



دبي العطاء  
Dubai Cares

# Looking at Crisis Differently: Participatory visual methods and adolescents' agency in Mali



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# Outline of the presentation

## Part 1: Agency and the multi-layer crisis in Mali

- Context of the study
- Youth agency in times of crisis
- Challenges of studying agency in Mali

## Part 2: Participatory Visual Methods (PVM) and youths's agency in 2 conflict-affected regions of Mali

- Participatory visual methods
- The field work

## Part 3: Findings and challenges



# Participatory Research on Education & Agency in Mali (PREAM)

## The 3 phases of the project





# The project's location

## The different layers of the crisis in Mali

- Armed conflict in the central and northern regions (since 2012)
  - Terrorism and jihadism
  - Tensions between communities
- Recurring droughts
- Political Instability
- Repeated workers' strikes
- COVID-19
- International sanctions



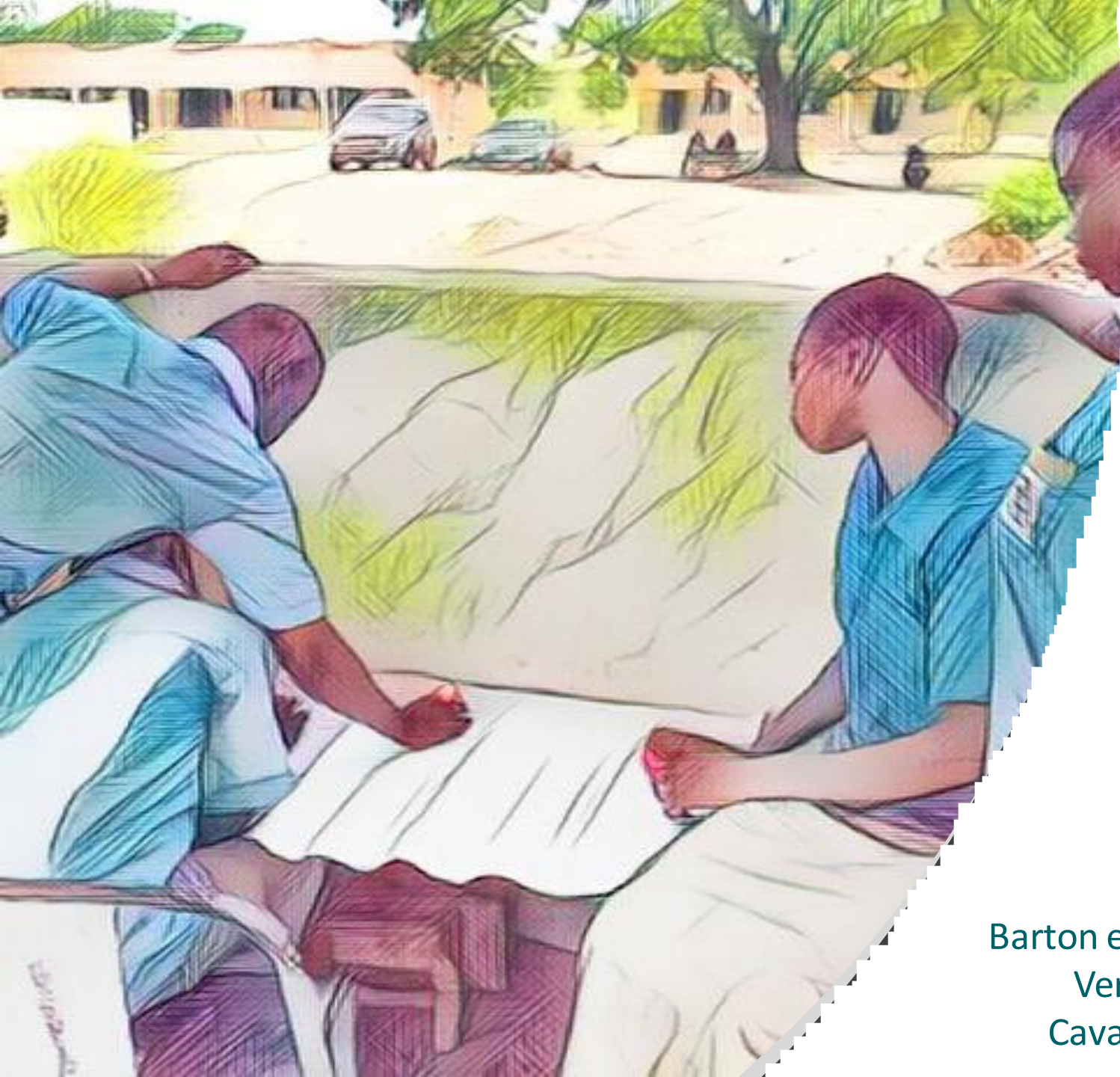


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## The elusiveness of the concept of 'agency' poses challenges to researchers

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- More than 30 definitions in the English literature alone.
- Amongst the 5 words used most often in the women empowerment literature (Prya et al., 2021).
- No consensus over its translation in French.
- Particularly difficult to translate in national languages without explaining it.



# The importance of youth agency

In times of crisis, agency helps youth to:

- Envision and assert their identity;
- Use their self-perception to imagine a different world;
- Take action to reduce inequalities;
- Display strategies to restore their wellbeing;
- Promote peace.

Barton et Tan (2010); Sen (1999);  
Veronese et al. (2017);  
Cavazzoni et al. (2021)

# Previous studies on youth agency don't reflect SSA's reality

- Studies on youth agency are often conducted in wealthy countries where young peoples' life and the expetations we have of them are really different (Punch, 2016; Lussier, 2021).
- Due to the crisis young people have to play a role that goes far beyond what is usually expected from adolescents.
- What adults consider agentic may therefore be fairly different from what youth themselves perceive.
- There are tensions between schooling and family responsibilities.





## Participatory Visual Methods

**Art-based visual tools that amplify the voices of those often reduced to silence**

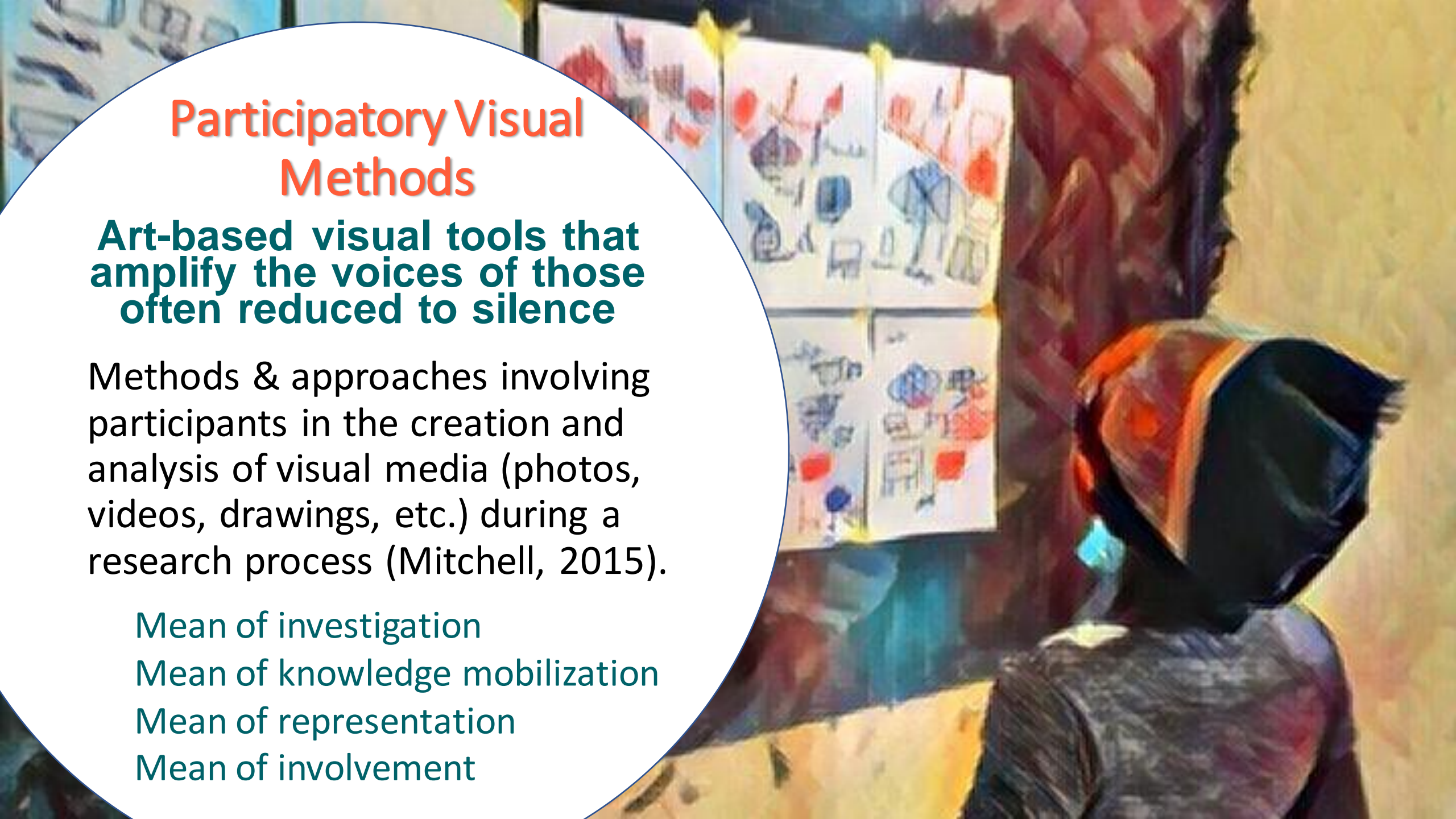
Methods & approaches involving participants in the creation and analysis of visual media (photos, videos, drawings, etc.) during a research process (Mitchell, 2015).

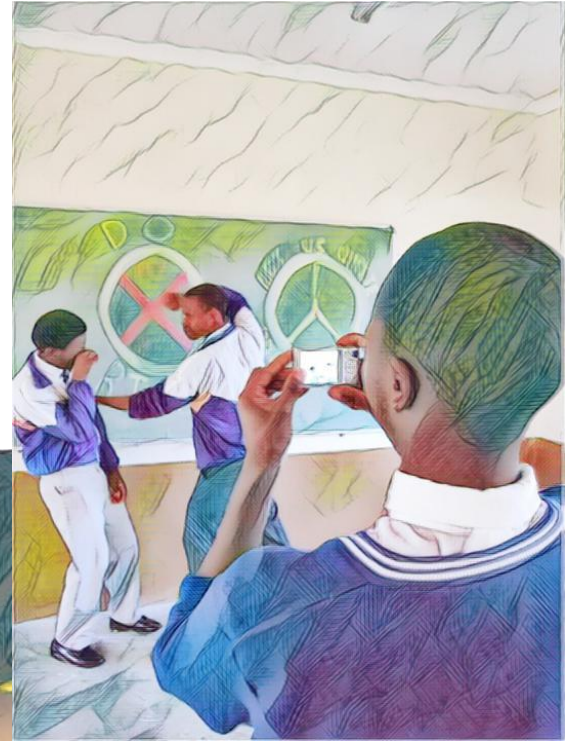
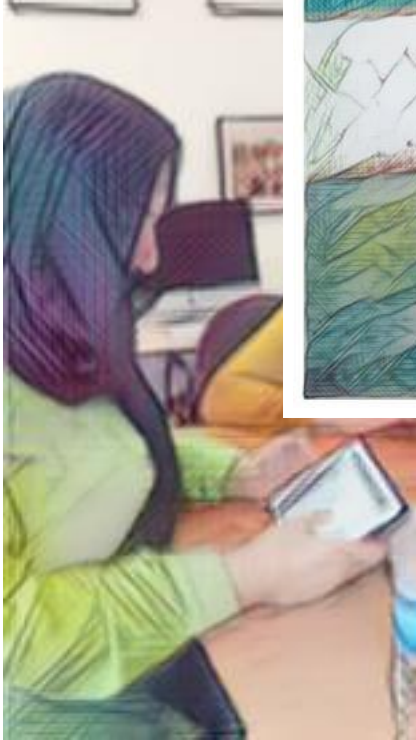
Mean of investigation

Mean of knowledge mobilization

Mean of representation

Mean of involvement





# What are cellfilms?



Cellfilms (Cellphones + film) are short videos (1-2 minutes) made on mobile phones (or other recording devices such as tablets) and address a specific challenge or issue.

# CELLPHILMING AS A PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGY



# Phase 1 Fieldwork



Fieldwork in 6 schools in Segou and Mopti in December, 2021

## Participants

120 young people (13-18)

Equal number of boys and girls

## Approaches

Cellphilmimg

Drawing

## Data

23 cellphilms + reflexive discussions

120 drawings+ reflexive discussions



**“You will create cellfilms on having the capacity to act and help yourself or not having the capacity to act and help yourself.”**

# Drawing: "À quoi ressemble *s'aider soi-même*?" (What does 'helping oneself' looks like?)



# Reflexive group discussions: Sample questions

## Drawings

1. What do your drawings have in common?
2. How are they different?
3. Are there any surprises?
4. What do the drawings say about 'agency'?
5. Who should see these drawings? Why?

## Cellphlms

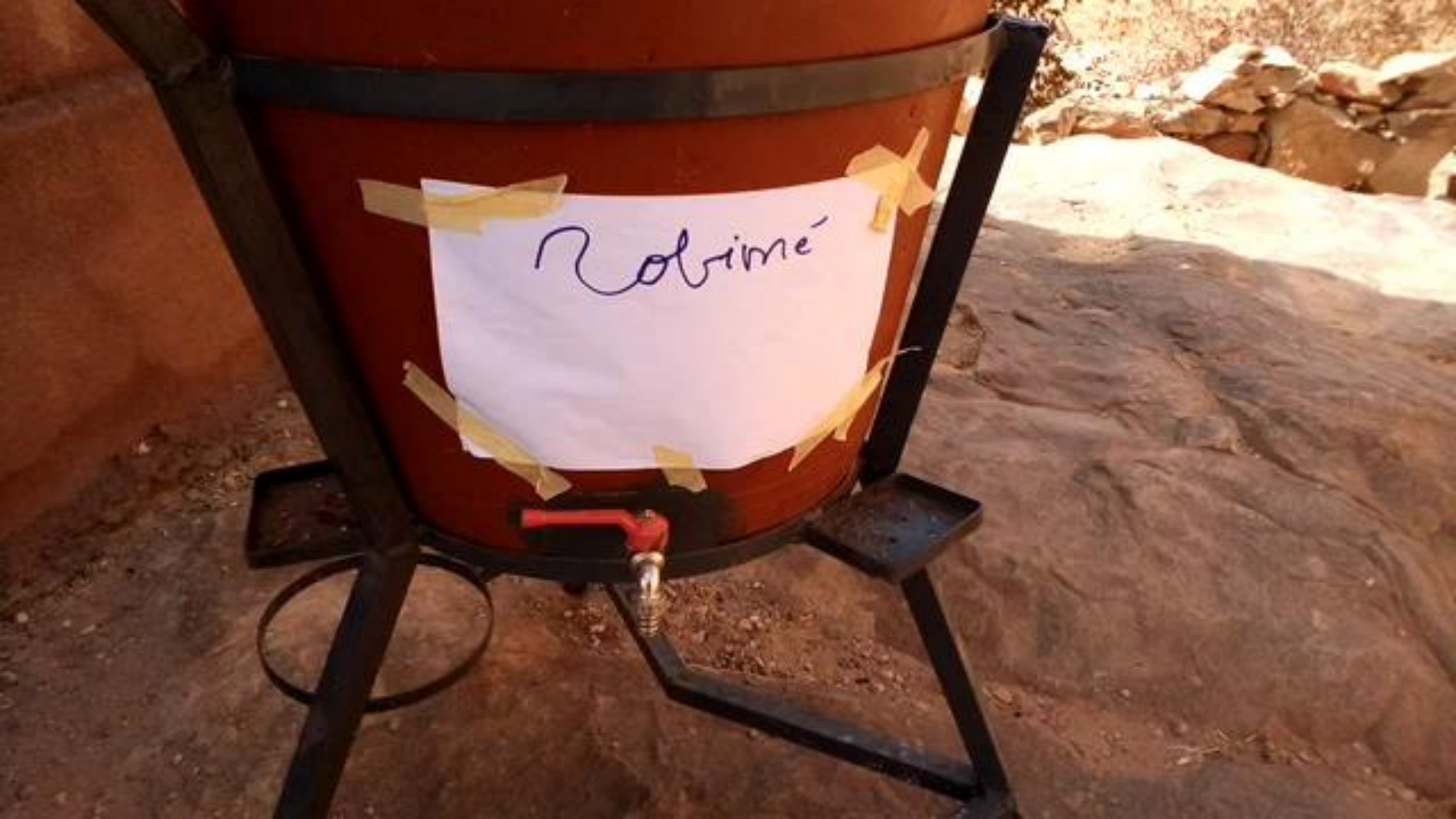
1. What's going on in the cellphilm?
2. In this cellphilm we wanted to show ...
3. What we like best about our cellphilm...
4. Who do we want to see the cellphilm?



# Themes Presented in the Cellphims

	SEGOU	MOPTI
Boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The power cut</li> <li>Strike at school</li> <li>Animal husbandry</li> <li>Expensive life</li> <li>The agreement / reconciliation</li> <li>Peace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Football players</li> <li>Discipline in class</li> <li>Health problems</li> <li>School</li> <li>The conflict</li> <li>Bomb</li> </ul>
Girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gardening</li> <li>War in the country</li> <li>Refusal to work at home</li> <li>Coronavirus</li> <li>Advisory on households' chores</li> <li>Theft at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleaning the house</li> <li>Looking for water</li> <li>Watering the garden</li> <li>Health of the child</li> <li>The girl doesn't go to school</li> </ul>



A red metal bucket is mounted on a black metal stand. A white rectangular piece of paper is taped to the front of the bucket with yellow adhesive tape. The paper has the word "Kobrimé" written on it in blue cursive ink. At the bottom of the bucket, there is a red plastic spigot with a metal nozzle. The background shows a dirt ground and a stone wall in the distance.

Kobrimé

# Reflecting on challenges

- **Planning the workshops:** teachers' strikes and security issues related to working in conflict zones in times of increased violence moments d'intensification des violences
- **Logistic:** Organise teams to conduct the study in two regions simultaneously
- **Allocating time to conduct the workshops:** Facilitation, the production of drawings and cellfilms as well as reflective participation takes time → difficult to do in ½ day
- **Language:** Working in national languages
- **Measures related to COVID-19**



## Arts-based methods in times of crisis

- ❑ Enabled adolescents to tell their own stories and show us what matters to them
- ❑ The creation of cellfilms showed how girls and boys are affected differently
- ❑ Created a safe space to present their perspective about the different crisis affecting them.
- ❑ Contributed to creating a collective data analysis space for the teams from McGill and ULSHB to work together on Agency.





We thank you for  
your attention!



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# PREAM

**Projet de recherche participative  
sur l'éducation et l'agentivité au Mali**

