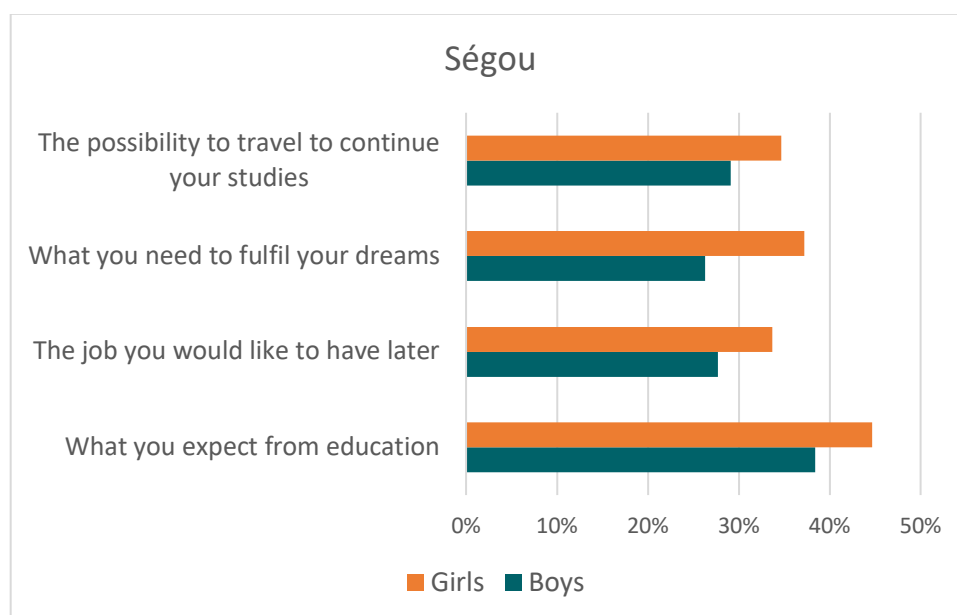
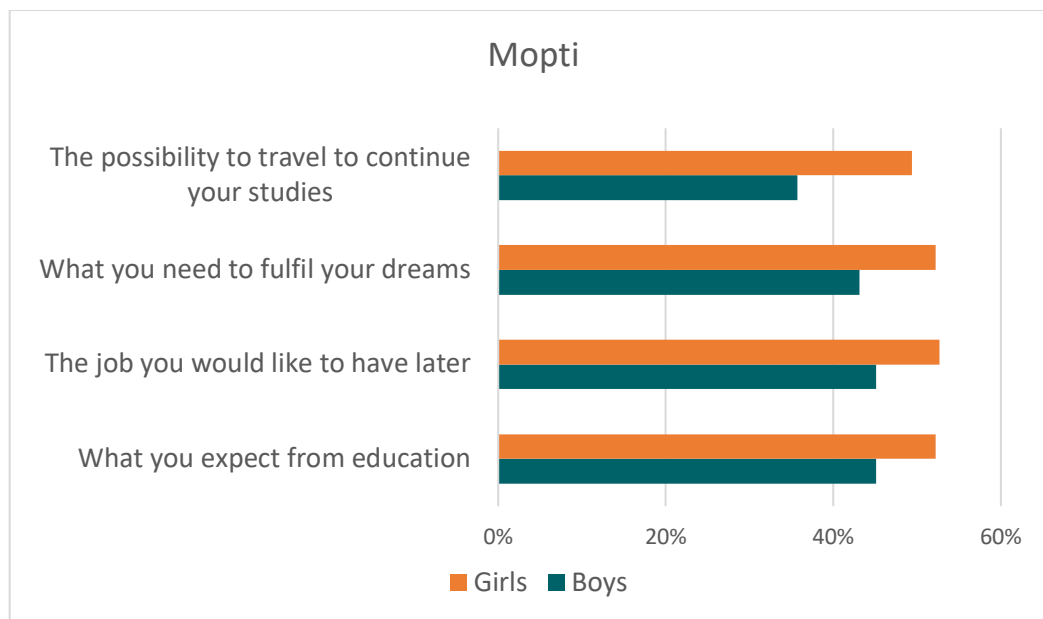


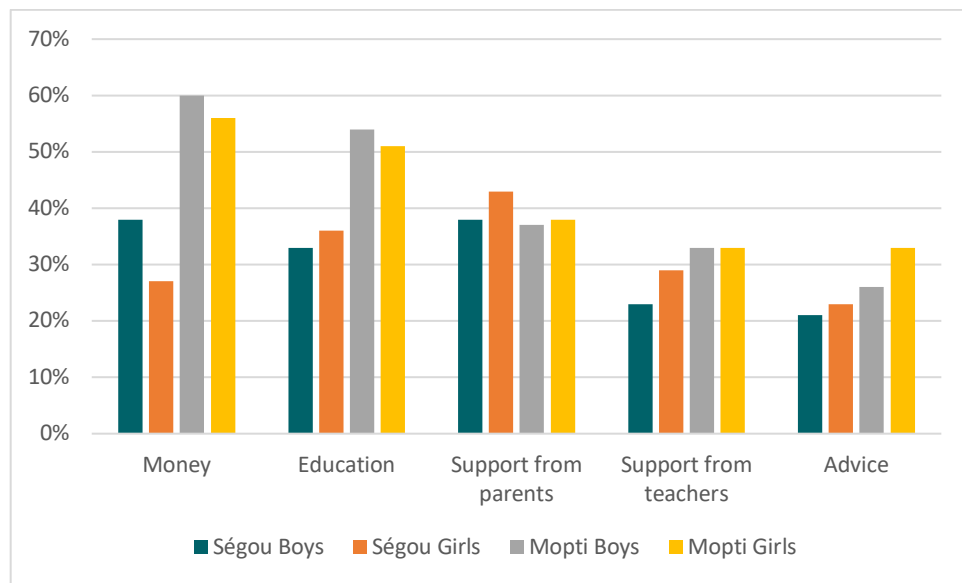
Figure 7: School attending respondents from Mopti who discussed of the following topics in the last 6 months by gender.



4.1.3 Components of agency most important to adolescent girls and boys

During the survey, we asked the participating adolescents a series of open questions about agency. When we asked them what they need to improve their capacity to set themselves objectives and do what it takes to achieve them, the five things mentioned most were the same regardless of gender and region. These are money, education, support from parents, support from teachers and advice. Some nuances worth mentioning however when it comes to the order of the three most mentioned answers. The most frequent answer for boys is money (48% of all the boys surveyed) in both regions although in Segou, the same number of boys answered parental support. Education is the second most popular answer in the survey when looking at all the boys together. Girls from Mopti also answered money the most often followed by education. In Segou, however, girls answered parental support most frequently followed by education. For these girls, money only came fourth.

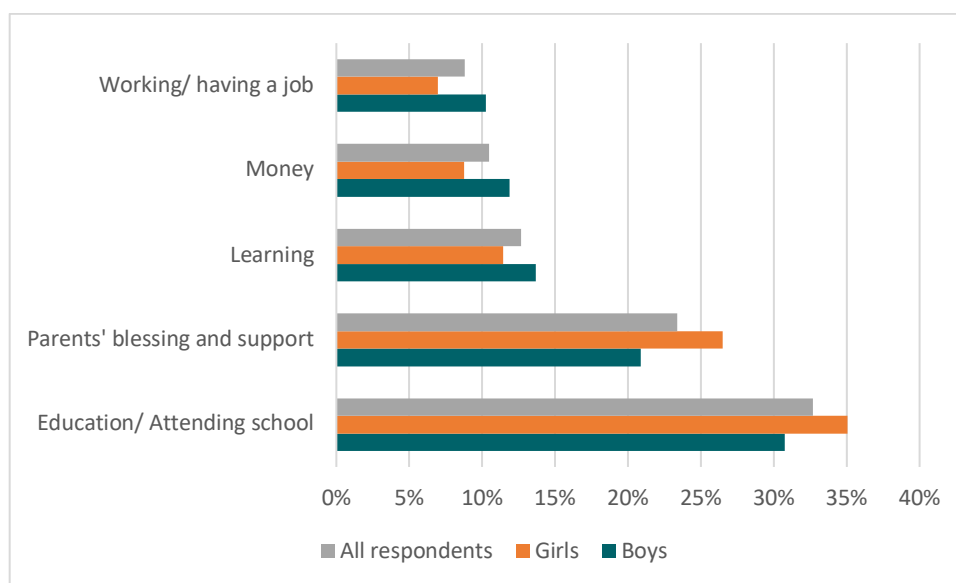
Figure 8: What adolescents need to improve their capacity to set themselves objectives and do what it takes to achieve them (top 5 answers)



Another way to understand agency is being able to help oneself. When we ask the young survey respondents what it takes for a person to be able help herself, the most frequent answer for both boys and girls in the two regions is education. In Segou, the most popular answers are, in order: education, money, working hard, advice and courage. In Mopti, gardening was the fourth most mentioned answer for boys (5th most popular answer for girls). The girls from Mopti also mentioned ‘working a lot’ more often than money, which is the second answer for boys. Education, money, advice, working hard and courage are also the five most frequent answers to the question ‘What does it take for a person to act (take action) to achieve his or her goals?’. As mentioned earlier, these were open questions and young respondents could give many answers. The similarity in the most frequent answers regardless of the wording of the questions indicates clearly that young people have a precise idea of the factors contributing to agency.

Even when survey respondents could give only one answer, for example “What is THE MOST important to be able to achieve your dreams and live the life you want?” the answers are rather similar (see Figure 9) with the added nuance that girls mentioned education/ attending school and parents’ blessing more than boys.

Figure 9: What young respondents found the most important to be able to achieve their dreams and live the life they want – Top five answers by gender



Looking at these data, the researchers noticed that agency is somewhat like a recipe in which there can be several different ingredients depending on the specific conditions in which it is formed and exercised. We sought to explore this further during the phase 3 workshops with adolescents. We invited boys and girls to work in separate groups and to recreate the 'agency sauce' by selecting the ingredients they felt were important and put them in the cauldron. Each group had a set of 12 cards with the ingredients most mentioned during the survey as well as blank cards with markers to add anything else they wanted. They could choose only some ingredients or all of them. The ingredients on the 12 cards are presented in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Ingredients of agency according to young respondents



Overall, the young workshop participants agreed with the list of ingredients provided. The main difference between groups was the order of the ingredients. In Dandoli, boys did not choose ‘efforts’ and ‘motivation’ because they felt that ‘courage’ and ‘determination’ were sufficient. However, they added ‘Peace’ to their list of ingredients. In Kononbougou, boys also added ‘peace’ but included ‘joy’ and ‘wisdom’ as well. The young people from Baraouéli also talked about the negative consequences of insecurity on agency: “Insecurity has serious negative impacts on young people’s capacity to help themselves because when there is no peace, people will not be able to work” (Boy, Baraouéli). “Without peace, we cannot do anything” (Girl, Baraouéli). During the plenary we asked young people what was different between the ‘agency sauce’ of boys and girls. They mostly talked about the order of ingredients except in the two communes where boys added ingredients. In Soroly one respondent explained the differences in this way: “The living conditions of girls are different from the ones of boys. Boys raise animals and work in the field while girls cook, collect wood and water, etc. so unavoidably the recipes cannot be exactly the same”.

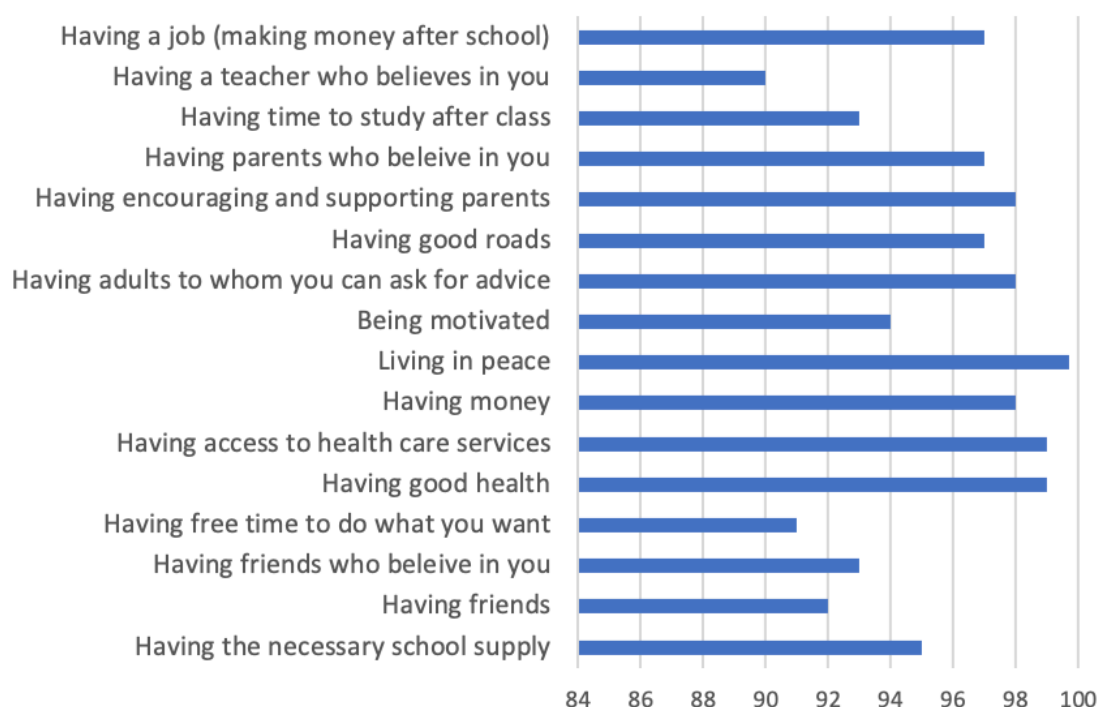
Other factors that support young people's agency

We asked the participating adolescents the extent to which peace, personality, motivation, and money made a difference in young people's capacity to help themselves. Peace had the biggest percentage of respondents saying it made a difference in both regions. 93,5% of all respondents answered that peace makes plenty or a lot of difference. 68% of boys and 63% of girls said peace makes a lot of difference. Peace also had the smallest percentage of respondents saying it made no difference at all (0,6%). The other factors, in decreasing order of respondents saying it makes a big difference in youth agency are money, motivation and a person's personality in Mopti and motivation, money and a person's personality in Ségou. Having a job (making money after school) was also considered very important to enable youth to take the necessary actions to reach their objectives (71% in Ségou and 62% in Mopti). The percentage of all respondents who considered having a job important or very important was 97%.

“In order for young people from here to be able to help themselves they must work. For example, do mechanic, gardening, and a lot of other things. I think we need working material, because if you don't have material, it is difficult to do this activity or that one” (Girl, Baraouéli).

We also asked the young participants the extent to which various aspects of life were important to enable them to take the necessary actions to achieve their objectives in life. These included having the necessary school supply, having friends, having friends that believe in them, having free time to do what they want, having good health, having access to health care services, having money, living in peace, being motivated, having adults to whom you can ask for advice, having good roads, having encouraging and supporting parents, having parents who believe in you, having time to study after class, having a teacher who believes in you, and having a job (making money after school). All were deemed important or very important by more than 90% of the participating adolescents (see Figure 11 below). These questions were asked all respondents regardless of whether they had some school experience or not. This may explain why some aspects that concern primarily school attending youth such as ‘having a teacher who believes in you’ appears important to a lower percentage of respondents than ‘living in peace’ which matters to all respondents.

Figure 11: Percentage of all young respondents who consider the following aspects important or very important to enable them to take the necessary actions to achieve their objectives in life.



As illustrated in figure 11 above, living in peace, having good health as well as having access to health care services were considered important by nearly all our young respondents. Overall, there was very little difference between regions in these items. Exceptions include having free time to do what you want (88% in Ségou and 93% in Mopti) and being motivated (98% in Ségou and 90% in Mopti).

The level of agreement amongst the participating adolescents on the importance of the aspects mentioned above are such that gender differences are minimal. That said, a slightly higher percentage of girls considered having time to study after school as very important (61,7% very important and 32,3% important) compared to boys (57,6% very important and 33,7% important)

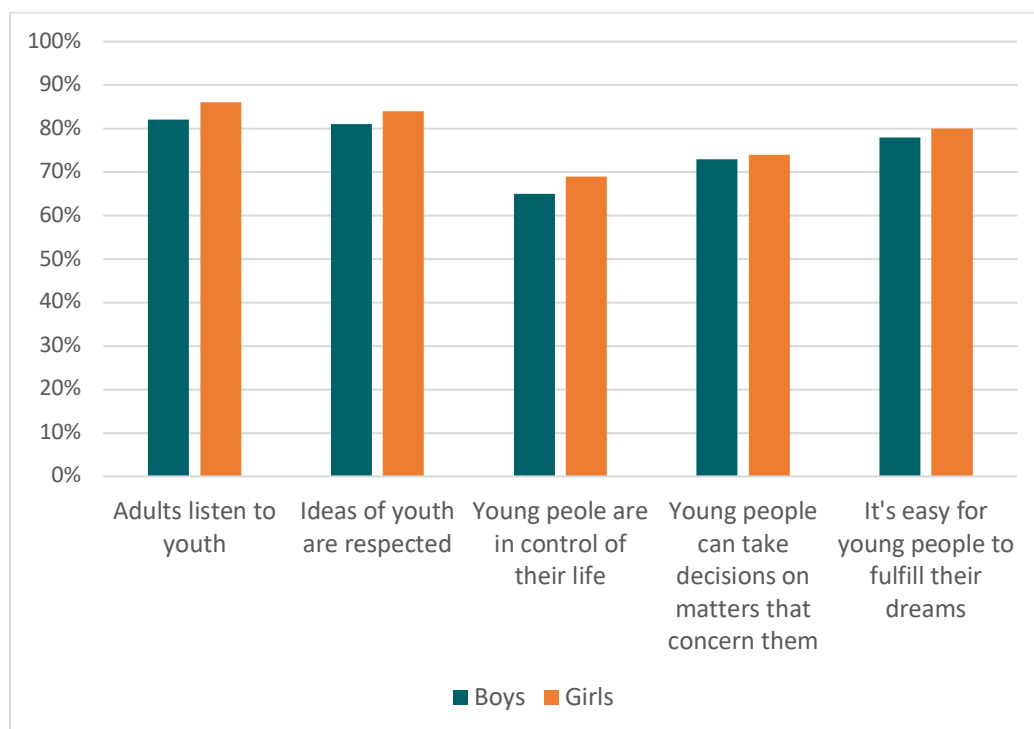
4.2. Young People in their environment

4.2.1. Young people's experiences in their community

This section presents the respondents answers on the questions related to how they see their place in their community, more specifically their agreement with different statements about their status in the community and their sense of control over their life. It also presents the occupation of out of school (OOS) adolescents.

We asked the participating adolescents their level of agreement with several statements relating to experiences in their community. Overall, the young people who took part in the study had a positive view of the place youth occupy in their commune and the percentage of girls who agreed or completely agreed with the different affirmations was a little higher than boys for every question in that category (see figure 12 below). The highest level of agreement for girls was 86% for 'Adults listen to youth' followed by 84% for Ideas of youth are respected.

Figure 12: Percentage of young respondents in agreement with the statements by gender



However, the difference between the responses in Ségou and Mopti is significant. 84% of respondents felt that adults listen to young people (75,6% in Ségou and 92% in Mopti). 82% felt that the ideas of youth are respected (72% in Ségou and 92% in Mopti). A significantly lower percentage of respondents (67%) felt that young people from their commune have control over their life (55% in Ségou and 78% in Mopti). 73% agreed that adolescents can make decisions on matters that concerns them (64% in Ségou and 82% in Mopti). 79% thought it is easy for young people to fulfil their dreams (75,4% in Ségou and 82,3% in Mopti).

For all these questions, the percentage of agreement in Ségou is consistently lower than in Mopti. Unfortunately, the survey data do not provide us the reasons for such differences. More qualitative investigation would be needed to understand what makes adolescents from both regions answer this way. It would be particularly interesting to further explore what made so many respondents, especially in Ségou, feel that they are not in control of their life and cannot take decisions on matters that concern them. Identifying ways to help young people gain more control on their life could consequently make them more agentic.

In order to have a better idea the life experiences of the participating out of school adolescents, the surveyors inquired about what they did during the day – their main occupation. Most of them were engaged in some form of work. When the survey took place, out of school (OOS) girls were predominantly engaged in domestic tasks or housework, followed by agricultural or gardening activities. The occupations of OOS boys were more diversified with agriculture/gardening being mentioned most followed by taking care of animals, learning the Coran and construction work. Table 9 below, summarises the answers provided by the respondents.

Table 9: What out of school respondents do during the day (their occupation)

	Girls	Boys	Total
Domestic tasks /housework	59	7	66
Agriculture/ gardening	17	40	57
Taking animals to pastures/ taking care of animals		34	34
Learning Coran		31	31
Construction work		23	23
Collecting water	9	13	22
Trading/ selling things / working in shops	9	3	12

Sewing	7	2	9
Begging		9	9
Fishing	1	7	8
Collecting firewood	6	2	8
Making things / weaving / Craft / Braiding	4	4	8
Transporting things	3	3	6
Working (not specified)	1	5	6
Nothing		5	5

4.2.2. Young people's experiences of education

This section presents the respondents' views of education. It begins with the perspectives of school attending participants such as their level of comfort, the word that best describes their experience, and what they like and don't like from school. Then, it exposes the results to the questions on the effects of the conflict on education. This is followed by a presentation of the motives provided by OOS youths for not attending school and how happy or sad they were of that decision. Next, there is a brief presentation about who adolescents believe has easiest access to school, the support youths receive and some of the education-related topics they discussed with adults from their family.

Amongst the respondents who were attending school when they answered the survey, 85% said they were either comfortable or very comfortable to participate in class, ask questions to their teachers, share ideas or answer when the teacher ask them something that's 83% of boys and 87% of girls. When asked how comfortable they were to make comments or complaints regarding their learning experience at school to an adult like a teacher or an aunt in the community, 86% of respondents said they were comfortable or very comfortable (88% of girls and 85% of boys). The word that best describes your experience at school was 'learning' for 371 respondents and 'important' for 200 respondents. These were the most frequent words mentioned by both girls and boys. Other words mentioned by more than 100 respondents can be translated as useful, enjoyable, likable, and easy. There was no meaningful difference between the words mentioned by boys and girls or in the two regions. Learning was mentioned the most when we asked school attending respondents what they like at school. When we asked them what they don't like at school, chatter (bavardage in French) was mentioned the most followed by brutality. Figures 13 and 14 below shows the top 10 answers to each question.

Figure 13: What school attending respondents like at school – top 10 answers

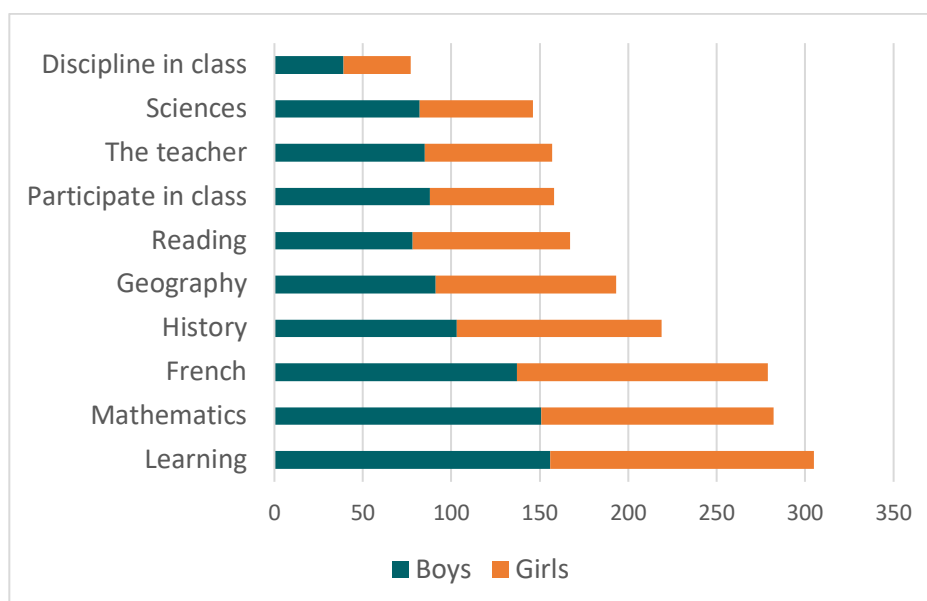
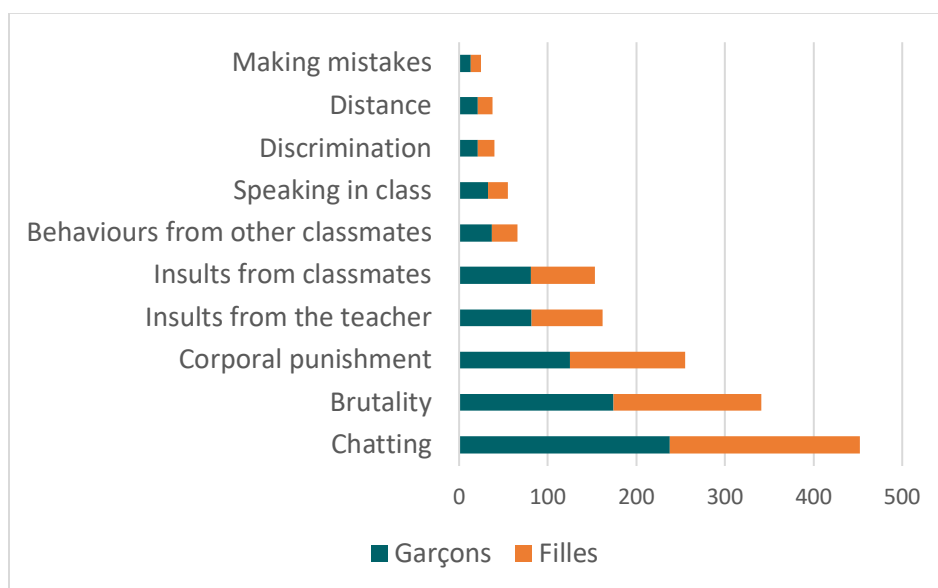


Figure 14: What school attending respondents don't like at school – top 10 answers



Unfortunately, the survey format did not allow us to find out the reasons why so many respondents said they did not like chatter in class nor did it allow us to identify the specific forms of brutality adolescents referred to. However, 255 respondents mentioned corporal punishment, which represents 36% of the school attending participants, and 162 adolescents said they did not like the insults from teachers. This suggests that despite the government's efforts to promote positive forms of disciplinary measures in schools, forms of punishment inadequate to the development of agency are still being practiced by some teachers.

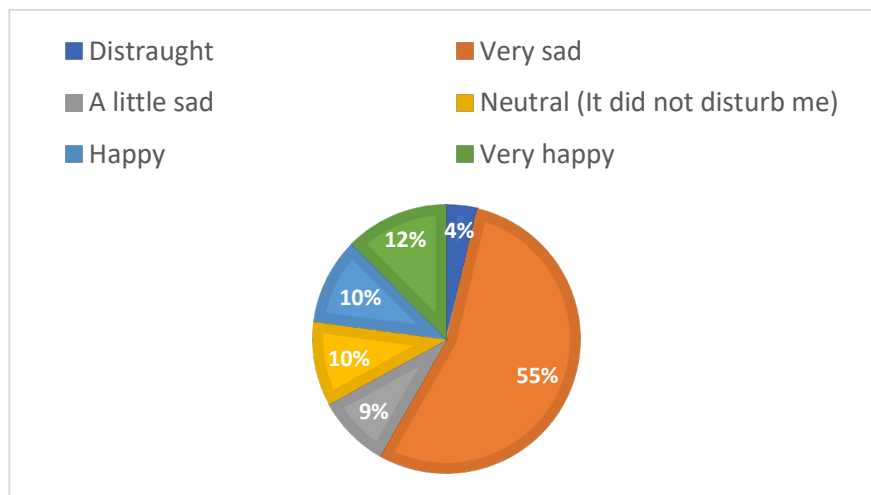
Perhaps surprisingly, only about half of respondents saw changes in their schooling experience since the beginning of the conflict. In fact, 52,9% of respondents (56,7% in Ségou and 49% in Mopti) said their school experience had not changed at all, 24,6% said that it was a little worse than before, 9% said it was much worse (5% in Ségou and 13% in Mopti) and 13,5% reported that it was better. This may have to do with the length of the conflict in relation to the age of the respondents. Since the violence started before most of the participating adolescents began attending school, many of them haven't experienced education in time of peace therefore can't appreciate the changes. When asked about the main effects of the conflict on education in their commune, 288 respondents said it had no effect at all. The effects of the conflict on education in their commune reported most often by school attending adolescents include school closure (mentioned 219 times), insecurity (196 times), the lack of teachers (193 times), fear of going to school (152 times mostly in Mopti) and travelling difficulties (92 times). When asked the extent to which the conflict had played a role in the decision not to attend school, 80,5% of the out of school participants said not at all (90,8% in Ségou and 71% in Mopti). 9,8% said it influenced the decision a lot (4,9% in Ségou and 14,2% in Mopti). There was no difference between boys and girls.

The respondents who dropped out of school between grades 3 and 6 were asked who decided that they should leave school. 50% said they decided themselves, 44% said their parents did. The main reason to leave school was to help parents at home (49%) followed by the need to work, the need to take care of younger siblings, the need to take care of animals, and poverty. The participating adolescents who never attended school were also asked who decided that they should not go to school. 12% said they decided themselves, 87,7% said their parents did, 2 respondents answered another member of the family. The main reason for not going to school was the need to help the parents at home followed, in order frequency, by the need to take care of younger siblings, the need to work, the need to take care of animals, parents' belief that school is not important, and 'I

did not like school'. If we group together the need to help parents with taking care of younger siblings, taking care of animals and helping on the farm, which are other ways of helping parents, we have 84% of the young respondents who never went to school. Although parents' beliefs that school is not important appears small in comparison (11%) it signals nonetheless the importance to keep working on awareness raising at community level. For instance, one girl said her father was afraid that she would live dissolutely (tomber dans la débauche) if she went to school while another commented "My father said that his daughters will not attend school. Me and my older sister, we are not registered at school but our brothers are at school" (Translation from survey answer).

According to out of school (OOS) respondents, the teachers' strike affected the decision of a limited number of participants. 11,5% of all OOS respondents thought the teachers' strike affected the decision not to attend school a lot. In Segou, 87,3% of OOS respondents said the strike played almost no role or no role at all in the decision not to attend school. This percentage was 78,4% in Mopti. As illustrated in Figure 8, the majority of the out of school respondents were unhappy with the decision of not attending school. In Mopti 71,3% of OOS adolescents reported being either very sad or distraught by the decision. In Ségou, it was 43%.

Figure 15: Extent to which out of school survey respondents were happy or sad of the decision not to attend to school both regions combined.



When asked for whom it is easier to attend school or to remain at school, most of the young respondents, boys and girls, in both regions answered that it is easier for boys (see table 13 below). When asked why they thought it was like this, the five reasons most mentioned are domestic tasks, early marriage, pregnancy and maternity, the need to work, and taking care of children. This is consistent with

findings from a prior study conducted by the ministry of national education (Mali MEN, 2018) and suggests that young people are aware of the gender barriers affecting education.

We also asked respondents how often they asked support from their parents or other adults of their families in order to get the money needed for school supplies, support to attend school regularly, to arrive to class on time, to feel safe at home, to feel safe at school or on the way to school and the money for the canteen (argent pour le goûter). Table 10, below, presents the number of respondents who either mentioned sometimes or often. Requests for support to feel safe at home were mentioned by the most respondents followed by the money for school supplies and feeling safe at school or on the way to school. This highlights not only the importance of feeling safe but also that young people need assistance in order to experience safety.

Table 10: Number of young respondents who sometimes or often ask support from their parents or other adults from their family on the following aspects:

	Segou	Mopti	Total Boys	Total Girls	Total
The money you need for school supplies	345	337	358	324	682
Attending school regularly (not missing classes)	321	290	314	297	611
Arrive to class on time	309	301	317	293	610
Feeling safe at home	337	360	369	328	697
Feeling safe at school or on the way to school	311	341	342	310	652
Money for the canteen	301	318	311	308	619

The young respondents from both regions were also asked if they had discussed with an adult of their family during the last 6 months about their expectations from education, what they needed to achieve their dreams, the job they wanted to do in the future, the need to prioritise their studies and the possibility to delay marriage to finish their studies (see Figures 16 and 17). These were included in the survey because they are not necessarily easy to discuss even in a family setting and doing so is a demonstration of agentic behaviour. For all the aforementioned topics, more girls had a discussion with an adult of their family

than boys. Amongst those five subjects, the most discussed by adolescents from both regions was the need to prioritise their studies instead of chores, housework, farm work, domestic tasks, etc. 70% of girls' respondents from Mopti and 68% of girls from Ségou reported having such discussion. This is encouraging because as mentioned earlier, domestic tasks are one of the main reasons young respondents mentioned to explain why it's more difficult for girls to remain at school and raising the topic at home is a first step in finding a solution. As can be seen in the figures below, some subjects were discussed more in Mopti than in Ségou. For example, delaying marriage to finish your studies was discussed much less by boys from Ségou. This does not mean that they refrain from talking about it. It may also be that they do not feel the need to discuss it in the same way that girls do.

Figure 16: Percentage of respondents from Ségou who discussed with an adult of their family of the following topics during the last 6 months.

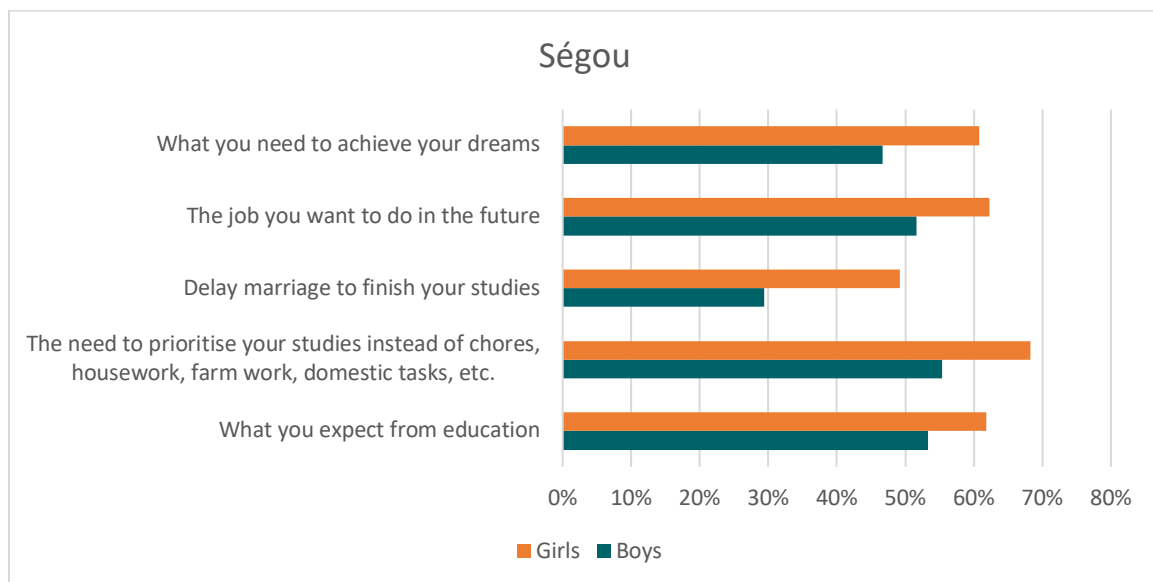
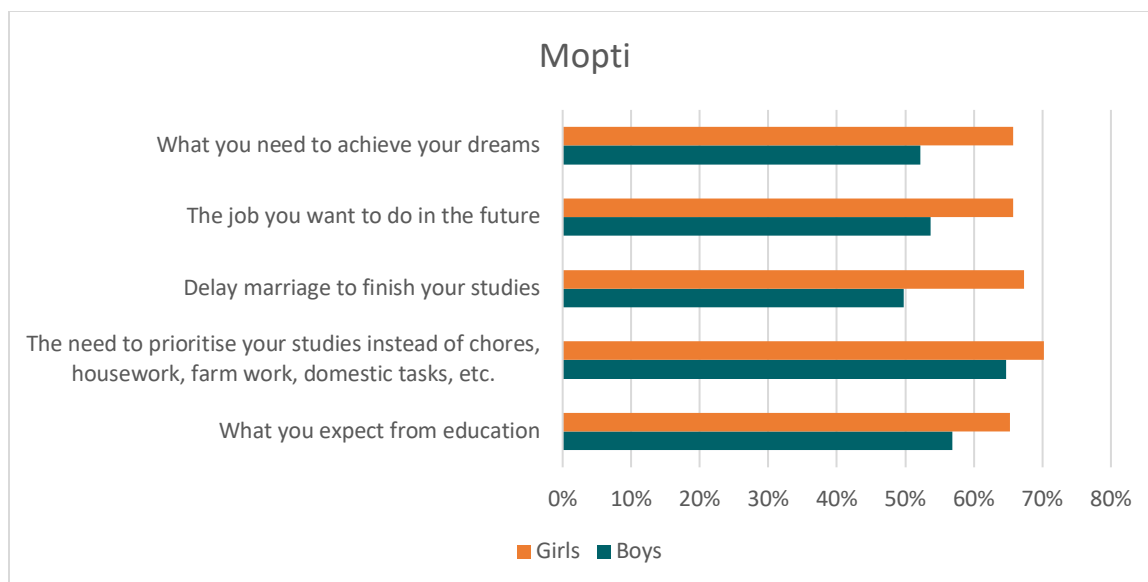


Figure 17: Percentage of respondents from Mopti who discussed with an adult of their family of the following topics during the last 6 months.



4.3. Relationship between education and agency

4.3.1. Influence of adolescent girls' and boys' participation in fundamental education on their agency

The young people who took part in both workshops underlined the importance of education to achieve their objectives and help themselves. This was visible in the art productions from phase 1 during which 22 drawings and 5 cellphlms were created on education (see section 4.1.1.). Adolescents also reemphasised the role of education in fostering and implementing agency during the discussions from phase 3. Education was part of the ingredients selected by all groups of boys and girls and in plenary sessions, they underlined the value of regular attendance, discipline, efforts, and participation in class. “Someone who has studied never lose himself” (Boy, Soroly). “Education enables us to have ideas so we can help ourselves” (Boy, Konobougou). In the peer interview activity conducted in phase 3, the young participants all agreed that there is a relationship between education and agency. Some said that they complement each other’s, others that the knowledge acquired through studying enables them to help themselves. “Yes, [there is a relationship] when you go to school you learn a lot of things and after you can do a lot of things to help yourself” (Girl, Baroueli). “One helps the other. When you study you have a lot of advantages” (Girl, Soroly).

The adolescents who took part in the survey clearly identified education, understood here as schooling, as an important factor to have agency. As mentioned earlier, to identify what it takes to have agency, we asked open questions formulated in different ways. This was to better capture the nuances within the concept of agency and reduce the chances of misaligned translation. The responses are consistent no matter how the question is worded. When we enquired what it takes for a person to be able to help herself, education was the most mentioned with 560 respondents including 309 boys and 251 girls. This represents 56% of the participating adolescents. When young people were asked 'what does it take for a person to act to achieve her goals?' education was also the most popular answer with 442 respondents including 241 boys and 201 girls. To the question 'What is the most important to be able to achieve your dreams and live the life you want?' Here, the respondents could only say one thing, education or going to school was again the first answer with 327 responses including 171 boys and 156 girls.

When young people were asked what they need to improve their capacity to set themselves objectives and do what it takes to achieve them, education came second, after money. 443 respondents, including 245 boys and 198 girls answered education. It is interesting to note that some respondents mentioned knowledge. These answers were classified separately since knowledge can be acquired in different ways and not necessarily in educational contexts. This consistence throughout several open questions worded differently is important considering the challenges related to the translation of the concept of agency. The significance of the role education plays for agency was also highlighted in the questions with multiple choices. Indeed, when we asked them directly the extent to which education is important to enable them to take the necessary actions to achieve their objectives in life, 62,6% of the all the respondents (including OOS respondents) said 'very important' and 26,6% answered 'important'. 89% of the adolescents surveyed also felt that going to school helps young people from their commune to help themselves (85% in Ségou and 94% in Mopti).

School attending adolescents were questioned about what they had learned at school that helps them to realize their dream. The most popular answer for both boys and girls was reading (341 respondents) followed by mathematics (330 respondents). Other popular answers include teachers' advice, history, geography, how to learn lessons, personal discipline, the way to teach and the way to do exercises. When asked what they would not be able to do if they hadn't been to school, learning to read and write was by far the most common answer with 538

adolescents followed by learning to speak French (358 respondents). Other answers mentioned more than 100 times include understanding life, having knowledge, learning good ideas to fulfill my dreams, learning foreign languages, learning to behave well in society. These illustrate the contribution that education can make on agency.

The respondents who dropped out of school between grades 3 and 6 were asked to what extent their experience at school helped them in their daily activities. 10,6% said school helped them do a lot of things, 47,1% said it helped them do something, 23,5% said it helped little. When asked in what area of life or activity they used their school experience to resolve the problems they face, 50% answered for reading documents, 12,8% said for trade, 5,8% said for work, 5,8% said in social relations, 5,8% said for family and 15,1% said for nothing. The reminder did not know.

Adolescents, however, also pointed out that education alone is not enough. This was made particularly clear in the ingredient exercise of phase 3. Here are a few examples of what young people said. “Without money even if you finish your studies, it’s useless”. “If you don’t have money, it’s very difficult to study and succeed at school”. “Even if we have health and education, it is not easy to succeed without courage”. “Someone who is not determined cannot give himself fully to his task which is bad for agency”. “Without advice from adults, nothing is possible”. In their messages to community members, groups of adolescents also wanted to raise adults’ awareness of the challenges they face in terms of access to education. In Mopti, for instance, girls expressed their need for greater freedom of choice, equality of opportunities and conducive environment to pursue their studies. Some girls also highlighted the importance of parental advice and support on matters of education to enhance their agency.

4.3.2. Influence of agency on adolescent girls’ and boys’ participation in fundamental education

The perceived contribution of agency to education was also assessed in the survey. 88% responded that the capacity to help one-self can help young people to stay in school (88% in Ségou and 88% in Mopti) and 88% of the respondents said that the capacity to help one-self can help a lot an adolescent from their commune to have better grades at school (90% in Ségou and 86% in Mopti).

In the workshops, some young people saw agency as something that can help them to overcome barriers to education. As mentioned earlier, all respondents to the peer interviews agreed that education and agency support each other's. "Attending school and helping yourself complete each other's because without other [ingredients] like courage or efforts it's hard to study and without studies, it's hard to help yourself" (Boy, Sibi-Sibi). "If you have the capacity to help yourself you will be able to do what is good and have the school supply (fournitures scolaires) and other things to study" (Boy, Konobougou).

4.4. Gender differences and similarities

4.4.1. Gender differences in adolescents' artwork

The artwork produced by boys and girls during the first phase of the study reflected traditional gender roles and the division of labor in the research areas. Girls' cellphilms talked about their domestic work and different challenges encountered on matters of health and education. Boys' cellphilms, although some also portrayed health and education issues, had a stronger focus on the conflict and questions related to income generation activities traditionally assigned to boys such as agriculture, football, construction work, etc. Similar differences were also visible in the drawings although some girls drew non-traditional professions such as soldiers or lawyers. When asked to comment on the differences between the productions of boys and girls, the young workshop participants from phase 3 said they could be explained by the conditions in which boys and girls are living and the work they are assigned by their parents. Girls addressed problematics such as early marriage, house chores preventing girls from attending school, the necessity to cover girls' education expenses, and the importance of good relationships. Boys expressed concerns about the conflict, the high cost of life, lack of electricity and illustrated ways they could earn money to help themselves and others.

"Well. It's gardening that is easy for boys and trade for girls. Their ways of working are not the same, boys can do things with their strength that girls cannot do" (boy, Baraouéli).

"We have to invite parents to associate themselves with young people in order to help us to accomplish our ideas and our objectives (girl, Konobougou).

Adults also interpreted the differences between the artwork of boys and girls in relation to social norms and expectations:

“Boys have highlighted work such as construction, agriculture, animal husbandry and girls housework, cooking, sweeping the floor, gardening, etc. That’s how it is here, and there are things that are difficult for girls” (men, Soroly).

“Yes, boys have shown local work and girls as well but usually they don’t have the same. Boys do agriculture and animal raising, girls clean the house, cook and garden” (woman, Mopti).

“Yes, there is a difference. Boys do construction work, agriculture and take care of animals while girls cook, sweep the floor, sew, garden, That’s the way it is1 boys are stronger” (parent, Sibi-Sibi).

4.4.2 Gender differences and similarities in the survey

One must be careful in the interpretation of the gender disaggregation of survey data as it may hide differences in girls’ experiences at commune and school levels. In addition, the open questions used in the survey enabled respondents to give several answers, but they did not rank them in terms of priorities. The statements below therefore present a broad strokes summary of the findings and the researchers are aware that more nuances would be required to fully appreciate how the relationship between agency and experiences of primary education in conflict-affected settings differ between adolescent girls and boys.

The gender comparison revealed differences in the way boys and girls experience life. For instance, a majority of respondents from both regions said it is more difficult for girls to attend and remain at school (see table 11.) The occupations of out-of-school boys and girls are different (see table 12), and more girls mentioned discussing their aspirations with adults (63,5% compared to 49,5%). Also, three out of four girls (76%) who took part in the survey felt that they had agency compared to 66% of boys. Similarly, 86% female respondents also felt that adults listen to youth, a percentage higher than boys (82%).

Table 11: For whom it is easier to go to school or to remain in school according to respondents.

Ségou				Mopti				Total			
Boys	Girls	Total	% Total	Boys	Girls	Total	% Total	Boys	Girls	Total	% Total

There is no difference	26	16	42	8,4%	20	33	53	10,6%	46	49	95	9,5%
It's easier for girls	54	44	98	19,6%	38	23	61	12,2%	92	67	159	15,9%
It's easier for boys	210	140	350	70,0%	197	189	386	77,2%	407	329	736	73,6%
Total	300	200	500		255	245	500		555	445	1000	

Table 12: Occupation of out-of-school respondents

	Girls	Boys	Total
Domestic tasks /housework	59	7	66
Agriculture/ gardening	17	40	57
Taking animals to pastures/ taking care of animals		34	34
Learning Coran		31	31
Construction work		23	23
Collecting water	9	13	22
Trading/ selling things / working in shops	9	3	12
Sewing	7	2	9
Begging		9	9
Fishing	1	7	8
Collecting firewood	6	2	8
Making things / weaving / Craft / Braiding	4	4	8
Transporting things	3	3	6
Working (not specified)	1	5	6
Nothing		5	5

Data also reveals several similarities. As mentioned earlier, the main factors of agency identified in the survey are the same for boys and girls. This is consistent with the results from the ingredients' activity presented in section 4.1.3. The quantitative data also reveals that the relationship between agency and school experiences is strong for both male and female participants. Boys and girls also see the impact of the conflict similarly (more on this in section 4.5).

4.5. Working with adolescents in times of crisis

Due to the innovative nature of its methodology in the context of Mali, PREAM enabled the researchers to identify different aspects that matters when working with adolescents in situation of conflict. First, a concern for the safety of

both the research team and the participants must be ever-present during the study. As noted earlier in the report, the timing of fieldwork was often tied to events on the ground and the evolution of the conflict. The Mali team had to be constantly aware of what was going in each research sites and maintain contacts in every research location. They also took great care in their travel arrangements and kept the local authorities informed of their activities all the time.

Safety was also about ensuring that young participants were not put at greater risks as a result of their engagement in research activities. Attention was paid to select safe locations to conduct activities and to hold the workshops at moments that did not interfere with adolescents' studies and maximized the chances that they would be able to travel from and to their homes safely. We also made sure that every participant was fully aware of what the research entailed before deciding to join and that underaged participants had a parental authorization.

Before each activity with adolescents, the personal involved in the study took part in a short course on safeguarding measures. The researchers were also trained on gender-aware research ethics for participatory and visual methods including the no-face approach. The research protocol for the visual workshops (See appendix 2) was designed to protect as much as possible the confidentiality of the data and reduce the likeliness that young people would be recognized in a way that might cause them harm in the future. Pictures and videos were therefore shot using techniques that hid the face of the participants either by shooting the subjects from the back or from a distance, by shooting shadows, body parts or objects, by framing from the shoulders down or by having subjects wearing masks, scarfs or other devices to protect their face from being recognizable. While hiding the face of respondents does not necessarily prevent them from being recognized by people who know them (one may still be recognized by a voice or a particular item of clothing), the approach helps to put young people at ease, it promotes creativity and has its own aesthetic value. For more on the no-face approach see Lussier et al. (in press).

Another interesting finding is that young people want to talk about the crisis. The adolescents who took part in the study have concerns, experiences, and ideas that they wish to share about the conflict. Their level of awareness of the circumstances in which they live is higher than what adults might expect. This was highlighted in the discussions between adolescents and adults during the third

phase of the study. Adolescents also want to share their solutions. Participatory methods, visual methods in particular, are a relevant way to generate such exchanges, bridge inter-generational barriers and enable young people, especially girls, to express themselves freely.

“What I understood in this work [the participatory workshops] is the blooming (épanouissement) and the progress of young people, for example being able to do something to help ourselves” (Girl, Konobougou).

Part 5: Conclusions: Lessons from PREAM

5.1. Summary of findings

Considering the elusiveness of the concept of agency and the multiple meanings it takes in the literature, the researchers acknowledge that the prompts used in the workshops and the wording of the survey questions were far from perfect. Moreover, no translation can fully capture the image that the term ‘agency’ conveys in English. At the same time, there are several noteworthy findings:

Young people’s awareness of what counts as agency: The participating young people have shown throughout the study that they have a clear idea of what it takes to have agency within the specific context in which they live and that, in itself, is a significant finding. Also, PREAM’s data highlighted the importance of collective agency for adolescents in Mali. Throughout the discussions and art productions the young participants kept on referring to their desire to help their families and their communities as well as helping themselves even when the wording of the questions implied individual forms of agency. Several cellphilms also showed how collective action can help to overcome challenges. This invites us to revisit our own conceptions of agency and what it means in terms of young people’s empowerment, girls in particular. The components of agency most important to adolescent girls and boys can be grouped in 5 categories: education and learning; money and work (having a job); adults’ support and advisory; conducive environment (living in peace, having access to health care services); and personal characteristics such as determination and motivation, ambition, efforts, courage, good health.

Young people’s awareness of the role of environment: PREAM’s young participants demonstrated a high level of understanding of their environment and the challenges of their communities. Their productions also highlight their determination to fulfill their needs. The adolescents established connections between youth agency and their living conditions that surprised some of the adults who took part in the final workshops. For instance, one group of adults said they were surprised by youths’ high level of knowledge about agency and expressed their desire to take action to address some the issues raised in the artistic productions. Some of the adults were also amazed at the way young people projected themselves in the future.

“[The artwork], illustrate daily lives, they tell about topics such as marriage, education, agriculture, sewing, militaries (Translation from representative of parents’ association, Mopti).

“The drawings of our children and others show that they project themselves in the future. [...] they are in class and already think about sewing and water towers” (Translation from a woman, townhall’s counsellor, Mopti).

Young people conveying messages to adults:

Methodologically, the findings were rich in that the study and show how participatory visual methods can help young people to convey their messages to adult audiences and contribute to bridge generational communication gaps by packaging issues and experiences in forms that are less personal and can easily be discussed. There was a sense of pride in parents’ eyes when they saw the work of their child in the posters and the artbook. It was also noticeable when they watched the cellphilms. While we do not know the long-term impact of this on the young artists, our findings highlight the need for longitudinal research where it would be possible to ascertain whether the solutions suggested by adolescents to the problems raised in their productions will be shared and the extent to which adults will consider implementing them.

Insights on intergenerationality:

Throughout the study, PREAM’s young respondents showed that they have ideas, plans and life objectives, but the data also suggest that their aspirations often need to be accepted and validated by adults to be fulfilled. Advice, whether they are provided by a member of the family, a teacher or other adults play a meaningful role in the development and expression of agency. This was reiterated in all three phases of data collection. The survey data suggest that parents can play an important role in the development of youth agency. Parental support is perceived by both boys and girls as a key element to help them to set themselves objectives and do what it takes to achieve them, and our respondents also consider parents’ blessing very important to be able to fulfill their dreams and achieve their goals in life. What young people call blessing can be seen from two angles. First, blessing in the spiritual sense that is parents asking God’s favours for the child. The child receives blessing each time he accomplishes a good deed for the parent or after the morning’s usual salutations. Second, receiving a parent’s authorisation to do what you want such as studying or pursuing an activity can be considered a parental blessing.

Education and agency support each other:

Clearly education and agency support each other. The young respondents see education – understood here as adolescent girls’ and boys’ participation in primary school – as an important factor to have agency. Their answers suggest that going to school increases adolescents’ capacity to help themselves and take action to achieve their objectives in life. The knowledge acquired in class, in particular reading and writing, mathematics and speaking French, are perceived to help youth achieve their dreams. Several respondents also mentioned that education helps to understand life, to resolve problems, to have good ideas and to behave well in society. Furthermore, the participating boys and girls think that agency can help adolescents to stay at school and to have better grades. The relationship between education and agency therefore goes both ways.

Agency and gender.

Although agency is a common term in gender studies, it tends to be used to discuss the extent to which girls and boys display agency, how they do, and the reasons why they do or do not. Attempts to understand the gender differences within understandings of agency, even with gender disaggregated data, proved to be far more complex. First, because there are several different ways to comprehend agency even within scholars, second, because it has no equivalent in local languages, and finally, as will be discussed shortly, because understandings of agency are influenced by culture and positionality.

When we embarked upon the project, we anticipated that there would be clear distinctions between how adolescent girls and adolescent boys viewed their agency in relation to education. As highlighted in the sections above, the wealth of data about girls in Mali and their attendance at school and the conditions which prohibit school attendance paint a particular picture. Over the course of the study, we did see some clear gender differences especially on the survey (e.g. boys and girls experiences of life, their occupation outside of school, girls facing more difficulties to attend school, etc.). However, what was also clear throughout the project particularly in relation to collective data analysis across the teams in Mali and Canada (and even within one team), there were many different interpretations on the same gender-focused data. For example, in one of the cellphilms, a girl refuses to do the domestic task requested by her mother because she needs time to study. Her older sister provides her guidance and tells her that she should do the chores. When the Canadian team members first analysed that cellphilm and another similar one in which a girl also refuses to work but whose motive is unclear, everyone agreed that the girls who refused to work were the ones demonstrating agency in both cellphilms. However, the Malian team was divided on the matter. Some thought that the first girl was being agentic because she wanted to use her

time to study. Others disagreed categorically. As for the second cellphilm, there was agreement within the Malian team that whether the girl was acting out of laziness or because she did not accept that her elder sisters had different duties, her refusal to work was showing a lack of agency. The transcriptions of what the girls had said about their own cellphilms revealed that the casts had wanted to show the importance of listening to their mothers in both cellphilms. During phase 3, both adolescents and community members were asked to discuss who was demonstrating agency in these cellphilms and others. While most adults including imams and village chiefs shared the view that there can't be agency without respect of parents thus the girls did not display agency. The message shared by young girls and perceived by several parents was the need to reduce the domestic burden of teenage girls.

Youth insights on the crisis:

The young people who took part in the workshops displayed a surprising level of understanding of the different facets of the Malian crisis. Their cellphilms addressed issues including school closures (Strike at school, War in the country), the sanitary crisis (Coronavirus, Health problems), the economic crisis (Expensive life), the conflict between farmers and herders (The agreement, The conflict) and of course the war (Bomb, Peace). At the same time their cellphilms highlighted resilience, open-mindedness, and determination. They promoted mutual respect and collaboration in order to find solutions and achieve peace. For most of the participants in this study, conflict is part of their daily life. They may experience relative peace in their communities for periods of time but they hear about it frequently. In the survey, nearly half of the respondents (and even more in Ségou) reported no change in their school experience since the beginning of the conflict. While this may seem surprising, it is important to consider the age of the participating adolescents (11 to 19 years old). The conflict in Mali has been going on for more than ten years which means that several boys and girls have never had the chance to study in times of peace.

5.2. Lessons for education authorities

The young people who participated in PREAM felt that school closures due to strikes, insecurity or teachers' absenteeism undermine their capacity to help themselves, set objectives and do what it takes to achieve them but some productions, such as the cellphilm 'Strike at school', also acknowledge that adolescents can come together and take action, as agents, to continue to learn.

Adolescents can and want to be part of the solution. Several participants said they wanted their cellphilms to be seen by education authorities because they want their concerns to be heard. PREAM's young participants were not passive observers of what goes on around them. They have ideas and suggestions to address the problems around them and they want to be involved. This, for us, is the essence of agency and something education systems should promote.

PREAM's data indicate that only a small number of young people talk about their aspirations, their needs, and what they could do to meet them, with the adults around them. At the same time, adolescents emphasised the importance of guidance and advisory thought-out the study. The world is constantly changing, and schools have a role to play in preparing young people to take their place within it. They should be a place where adolescents can discuss about life, their hopes and their dreams amongst themselves as well as with significant adults. Schools should therefore create space and time for young people to discuss not only with their teachers but also other adults who can act as role models and sources of inspiration. This is particularly important for young women, since they have fewer opportunities to go outside of their village and meet women from outside of their communities. Readings and audio-visual materials (videos, radio broadcasts, etc.) about inspiring African personalities could also be developed and made available to adolescents through schools.

The open questions from the survey revealed a need to continue to promote positive disciplinary measures in class and support teachers and school directions in their implementation. Corporal punishment, insults, brutality, and discrimination are amongst the things frequently mentioned by young respondents that undermine their experience at school. Schools must also be accompanied in their efforts to prevent harassment, discrimination, and violence between students. In their cellphilms the young participants illustrated how the difficult circumstances of some learners can lead to unwanted behaviours. Addressing undesired behaviour in a way that considers such circumstances and is agency enhancing for all the adolescents involved is not easy, particularly for less experienced or untrained teachers. However, it can make a significant difference in young people's learning experience, their desire to stay at school, and perhaps more importantly their ability to deal with conflict in their own lives. Positive and agency enhancing disciplinary practices should therefore be included in teacher training and continuing professional development programs.

5.3. Lessons for NGOs and education partners

One of the most significant lessons from PREAM is that agency appears different depending on who looks at it and that our positionality may influence what we recognise as agency and what we overlook. We have already discussed in the literature section that there are different forms of agency (see the ‘Agency Flower’ section 2.3.) and as discussed in the earlier section, the different ways of seeing agency were particularly striking in the discussions around the cellfilms of the girls’ refusing to work. Perhaps NGOs and education partners need to reflect on the extent to which the way they see agency aligns with the visions of the local actors and whether it is ethical to impose foreign ways of interpreting agency.

Similarly, as discussed earlier, the importance of collective agency was constantly emphasised by respondents. In the literature, collective agency tends to be discussed in contexts of social movements and organisations. In PREAM, however, adolescents did not see collective agency as something distinct or requiring formal grouping or organising. Collective agency is naturally occurring and included within the idea of agency itself. Friends and family spontaneously come together to support each other’s and that’s what enables them to be agent. Once again, this shows the importance of involving participants in the analysis of their production, but it also reminds us of the importance of taking a step back and being humble when determining what development interventions should promote. Education partners may have a vision of empowerment that is based on a different conception of agency from the one of the primary stakeholders they aim to support.

The survey highlighted the important role of teachers in fostering agency. While a majority of school attending respondents reported feeling at ease to participate in class, more than a third of the respondents reported instances of brutality or corporal punishment. This suggests that education actors should continue their efforts to provide a safe and respectful learning environment to both boys and girls and work with teachers to develop agentic approaches to discipline in class.

PREAM’s findings suggest that in spite of the difficult conditions in which they live, a majority of young people are agentic and have hope for the future. They consider education to be very important to help them to fulfill their dreams and education actors should therefore continue their efforts to keep schools open and support young people’s access to quality education in times of crisis. Considering

the importance of parents in the decision to remain at school or not and the persistence of gender-based barriers to education, parents' awareness raising efforts should be maintained, especially to enable girls to remain at school beyond the first cycle of fundamental education.

Finally, the study showed that participatory visual methods are well adapted to working with young people even in context of crisis. The participating adolescents were eager to take part in the activities. They expressed themselves freely during the activities and encountered no difficulty in using electronic tablets. The artwork produced helped them to transmit messages and served as an effective way to open conversations with both peers and adults on topics that might have otherwise been difficult address.

5.4. Agency in the classrooms: lessons for teachers

Fostering agency in classrooms

The young people who took part in PREAM told us that education, while a critical ingredient of supporting agency, was not sufficient on its own to develop the capacity to help oneself, or in other words, to set goals and do what it takes to achieve them. Support and advice from teachers and parents are particularly important to foster agency. So are personal characteristics such as determination, courage, ambition, motivation, as well as efforts and hard work. But how to develop such qualities in classrooms, particularly in resource deprived environments?

First, the researchers believe that fostering agency at school requires a shift of mindset from teachers and other education actors. Educators must believe that young people deserve and are able to control different aspects of their lives. They must see adolescents as active learners and contributors to society rather than passive recipients of knowledge. Teachers should also be willing to let youth use their voice and express their creativity in order to encourage the kind of critical thinking that leads problem solving.

Second, fostering agency means moving from focussing on traditional and perhaps comforting ways of looking at problems (e.g. the way things have always been done) to innovative solution- seeking. This doesn't mean, of course, that only transformative forms of agency should be promoted, but rather that adolescents should be encouraged to take decisions consciously and reflect on the specific conditions in which they evolve. That can be done through the creation of

discussion spaces and opportunities to engage in classroom problem solving and decision making.

Finally, fostering agency is also about helping young people to project themselves into the future and think about the kind of life they want, without judgement, whether such desired life aligns with socio-cultural expectations or not. The language of ‘what I am hoping for’ and ‘what do I want to do or be’ is critical. This requires the creation of respectful learning environments that embrace diversity and inclusion – to enable learners to transcend stereotypes – while creating opportunities for advisory and guidance from significant adults.

The way we teach and interact with learners can either promote agency or constrain it. The same can be said of the way learners interact with each other. It is therefore important to reflect on what is happening in classrooms and identify ways that schools can better contribute to the development of youth agency. Table 13 below summarises what we regard as agency promoting teaching practices and conditions as well as what might be described as agency undermining teaching practices.

Table 13: Agency in teaching practices

Agency promoting teaching practices	Agency undermining teaching practices
- Adolescents involved in establishing the code of conduct. - Positive disciplinary practices. - Regular formative assessment. - Learners invited to reflect on and discuss what they read. - Promoting understanding rather than rote learning. - Group discussions. - Debates. - Mentorship. - Learners invited to think about a variety of possible careers. - Learners invited to discuss what they want from life with their teachers and their parents. - Introductions to or talks about positive adult role models in the society. Use activities supporting:	- Corporal punishment - Disciplinary measures that induce fear in learners. - Interactions that lower self-confidence or induce shame in learners. - Asking learners to copy text without the opportunity to engage with it. - Asking learners to read without engaging with the material. - Making learners reproduce examples without making sure they understand them. - Memorising without understanding. - Not making sure that the classwork is done properly. - Supporting some learners but not others.

- Active participation in class - Autonomy - Critical reflection - Problem resolution - Creative thinking and innovation - Thoughtful decision making	
Agency promoting classroom context	Agency undermining classroom context
- Opportunities to involve in school or class governance through student councils, committees, consultative groups, etc. - Environment of respect at school. - Opportunities to discuss and express opinions and ideas. - Safety of classroom and school grounds. - Curriculum promoting autonomy. - Curriculum promoting entrepreneurship and innovation. - Educative policies promoting diversity and inclusion.	- Lack of respect amongst students - Intimidation - Violence - Lack of opportunities to discuss. - Lack of opportunities to express opinions. - Presence of gender stereotypes - Restrictive social expectations - Lack of adequate infrastructure and classroom environment (classroom furniture; space for learning activities; safety of classroom; space to circulate, etc.)

Promoting girls' agency in and outside the classroom

All the measures mentioned above apply to the agency of boys and girls alike. However, as discussed earlier, PREAM's data suggest that girls are facing more barriers to education and that social norms may constrain girls in the exercise of their agency. The development of girls' agency must therefore not limit itself to the school environment but bridge what is happening in class, at home and in the community. For this to happen, girls must be given the opportunity to reflect and discuss their various experiences and efforts must be made to challenge restrictive mindsets and gender stereotypes at school, family and community levels.

As PREAM's attempts to analyse gender and agency in cellphilms (see section 5.1 above) revealed, girls can demonstrate various forms of agency that can be located anywhere on the continuums of transformation, behavioral conformity, and alignment with norms. These must therefore be interpreted in relation to the socio-cultural contexts in which they are situated. What matters is to make sure that adolescent girls are making conscious choices and are free to act according to their own values and aspirations. Adaptive agency can be the

most relevant and valid choice in some contexts. The role of education actors is to make sure that it is exercised with as little constraints as possible.

In addition to the measure mentioned above, the following actions can make a difference in promoting girls' agency.

- Raise parents' awareness of the importance of educating girls beyond basic education.
- Raise parents' awareness of the importance of reading and studying at home.
- Invite parents to reduce the burden of their daughters' domestic tasks, especially on school days.
- Invite parents to discuss with their daughters about what they expect from life.
- Raise parents' awareness of the negative impact of early marriage.
- Encourage adolescents' boys and girls to think beyond traditional gender roles when considering the kind of life they want.
- Encourage girls' active participation in class and in extra-scholar activities.
- Put in place measures to facilitate menstrual hygiene practices.
- Encourage girls to share their opinions and ideas in class and in extra-scholar activities.
- Create safe and respectful environments for girls to express themselves in mixed-gendered groups.
- Involve girls in decision making through students' councils, committees, etc.
- Distribute classrooms' responsibilities evenly between boys and girls rather than based on gendered social practices.
- Encourage girls to think about career opportunities.
- Present various models of influential adult women, including some with non-traditional professions.
- Congratulate girls when they demonstrate initiative, leadership and creative problem solving.

5.5. Lessons for researchers

PREAM as a research study was concerned with method as interrelated to agency itself. In embarking upon a study of agency through participatory visual methodologies, we were of course interested in how young people would engage with digital tools and open-ended prompts, and also the challenges of doing this type of research in contexts where the focus is often solely on surveys and focus groups and where teaching itself may be top-down rather than participatory.

Young people responded very positively and creatively to these methods, producing 120 drawings and 23 cellphilms. Although both the Research Ethics Board at McGill and some of the research team had been concerned that young people in an under resourced area and in times of conflict would struggle to produce cellphilms using ipads this was not at all the case. One restriction we placed on the productions was the idea of 'no faces' so that youth would not be recognized. We regarded this as a protective measure. However, as we highlight elsewhere (Lussier et al., in press), a no faces approaches in a study of youth agency brings its own problematic in that the participants themselves were not able to choose whether to show their faces or not.

For researchers, cellphilms are primarily a source of visual data emerging from a participatory process that gives a voice to people often silenced by the conditions in which they live. They have a specific purpose and a specific target audience. [...] For adolescents, cellphilms are a means of expression and creation, a way to communicate. Beyond the artistic productions, however, are young actors whose message may or may not align with the expectations of the broader society. Who, then, should decide what is safe to show? How do we draw the line between safeguard and censorship? (Lussier et al., in press)

In summary, we advocate for a greater attention to the idea of youth agency as integral to methodology.

5.6. Lessons for research partners and donors

A frequent misconception of participatory research is that data emerge spontaneously during the events themselves. However, while a lot can be learned during the participatory activities, participatory data are still qualitative data and to have any value, they require significant time and energy to transcribe, translate and analyze. In the context of research, when information gathered through participatory processes are not properly analyzed and interpreted they cannot translate into findings thus the activities that generated them become scientifically worthless. It is therefore essential that sufficient time and resources be set aside for transcription, translation, and analysis of participatory data.

Working in conflict settings require flexibility from all the research stakeholders because the timing and organization of research activities need to be adjusted to the evolving situation in the research sites. Funds must therefore be made available in advance and dispositions taken to enable researchers to adapt data collection when required.

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APPENDIX 1: Knowledge mobilization and Capacity Development

Academic publications

Mitchell, C., Lussier, K. and Keita, F. (2022). Youth agency in times of crisis: Exploring education and conflict in Mali through participatory visual approaches with youth. *Front. Educ.* 7:959225. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2022.959225

Lussier, K., Keita, F., & Mitchell, C. (in press). 'Face value': The ethics and aesthetics of a *no-face* approach to cellphilmaking with young people in Mali. In Mitchell, C., Sadati, S.M.H., Starr, L., & Roy, S. (Eds.), *Re-visioning Cellphilmaking Methodology*. Springer.

Bandarchian Rashti, N. & Mitchell, C. (in press). A visionary conversation: International NGOs on cellphilmaking in interventions and advocacy. In Mitchell, C., Sadati, S.M.H., Starr, L., & Roy, S. (Eds.), *Re-visioning Cellphilmaking Methodology*. Springer.

Art book

Participatory Cultures Lab. (2023). *Dépeindre l'agentivité – Picturing agency*. McGill University, Montreal, Canada.
https://www.mcgill.ca/ihdw/files/ihdw/picturing_agency.pdf

ISBN: 978-1-77247-063-5 (PRINT)

ISBN: 978-1-77247-064-2 (E-BOOK)



Unpublished work

Literature reviews

Lussier, K. (2021). Girls and agency: A review of the literature. Participatory Research on Education and Agency in Mali.
<https://www.mcgill.ca/ihdw/pream>

Lussier, K. (2021). Les filles et l'agentivité : Une revue de littérature. Recherche Participative sur l'Éducation et l'Agentivité au Mali.
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Framework

Participatory Research on Education and Agency in Mali. (2023). Conceptual Framework on Agency.

Guidance notes and briefs

Participatory Research on Education and Agency in Mali. (2023). Ethical Practices and Youth Agency in Participatory Visual Research in Humanitarian Contexts.
<https://www.mcgill.ca/ihdw/pream>

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Conferences and academic events

Dembelle, M., & Dia, M. (2022, Aoril 21). *Horizons sexospécifiques: Perspectives des jeunes sur l'éducation et l'agentivité dans deux régions affectées par le conflit au Mali*. Comparative and International Education Society Conference 2022: Illuminating the Power of Idea/lism., Online.

Lussier, K., & Keita, F. (2022, April 21). *Étudier l'insaisissable: promesses et difficultés dans l'exploration de l'agentivité des jeunes*. Comparative and International Education Society Conference 2022: Illuminating the Power of Idea/lism, Online.

Lussier, K., & Loua, S. (2021, November 19). *Éducation et agentivité au Mali: défis et opportunités* World Council of Comparative Education Societies Symposium, Online.

- Traore, I. S., Loua, S. & Dembelle, M. (2021, November 25-26). *La collaboration scientifique Nord –Sud et les passerelles d'innovations et de pratiques de recherche : Les Méthodes Visuelles Participatives (MVP)* Journées scientifiques de la Faculté des Sciences Humaines et des Sciences de l'Éducation (FSHSE), Bamako.
- Mitchell, C., & Loua, S. (2022, April 21). *Les méthodologies visuelles participatives pour développer l'agentivité pendant l'étude de l'agentivité: Idéaux et aspects pratiques*. Comparative and International Education Society Conference 2022: Illuminating the Power of Idea/lism., Online.
- Mitchell, C., & Lussier, K. (2022, 17 May). *Looking at crisis differently: participatory visual methods and adolescents' agency in Mali* Canadian association for the study of international development 2022, Online.
- Dembelle, M. (2022, May 18). *La recherche en temps de crise au Mali*. Canadian association for the study of international development 2022, Online.
- Loua, S. (2022, May 18). *Conflit, éducation et agentivité des jeunes* Canadian association for the study of international development 2022, Online.
- Keita, F. (2022, May 18). *Genre et agentivité en temps de crise*. Canadian association for the study of international development 2022, Online.
- Dia, M. (2022, May 18). *Au-delà de la crise: l'agentivité comme vecteur de paix?* Canadian association for the study of international development 2022, Online.
- Keita, F., & Lussier, K. (2022, June 9). *What about «face value»? The ethics of the no-face approach to cellphilm in Mali* Revisioning Cellphilm Methodologies Symposium, Online.
- Keita, F., & Fofana, F. (2022, June 25-27). *Rechercher l'insécurité* Symposium international des Sciences Appliquées du Mali
- Keita, F. (2022, July 25-27). *L'expérience de PREAM pour une recherche en éducation de qualité en contexte de conflit* Colloque International sur Insécurité et Recherche au Sahel, Bamako.
- Dembelle, M. (2022, August). *Éduquer à la paix et à la cohésion sociale: quels enjeux et défis pour les sciences de l'éducation?* Symposium des sciences de l'éducation, Bamako.
- Dembelle, M. (2022, November, 29-30). *Recherche participative sur l'Education et l'agentivité en contexte de conflit : quels enseignements pour les*

politiques publiques d'éducation au Mali ? Journées scientifiques de la science politique au Mali, Bamako.

Dembelle, M. (2022, December 6-8). *PREAM : quelle agentivité développée chez les formateurs des formateurs en formation initiale et continue à l'école normale supérieure de Bamako ?* Colloque international sur les 60 ans des écoles normales supérieures : parcours, mutations, défis et perspectives, Dakar.

Dia, M. (2022, December 6-9). *La recherche pour le développement de l'éducation en Afrique : l'exemple de PREAM au Mali* Journées scientifiques du CAMES sur « les sciences humaines et sociales face au devenir de l'Afrique : épistémologies, savoirs et pratiques, Libreville.

Mitchell, C., & Lussier, K. (2023, February 15). *Listening to research participants in times of crisis: The methodological implications of using Q2 with youth in conflict zones.* Comparative and International Education Society Conference 2023: Improving Education for a More Equitable World, Online.

Dembelle, M. (2023, February 15). *The Malian crisis through the eyes of youth in Mopti: How do children talk about their experiences of the security crisis?* Comparative and International Education Society Conference 2023: Improving Education for a More Equitable World, Online.

Loua, S., & Keita, F. (2023, February 15). *Listening to adolescents from Segou and Mopti: What are they communicating about education and agency?* Comparative and International Education Society Conference 2023: Improving Education for a More Equitable World, Online.

Traore, I. S. (2023, February 15). *School as a bulwark against the conscription of pupils; an analysis of learners' logics.*

Mitchell, C., & Lussier, K. (2023, February 19). *Participatory Research on Education and Agency* Comparative and International Education Society Conference 2023: Improving Education for a More Equitable World, Online.

Lussier, K. (2023, May 31). *Struggling for agency in Mali? Re-imagining the place of adolescents in researching crisis* Canadian Association for the Study of International Development Conference 2023, Toronto.

Other dissemination events

Activities with government bodies

- **Launch of the project** at the National Directorate of Basic Education (DNEF)
Date: November 26th 2021,
Participants: representatives from the teaching academies of Bamako Left Bank and Bamako Right Bank, the Pedagogical Animation Centers (CAP) of Bamako, the National Directorate of Basic Education (DNEF), the National Directorate of Standard Education (DNEN), the National Directorate of Non-Formal Education – National Languages (DNENF-LN), the National Directorate of Pedagogy (DNP).
- **Project Presentation** at the National Directorate for the Promotion of Women, Children and Family (DNPFEF)
Date: March 1st 2022
Participants: Representatives of all the departments of the DNPFEF
- **Information and coordination meeting** with the National Directorate for the Promotion of Women, Children and Family (DNPFEF)
Date: May 10th 2022
Participants: Representatives of the DNPFEF
- **Presentation of preliminary results** at the National Directorate of Basic Education (DNEF)
Date: September 27th 2022
Participants: representatives from the teaching academies of Bamako Left Bank and Bamako Right Bank, the Pedagogical Animation Centers (CAP) of Bamako, the National Directorate of Basic Education (DNEF), the National Directorate of Standard Education (DNEN), the National Directorate of Non-Formal Education – National Languages (DNENF-LN), the National Directorate of Pedagogy (DNP).
- **Presentation of findings** at the National Directorate of Basic Education (DNEF)
Date: August 25th 2022
Participants: representatives from the national centres for pedagogy, the national teaching institutes, teaching academies of Bamako, the Pedagogical Animation Centers (CAP) of Bamako, parents associations from the district of Bamako, school management committees, the National Directorate of Basic Education (DNEF), the National Directorate of Standard Education (DNEN), the National Directorate of Non-Formal Education – National Languages (DNENF-LN), the National Directorate of Pedagogy (DNP).

Activities with education partners

- **Project Presentation** to the Joining Forces Africa (JOFA) group
Date: August 2021
Participants: Representatives from six international NGOS working in child protection and safeguarding including Educo, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children's villages, Terre des Hommes, and World Vision

Activities with local authorities and community actors

- **Youth-informed community workshop in Kononbougou**
Date: May 6th, 2023
Participants: 26 participants including teachers, parents, school principal and community leaders (5 girls, 10 boys, 10 men and 1 woman).
- **Youth-informed community workshop in Baroueli**
Date: May 7th, 2023
Participants: 23 participants including teachers, parents, school principal and community leaders (8 girls, 8 boys, 6 men, 1 woman).
- **Youth-informed community workshop in Markala**
Date: May 8th, 2023
Participants: 24 participants including teachers, parents, school principal and community leaders (8 girls, 7 boys, 6 men and 3 women).
- **Youth-informed community workshop in Sibi-Sibi**
Date: May 13th, 2023
Participants: 30 participants including the school principal, a counsellor from the CAP, an Imam, a village chief, a representative from the school management committee, representatives from the mother's association, representatives from the parents' association, parents and 18 adolescents (9 girls, 9 boys, 10 men and 2 women).
- **Youth-informed community workshop in Dandoli**
Date: May 14th, 2023
Participants: 28 participants including the school principal, a counsellor from the CAP, a teacher, parents, representatives from the parents' association, a representative of Imams, a representative from the mother's association, a representative from the school management committee, a representative from CAFO and 14 adolescents (7 girls, 7 boys, 12 men and 2 women).
- **Youth-informed community workshop in Soroly**
Date: May 14th, 2023
Participants: 29 participants including the school principal, representative of Imams, teachers, the president and representatives from the school management committee, the president and representatives from the

mother's association, a village counsellor (9 girls, 10 boys, 7 men and 3 women).

- **Presentation of findings** at the Centre d'Animation Pédagogique (CAP) of Bandiagara.
Date: August 3rd, 2023
Participants: Local education authorities
- **Presentation of findings** at the Centre d'Animation Pédagogique (CAP) of Baroueli.
Date: August 14, 2023
Participants: Local education authorities
- **Presentation of findings** at the Centre d'Animation Pédagogique (CAP) of Markala.
Date: August 15, 2023
Participants: Local education authorities
- **Presentation of findings** at the Teaching Academy (AE) of Ségou
Date: August 16, 2023
Participants: Local education authorities

Capacity development activities

Online activities

Virtual Training courses

- Introduction to participatory visual methods in research
Date: March 30, 2021
Participants: 10 researchers and 7 doctoral students from ULSHB
Facilitator: Claudia Mitchell, Kattie Lussier, Ramy Gorgis, and Myriam Gervais from McGill University
- Drawing as a participatory visual research method
Date: March 31st, 2021
Participants: 10 researchers and 7 doctoral students from ULSHB
Facilitators: Prudence Caldaïrou-Bessette from Université du Québec à Montréal, Kattie Lussier and Claudia Mitchell from McGill University
- Cellphilmimg as a participatory visual research method
Date: April 1st and 7th, 2021
Participants: 10 researchers and 7 doctoral students from ULSHB
Facilitators: Jennifer Thompson from Université de Montréal, Claudia Mitchell and Kattie Lussier from McGill University

- Working with visual data
Date: April 8th, 2021
Participants: 10 researchers and 7 doctoral students from ULSHB
Facilitators: Kattie Lussier and Claudia Mitchell from McGill University

Virtual workshops

- Analysing data with Nvivo
Date: February 16, 2022
Participants: 5 researchers from ULSHB
Facilitator: Kattie Lussier from McGill University
- Understanding the Youth Education and Agency Survey Protocol
Date: February 23rd, 2022
Participants: 5 researchers from ULSHB
Facilitators: Kattie Lussier from McGill University

Face to face activities

- Training on gender equality and safeguarding for initial workshops
Date: October 22, 2021
Participants: 17 researchers and research assistants from ULSHB
Facilitators: Bakary Kone and Fatoumata Sacko from Plan International Mali.
- Training on gender equality and safeguarding for surveys
Date: May 13, 2022
Participants: 40 enumerators from ULSHB
Facilitator: Bakary Kone from Plan International Mali.
- Training on Translating the Youth Education and Agency Survey in Bamanakan and Dogosso
Date: May 13-14, 2022
Participants: 40 enumerators from ULSHB
Facilitators: Issiaka Ballo and Kindié Yalcouye from ULSHB
- Training on using Survey CTO Collect to administer the Youth Education and Agency Survey
Date: May 13-14, 2022
Participants: 40 enumerators from ULSHB
Facilitator: Balla Saddam Camara from ULSHB
- Workshop on implementing the research protocol for phase 3
Date: April 24 and 25, 2023
Participants: 28 researchers and research assistants from ULSHB
Facilitator: Kattie Lussier from McGill University

- Training on gender equality and safeguarding for final workshops
Date: April 24, 2023
Participants: from ULSHB
Facilitator: Fatoumata Keita from ULSHB
- Training on data analysis using Nvivo
Date: April 26 and 27, 2023
Participants: 15 researchers from ULSHB
Facilitator: Kattie Lussier from McGill University
- Training on Participatory Visual Research Methods
Date: April 29 and Mai 1st, 2023
Participants: 34 doctoral students from ULSHB
Facilitator: Kattie Lussier from McGill University

Tutorials and guides

Lussier, K. (2022). Introduction à l'analyse de données qualitatives avec Nvivo : Tutoriel 1 – Aperçu du Locigiel. [Video Tutorial]. Projet de Recherche Participative sur l'Éducation et l'agentivité au Mali, Université McGill.

Lussier, K. (2022). Introduction à l'analyse de données qualitatives avec Nvivo : Tutoriel 2 – Introduction à l'utilisation de Nvivo. [Video Tutorial]. Projet de Recherche Participative sur l'Éducation et l'agentivité au Mali, Université McGill.

Lussier, K. (2022). Introduction à l'analyse de données qualitatives avec Nvivo : Tutoriel 3 – Importer de fichiers et des codes. [Video Tutorial]. Projet de Recherche Participative sur l'Éducation et l'agentivité au Mali, Université McGill.

Lussier, K. (2022). Introduction à l'analyse de données qualitatives avec Nvivo : Tutoriel 4 – Créer des codes, des cas et des classifications. [Video Tutorial]. Projet de Recherche Participative sur l'Éducation et l'agentivité au Mali, Université McGill.

Lussier, K. (2022). Introduction à l'analyse de données qualitatives avec Nvivo : Tutoriel 5 – Coder des documents. [Video Tutorial]. Projet de Recherche Participative sur l'Éducation et l'agentivité au Mali, Université McGill.

Lussier, K. (2022). Introduction à l'analyse de données qualitatives avec Nvivo : Tutoriel 6 – Explorer les données. [Video Tutorial]. Projet de Recherche Participative sur l'Éducation et l'agentivité au Mali, Université McGill.

Lussier, K. (2021). Introduction à Nvivo. [Course Guide] Projet de Recherche Participative sur l'Éducation et l'agentivité au Mali, Université McGill.

APPENDIX 2: Protocol of Participatory Visual Workshops - Phase 1

Part 1 – Welcome and Introductions

Welcome by the facilitators

Warm up activity

In sub-groups by gender, participants are invited to introduce themselves and say one thing they like about their community.

Participants film each other's using a tablet.

The videos will be shown to other groups.

Presentation of the workshop process

Part 2 - Drawing

Drawing Prompt: What does “helping yourself” looks like? Draw a picture.

Distribute paper and markers (blue, black, red). Ask participants not to write their names on the drawings.

Facilitators will write the age, gender of the author behind the drawing (a pseudonym may also be written at adolescent's request)

Drawing:

Adolescents draw individually.

Tell them they have 10 minutes and inform them when there are 5 minutes left.

If needed, give them 5 minutes more.

Legend:

Shortly before time is up, ask adolescents to write a sub-title or a legend (or a short explanation) on the same page as their drawing for example “I drew this to show....” “this drawing shows....”

Sharing in small groups:

Ask participants to go back to their small groups and share their drawings.

- Each person should show her drawing to the group and explain why she drew that.
- After everyone shared, the group will discuss what is similar and what is different in the drawings.
- Exchanges will be recorded. Facilitators may ask additional questions such as “Can you tell me more about your drawing?”

Drawings' exhibition:

Put all the drawings on a rope, a blackboard or a wall and ask participants to look at them.

Sort the drawings based on the location (home, school, community).

Discussion in big group:

Participants reflect on the drawings exposed.

- a. What location was represented the most? What could be the reasons for that?
- b. What do the drawings have in common?
- c. Are there surprises amongst the drawings? Which ones?
- d. What are the elements that stand out from these images?
- e. Are there differences between what the girls have drawn and what the boys have drawn? What differences do you see? What do you think could be the reasons for these differences?
- f. What are all the drawings together telling us about the theme "helping yourself? (agency)"
- g. What role does school play?
- h. What makes a person able to "help herself"?
- i. Who should see these drawings? Why?

Short pause with snacks

Part 3: Cellphilms

Introduction to the creation of cellphilms with tablets

Explain briefly: Cellphilming implies using a mobile phone, a tablet or another portable device to create a short video (generally between 1 and 2 minutes), in which participants explore, represent and analyze their ways of looking at issues in their life.

Visual ethic

Facilitate a discussion on visual ethic by showing various pictures on a tablet.

Interpretation of images

- What is happening on these images?
- What messages are you perceiving?
- How is the problem interpreted?
- What feeling or mood is the picture representing? What makes you say this?
- Are there other alternative messages?
- What is similar?
- What differences do you see?

Safety and Risk

- Are these images putting someone in danger or at risk? (Person on the picture? Photograph? Someone else?)
- Can you identify the persons on the pictures?
- Do you think that the persons on the pictures know that their picture has been taken?
- What do you think about pictures of crowds? Animated streets? Private enterprises?
- What else could you film beside people's faces?

Key messages on visual ethic

- Context matters
- Safety: Is it safe?
- Human rights: Ask permission before filming.
- Right to private life: Confidentiality
- Are you sharing sensitive information?

Presentation of the 'no-face' approach

- Objects
- Shadows
- Written text
- Body parts (hands, feet)
- Filming from a distance
- Filming spaces
- Filming people from the back

Remind participants not to name anyone when they do their video.

Filming techniques

Explain to participants how to hold the tablets to film and how the video mode of the tablets works (record, pause, stop).

Basic advice:

- Keep the message simple and clear.
- Pay attention to lighting (do not film in front of a sunlit window).
- Point the microphone towards the person talking.
- Actors should speak loudly.
- Use posters or written signs.
- Be careful not to put your fingers in the objective.
- Hold the tablet horizontally and move it as little as possible.

Cellphilm prompt

In the same groups, you will create cellphilm on having the capacity to act and help yourself or not having the capacity to act and help yourself.

Brainstorming

Invite the teams to take 5 minutes to discuss their ideas:

- Who would you like to show your cellphilm to?
- What message to you want to give them?
- How do you want them to feel when they watch your cellphilm?
- What kind of story do you want to tell?

Storyboarding

Distribute the storyboard canvas (1 per team but you should have additional copies in case a team would like to start again)

Create a cellphilm of 1 to 2 minutes, scene by scene (use drawings or text)

- What is the title of your cellphilm?
- What happens first?
- What happens next?
- What feelings do you want to communicate?
- Where will you film?
- DO you need accessories like objects or signs?
- Don't forget to include credits at the end.

Creation of the cellphilms

- Let the young participants make their cellphilms and document their discussions.
- Remind the teams to capture the title of the cellphilm at the beginning of the video.
- Provide technical assistance with the tablets when needed but **let adolescents film themselves**.
- When needed, remind them to use a 'no-face' approach.

Screening of cellphilms

Young people watch all the cellphilms

Analysis of the cellphilms by the young participants

For each cellphilm

- What did you like in this cellphilm?
- What is the main message of the cellphilm?
- What is the cellphilm saying about the capacity to act and help oneself?

For all the cellphilms

- What images do you keep in mind?
- What do the cellphilms have in common? (What is happening in the cellphilms?)
- What is different?
- Are there things that surprised you? If so, what?

- What are the cellphilms saying about the life of young people from the commune? About girls? About boys?
- Together, what are the cellphilms saying about the capacity to act and help oneself (agency)?
- Are the capacity to act and the capacity help yourself the same thing? What makes you say that?
- What is similar and what is different between the cellphilms of girls and the cellphilms of boys?
- Are there other topics that would be important in order to understand well the capacity to act and help oneself (agency) of the young people from around here?
- What do you need to have the capacity to act and help yourself?
- What role can education play in this?
- In what ways can the schooling experiences of a person influence his or her power to act? What about the capacity to help oneself?
- In what way can the capacity to help yourself influence the schooling experience of a person?
- If you could change something to have a greater capacity to act and help yourself, what would it be? Why?

If you have time

- What surprised you during the activity?
- What part of the activity was the most difficult?
- What did you like the most during the activity?
- What have you learned about the way to communicate a message?
- What would you like to do with your productions?

Conclusion

- Do you think there are any risk in showing these drawings and cellphilms?
- Who should see your drawings and your cellphilms? Why?
- Now that you have learned to make cellphilms, in what are other contexts could you use these skills?

Evaluation of the workshop

- What id you like during the workshop?
- How could the workshop be improved?

For each of the following questions, ask participants to vote by putting a token (dry pea, stone etc.) in the recipient with the corresponding face (smiley face, neutral face, or sad face) Provide tokens of different kinds or colors for boys and girls.

1. I felt at ease to express my ideas during the workshop.
2. I felt respected during the workshop.
3. I felt safe during the workshop.
4. I enjoyed participating in the workshop.

Closing remarks: Thanks and congratulate participants

APPENDIX 3: Protocol of Participatory Workshops from Phase 3

General Information

The young people invited to take part in the workshops are the same adolescents who participated in the participatory visual methods (PVM) workshops in June 2021. In each workshop, there will be a maximum of 10 girls and 10 boys aged between 14 and 21 years old. We are expecting most of them to be in grade 9 but some may have repeated a grade or left school already.

The community members invited include school principals, teachers from the second cycle of fundamental, representatives from CAP, parents from the young participants, representatives from school management committees, representatives from parents' associations, representatives from mothers' associations, local leaders (village chiefs, imams, etc.), women playing an active role in the community.

Duration of activities: around 3h30 for the workshop with adolescents in the morning and 2 hours for the youth-informed community workshop in the afternoon

Consent and ascent forms should be signed prior to the workshops.

Sequence of activities

Part 1: Workshop with adolescents (Morning)

Welcome from the facilitators and introductions (15 min – aim for 5 to 10 min)

- The facilitators thank participants for their presence and introduce themselves.
- Reminder of PREAM's objective and research questions:
PREAM is a 3-year research project whose main objective is to study the relationship between youth agency and participation in basic education in the conflict-affected regions of Mali. It is undertaken in 3 communes from Segou and 3 communes from Mopti and seeks to answer the following questions:
 1. What components of agency are most important to adolescent girls and boys?

2. How does agency influence adolescent girls' and boys' participation in basic education?

3. How does adolescent girls' and boys' participation in basic education influence their agency?

4. How does the relationship between agency and experiences of basic education in conflict-affected settings differ between adolescent girls and boys?

- Presentation of the objectives of the workshop:
 - o Involve young people in knowledge mobilization on agency.
 - o Delve deeper into young people's perceptions of the relationship between agency, basic education, and conflict.
 - o Validate some preliminary findings from phase 1 and 2.
 - o Document adolescents' perceptions of their involvement in the study.

Ice breaker: ask participants to say their name and one thing they remember from the last workshop. (15 min)

Reflections on the drawings and cellphilms

- Ask the participants to look at the posters (15 min)
- Plenary discussion on the drawings (15 min)
 - o What are the drawings telling you about the capacity to help yourself?
 - o What are the main messages of girls' drawings?
 - o What are the main messages of boys' drawings?
- There will be 2 different composite videos with 12 cellphilms on them. One group of boys and one group of girls will watch each composite video. Distribute the viewing template that relates to the specific video and in small groups of boys and girls ask participants to watch the cellphilms from the video on tablets (20 min) and for each cellphilm reflect individually on
 - o What is the main message of this cellphilm?
 - o Who is having the capacity to act and help oneself in the video?
 - o What makes you say that?
- Sharing of individual answers within the small groups (10 min)
1 researcher per group captures all the answers on a viewing guide
- Focus group discussions within the same small groups facilitated by one researcher (30 min) Capture the main ideas of the group on flip chart paper
 - o What do you think about the cellphilms from the other communes?
To what extent are they reflecting your own experiences?
 - o What surprised you or really interested you in the cellphilms?

- What are those cellphilms saying about young people's capacity to set themselves objectives and do what it takes to achieve them?
- What are those cellphilms saying about adolescents' lives that should be heard by adults? Why?
- What is different between the cellphilms from boys and the cellphilms from girls? Why do you think it's like this?

Small Break (10 minutes)

Plenary discussion:

- Ask 1 participant per team to summarize the small groups' discussions (20 min).
- Facilitated Discussion (10 minutes)
 - Tell us how it felt to watch the cellphilms after all that time?
 - What is different now in the way you see your capacity to act and help yourself?

Ingredients' exercise (20 min)

Instructions: Last year we asked 1000 young people what was the most important to have the capacity to help themselves, set personal objectives and do what it takes to achieve them. That's sometimes called 'agency'.

Imagine that 'agency' is a special sauce (show the 2 cut-out pots) and we want to find out the ingredients to be able to make the recipe again.

Here are the ingredients that young people mentioned the most in the survey (each ingredient is written on a separate card) and here are empty cards for other ingredients that you may want to add.

In two groups, one group of boys and one group of girls, please put in the pot the most important ingredients. The ones that are necessary to make this special sauce, to create the capacity to help yourself, set personal objectives and do what it takes to achieve them.

Process: Place the 2 'agency pots' as well as the ingredient cards, empty cards and markers on 2 tables and give 10 minutes to each group to place the ingredients in their respective pots

Return: Ask participants to look at both pots. If there are differences between boys and girls, ask participants why think the recipes are different.

Group discussion facilitated by researchers – boys and girls together (20 min)

Capture the main ideas on A0 paper

- What could adults do to help young people to set personal objectives and do what it takes to achieve them?
- If you could change something to have a greater capacity to act and help yourself, what would it be? Why?
- What message would you like to share with adults around you about adolescents' capacity to act and help themselves?

Preparation for afternoon workshop (10 min)

- Ask for one or two volunteers to present a summary of their discussions to the adults. Particularly the last 3 questions and question 'What are those cellfilms saying about adolescents' lives that should be heard by adults?' from the group discussions.
- If there are more volunteers the group can elect their representatives.

Evaluation of the workshop using the smiling faces

For each of the following questions, ask participants to vote by putting a dry bean, a stone (or something else) in the corresponding recipient (smiley face, neutral face or sad face) Use different colors for boys and girls.

Questions :

1. I felt at ease to express my ideas during the workshop
2. I felt respected during the workshop
3. I felt safe during the workshop
4. I enjoyed participating in the workshop

Lunch

Part 2: Youth-informed community workshop (Afternoon)

Welcome of participants by young people and researchers

Invite adults to look at the posters.

Word of welcome by the facilitators (present the facilitators and the adolescents; thank participants for their presence; briefly describe the research objective and the research questions; present the objective of the workshop and the sequence of activities) (10 minutes)

PREAM is a 3 years research project aiming to study the relationship between youth agency and participation in basic education in the regions affected by the

conflict in Mali. The study takes place in three communes from Segou region and three communes from Mopti region. It attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What components of agency are most important to adolescent girls and boys?
2. How does agency influence adolescent girls' and boys' participation in primary education?
3. How does adolescent girls' and boys' participation in basic education influence their agency?
4. How does the relationship between agency and experiences of basic education in conflict-affected settings differ between adolescent girls and boys?

Objective of the workshop:

- Involve the community and education actors in discussions with young people on youth agency and participation in education in the context of conflict while validating some of the initial findings of PREAM with the actors concerned.

Brief presentation the sequence of activities

- Presentation of young adolescents' artwork
- Small group discussions
- Reports from groups
- Plenary / discussions in big groups
- Evaluation of the workshop
- Snacks

Presentation of the artwork by adolescents (5 min)

- Drawings → mention the drawing prompt: "What does 'helping oneself' looks like?"
- Cellphilms → mention the cellphilming prompt: "Create cellphilms on having the capacity to act and help yourself or not having the capacity to act and help yourself".
- Invite adults to form small groups to watch the cellphilms and discuss them.
- One person per group will be a reporter.

Work in small groups (the adolescents move to the second room (1 hour – finish earlier if young people finish before))

Adults

In small groups, watch the video of the cellphilms

Discuss the following questions and capture the main elements on A0 paper to facilitate the plenary discussions.

1. What are the main messages of the artwork? (you can go back to look at the drawings if you want)
2. Are there things that surprised you? If so, which ones?
3. In the cellphilms, who are the persons who demonstrated agency (capacity to act and help oneself) or have not demonstrated agency according to you? What makes you say that?
4. What are the artistic productions saying about the life of young people?
5. What differences have noticed between the artwork of girls and boys? Why do you think it's like this?
6. According to you, what does it take for young girls and boys from this commune to be able to fix themselves personal objectives and do what it takes to achieve them?

Adolescents

Peer interviews

The young participants will work in pairs and interview each other's using tablets to do video recording of the other's answer. (Between 45 min and 1 hour. Allow 30 min per participant) A researcher will keep an eye on time to tell the adolescents when to change.

Questions:

1. Tell me about your experience participating in the study.
 - What did you enjoy?
 - What was difficult?
 - What did you learn from the process?
2. According to you, what makes it easier for a young person to set personal objectives and do what it takes to achieve them?
 - Is it the same for boys and girls?
 - What makes you say that?
3. According to you, what makes it difficult for a young person to set personal objectives and do what it takes to achieve them?
 - Is it the same for boys and girls?
 - What makes you say that?
4. How is the conflict affecting young people's capacity to act and help themselves?
5. How do you see the relationship between going to fundamental school and having the capacity to act and help yourself?
 - Is one helping the other?

- How?

Plenary with all participants (30 min)

- Thank all participants for their work.
- Ask the reporters from each group of adults to summarize the discussions from their respective group.
- Give the opportunity to young people to ask questions and to comment.
- Ask the reporter of the group of young people to present the points prepared in the morning.
- Give the opportunity to adults to ask questions or to comment.

Validation of PREAM's preliminary results (20 min)

- Presentation of the results from the survey (10 to 15 min)
- Period of questions and comments from participants (10 min)

Concluding remarks (10 minutes)

Evaluation of the workshop (5 min) using the same approach as in the morning

Snacks and drinks

APPENDIX 4: Viewing Guides for Cellphilms

Vidéo #1

	What is the main message of the cellphilms?	Who has the capacity to act and help himself/herself?	Reasons to say that
Refusal to work at home (Girls)			
Animal husbandry (Boys)			
Gardening (Girls)			
Strike at school (Boys)			
The agreement (Boys)			
Theft at school (Girls)			

Looking for water (Girls)			
Football players (Boys)			
Health problems (Boys)			
School (Boys)			
Health of the child (Girls)			
The girl doesn't go to school (Girls)			

Vidéo #2

	What is the main message of the cellphilm?	Who has the capacity to act and help himself/herself?	Reasons to say that
Coronavirus (Girls)			
Expensive life (Boys)			
War in the country (Girls)			
The power cut (Boys)			
Advisory on household's chores (Girls)			
Peace (Boys)			

Cleaning the house (Girls)			
Discipline in class (Boys)			
Watering the garden (Girls)			
The conflict (Girls)			
Bomb (Boys)			

APPENDIX 5: Lexicon

Agency “Ability to define one’s goals and act upon them” (Kabeer, 1999:438) “Purposefully considering and enacting both small- and large-scale change in personal and community domains, based on one’s beliefs and goals” (Basu, 2008:891).	Empowerment “The process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability” (Kabeer, 1999:435).
Individual Agency Agency of a person	Collective Agency Agency of a group of persons
Responsible agency Agency demonstrated when children and youth adopt a conduct that aligns with morally and socially approved goals (Johnson and al., 2018). Often associated with liberal conceptions of autonomy and presupposes a notion of the subject as ‘responsible citizen’ (Bordonaro and Payne, 2012).	Ambiguous agency “Agency amongst children and youth which is in stark contrast to established and normative conceptions about childhood and moral and social ideals about the kind of behaviour young people should demonstrate, the activities they should be engaged in, and the spaces and places deemed appropriate for them to inhabit” (Bordonaro and Payne, 2012:366).
Oppositional agency “The act of challenge in which an individual, alone or in concert with others, acts and plans to act against the established norms in a system” (Maslak, 2007: XV)	Allegiant agency “The collective and collaborative movement of an individual or group that aligns with popular thought in order to achieve a purpose” (Maslak, 2007:XV).
Transformative agency	Non transformative agency

The ability to initiate transformative changes in one's environment, to overcome norms and institutions that would otherwise prevent a person from achieving goals (Donald et al., 2020).	Forms of agency maintaining or reinforcing existing power relations and decision-making structures. The ability to make one's own choices within existing decision-making hierarchies (Donald et al., 2020).
Adaptive agency Agency being exercised when internal and/or external norms and regulations limit a person's level of control and autonomy but he or she act in a resilient manner adapted to the situation.	Public Realm of power The power affecting a person in the public life: at work, at school, in religious groups, in the community, legal rights, etc.
Private realm of power The power imbedded in the relationships and roles in family, among friends, marriage, sexual partnerships, etc.	Intimate realm of power Power as it relates to a person's sense of self, psychology, and the relationship with his or her body and health.