

Impact of the conflict on children's education in Mali

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Major Events

In January 2012, an [armed conflict broke out in northern Mali](#), which [Tuareg rebels](#) took control of by April and declared the [secession](#) of a new state, [Azawad](#). The conflict was complicated by a [military coup](#) that took place in March and later fighting between Tuareg and Islamist rebels.

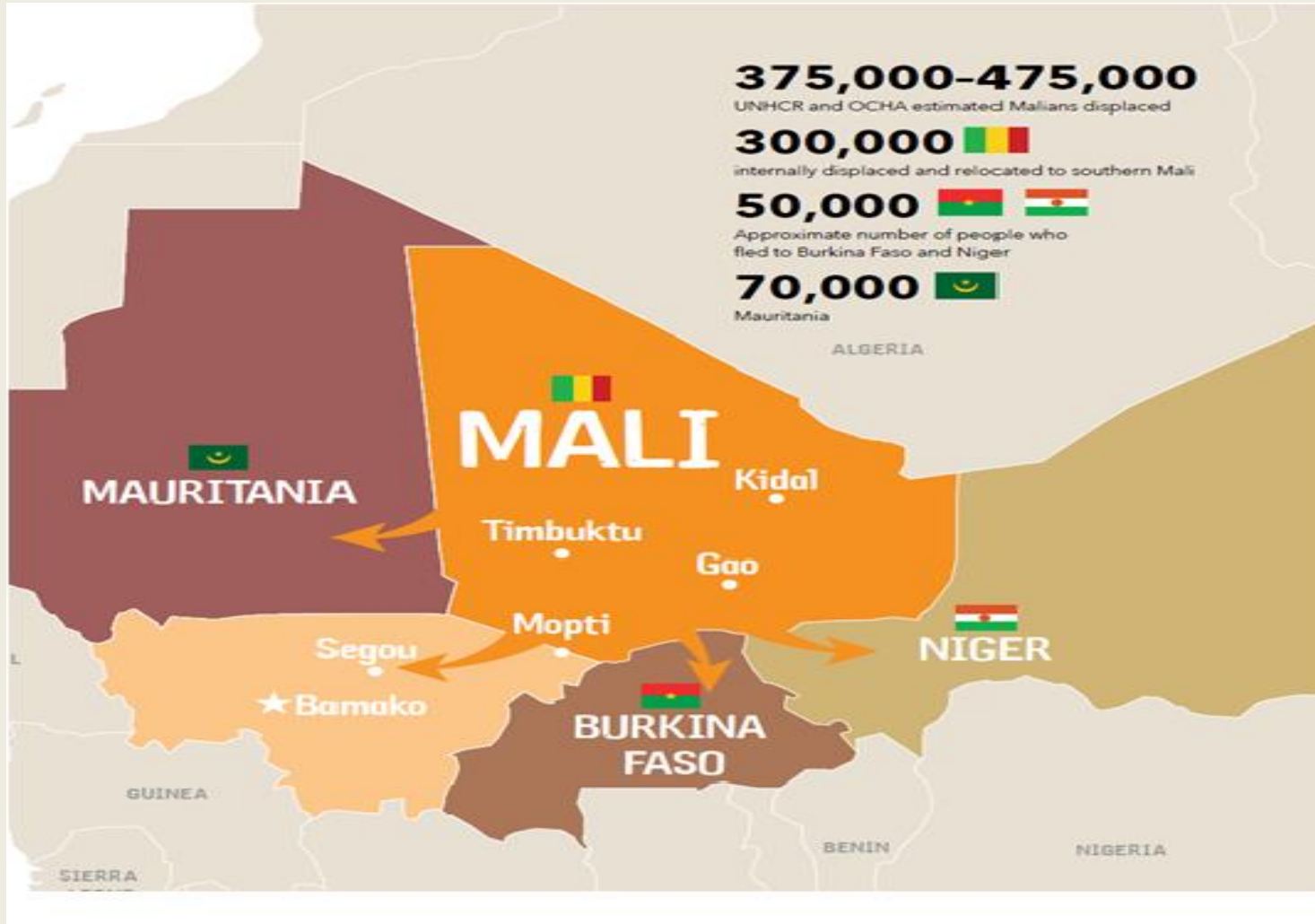
Islamist groups including [Ansar Dine](#) and [Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb \(AQIM\)](#), who had helped the MNLA defeat the government, turned on the Tuareg and took control of the North with the goal of implementing [sharia](#) in Mali.

In response to Islamist territorial gains, the French military launched [Opération Serval](#) in January 2013.

[MINUSMA was established](#) by Security Council resolution 2100 of 25 April 2013 to support political processes in that country and carry out a number of security-related tasks

[Presidential elections were held in Mali in July 2013](#). Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta becomes the new President of Mali.

Population Displacement



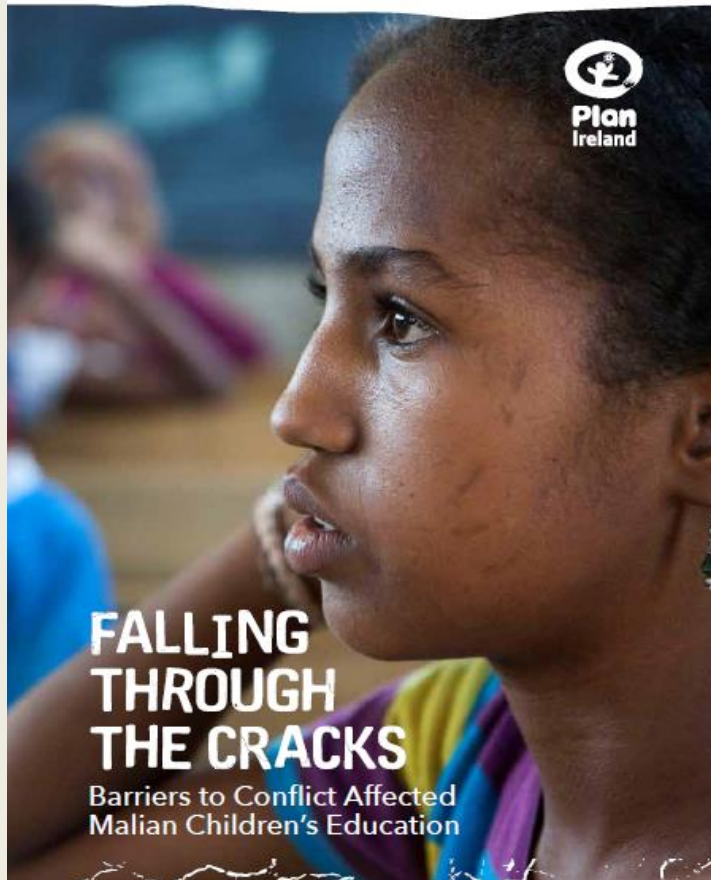
Impact on Education following the crisis

- 800,000 school age children dropped out due to the crisis in the North
- Malian refugee children- 77% in Niger & 79% in Burkina Faso are not in school
- It is estimated that 80% of education personnel fled the region
- In March 2013 130 government schools were occupied, looted or destroyed by armed forces

Fragile Education system prior to the crisis

- Net primary school enrolment (including boys and girls) in 2011 was 71%
- In secondary school (including boys and girls) was 34% and gross tertiary school enrolment (for boys and girls) was 7%
- The overall adult literacy rate in Mali between 2008–2012 was 33.4%
- 1.2 million out of school children prior to the crisis

Study



- The study conducted in 2014 was aimed to identify and explore the myriad barriers to access to education for conflict-affected children in Mali and in the refugee camps in Niger and Burkina Faso
- The main conclusion is that many barriers existed prior to the conflict, but were aggravated by it; other barriers have emerged as a result of the fighting and related insecurity.

Study Overview

Q: What are the various barriers to conflict affected Malian children's education?

Qualitative research methods & desk review,
123 participants, 4 locations,
3 countries (Northern Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger)

Koira Biery IDP Camp
Mentao Refugee Camp
Mangaize Refugee Camp
Tabareybarey Refugee Camp

Focus Group Discussions
11

Key Informant Interviews
11

Content Analysis of Published
Reports

Nine Inter-Related Barriers to Education

Poverty

Ethnic Identity

Perception of Education's Value

Discrimination against girls

Security

Physical distance

Challenges for adolescents

Poor Learning environments

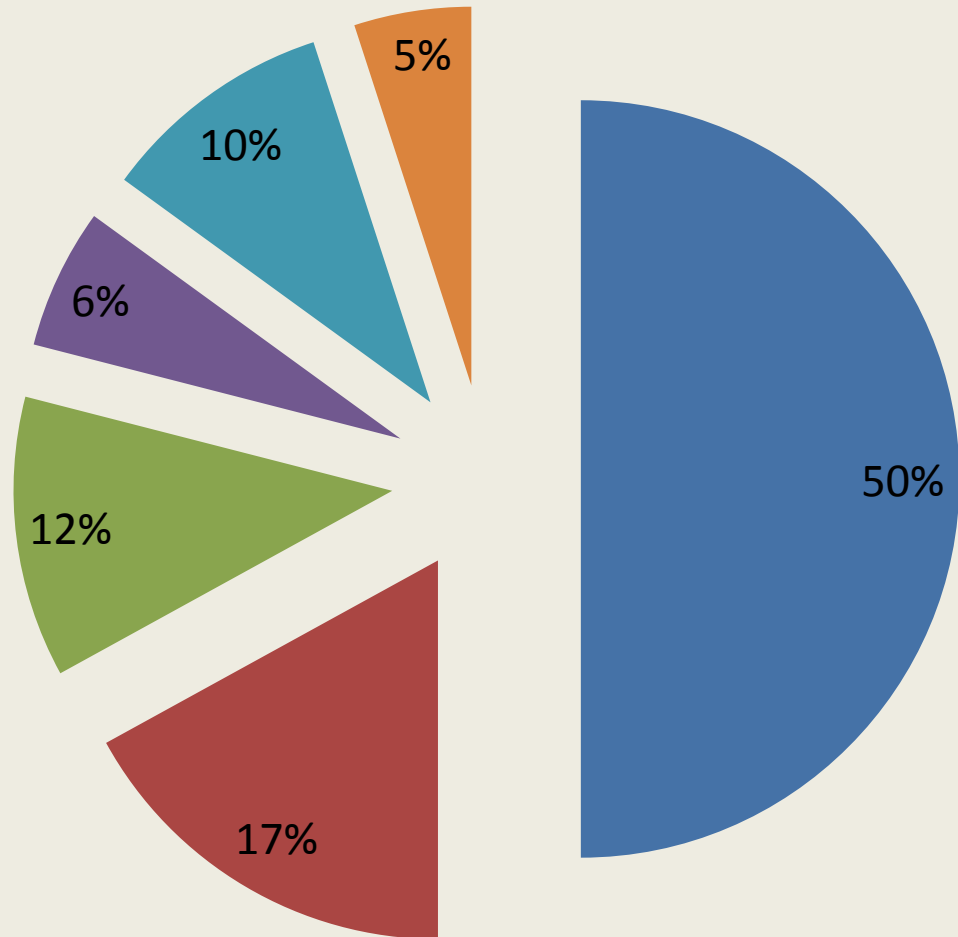
Insufficient Teachers

1. Poverty

- FGDs and key informant interviews identified extreme poverty as a principal barrier
- 50.4% of Malian population was living below the poverty line (2007-2011), 70%-80% population lived in rural areas
- The conflict has robbed people of their livelihoods
- Children's labour is valued much more than their education
- Families don't have the means to provide education for their children

Ethnic Identity

- Mande (including subgroups of Bambara, Malinke, Soninke)
- The Fulani (Peul)
- Voltaic
- Songhai
- Tuareg & Arab
- Others



Main Ethnic Groups in Mali

2. Ethnic Identity



- The Tuareg and Arab ethnic groups from Northern Mali have faced massive displacement. They constitute 60% of the ethnic makeup in Niger's refugee camps.
- Hostility and trust between the ethnic groups have eroded due to the conflict. Ethnic groups have had to abandon their traditional occupations in search of new sources of income.
- Among the Tuareg, the Bellas sub caste are further disadvantaged and ostracised
- The current curriculum does not promote peace building and coexistence values. In 2015 UNICEF has launched a peace building programme in Timbuktu and Gao and NGOs, including PLAN, have been invited to participate in a thematic group led by the Ministry of Education whose aim is to design tools for school-based peace building activities and review existing curriculum in order to integrate peace building

3. Perception of Value of Education



- Parents can be an insurmountable barrier to education especially for adolescent girls, children with disabilities & nomadic children
- Lack of experience of parents of the formal schooling processes-attendance, academic success, can be a barrier
- Some adolescents did not want to attend school due to boredom &/or lack of encouragement
- FGDs & interviews revealed that some parents and children viewed education as a temporary privilege, a drain of resources & even futile
- Rise of radical Islamic groups have kept students, especially girls away
- Back to school programmes have had limited success so far. Out of 800,000 dropouts, 127,000 got back to school in 2013-2014

4. Discrimination Against Girls



- Girls' education and enrolment rate has suffered more than boys since 2012. Girls' net school enrolment considering the whole country was 62.6% with 54.6% attendance (boys' net enrolment was 71.6% with 60.2% attendance)
- Cultural and religious beliefs play a great role
- Rise of radical Islamic groups has become a barrier
- The challenges faced are at 3 levels:
 - Access Level:** girls cannot travel alone, girls' 'place' is in the house
 - Retention Level:** Schools are not girl friendly, lack of separate and decent sanitation and washing facilities, very few female teachers
 - Completion Level:** Early forced marriages, responsibilities at home prevent completion. In Mali an estimated 55% of females are married before age 18 and 15–25% are married before age 15.

5. Security



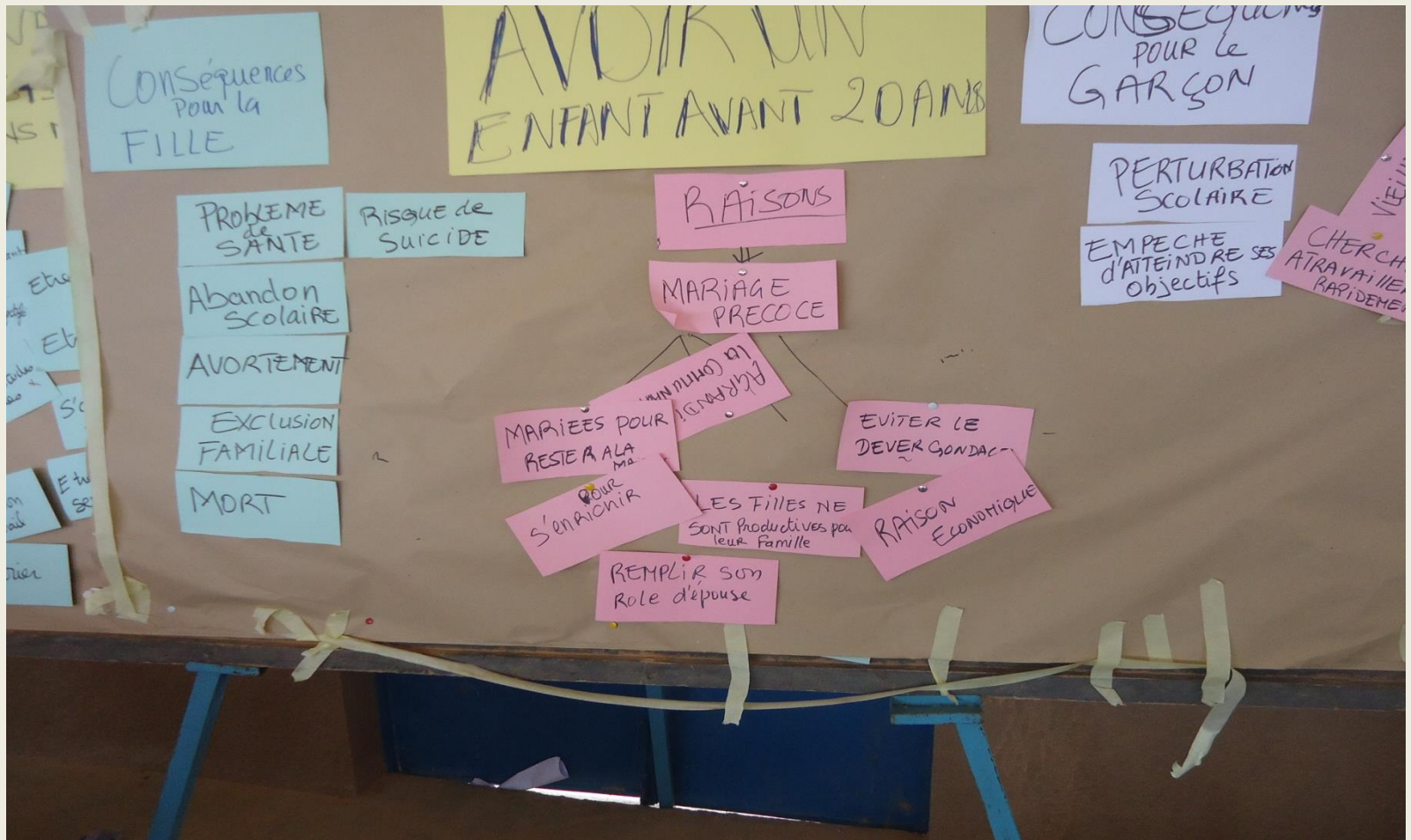
- Schools have been attacked and looted (130 Gov schools in March 2013)
- Children have been targeted for recruitment into ethnic armed groups (In July 2013, 175 boys aged 12-17 reported)
- Girls' education has suffered more
- Persisting security issues to date: In June 2015 UN reported: - recruitment and use of 84 children in the North;
- the killing of 9 children and the injuring of 23 by firearms and explosive;
- 38 incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence against girls were perpetrated by MNLA and other groups;
- 20 cases of military use of schools; in the region of Kidal, almost all schools remained closed;
- 24 incidents of denial of humanitarian access severely affecting the delivery of humanitarian assistance

6. Physical Distance



- Physical distance was identified as a major obstacle at the secondary level
- Women's education suffered the most as traditionally young girls do not travel alone
- The children of nomadic families found it difficult to continue their education
- There is a lack of teachers, especially ones who are trained to travel with nomadic communities

7. Challenges for Adolescents



- Belief- it is more beneficial for teenagers to work than study.
- Adolescent boys are expected to work, girls to be married and raise families
- Young students are reluctant to sit in the same class as much younger children
- The existing curriculum is not flexible and does not respond to the needs of the young people in terms of vocational training, flexible modules etc.

8. Poor Learning Environments



- Lack of proper infrastructure
- Insufficient teaching and learning material
- Insufficient Wash Facilities, especially for girls
- No school canteen
- Lack of infrastructure to support students with disabilities
- Language barriers
- A curriculum that does not relate to the realities of their lives (skill based learning)

9. Insufficient Teachers



- Estimated 27,250 new teachers are needed
- Ratio of Fully Certified Teachers: Pupil- 1:181
- 80% of the teachers from the north fled to the South or to neighbouring countries
- Teachers also face poverty, hunger, psychosocial stress
- Insufficient number of female teachers & teachers trained to teach students with disabilities
- The lack of training is obvious & existing teachers are sometimes not respected
- Currently no system in place to certify teachers in refugee camps

Physical Environment

- Conflict Lack of Security
- Poor Learning Environment
- Physical Distance

Social Factors

- Conflict leading to severe disruption of life & livelihood
- Severe economic distress
- Cultural & Religious beliefs on occupation, gender roles
- Rise of Radicalised Islam

Lack of Motivation

- Lack of motivation for young adults to continue education
- Lack of motivation among parents to support education of their children
- Lack of motivation among teachers

Recommendations

- Expand accelerated and alternative learning opportunities
- Access to relevant teaching and learning materials
- Expand Early Childhood Care and Development opportunities near schools
- Provide a healthy snack or hot meal during a school day
- Increased security for girls, especially at secondary school level
- Grade level testing for children
- Awareness raising campaigns
- Support for parents
- Support for teachers

Link

- <https://plan-international.org/files/global/publications/emergencies/falling-through-the-cracks-report-english.pdf>