

# Support to human security in Northern Mali through building the resilience of youth and women



UN Trust Fund for Human Security



## Fast Facts

**Country:** Mali

**Duration:** January 2015 to March 2019

**Implementing UN Agencies:** UNDP; UNFPA; FAO; UNICEF; WHO; ILO

**Other Implementing Partners:** Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, Youth and Citizen Construction; CSOs; Territorial Collectives

**Budget:** \$5,114,749 (UNTFHS: \$2,087,409, Others: \$3,027,340)

**Key Words:** Conflict affected communities; women; youth; social inclusion; health; access to employment

## BACKGROUND

Between January 2012 and June 2013, northern regions of Mali endured months of conflict. Vulnerable communities in Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal bore the brunt of violent clashes between armed groups and Government troops as people were forced to flee their homes and young people feared recruitment by rebel groups. Moreover, the conflict exacerbated existing insecurities with some 4.6 million people already at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition, and unemployment rates at 55%. As a direct consequence of the conflict, the struggling local economy has stagnated, livelihood opportunities are limited and households struggle to purchase the food

they need as prices continue to rise. Furthermore, basic social services such as education, sanitation and health facilities have rapidly deteriorated and there is a worrying increase in sexual and gender-based violence, with the number of HIV cases and other sexually transmitted diseases on the rise. While incidences of violence continue to erupt in the region, the signing of the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement gives hope for peace. However, the transition towards durable peace and sustainable development must begin by healing the scars of conflict and addressing the underlying causes of unrest in northern Mali.

## PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The project's goals are the consolidation of peace and stability; the diversification of economic opportunities; and the establishment of social and economic recovery in crisis affected regions of northern Mali. This will be achieved by: (i) providing sustainable economic opportunities for the most vulnerable groups, in particular youth and women; (ii)

improving access to basic social services including clean water, sanitation, health care and education; and (iii) building community resilience to future crisis by promoting peaceful coexistence and integrating the human security approach in Mali's development and recovery programmes.

### OUR PARTNERS

The project is supporting over 4,000 people directly and around 40,000 indirectly in Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal, with a specific focus on young people involved in armed groups, women, displaced people and their

host communities. Six UN agencies will work in partnership with nine specialized Government ministries as well as local Territorial Collectives and civil society organisations.

## APPLYING THE HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH

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Since threats to peace and stability are seldom singular in nature, the root causes and the interplay between multiple threats require the need to overcome the organisational obstacles that separate humanitarian relief from long-term development. Through the application of the human security approach, the project offers an innovative framework to support the transition from emergency relief to sustainable development in northern Mali.

First, by placing people at the centre of analysis and by promoting a participatory and inclusive household and community survey, the project engages key stakeholders such as, IDPs and returning refugees, ex-combatants, youth, women and girls, in addition to Government agencies and civil society organisations to actively participate and take ownership of the post-conflict peacebuilding process. As a result, immediate recovery needs and long-term development priorities are identified by those most affected by the conflict in Timbuctoo, Gao and Kidal, resulting in greater commitment by these groups to the consolidation of peace and the long-term social and economic rehabilitation of their communities.

Moreover, by proactively considering the root causes of the conflict, the project highlights the long-term solutions that will be needed in order to prevent the re-occurrence of future conflicts. For example, the provision of basic social services, such as, sanitation, water, health care and education, as well as the diversification of economic opportunities are identified as critical to reducing marginalisation and social exclusion. Meanwhile, training community leaders on leadership and reconciliation, while empowering youth to participate in community development and conflict management, are found to be instrumental in fostering social integration and deterring those most likely to return to violence.

Whereas planning in times of crisis tend to be loosely coordinated and focused on individual solutions, the project by addressing the root causes of the conflict brings together the combined expertise of six UN agencies as well as the resources and commitment of the Government, local authorities, civil society and the affected population. This enhances the UN system-wide coherence, strengthens the comprehensive response needed and improves the overall resilience and long-term stability of the communities emerging from conflict in northern Mali.