

**Regional Action Plan / Decision-Making Program**  
*(Programme d'Appui à la Déconcentration / Décentralisation de l'Éducation au Mali)*  
September 2004-August 2008



Mali is in the process of decentralizing the management of its school system by transferring responsibility and resources from the central ministry to regional and local governments and education technical offices. USAID/Mali supports this policy with training and technical assistance through the Regional Action Plan / Decision-Making Program (RAP-DM) implemented by the Academy for Educational Development (AED) with Education Development Center (EDC) providing in country services.

RAP-DM supports the decentralization efforts of the Ministry of Education through (i) capacity-building of Ministry of Education staff in 15 regional and 70 subregional technical offices, and (ii) improving education officials ability to analyze data to determine whether the education system strategies meet the needs of children who have historically been underserved by the school system (poor rural girls, nomadic populations, other marginalized populations, etc.).

***The capacity-building work supports the devolution of responsibility particularly in education planning, financial management, monitoring and evaluation from the national to the regional and subregional MOE offices.***

- RAP-DM identifies opportunities for improving management and resource flows and tailors training and coaching of Ministry staff around those systemic changes.
- Training for regional and sub regional education officials includes “how to” information for mobilizing resources, generating reports, analyzing data, applying government policy on decentralization and Education For All, and many other topics.
- Training targets the new roles and responsibilities that are called for in the context of decentralized school system management.
- Just-in-time methodology used by RAP-DM provides focused training to groups followed by coaching and support as administrators practice their new roles.
- A particularly appreciated RAP-DM service is its continuous information loop, letting central ministry officials know about specific implementation problems in a timely manner.

**Data to assist education system planners and decision-makers understand whether existing education sector strategies help to close the gaps between the haves and the have-nots.**

- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are used to show population settlement patterns and better understand the effect that home ↔ school distance plays on enrolment and retention in school.
- To date, eleven sub regional offices have conducted GIS mapping and school/ teacher optimal configuration exercise. Preliminary analysis shows that current practices favor children in larger villages and towns compared with children in outlying hamlets, particularly girls. Data shows that enrollment drops off steeply in villages located 1 – 3 kilometers from a village with a school.
- The Ministry of Education, with assistance from RAP-DM, is using the data produced to explore strategies to improve education system coverage of children in isolated rural communities.
- The Minister of Education commissioned a technical working group to develop a rural school model with single teacher schools.

RAP-DM is based in the MOE and is fully integrated in the ongoing education reform program. The Program works directly with the Financial Directorate, the Planning Office and the Decentralization Unit, contributing to better collaboration between the three. In addition, RAP-DM works through a network of regional education officials who provide direct training service to their subregional counterparts.

