

## City Development Strategy in Bamako, Mali

Bamako is a district of 1.3 million people in Mali, a country with a population of 10 million. Bamako faces problems with high population growth and a weak and unbalanced economy. Approximately one third of the population of Bamako lives below the poverty line, and the majority of population itself is under 20 years old. Unemployment is high, and access to basic services low. Farming and agro-pastoral activities constitute a threat for the fragile balance of the ecosystems and foster the advancement of the desert.

Bamako is important in the overall national context of Mali, as 24% of the GDP is generated from the city, in addition to 25% of the national consumption and 70% of the commercial activities. The geographical location of the city also presents a challenge economically, particularly in terms of trade, as the region is remote and a distance from the coast, thus limiting trading opportunities.

The main challenge of the District of Bamako is to achieve sustainable development and alleviate poverty. Unfortunately, it proved very difficult to collect real statistics and data on the economic situation of Bamako, thus the Bamako CDS had to be conducted without an adequate information base on poverty and economy in the city. Nevertheless, the need to conduct a participatory process and take action towards long-term strategic development was important enough to proceed without this information base.

The CDS in Bamako, coordinated by ALPHALOG, was undertaken in four stages: the city strategic analysis, the thematic committee working group sessions, a public day, and a strategic planning workshop. The city strategic analysis was based on the collection and processing of available data, although, as mentioned before, this was not as thorough as hoped. Nevertheless, strengths and weaknesses were identified and a provisional report produced. Working group sessions followed in order to reach consensus around major themes for the Bamako CDS. There was an extremely high level of involvement and participation by all stakeholders, and there was genuine enthusiasm in being involved.

Bamako, Mali		
Background	Process	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Population 1.3 million, growth rate 6%</li><li>Poverty –33%, unemployment 39%</li><li>Poor economic base, largely agrarian and service economy</li><li>Poor statistical base on city's economic structure</li><li>Participatory process introduced by Mayor as a part of national strategy of combating social exclusion and poverty</li><li>CDS began in December 2000</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Thematic working groups of stakeholders established for priority actions</li><li>Public day by Mayor for broader participation</li><li>Weak statistical base on economic and poverty resulted in more general discussions</li><li>Involvement of large number of stakeholder groups and donor agencies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Strategic vision and action plans developed</li><li>Plans focus more on promoting informal sector, provision of credit and market facilities</li><li>Donor round table to be organized, UNDP and World Bank show interest in follow-up investments</li></ul>

This was further reinforced by a successful Public Day event, where everyone in the city was provided an opportunity to voice his or her opinion on the city's strategic vision and key action areas. This event was an important innovation in the CDS process. Many stakeholders came together, and, chaired by the Mayor, discussed the problems and constraints facing citizens and worked together to find solutions. Representation from all levels of government, the private sector and civil society made this a very meaningful event. Discussions were held around the major themes of:

- Land issues and development of the city;
- Urban social services;
- Urban network services;

- Development and economic services;
- Environment, living conditions, sport, culture and leisure;
- Municipal administration and security.

The strategic planning phase that followed resulted in the definition of a shared vision, identification of objectives, and the preparation of expected results and implementation strategies. The strategic plan focuses specifically on promotion of the informal sector, due in large part to the active involvement of the most disadvantaged for the population and their needs in terms of city development.

The CDS activity in Bamako confirmed high stakeholder participation and satisfaction in the process, from government of differing levels to women's groups to community leaders. Many groups were invited to take part by the Mayor of the District and in some cases their involvement marked the first time they took part in an active way in a city development process. The credibility of the elected official in the district is now dependant on showing results from this interactive process – something that is underway but for which more attention and resources are needed.

The vision of Bamako that resulted was one of “a prosperous city and city of interaction; a well-managed and safe city; a pleasant city; a city of culture and a modern city”. Six goals were proposed for strategic action to achieve this:

- Goal I: *Promote economic development through productive employment creation and resource mobilization activities*, through the organization and promotion of the informal sector; rehabilitated, created and managed market facilities, improved resource mobilization, an efficient artisanal policy and the organisation and promotion of the agro-food sub-sector.
- Goal II: *Improve local governance*, through the promotion of a spirit of citizenship, greater security of persons and goods, training, well-defined internal and external communication policy, better involvement and concentration of actors in decision making, increased transparency in the management of local affairs and revise instruments in general and particularly those on the special status of the District
- Goal III: *Improve the quality of life of the population in healthy environment in 10 years*, through improved access by District communities to adequate means of transport; a better urban environment, accessible health services to communities, and improved socio-economic situation of the most disadvantaged sections of the population
- Goal IV: *Have an efficient educational system*, through strengthened education, improved quality of education, better school infrastructure and facilities, strengthened literacy, restored authority to schools and stronger partnerships around schooling
- Goal V: *Make Bamako a city of culture, a city in which sport is seen as a factor for improving the quality of life and as a federating factor, a city that promotes physical, intellectual and psychological well being*, through the development of cultural wealth and the promotion of sports and leisure activities
- Goal VI: *Formulate and implement a suitable Urban Policy* through improved infrastructure and equipment, correctly managed land, improved living conditions and access to decent housing and enhanced transport and road traffic.

### **Evaluation and Lessons:**

The CDS process in Bamako afforded the opportunity to learn important lessons about the CDS and how the city could move forward. The analytical phase led to a greater knowledge of the city and the development problems it faces, and also highlighted the lack of information and the weak statistical base on which the work was built. The figures being used were merely indicative of the overall general characteristics of poverty. The group work established new working relationships and opened up channels of communication between the government, the private sector and civil society, while still experiencing difficulties in communication between groups. The Public Day event was a big success, with enthusiastic involvement. Testimonies of personal experiences by some of the poorest members of society proved to be

very powerful. The event itself, due to its size and time limits, was difficult to manage. Not enough time was devoted to the strategic planning, and there were difficulties with the methodology used. And, without adequate internal resources, the ultimate implementation of this plan will be dependent on donor resources.

The Bamako CDS was considered successful in achieving the goals of the first three phases, although further efforts and resources are needed to implement the long-term action plan. Extending the public consultation phase, building the capacity of staff and resource persons and establishing an urban observatory for the collection of indicators would improved the outcome of future CDS activities.