

## SUCCESS STORY SPOTLIGHT

# Supporting the Future of Malian Children by Bringing Essential Vaccines to Rural Communities

With USAID support, over 1,800 children received routine childhood vaccinations in the health area of Kadiana in Mali between April and June of 2020. Despite widespread disruptions to health services due to COVID-19, more children were vaccinated in this period than prior to the onset of the pandemic.

Since 2014, USAID has worked in Kadiana, a rural health area in the Sikasso region in Southern Mali, to strengthen community health services by reinforcing the capacity of the community health management association. Over the years, this association has served as a forum allowing community members to work together with local government representatives to effectively manage the local health center, ensuring it meets the needs of the community it serves.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit Mali, access to health services was disrupted and families faced barriers to seeking care due to restrictions on gatherings, limited access to transportation, and fears of possible COVID-19 infection. These disruptions threatened the delivery and uptake of critical routine immunization services for thousands of children in Kadiana.

**In other nearby rural villages in Mali, vaccination against measles amongst children under 12 months decreased by over 70 percentage points (from 103 percent to 32 percent) between January and June 2020.**



USAID supported children in Mali receive routine immunizations, despite challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic. PHOTO: USAID Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program

“We worried that a crisis was looming and our children would suffer.”

— MAMADOU, CHAIRMAN OF THE KADIANA JOINT COMMITTEE

Fearing a similar impact in his community, Mamadou Bamba, Chairman of the Kadiana Joint Committee, spoke out at the next community town hall, requesting support from the local government to help conduct mobile vaccination outreach clinics throughout Kadiana. Convinced by Mamadou's testament to the critical, life-saving importance of continued childhood immunizations during the pandemic, the municipal government donated 200 liters of fuel for motorcycles and purchased infection prevention materials for the health facility to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including masks, handwashing kits, soap, and hand sanitizer.

**With USAID support, the health center in Kadiana carried out 36 mobile outreach campaigns between April and June 2020. In total, 1,829 children received vaccinations to prevent outbreaks of diseases like measles and polio.** In addition, with the local government donation of infection prevention materials, all staff regularly wear masks at the facility and during mobile outreach, effectively helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19 for themselves and their patients.

The success of maintaining essential vaccination services in Kadiana resulted from the groundwork USAID had laid years earlier, when the formal community health management association received support to manage the health facility, allowing the community and local-government to work together to strengthen local community health services. As a result, this community was empowered to find local solutions to support the continuity of essential health services for children in the midst of a global pandemic.



Health workers in Mali have worked hard to distribute essential, and often lifesaving, routine vaccines to hard to reach communities in Mali. PHOTO: Soumeyla Dao/Association Conseil pour le Développement