PROJECT
« MY EDUCATION / MY FUTURE »

SCORE survey: Schools functionality and schooling patterns
in the regions of Timbuktu, Gao and Mopti.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The low level of schooling rates in Mali are the result of several interdependent factors. Different kinds of insecurity, irregular school functioning, the under-appreciated value of education in the community, and financial difficulties in many households all contribute to poor schooling outcomes.

1. A first observation is the existence of a series of interconnected conflicts and local risks. Conflicts over land and natural resources, intergroup conflicts, political rivalries, exogenous risks such as COVID-19 or attacks by armed groups are all prevalent in the regions of Mali which were part of this study. Some conflicts are considered more significant than others depending on the respondents, but most people agree they have been exposed to all these threats at the same time. To these threats, are added some forms of insecurity that are related to the life of the community (e.g. theft, burglaries, vandalism) mainly in the Gao region. The Covid-19 pandemic is also a factor in the deterioration of living conditions in the surveyed areas. In general, levels of personal safety are particularly low. Particular attention must be paid here to rural populations whose food security is dramatically affected by different conflicts.

2. Conflict and other forms of violence against the person within the community has a direct effect on the ability for schools to operate[1]. Low levels of school functioning in the studied areas are mainly due to the existence of repeated conflicts and threat perceptions felt by community members. Statistical analysis has made it possible to uncover the resilience factors that allow some schools to operate despite these disruptive dynamics. They are structured around two dimensions: community safety experience and the value communities attach to education. In other words, school functioning is far more effective in communities where the sense of security is high, and education is valued. In these communities the local security experience is characterised by low exposure to conflict, while citizens feel safe and more trustful of the security forces and public service delivery in general. Therefore, a secure environment is associated with access to state services, which help people to feel protected.

Schools' operations tend to be stabilized within an environment in which school education is valued and encouraged. It is characterised by parents who encourage children to go to school and who consider education as a crucial lever for social integration. Under these circumstances community mobilization allows young people to feel listened to and access forms of education outside of school. In short, a school located in a safe community and which is better equipped to deliver educational outputs, while providing a secure environment for young people will be more likely to function uninterrupted.

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[1]In 2021, 120 attacks against schools were reported by the MRM (Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism, which monitors and responds to the 6 grave violation types against children in conflict situations); as of December 2021, 1,632 schools were closed due to insecurity.

3. A key finding is that even when schools are operating well, parents do not systematically send their children to school. The reasons for non-schooling are multiple and complex. Explanatory factors may vary depending on the child's gender, age or socio-economic situation of the household. It is a bundle of factors that are cumulative and interconnected, leading to the child's non-schooling or dropping out of education.

The analysis sought to identify the resources and determinants that encourage parents to send their children to school in spite of adversities that may deter them from making this choice. The results showed that schooling strategies largely depend on parents' relationship with education, with parents who value education more likely to keep their children in school. This result is quite intuitive: the more parents value school education, the more they will tend to send their children to school. The insight that emerges from this finding is that the value of education serves as an asset which helps to overcome factors which would otherwise be considered obstacles to school attendance. In other words, the study finds that conflict, as threat to community life, is not a major factor which dissuades parents from sending their children to school. Access to services and socio-economic status are also decisive in the number of children attending school.

The relationship with education appears as a set of specific internalized values stabilized within the household, while the threats are more contextual and take place in the community environment. Therefore, values (factors which define the strength of feeling within the household towards education) and capacity for action (socio-economic situation of the household) structure schooling decisions independently of external threats. These two determinants are the main levers explaining the level of schooling in the three surveyed regions.

4. Children's' lack of interest in school appears to be a driving force behind unschooling. Often, the teenager who is not interested in school manages to convince his(her) parents of the need to end school attendance. The more sensitive the individual is to social interactions at school and satisfied with the school environment, the less likely the child is to consider dropping out of school. In other words, the more the attachment to the social dynamics of the school grows, non-interest in school becomes less important in explaining the decision to drop out of school. Adolescent's attachment to sociability in school is defined as the extent to which the student feels close to his classmates, maintains a positive relationship with the school staff and finally considers himself personally happy to be in this environment. This indicator therefore combines three dimensions: the relationship with other students, the relationship with teachers and finally the level of individual satisfaction. The analysis shows that this level of attachment is mainly influenced by three determinants: inclusive governance at school, school education that places personal development and competency-based learning at the heart of the school experience and finally an education-friendly environment within the community.

5. SCORE findings make it possible to develop a broad framework for programmatic action. This points to interventions and actions aimed at improving schools' operations and the schooling rate conceived through the prism of the school-family-community relationship (SFC)[2]. This "ecosystem" approach requires an understanding of the different interdependent environments in which children and adolescents develop and assessing the reciprocal influences[3]. The results of the various statistical analyses conducted as part of this project suggest that programmatic interventions guided by the SFC approach may be particularly relevant. The recommendations suggested here are systematically based on the observed results. Three main courses of action can be developed: a) interventions must be carried out to strengthen children's attachment to school; b) familiarize parents with school to help them value education and c) finally encourage the community's attachment to school education[4]. Each of these main axes can then be divided into a series of complementary and interdependent programme and policy actions.

Strengthening children's attachment to school can be based on programmatic interventions focusing on the practical dimension (security and logistical conditions within schools), on the pedagogical dimension (approach based on educational skills, comfort and interest) and on the citizen dimension (strengthening the modalities of student participation in school governance). Parents' familiarization with school can happen through the communication channel (awareness campaigns and other activities) and through the integration of parents into the «school world» (e.g. parents' interventions within schools, improvement of the inclusiveness of representation structures within the school, partnership strategies between parents and the school, etc.). Given that education is a human right which puts a responsibility on state partie[5], (duty-bearers) financial support (e.g. cash transfer arrangements) should be used to support access to education for vulnerable households and thus limit the effects of socio-economic deprivation on school enrolment decisions. Finally, strengthening the community's attachment to school education requires the promotion of a school valuing discourse that could be supported by community leaders, for example, through the development of practical activities linking the school and the community (e.g. activities of local associations within the school or in collaboration with the institution, provision of spaces by the community to ensure the involvement of former teachers and out-of-school children)[6].

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[2] Boulanger et al. (2011)

[3] Epstein, J. (1997). School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action (1st ed.). Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Corwin Press.R.

[4] Each of these axes is the subject of a detailed analysis in its respective section. dans la dernière partie de ce rapport.

[5] The international legal basis for the right to education can be found in different human rights instruments including: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 13); Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28); African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Article 17); African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Article 11).

[6] All of these recommendations are described in more detail in the last part of this report.

INTRODUCTION

1. Background

The last decade has seen a deterioration of the security environment across Mali, characterised by an ongoing armed insurgency, and punctuated by a coup d'état in 2020. Despite the Algiers peace talks process which led to the Agreement for Peace and reconciliation in Mali (2015) between the Government and the Platform and the Coordination of Azawad Movements, peace remains fragile and social cohesion is struggling to be sustained in areas sometimes considered as ungovernable[7]. According to an ACLED report, the year 2020 was one of the deadliest for the country, with growing insecurity rooted in the weakness of the state[8].

The State's difficulties in imposing sustainable governance are based on a series of structural weaknesses. The presence of armed groups and their attempts to infiltrate «from below» undermines the authority of the state[9]. Its inability to deal with latent inter-communal conflicts and to prioritize just and equitable resolutions for all, its inability to ensure security for marginalized groups and its tendency to militarily repress all forms of insurgency (rather than seeking peaceful solutions to the root causes of conflict) are all elements that weaken the proper functioning of State institutions and degrade the sustainable development of the country[10]. Weakened by security problems, the Malian state is struggling to provide basic public services[11].

While the Malian state is often perceived as a distant agent, it is still mostly considered the only legitimate actor capable of providing essential services to the population[12].

[7] Lloyd (2016) « Ungoverned Spaces and Regional Insecurity: The Case of Mali », SAIS Review of International
[8] ACLED, 2020, "Mali: Any End to the Storm?", https://acleddata.com/2020/12/17/mali-any-end-to-the-storm/
Pour plus de précisions, voir le rapport rédigé par le Point Focal Sécurité Mali de Search For Common Ground (SFCG) faisant état de plus d'une centaine d'incidents dans les trois régions étudiées dans le cadre de ce projet entre février et août 2021.
[9] Guichaoua, Y., « Comment le djihad armé se diffuse au Sahel ? », The Conversation, 2019.
[10] Early Warning Project, (2018), Country Report. Regions at Risk: Preventing mass atrocities in Mali, Simon-Skjodt Center;
[11] Search For Common Ground, 2020, «ANWKOHÊRÊ!» (PEACENOW!) Strengthen the resilience of communities in central Mali, Mali: Baseline Study.
[12] Tobie, A. et Chauzal, G., « State Services in an Insecure Environment, Perceptions among Civil Society in Mali », SIPRI, 2018.

It is in this context that this report assesses the social dynamics related to schooling in Mali. Schooling trends are evolving in a highly disruptive environment, characterised by threats to security and weakened state authority. The deterioration of school life is linked to endemic conflict, the growing feeling of insecurity and dysfunctional school operations, which conspire to discourage children's school attendance. This relationship was uncovered in Mali by Search for Common Ground in 2018[13]. In November 2021, the Education cluster reported that 1664 schools remain closed in the country affecting nearly half a million children and nearly 10,000 teachers[14]. School closure, the departure of teachers, the desertion of students, the disengagement of parents and the emergence of internal school disputes related to school management undermine the ability of the Malian State to ensure the universal right to education for all, a guarantee of a peaceful society.

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[13]Search For Common Ground, (2018), «Together, Let's Sow the Grains of Peace», UNICEF.
[14]https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/mali/education

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2. Methodology

The Score Index

The approach taken for this study is based on two methodologies which have been used to in an integrated fashion to produce a multi-level analysis. This includes a qualitative methodology developed by Search for Common Ground called Conflict Scan and a statistical-based tool called the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation index (SCORE), developed by the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD). SCORE is a participatory action research tool that aims to quantify psychological, social, political and economic phenomena, with a view to contributing to the improvement of social cohesion, resilience, reconciliation and peacebuilding. It is a versatile tool that integrates the contextual information pro-vided by the qualitative phase and is reflected in the questionnaire used for data collection.

The SCORE index aims to quantify different social phenomenon and provide quantitative information on attitudes and behaviours (e.g. «civic engagement»), perceptions (e.g. «feeling of marginalisation») or opinions (e.g. «relationship to authority»). The indicators created are based on an aggregation of several items (between 3 and 10, in general)[15]. The combination of these items makes it possible to measure the different perspectives of the same phenomenon. The Score index thus suggests a standardized measure of social phenomena (scores from 0 to 10). A score of 0 corresponds to the complete absence of the phenomenon at the in-dividual, regional or whole sample level, while a score of 10 means a full presence of this phenomenon.

Based on the variables obtained after the primary data analysis, these variables can be presented in various forms:

- "Heatmaps: illustrate the strength of a phenomena in different geographical areas of a country being studied. This makes it possible to glimpse, intuitively, the geographical areas of high prevalence (or deficit) of each studied phenomenon[16].
- Causal analysis (predictive models): makes it possible to represent the existing relationships between different indicators (variables). Predictive models reveal the existing correlations between phenomena and show the magnitude and direc-tion of the influence that some phenomena have on others. In this case, these indicators (phenomena) can be called «drivers», because they positively or nega-tively predict the other phenomena (variables) to which they are related.

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[15]Systematically, the construction of an indicator (i.e. the aggregation of several items) responds to a statistical verification process that makes it possible to ensure the internal coherence of the measured phenomenon (alpha coefficient of Cronbach)..
[16]The scores reported on the heatmaps show scores by Cercle, region and average score for the entire sample.

Field work and sampling

Within the framework of this study, the field surveys were conducted by a team of researchers from Search for Common Ground, supported by SeeD. The data collected was analysed in accordance with the SCORE methodology. Following the design of the questionnaire data collection was undertaken in May and June 2021 in three selected regions (Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu).

The quantitative data collection was performed using the Kobo Collect software and followed a random sampling approach[17]. Overall, the data analyzed is based on the administration of 1424 questionnaires with three different samples. 611 parents and 611 adolescents were interviewed (aged between 13 and 15 years)[18]. The third set of questionnaires was administered to 202 teachers. Sampling was calibrated according to the geographical distribution within each of the Cercles (see table below).

Region	Cercle	Parents	Adolescents	Teachers	Total
Mopti	Mopti	154	154	51	359
	Bandiagara	130	130	43	303
Gao	Gao	100	100	33	233
	Ansongo	55	55	18	128
Timbuktu	Timbuktu	53	53	18	124
	Gourma Rharous	46	46	15	107
	Niafunké	73	73	24	170
	Total	611	611	202	1424

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[17]This methodology thus made it possible to ensure that each individual interviewed had the same chances as another to be chosen.
[18]Each of the teenagers interviewed is the son or daughter of one of the parents interviewed.

Three levels of analysis and complementarity with the Conflict Scan

This report is based on a relatively innovative methodological design for two main reasons. First, the results presented are elicited from the integration of two research tools: the Conflict Scan and the SCORE. The operationalization of these two tools was built jointly and simultaneously from the beginning of the survey (i.e. research questions, literature review) and the partnership process was followed to the end of the project (i.e. presentation and discussions of results in various forms: workshops, reports and policy briefs). SFCG and SeeD teams worked from the outset to ensure a consistent and joined-up approach to the way the survey was designed and delivered, and worked together in interpreting and sharing the project results. This report is therefore based on SCORE results fed by contextual data generated by Conflict Scan[19].

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[19]Conflict Scan's observations are synthesized and presented at the end of each section. The objective of the box is to be able to put into perspective the results promoted by the two analytical instruments.

3. Research questions and organization of the report

Each of the sections of this report aims to address a particular dimension of the «My Education, My Future» project. The four sections of this report allow us to propose a detailed and comprehensive analysis of schooling in Mali. The first part will address the conflict dynamics and sources of tension observed in the three studied regions – these dynamics acting as disruptive factors in normal school functioning. The second section deals with resilience factors as schools face these adversities. The analysis identifies specific determinants that contribute to the functionality of schools despite adversities and disruptive factors in society and the local community. The third section presents the factors that influence schooling choices. The aim here is to understand the resilience factors of that encourage some parents to send their children to school even though they face the same level of adversity as other parents who have opted to withdraw their children from school. The fourth section focuses on school life through the perceptions and expectations of its main actors: students and their teachers. This section mainly describes the factors and conditions that strengthen students' connectedness to school.

To summarize, each of the sections provides answers to the following research questions:

Section 1 : What are the conflicts in the studied regions?

Section 2 : What are the resilience factors that allow some schools to operate despite the persistence of conflict dynamics in their locality?

Section 3 : What are the resilience factors that encourage parents to send their children to school despite various forms of insecurity?

Section 4 : What are the determinants that tend to make school life appreciable by children and teachers?

SECTION **1**: Forms of violence and conflict in the studied areas

SECTION 1. FORMS OF VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT IN THE STUDIED AREAS

1.1. An environment prone to adversity: conflicts, insecurity and violent experiences

This section describes the different kinds of factors and challenges which disrupt education and schooling in the three study regions covered by this report. It describes different kinds of conflict (e.g. disputes over land and natural resources, intergroup tensions, political rivalries, and threats posed by or armed groups), forms of insecurities experienced by the community (e.g. theft, burglary, vandalism), the level of violence exposure (i.e. violent experiences in daily life) and finally the impact of conflict on the daily life of community members (i.e. food shortages, and denied access to public services).

What types of conflicts?

The threat perceptions described in Table 1 must be understood as phenomena or dynamics likely to weaken social cohesion. The scores reflect the strength of these phenomena according to the respondents. Conflicts over natural resources and land issues, for example, are the most threatening to stability and peace in the country. Exogenous structural threats include dynamics that are, to some extent, external to communities. This indicator looks at phenomena such as fears related to the settlement of economic migrants in the local community, foreign influences, pandemics and armed attacks.

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Table 1 : average scores for type of threat by cercle (parents' sample)

	Mopti		Gao		Timbuktu		
	Mopti	Bandiagara	Gao	Ansongo	Timbuktu	Gourma Rharous	Niafunké
Threats related to land or natural resources	7.63	7.83	6.94	8.91	6.74	7.50	6.54
Threats related to political rivalries	5.78	6.54	4.67	7.30	4.93	8.06	6.54
Threats related to intergroup conflicts	4.31	6.30	5.94	7.28	4.73	6.76	3.63
Exogenous structural threats	4.75	5.01	4.49	5.34	4.50	6.04	4.00

The importance of these conflicts varies depending on location with some Cercles more prone to particular threats. For example, Ansongo experiences quite severe conflicts over land and natural resources compared to other regions. On the other hand, political rivalries are considered more dangerous in Gourma-Rharous than elsewhere. The Cercle of Gourma Rharous seems to accumulate high levels for several types of threats. Beyond political rivalries, local populations also fear intergroup conflicts and threats external to the community. The inhabitants of the Cercles of Niafunké and Timbuktu, on the other hand, feel less exposed to these disruptive dynamics.

It is also important to note that these four types of threats are statistically correlated. This result means that **local populations face** a network of **interconnected threats**. **These threats are more or less intense depending on the local context, but all threats are systematically present everywhere**. In other words, it is rare for an individual to claim to be exposed to only one or two types of conflict. Some conflicts are considered more significant than others depending on the respondents, but most respondents consider themselves exposed to all these threats at the same time.

Impact on people's daily lives

Exposure to these threats disrupts people's daily lives in different ways. Three meta-indicators were used to measure conflict-exposure consequences. The first measures the impact of conflicts on the person and property: destruction of the house, crops, theft or slaughter of livestock, serious injury or disability resulting from an attack or a fight. The second indicator measures the impact on access to services: denied access to the market, school or a health centre. The third indicator measures the impact of conflicts on basic needs and food security: food scarcity or water scarcity.

Figure 1 : scores related to the impacts of conflicts by Cercles (parents' sample)
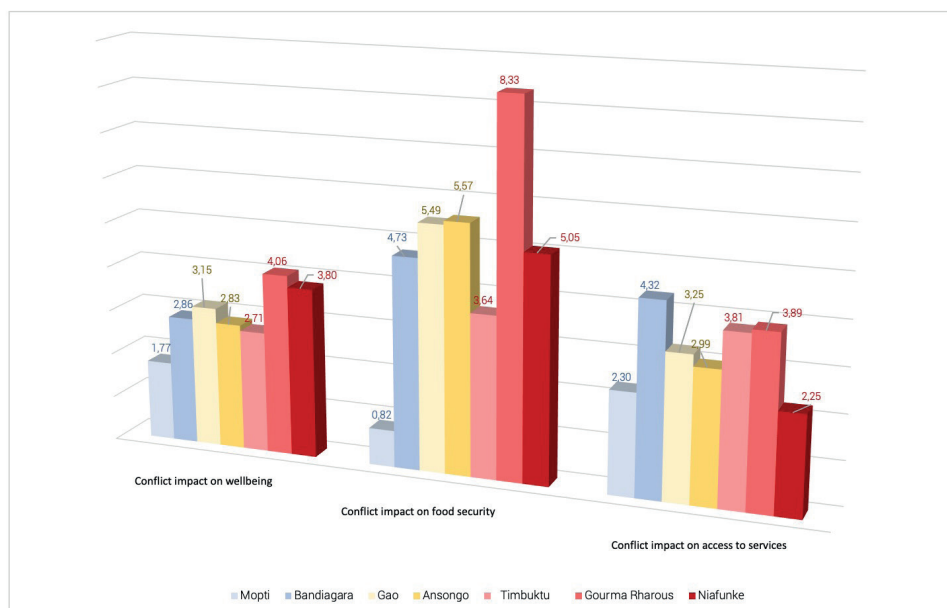
In general, conflicts appear to primarily threaten households' ability to access water and food («impact on basic needs and food security»). Gourma Rharous is particularly vulnerable at this level. The conflict situation seems to have the least impact on people's daily lives in Mopti. The gap between Mopti's score and that of Gourma Rharous is extremely large considering food security (0.82 versus 8.33). It illustrates a profound contrast of situations: **few people in Mopti consider that conflicts threaten their food security while a large majority of the inhabitants of Gourma Rharous consider themselves greatly affected.**

It should also be noted that there are strong disparities depending on whether the community is in a rural or urban area. People in rural areas are much more affected by conflict in their daily lives than people in urban areas. The negative impact on access to water is 5.72 in rural areas while it is 2.07 in urban areas.

Incivility and insecurities

In addition to the conflict-related threats mentioned above, the analysis also considered the perceived forms of anti-social behaviour and insecurity within communities.

Table 2 : types of incivility, misdemeanours and crimes observed (parent's and children's sample by gender)

	PARENTS		ADOLESCENTS	
	Men	Women	Boys	Girls
Burglaries and robberies	29%	29%	29%	25%
Flights	39%	39%	39%	37%
Agressions	21%	19%	19%	18%
Gangs, bandit groups	26%	25%	23%	23%
Vandalism	12%	12%	9%	9%
Violent disputes	11%	13%	10%	10%
Alcoholism	26%	21%	22%	20%
Drugs	24%	16%	21%	17%
Firearms, shootings	29%	31%	27%	28%
Militias	32%	32%	30%	33%
Early pregnancies	19%	15%	16%	13%
Domestic violence	39%	6%	7%	6%
Child abuse	9%	8%	11%	8%
Prostitution	17%	8%	13%	9%
Rape	10%	8%	10%	10%
Cattle theft	54%	50%	53%	52%

The perceptions of parents and their children are relatively homogeneous. Cattle rustling is the most common form of insecurity, followed by theft, burglaries and robberies. While cattle rustling is the most common phenomenon in all three regions, the types of insecurity are relatively distinct depending on the region.

Communities in Gao report being most exposed to various forms of insecurity. This region is particularly prone to burglaries and robberies.
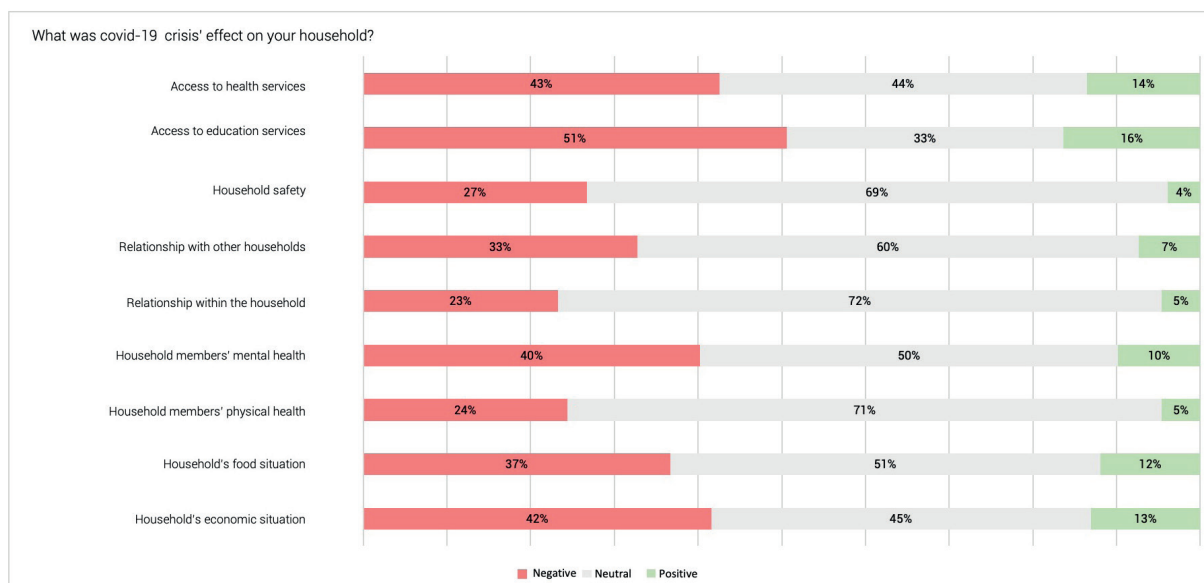
Ansongo Cercle records scores of 8.05 for burglaries and 8.74 for robberies (while the average score is 5.78 and 6.59 respectively). Cattle theft is also much higher in this region. **Particular attention needs to be paid to the Gao region, which seems particularly conducive to the development of various forms of insecurity.**

Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has considerably disrupted societies around the world. Nevertheless, if its effects are global, the health, economic or social consequences are heterogeneous, impacting societies in different ways. Restrictions and disruptions affect various dimensions of daily life and not all categories of the population are affected in the same way. Figure 2 shows to what extent the Covid-19 crisis has particularly affected access to education.

Indeed, among the list of potential damage caused by the pandemic, it seems that the field of education has been the main victim. **More than one in two households say they have experienced a deterioration in their access to education as a result of the pandemic.** Parents residing in the Cercles of Gao and Ansongo who seem to have been most affected at this level.

Figure 2 : effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on households (parents' sample)[20]

What was covid-19 crisis' effect on your household?

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Access to health services	43%	44%	14%
Access to education services	51%	33%	16%
Household safety	27%	69%	4%
Relationship with other households	33%	60%	7%
Relationship within the household	23%	72%	5%
Household members' mental health	40%	50%	10%
Household members' physical health	24%	71%	5%
Household's food situation	37%	51%	12%
Household's economic situation	42%	45%	13%

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[20]The green data on the graph means that for some households, the situation has improved as a result of the pandemic. For example, 14% of households say they have better access to care and health services since the Covid19 crisis.

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Access to health services, economic wellbeing and food security have also been shaken by the Covid-19 crisis. The economic and food situation of the parents interviewed in Bandiagara Cercle have been significantly weakened. Undoubtedly, the Covid pandemic constitutes a new adversity disrupting the well-being of individuals, blurring their traditional routines, disrupting access to essential services and threatening their ability to stabilize the daily life of the household. Sixty-seven percent of the households surveyed considered that the impact was generally negative (66 percent of the adolescents surveyed and 74 percent of the teaching sample).

Exposure to daily violence

The results presented so far reflect respondents' perceptions of insecurity and conflict dynamics. They provide information on how local people assess the importance of land conflicts, inter-ethnic disputes or the frequency of burglaries in their community. Respondents are seen as observers who report on how they perceive the evolution of certain phenomena. The following figure no longer places respondents in the position of observers but in the position of "actors". It illustrates the degree of exposure to violence of individuals and reflects the violent experiences of respondents. This dimension is particularly important because it appears statistically linked to the problems of access to education.

As the next section will show, there is a high level of correlation between the daily violence reported within a locality and the level of school operations in that locality. In other words, a high level of violence within the community is associated with poor school operations[21].

Figure 3 : types of exposure to violence (parents and adolescents' samples)
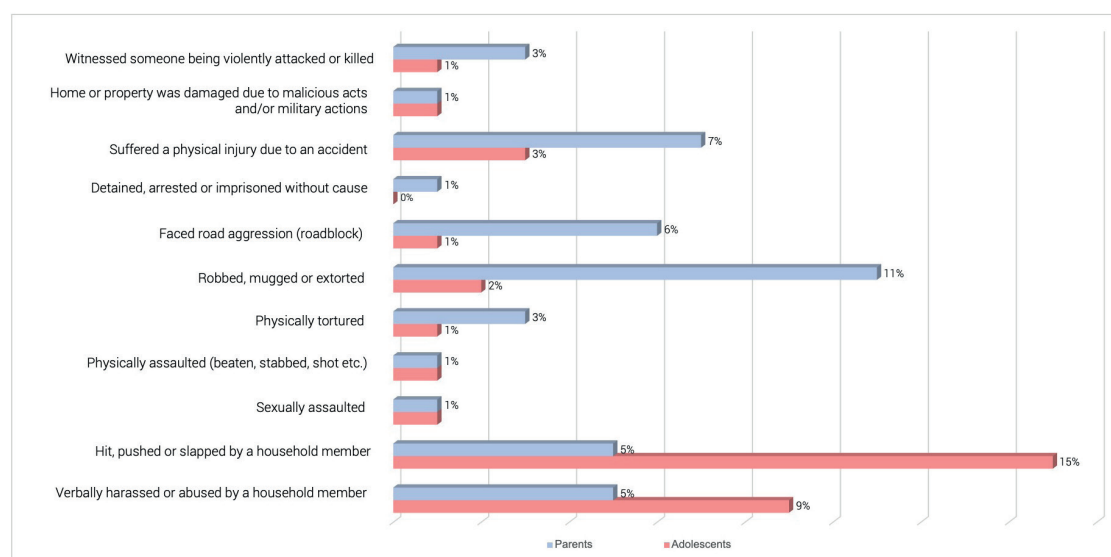
Reading : 11% of parents say they have been victims of theft or burglary.

Teenagers are more likely to be victims of domestic violence, with 15 percent of them reporting being pushed, slapped or hit by a member of the household. Parents are more likely to be victims of theft, burglary or assault on the road. The distribution of these phenomena varies significantly depending on the locality. The indicator measuring experience of physical violence has been created to group several of the items shown in Figure 5[22].

Ansongo had the highest score; respondents living in this Cercle were more likely to be victims of physical assault than elsewhere. The Cercles of Mopti and Bandiagara, on the other hand, are the least likely to be subjected to recorded forms of daily violence.

1.2. Low levels of security

The results show that individual safety (i.e personal security) is much lower in rural and semi-rural areas[23]. SCORE defines personal security as a situation where the individual feels safe from violence in his or her daily life. This means that individuals are confident in the ability of the security forces to protect them, and they are not afraid to walk alone in the evening or to accompany children to school in the morning.

The sense of individual security is unevenly spread between Cercles. Respondents from Timbuktu feel the most secure (6.0), while the gap with respondents from the Cercle of Gourma-Rhrous is particularly wide (2.8).

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[22]This item consists of the following items: «Physically tortured» / «Stolen, robbed, extorted» / «Assault and robbery on the road (road cut off)» / «Arrested, detained or imprisoned without any reason».
[23]The UNDP Human Development Report published in 1994 suggests a multidimensional approach to human security. This covers the dimensions related to economic, religious, food, community, political and health security. Some of these dimensions were covered during the survey through other indicators.

Heatmap 1 : individual safety scores (parents' sample)[24]

Personal Security: Feeling Safe
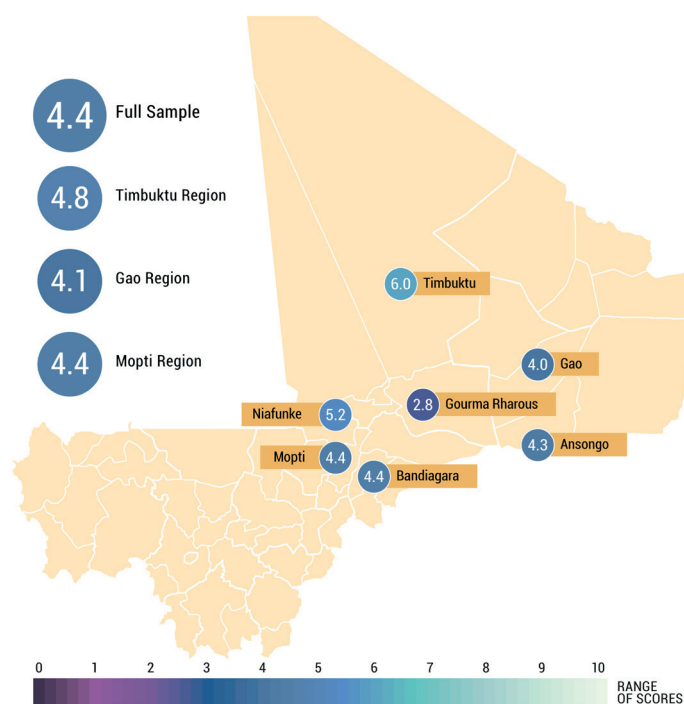
The sense of security is based on a multitude of subjective and objective factors. The way in which people are informed, past experiences, values and perceptions are all structuring determinants of how individuals view their level of security.

The perception of being a victim of violence is not necessarily connected with the actual risk a person faces in daily life. Some individuals may feel safe in an objectively dangerous environment while others consider themselves threatened in peaceful contexts.

This study does not intend to understand the gaps between perceived and experienced safety. However, some avenues of reflection can be used to explain the variation in security levels depending on the locality. For example, elements statistically correlated with the indicator «individual safety» may partly explain where the feeling of insecurity comes from. The three indicators aimed at assessing the impact of conflicts on the individuals' daily lives (Figure 1) are particularly related to individual safety. In other words, the level of insecurity grows with the consequences of these conflicts.

The feeling of insecurity is directly associated with the negative effects generated by adversities. It is not automatic that conflict threatens the security of local populations but the feeling that these disruptive phenomena will affect the daily conditions of survival. The feeling of fear is the result of the consequences that conflicts have on food security, on access to public services or on well-being in general.

[24]The scale of scores puts them between 0 and 10. The closer the score is to 10, the safer individuals in a given region feel (i.e. they are not afraid to walk alone at night, they are confident in the ability of the police to protect them etc.). Therefore, an average score of 4.4 reflects a shared sense of insecurity among the population.

Figure 4 relates the feeling of insecurity to the types of consequences of conflict on populations. Conflict Respondents in Gourma Rharous reported the highest levels of insecurity where conflict has the most pervasive impact on food security and well-being.

Figure 4 : relationship between level of insecurity and exposure to conflict (parents' sample)
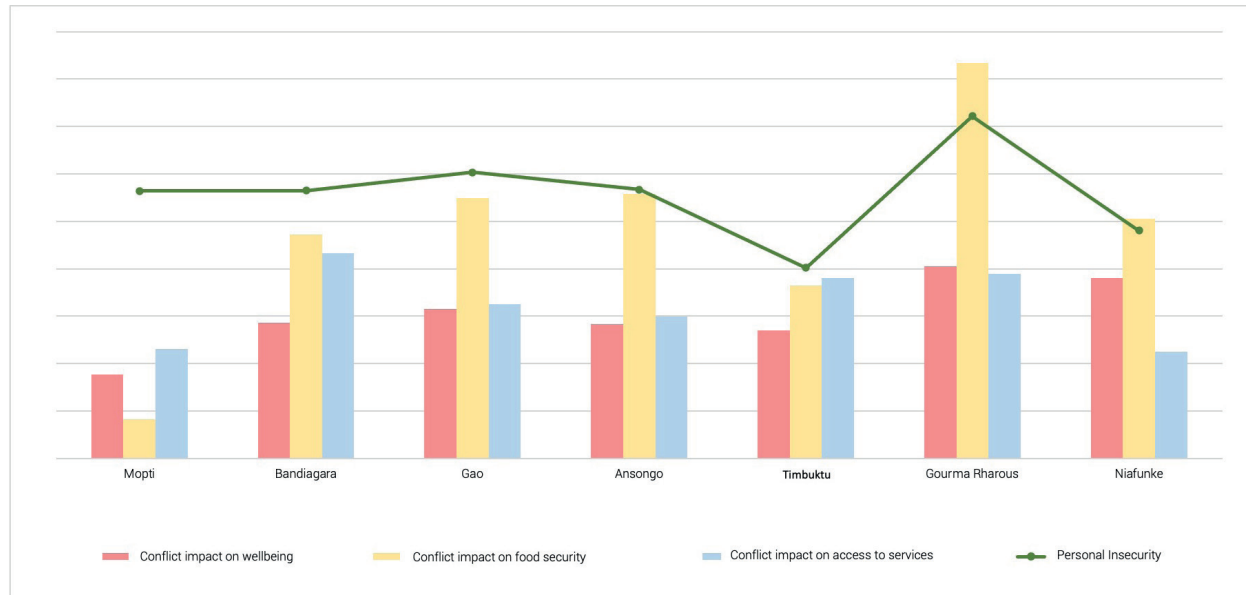
On the other hand people's perceptions of insecurity is lowest in Timbuktu Cercle where the impact of conflict is weaker than elsewhere in the region.
The situation in Mopti region is also complex. The impact of conflict is low, however the perception of conflict and its consequences is particularly high among the local population. We can surmise that exposure to past conflict has shaped individual perceptions of security threats, which are possibly inflated due to past conflict experience. At the same time other factors help to determine people's understanding of their security environment, including trust in the security forces, past traumatic experiences, and the socio-economic position of the individual.

1.3. Threats and conflicts disrupt school functioning

The conflictual environment, the forms of insecurity and the various threats in Malian society are all disruptive dynamics that destabilize the functioning of schools. Respondents were asked to what extent these dynamics affect the school operations in their opinion. Figure 5 shows the results for the three samples.

Figure 5 : distribution of threats to school operations (Three Samples)
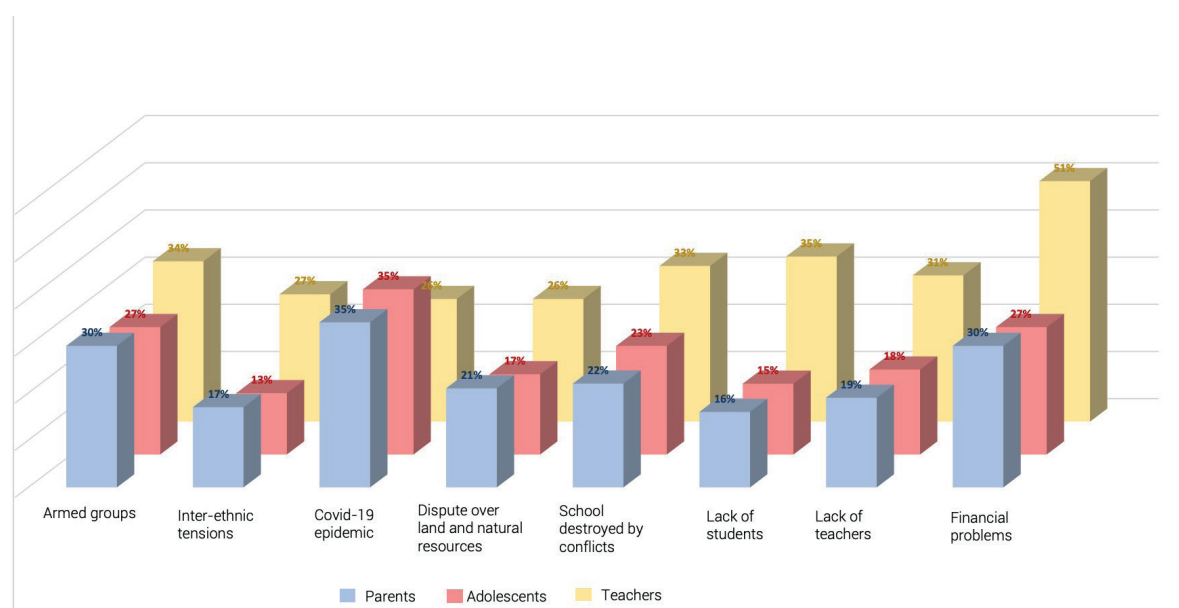
Reading : 30 percent of parents «totally agree» with the idea that school functioning has been affected by the threat of armed violence.

First, it should be noted that teachers consider threats have a more severe impact on school functioning than children or their parents. Since teachers are at the heart of the way schools work, they are more likely to experience the daily internal problems and challenges of the school. For example, half of the teachers surveyed fully agree that financial problems destabilize the functioning of the school.

For both parents and children, the Covid-19 pandemic, the school's financial problems and armed threats are the three main reasons for disruptions to school functioning. These reasons can be grouped into two categories: the analysis distinguished between external threats (i.e. dynamics that take place in the school environment) and internal threats (i.e. phenomena directly related to school[25] governance). Figure 6 describes the importance of internal and external threats to the functioning of schools in each of the Cercles.

Figure 6 : Internal and External Threat Scores by cercle (parents' sample)
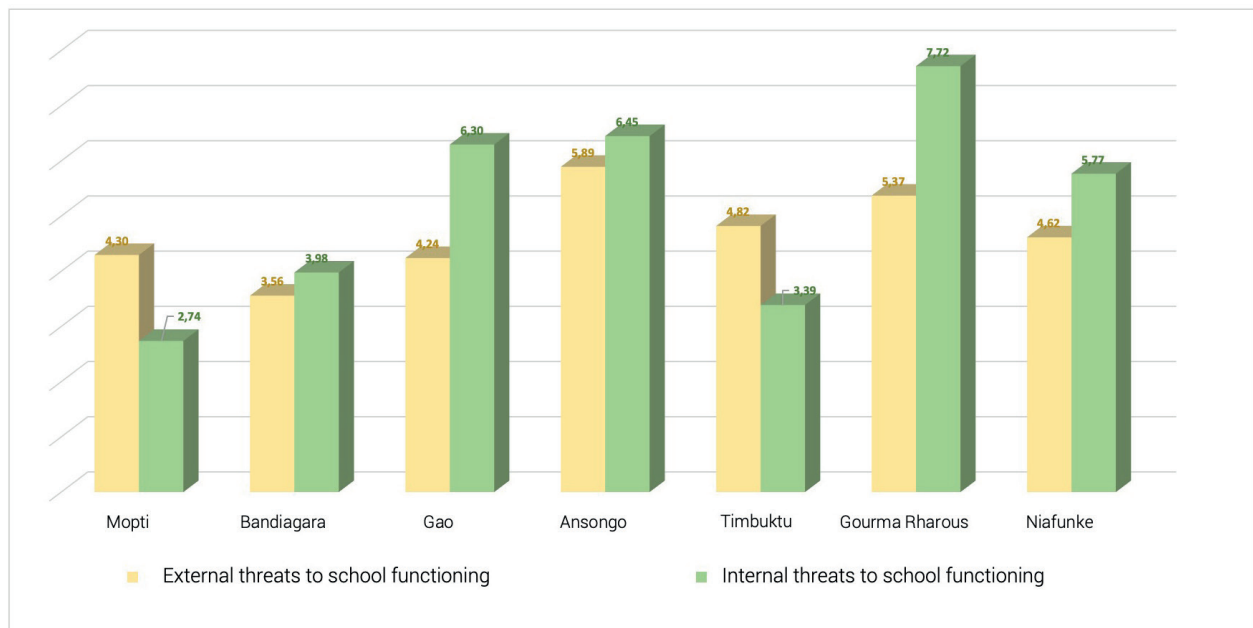
Threats to school operations are unevenly distributed. In most Cercles, the problems related to school governance (in green) seem to mainly handicap the proper functioning of schools. In most Cercles (according to parents), it is not armed groups, Covid or other economic threats that affect the stability of schools but rather the problems of governance of these institutions. **According to data collected from teachers, in the Cercles of Gourma Rharous, (8.54), Gao (7.65) and Bandiagara (7.06), schools mainly suffer from internal dysfunctionalities (average score of 5.88).**

This type of threat is particularly acute in Gourma Rharous where there seems to be a consensus between parents, children and teachers. On the other hand, in the Cercles of Mopti and Timbuktu, parents are more likely to consider that external threats are what disrupt school operations. The influence of external threats is highest in Ansongo Cercle. More than elsewhere, parents and children believe that economic threats disrupt the functioning of schools. On the other hand, in Bandiagara this type of threat is the least important according to parents and children.

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[25]External threats : armed threats, inter-ethnic conflicts, Covid-19 pandemic, school damaged by conflicts and disputes related to natural resources and land issues. Insider threats : lack of students, lack of teachers and financial problems.

The question of adversities according to the Conflict Scan

The results put forward by the three Conflict Scans conducted in the different regions tend to confirm the multidimensional nature of the threats. Indeed, the reports of Gao, Timbuktu and Mopti all describe the existence of insecurities linked to religious, ethnic, and intercommunal conflicts, which occur against the background of ongoing banditry. All these factors affect access to school.

Conflicts related to the application of Islamic law are particularly disruptive and relates to moves to impose the Sharia and Koranic school system. Schools have been attacked and destroyed in connection with this dispute causing schools to close. Conflict Scan tends to explain the levels of insecurity observed in the Cercles of Gourma Rharous and Niafunké. Here, the phenomenon of banditry considerably affects these two Cercles.

The Conflict Scan also looks at the internal factors disrupting the way schools operate. These occur between the different actors in the education sector, namely: the Academies of Teaching (AE), the Centers for Pedagogical Animation (CAP), the Committees of School Management (CGS), the Associations of Students' Parents (APE), the Associations of Students Mothers (AME), and the directors of schools and the teachers.

The conflicts identified by Conflict Scan potentially affecting access to school are presented below. They correspond to the adversities detailed in the first section of this report.

SECTION **2**: School functionality requirements

SCORE survey: School status and schooling patterns in the regions of Timbuktu, Gao and Mopti.

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SECTION 2. SCHOOL FUNCTIONALITY REQUIREMENTS

2.1. Diverse functionality situations

The level of school functionality is categorized according to three situations: (i) a fully functional school, (ii) a non-functional school, and (iii) an irregular-functioning school. This third category was created in order to capture the situation of schools that operate intermittently but are not completely closed. This category supports a continuum of situations where the school may at least be closed a few days a month and at most have been closed for a year.

Forty-nine percent of parents confirmed that their child's school was operational, while 14 percent said the school is non-functional. Clear differences appear according to localities. Schools in Timbuktu are, much more functional than those of Gourma-Rharous. Irregularly functioning schools are mostly located in the Cercle of Mopti.

This data can be compared with information regularly collected by the Education Cluster[26]. In May 2021[27], the education Cluster reported that the closure ratio in the Gao region was 22 percent (127 schools closed out of 565 in total), with the Gao Cercle more affected than that of Ansongo (respectively 30 percent and 21 percent closure ratio). The Cluster's data also confirm that few schools located in the Timbuktu Cercle are closed (2 percent). On the other hand, the May 2021 report indicates that the Cercle of Niafunké is more affected than that of Gourma Rharous (respectively 38 percent and 21 percent closure rate). Finally, school closure rates in the Mopti and Bandiagara Cercles are similar at 28 percent and 30 percent respectively.

While the observations of the Education Cluster and this analysis show similar trends, disparities can be explained by the method used to register open and closed schools. While the Education Cluster records the number of schools closed at a specific time (in this case May 2021), the SCORE survey considers the level of operation of schools over the long term by recording the number of schools which are irregularly functional». In other words, it is quite conceivable that in May 2021 some schools will be registered as closed by the Education Cluster while SCORE records the same schools being « operational three months earlier, due to their irregular functioning status.

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[26] https://www.educationcluster.net/Mali
[27] Date of data collection for this SCORE study

Figure 7 : different levels of school operations (parents' sample)
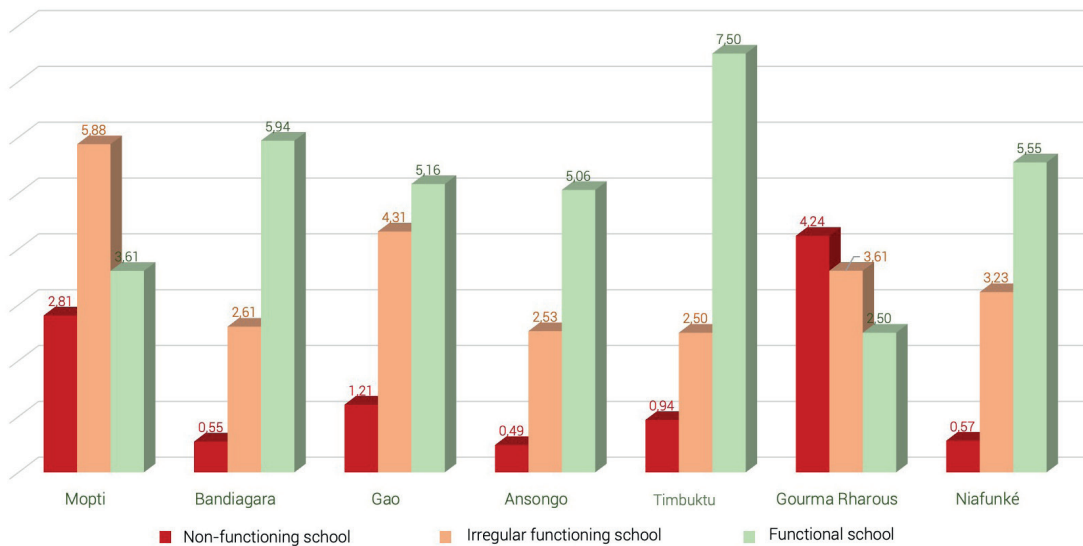
The data in Figure 7 indicate that in the majority of Cercles, there are more operational schools than closed or irregularly functioning schools. As confirmed by the Education Cluster, schools in the Timbuktu Cercle are better able to operate. School functioning in the Gourma Rharous Cercle is particularly deficient since the number of non-functional schools is highest. The Mopti Cercle is particularly marked by an intermittent level of school functioning.

The aggregation of the 3 levels of operation (non-functional/irregular/operational) makes it possible to determine a general level of school operation by Cercle and by region. A score of 10 means that all parents surveyed in the locality confirm that their child's school is operational (all schools operate without interruption). The more parents report that the school operates intermittently, the lower the locality's score and levels of school non-functionality further decreases the locality's score.

Heatmap 2 : status of school scores (parents' sample)

Figure 7 illustrated the difference between school operation in the Gourma-Rharous Cercle and Timbuktu. It reflects two local situations – two Cercles belonging to the same region – with diametrically opposed conditions. Figure 8 visualizes factors with significant and negative levels of correlation with school functionality. The phenomena in red denote dynamics that act negatively on the school's ability to operate normally[28].
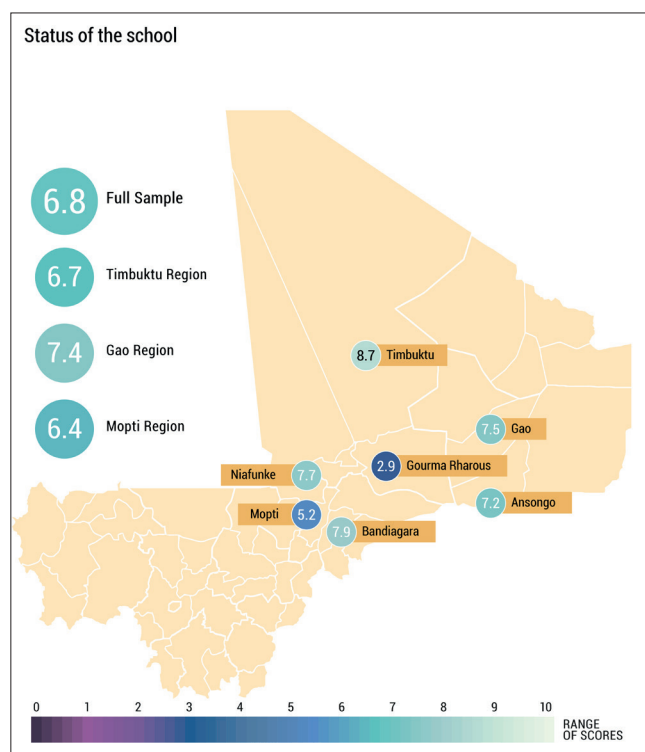
Figure 8 : disruptive dynamics and school functionality (parents' sample)
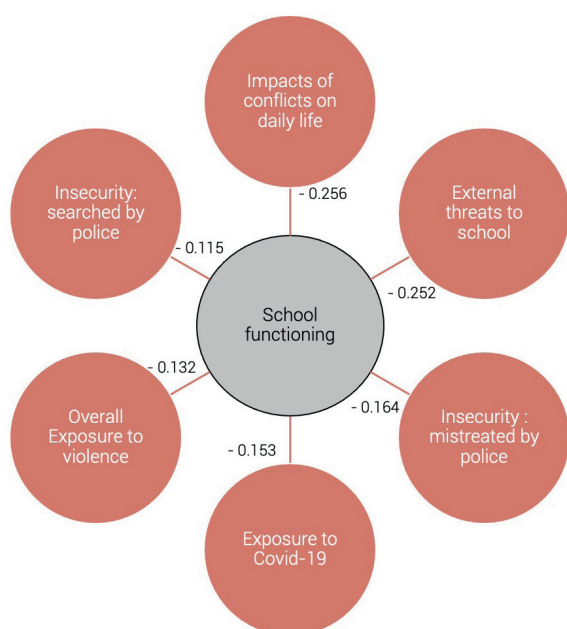
This network of negative factors point to six trends – all of which relate to the safe environment in which the school operates. Conflicts in daily life, threats faced by schools, exposure to violence, fear of the security forces are all indicators of an environment plagued by various insecurities. **The irregular functioning of schools in the surveyed regions is mainly the result of an inability to ensure the safety of populations in the face of various threats.**

The impact of conflict generally remains the most important adversity in all localities.

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[28] The numbers mentioned describe the level of correlation between the variable and the school's functionality.

Conflict impacts the well-being of individuals, including their access to services and their food security, and this has an effect on school functioning. In other words, conflict greatly disrupts the living conditions of individuals and the conditions of school operations.

Relations with the police also influence school functioning. In localities where the police appear to be particularly draconian the schools in those communities are among the least functional. An insecure environment resulting from heavy-handed policing contributes to a community instability which under-mines school operations in the locality.

The Covid pandemic is also a phenomenon negatively correlated with school operations. During the COVID-19 health crisis, the Malian Government took the decision (19 March 2020) to close all schools, including community learning centres, temporary learning spaces and Accelerated Schooling Strategy/Gateway (SSA/P) centres. After two extensions, it was decided to reopen on 2 June 2020, and the reopening of all schools from 14 September 2020.

Figure 9 shows the scores obtained by region for each of the factors identified as disruptive to school operations. Specific threats external to the school and the impact of conflicts on daily life are the highest indicators[29] (they are particularly prominent in the Cercles of Gourma Rharous and Ansongo).

Figure 9 : scores for disruptive dynamics associated with school (parents' sample)

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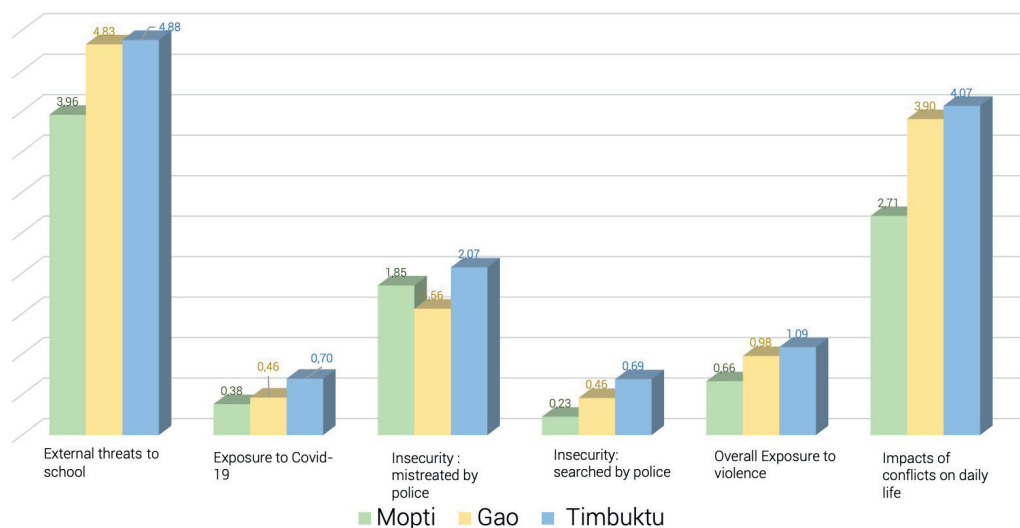
[29]To see figure 6

2.2. Resilience factors: why do some schools operate well in conflict situations?

Despite the existence of disruptive dynamics throughout the country, some localities display a level of functionality that others have hardly achieved. This implies that despite exposure to these disruptive factors (identified in Figure 8), some localities are finding a way to «resist» and overcome conflict-related challenges. In the SCORE study, these communities are considered resilient.

The statistical analysis of resilience consists of understanding how some schools manage to function despite the existence of the disruptive dynamics described above while other schools facing the same level of adversity are forced to temporarily or permanently close. The analysis then managed to identify factors common to functional schools. These resilience factors are structured around two dimensions: (i) the community safety experience and (ii) the community value of education. In other words, these are **schools located in communities where the sense of security is high and where education is valued and are shown to have the least interruption in school functioning**.

Figure 10 : resilience model representing adversities and resilience factors
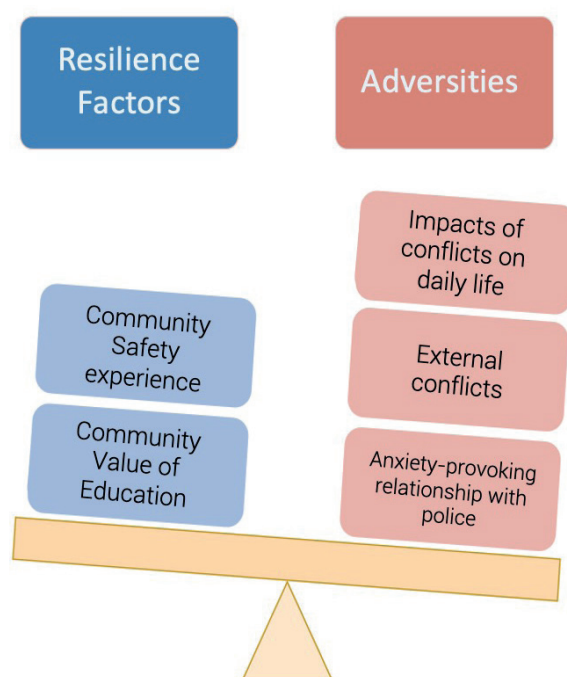
Resilience Factor 1: The importance of security

The community safety experience represents the first dimension of the factors contributing to the educational resilience of the community. This community safety experience can be defined as the situation in which locals are not exposed to adversities, feel safe, and tend to trust the institutional network to ensure their protection. The locality is in a situation of community security if the populations have access to the services of the State and feel protected. Figure 11 below shows the elements that make up the phenomenon described as a community safety experience.

Heatmap 3 : community safety experience scores (parents' sample)

Heatmap 3 shows that the community safety experience is relatively average for the majority of the localities. However, Timbuktu, as a region and Cercle, has a community safety experience well above average (7.0).

Community Safety Experience

This community safety experience grows when (i) individuals have confidence in security institutions (ii), experience more personal security (iii), trust state and social institutions (iv), confirm a satisfactory level of access to security and justice services (v), trust in international organizations (vi), are in a situation of political security (vii) and are slightly exposed to adversity.

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Figure 11 : components of the community safety experience (parents' sample)

The community safety experience indicator is the result of the combination of these different variables, and correlate with each other. Their combination makes it possible to account for the level of security felt by the populations within their locality. By combining these dimensions, this meta-indicator provides a more complex account of individuals' safety experience in their community, and acts as a fundamental resilience factor. **The higher the community experience of safety, the less likely local schools are to have their operations affected.** This is a network of interrelated factors that can be seen as levers to make schools more resilient to disruptive dynamics.

Each of these components behaves differently depending on the Cercle. Figure 12 shows that three indicators are particularly low: personal security, trust in security institutions, and access to security and justice services. Strengthening these three dimensions should improve the safe experience at the community level and thus protect schools from the risk of interruption or closure.

Figure 12 : community safety experience (parents' sample)
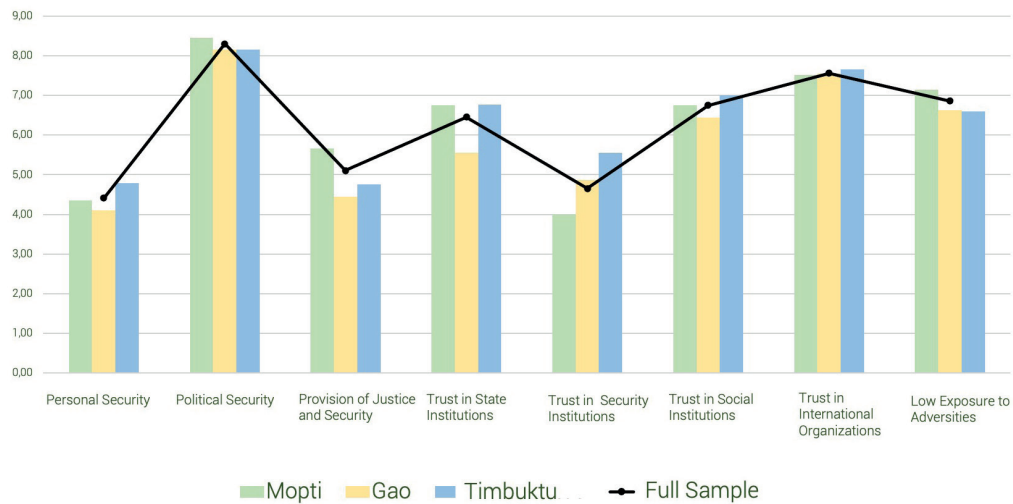
Resilience Factor 2: The importance of education for the community

The importance of education to the community is the second factor of resilience in maintaining the school operations (see Figure 10). This indicator is based on the consideration of two dimensions: first, the household value of education[30] which describes how parents view school education and secondly, the education conducive community environment which focuses on the existence of community dynamics that can promote education within the community.

This second factor of resilience, therefore, articulates two levels: the way in which education is valued at the household level and at the community level. Beyond the question of security, valuing education at the household and community levels guarantees that the school operates with less interruptions than elsewhere.

[30]Section 3 focuses more on this indicator and clarifies its scope on enrolment strategies.

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Heatmap 4 : community value of education (parents' sample)

Community Value of Education
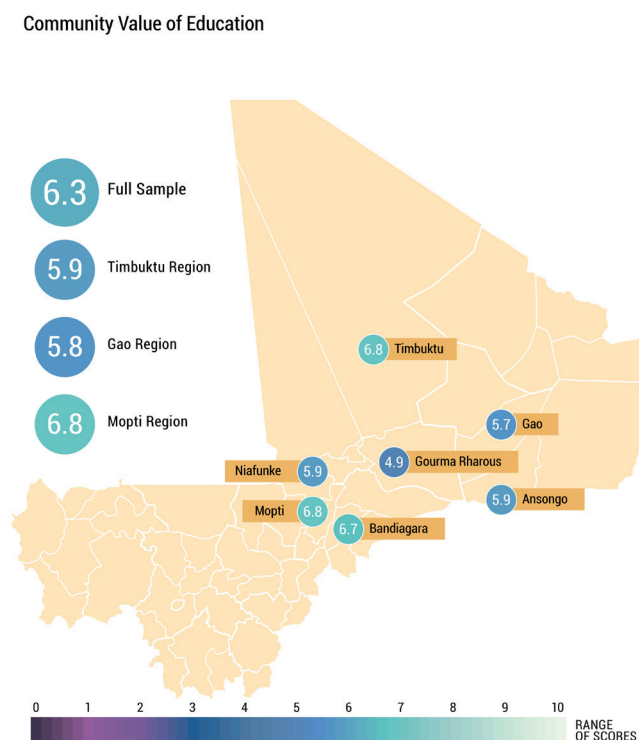
In this regard the Cercles of Mopti, Bandiagara and Timbuktu have relatively high scores for community value for education. However, lower scores are registered in the Cercles of Niafunké, Ansongo, Gao and Gourma Rharous. The study confirms that there is a statistically significant difference between survey participants according to Cercle, region, type of locality (i.e. rural/urban) and educational level.

If we pay attention to the two components of the indicator (Figure 13), we notice that the relationship to education is homogeneous between households in the various localities. The way parents value school education is on average similar across Cercles [31].

Conversely, there are significant differences in how communities create conditions conducive to education. The Cercles of Gourma Rharous, Ansongo and Gao show low community-enabling scores. The low scores for this component in these localities could explain the low performance of their performance for the general indicator «community value of education».

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[31]For this indicator, there are not significant differences according to the localities but according to other di-saggregation levels such as level of education of the parent, access to services, etc, (see section 3). In general, particular attention will be paid to the first component (value of education for the household) in the third section. Here we will focus more on valuing education at the community level.

**Figure 13 :** components of the value of education to the community (parents' sample)

Legend: Niafunké, Gourma Rharous, Timbuktu, Ansongo, Gao, Bandiagara, Mopti
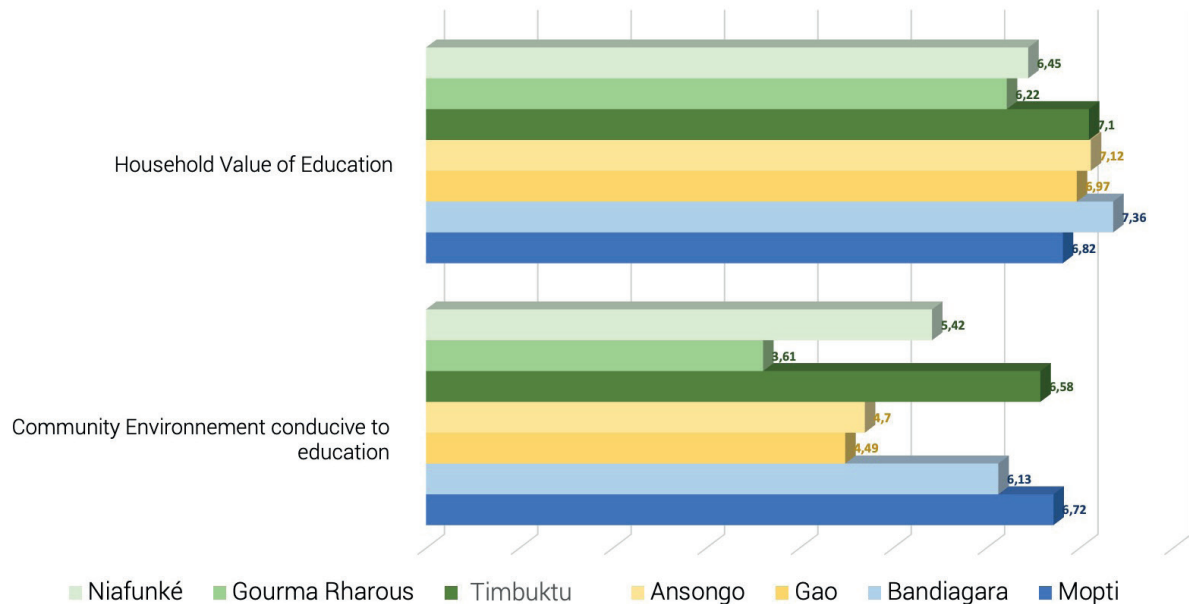
What is a community environment conducive to education?

Figure 14 shows the dimensions used to measure the community's value for education. The aim here is to understand what distinguishes communities in the field of education: what are the specific characteristics of each locality that tend to facilitate the transmission of school education? It is possible to classify the identified indicators into four categories. The first category is negative (specific internal threats to the school). This is a characteristic that reduces the spread of school education: all the situations that disrupt the functioning of the school (i.e. lack of students and lack of teachers). The second category is related to the community dimension (youth-friendly community environment plus educational environment within the community). This is the capacity of the community to supervise young people in their educational development (e.g. the capacity to organize and support courses) and more generally to ensure the integration of young people. The third category is linked to the action of the State (access to educational services): availability of schools within the locality. The last category is related to the motivations of parents (incentives to school). This relates to the specific elements that encourage parents to send their children to school: a local school that is of high quality, affordable and offers a certain flexibility in its schedule.

Figure 14 : components of the community environment conducive to education (parents' sample)
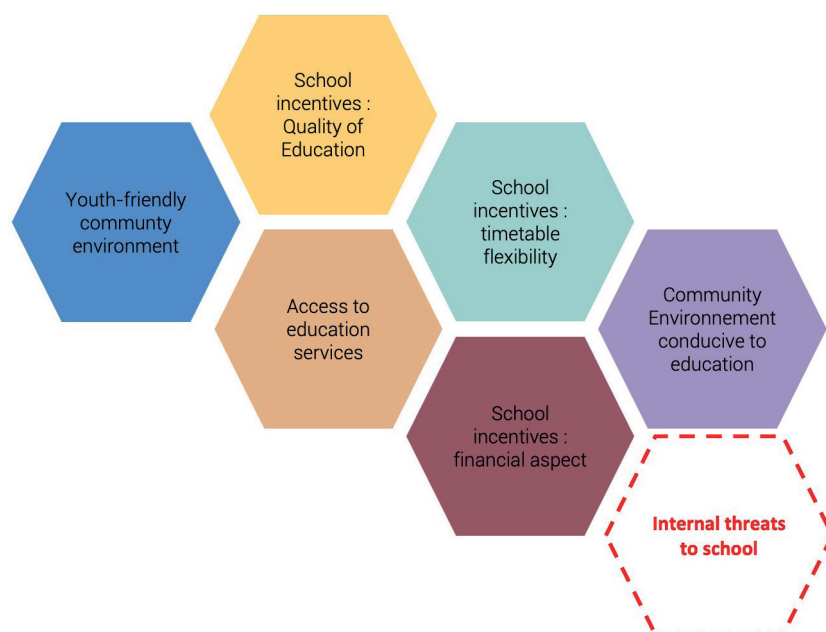
In sum, communities that tend to value education adopt the profile visualized in Figure 14 – which makes local schools more resilient to the threat of disruption.

The youth-friendly community environment is a crucial characteristic of a community that values education. This indicator is measured through questions concerning community dynamics (intergenerational relationship, community attitude towards young people and friendly relations within the community) and practical issues of safety and leisure for young people (see Figure 15). It must be understood here that the existence of material conditions conducive to the development of young people – spaces in which they are safe, where they have access to activities and in which social relations are appeased – promotes the dissemination of education within the community.

Figure 15 : youth-friendly community environment (parents' sample)
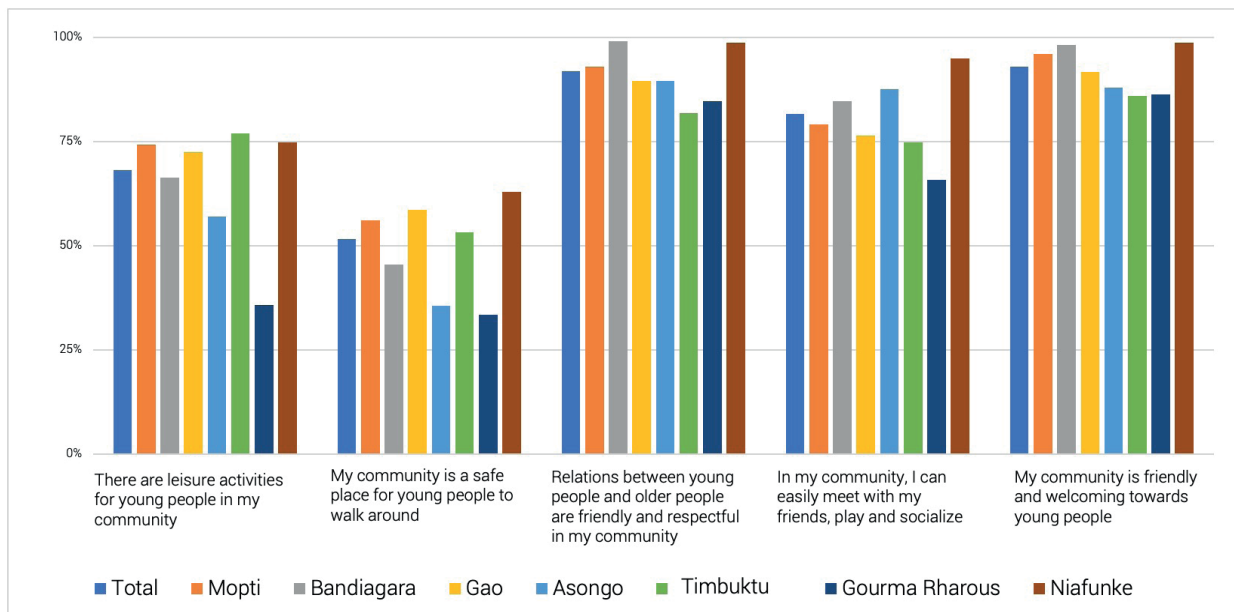
Reading : 74 percent of Mopti parents consider that there are leisure and activities for young people in the community.

The study showed different scores across regions related to a youth-friendly community environment. In Gourma Rharous, for example, communities seem least inclined to develop comfortable conditions for the development of young people. To complete the description of how the community behaves towards its youth, a second indicator looks concretely at the measures deployed by the community to support for education, as shown in Figure 16.

Here again, the promotion of education within the community through the implementation of concrete actions must be considered an indirect lever to reduce the non-functionality of schools and therefore as a means of strengthening access to school education in the long term.

Figure 16 : percentage of respondents who «strongly agree» with the following statements
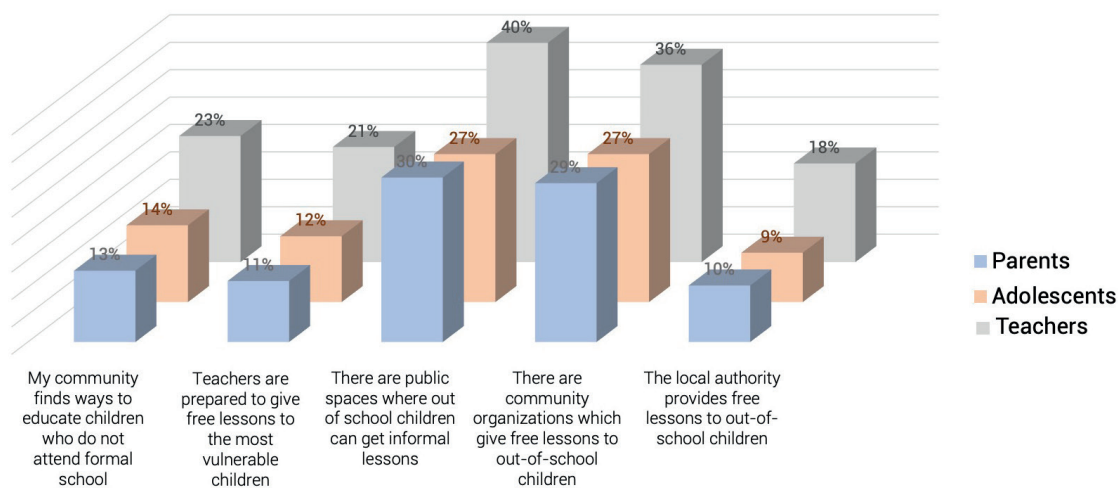
2.3. How can schools be improved?

The functionality of the school is associated with a) the safe environment in which parents and the community pay attention to young people and b) the value of school education held by parents and the community. These two dimensions represent opportunities for programmatic intervention. As we want to strengthen the resilience of communities and ensure the uninterrupted school functioning, we must intervene in both directions. **A school located in a community that is safe, and more inclined to promote the dissemination of school knowledge than others, will be less likely to have its operation interrupted.**

Figure 17 shows the most important levers that can be used to define areas of intervention.

The key determinants can be grouped into two categories:

- **The determinants associated with state governance:** access to documents, access to infrastructure and transport, adverse economic effect of covid-19.

- **The determinants associated with community dynamics:** elder governance, conflict management capacity, community mobilization capacity, information consumption and the positive impact of the teacher on the child's life.

Figure 17 : predictive model of school operation in the studied localities
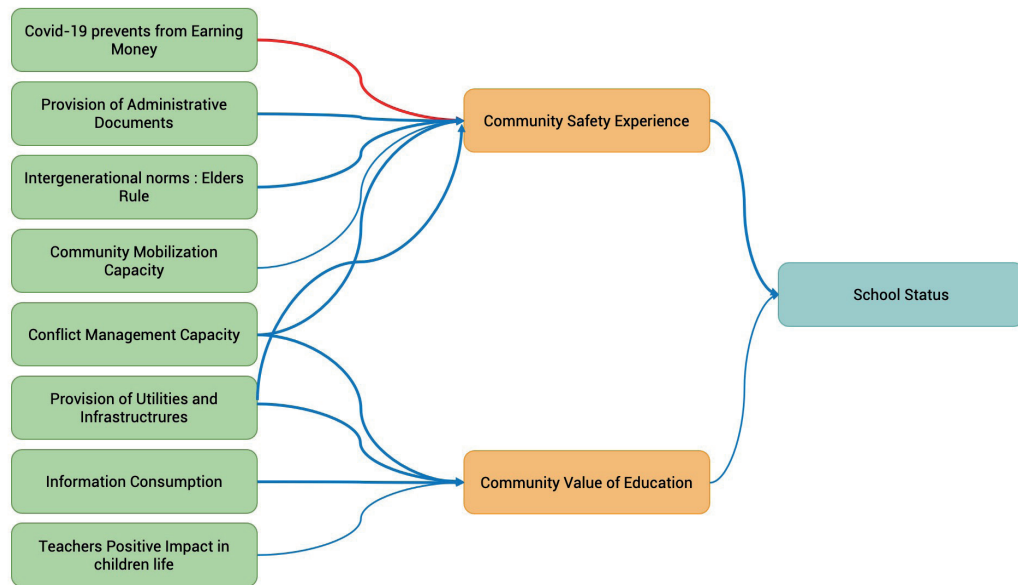
Identified as potential levers (Figure 17), **conflict management capacity** and community mobilization **capacity** must be understood as indicators of a particular programmatic interest and should be activated in a certain direction. **Community mobilization capacity** refers to the availability and habit of members to mobilize around collective initiatives. In an active community, it would be easy to redirect this capacity for collective mobilization towards improving access to school for young people in the community. As for the capacity to manage conflicts, it refers to the skills existing within the community that could be mobilized to create a peaceful environment conducive to better school operations (absence of conflicts between the actors of the school, the practice of using community mediators in cases of conflict, and the role of mediator played by non-state organizations). Acting on these two indicators by orienting them to the educational dimension would make it possible to establish a climate favourable to school functionality. In other words, community mobilization and conflict management capacities must be put at the service of the educational mission within the community.

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The question of school functionality according to the Conflict Scan

The Conflict Scan analysis in the Cercles of Gourma Rharous and Mopti shows that school operation is the most disrupted. This finding is consistent with the Education Cluster assessment, which found that 60 percent of schools are closed in the Mopti region. Among the reasons for blocked access to education are growing insecurity, population displacement, rural exodus, lack and/or non-functioning school canteens and the Covid-19 pandemic.

More specifically, the Conflict Scan shows that school closures are more frequent in rural areas and those far from urban centres. These results are confirmed by the SCORE analysis since the level of functionality in rural areas (regardless of regions or Cercles) is 6.54 while that of urban areas is 8.21.

Internal school governance challenges also contribute to dysfunctionality. In particular, poor levels of cooperation and tense relations between school board members and students' parents are a disruptive factor, and often related to parents' financial obligations to the school. The inability of the household to pay school fees plays a major role in parents' decisions to keep children at school, and this will be discussed in full in the third section of this report.

Conflict Scan surveys attempted to identify locally the development of resilience strategies within communities that could help mitigate the adverse effect of conflict. It appears that there are relatively few provisions and modalities to limit the deleterious dynamics affecting school operations. Nevertheless, the communities of Gao and Mopti seem to stand out from the rest. In the Gao region, several types of initiatives have been identified. They concern the organization of consultation sessions between education stakeholders, the awareness of the community on the importance of school and the recruitment of teachers and volunteers from the community. Awareness-raising sessions are also being developed in this locality with parents on the socio-professional integration of children. In the Mopti region, these strategies include the establishment of learning and training centres for the reintegration of dropout and out-of-school children, and school-monitoring committees (school-age children) under the coordination of the Comité de Gestion Scolaire (CGS). In addition, remediation courses are organized where parents are made aware of the enrolment and retention of children in school.

SECTION **3:** Determinants of schooling choices

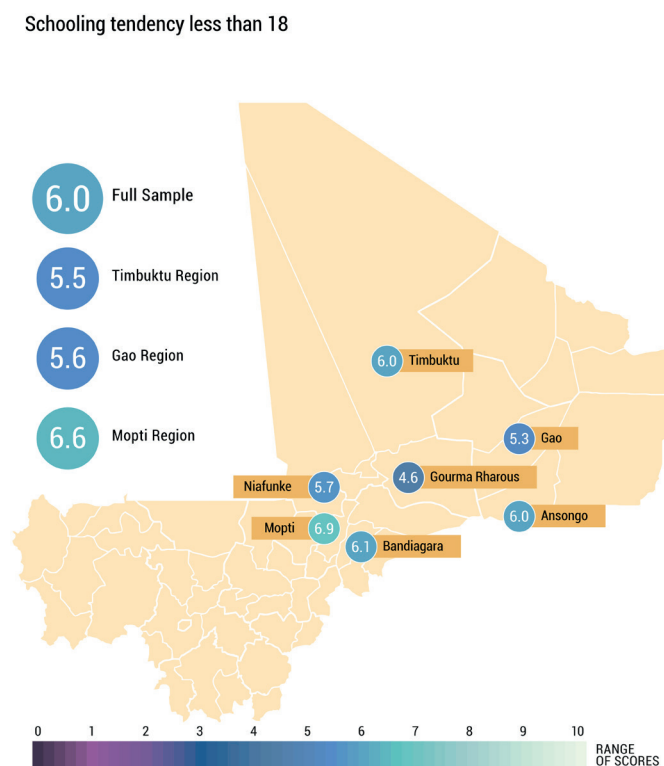SCORE survey: School status and schooling patterns in the regions of Timbuktu, Gao and Mopti.

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SECTION 3. DETERMINANTS OF SCHOOLING CHOICES

The following section describes the dynamics and determinants that explain trends in enrolment. It is a question of understanding what are the elements that encourage some parents to send their children to school longer than others. **The trend towards school enrolment measures two phenomena simultaneously: the number of children in the household in school and the duration of their schooling.** A low score means that few children in the household are in school and those who have been educated have left school early. On the other hand, a high score means that most of the children in the household are in school on a sustainable basis.

3.1. The school enrolment situations observed

School enrolment levels according to parents

Heatmap 5 : household's <u>tendency towards schooling</u> for children under 18 (parents' sample).

Schooling tendency less than 18

6.0	Full Sample
5.5	Timbuktu Region
5.6	Gao Region
6.6	Mopti Region

6.0 Timbuktu
5.3 Gao
4.6 Gourma Rharous
5.7 Niafunke
6.0 Ansongo
6.9 Mopti
6.1 Bandiagara

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

RANGE OF SCORES

Parents living in Mopti Cercle are more likely to enrol and keep their children at school than in other Cercles (score of 6.9). While the results are relatively homogeneous across most of the Cercles, **children are much less educated in Gourma Rharous than elsewhere.**

Data per locality tells us about the phenomena of school enrolment from a geographical point of view, but there is no significant difference between certain categories of the population. Particular attention to the level of education of parents reveals clear differences between households. The higher parents' level of education is, the more likely they are to keep their children in school.

The gap is particularly wide between parents who have never been to school (score of 4.71) and those who have been at least in primary school (score of 6.66).

Situations of schooling and dropping out according to adolescents

Before addressing the determinants of trends in enrolment, the following graph gives an account of the educational situation of the interviewed children[32]. Thus, among the 611 adolescents surveyed, 63 percent are currently in school, and 16 percent have dropped out of school. One in five children has never been to school.

Figure 18 : school situation according to the children.

- I currently go to school
- No, I stop schooling
- I've never been to school
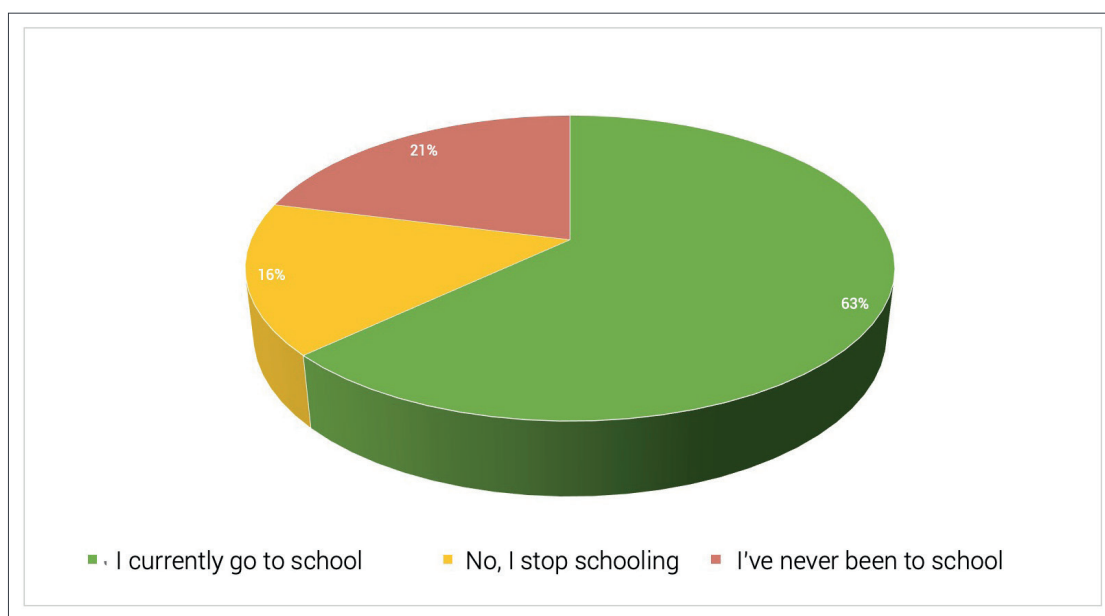
The reasons for non-schooling are multiple and complex. Reasons for not continuing formal education at age 14 are often different from those that finish their education at age 18. The reasons may also vary depending on the gender of the child or the socio-economic situation of the household. Moreover, rarely is there a single reason for withdrawing from school. It is more a bundle of factors, cumulative and interconnected, that pushes the child out of school. The questionnaire submitted to parents made it possible to identify the reasons that seem to most often influence the decision to drop out of school or not to attend school.

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[32]It is important to note here that the data in this section are distinct from the data discussed above. Indeed, the trend towards school enrolment described above reflects the educational situation of all children in the household while figure 18 described only the educational situation of the interviewed adolescents. In other words, this graph does not give a general view of schooling within the household (i.e. we do not know the situation of the siblings of the interviewed children) but only of the adolescents surveyed.

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Tableau 3 : comparison of factors explaining out-of-schooling according to the age of the child.

	Dropping out of school for children under 10	Dropping out of school for children between 10 to 14	Dropping out of school for children between 15 to 18
My children don't have a birth certificate	27%	24%	25%
I had to leave my village	9%	15%	11%
The conflicts in my locality have pushed me to stop sending my child(ren) to school	34%	32%	22%
I didn't have enough money to send my child(ren) to school	39%	38%	39%
I think a few years of school were enough even if they didn't make it to graduation.	9%	9%	11%
My/My children have been expelled from school for disciplinary reasons	6%	4%	7%
My child(ren) didn't like school	30%	36%	39%
I don't think the school is profitable (it cost me more than it will bring us)	19%	16%	19%
I realized that it was more important for my child(ren) to work rather than go to school	24%	25%	32%
My home faced a crisis situation that prevented me from being able to continue sending my child(ren) to school (e.g. health problems, loss of a job,…)	26%	28%	23%
My son had to get married	3%	0%	8%
My daughter had to get married	13%	13%	27%
The school has closed	18%	9%	12%

Reading : 27 percent of parents consider that the absence of a birth certificate is a reason for the non-schooling of their child(ren) under 10 years of age.

A first observation is that of the consistency of the results according to the age of the child: the level of influence of a particular reason is essentially the same regardless of the age of the child. In other words, the reasons that legitimize the withdrawal from school for children under age 10 are generally the same for children under age 18 years. The explanatory power of most of these reasons is maintained over time and determines the schooling choices regardless of the age of the child. The main notable difference concerns the explanations related to marriage. Indeed, the marriage of the daughter (and to a lesser extent that of the son) becomes a more important reason to explain the non-schooling of the child between 15 and 18[33]. It should also be noted that the influence of conflicts in the decision to leave school decreases with age. This seems to be an influential reason for children under the age 15, but it is much less so for teenagers under the age of 18.

Second, there are some reasons that seem to be predominant. For children under 10 and under 14, the three decisive explanations are a) the existence of conflicts in the locality, b) the financial situation and c) the child's lack of interest in school. As mentioned above, for adolescents between the ages of 15 and 18, the issue of conflict no longer becomes so crucial and is «replaced» by the need to go to work. The following figure groups the series of explanatory reasons into a few categories.

Figure 19 : reasons for children's non-schooling
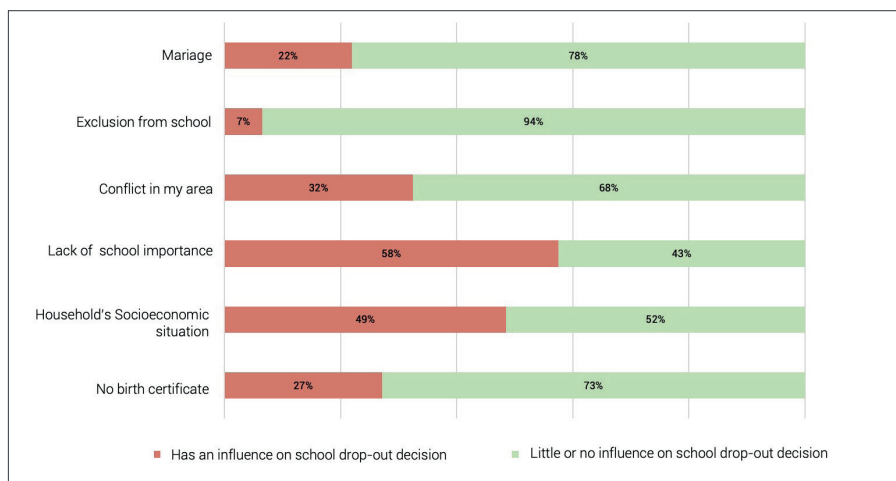
The categorization of the results (regardless of age) reveals two particularly important issues: the lack of credit given to school education and the socio-economic situation of the household. The economic dimension makes particular sense when we look at the occupations of out-of-school children. Teenagers who no longer go to school were asked about their main daily activities.

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[33]It should be noted here that actions have been developed by UNICEF in Mali against the practices of early marriage. To see https://www.unicef.org/wca/fr/node/3256

Figure 20 : daily occupations of out-of-school children (children's sample)
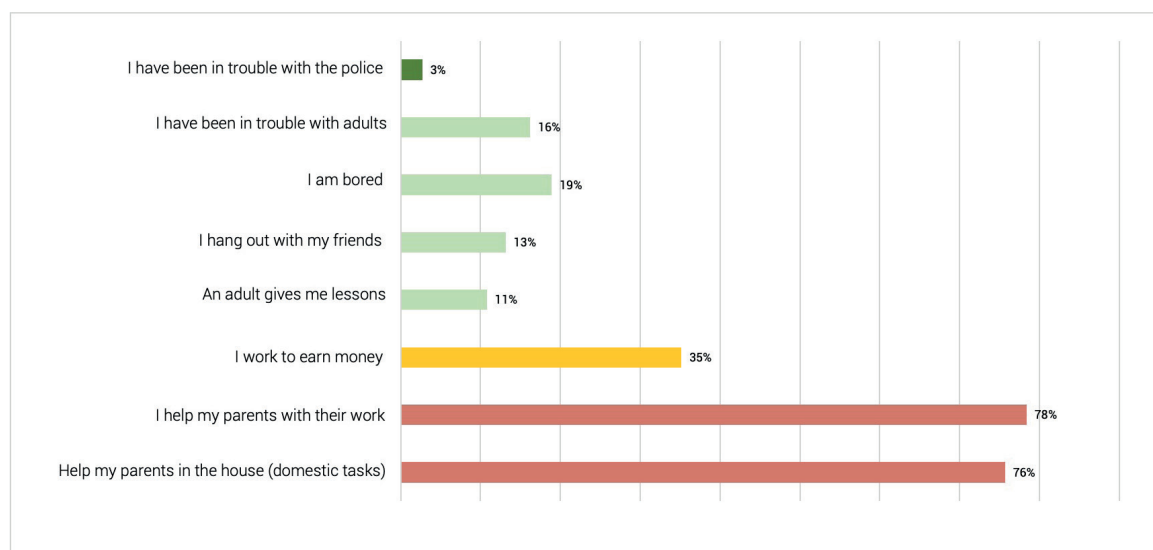
Reading : 76 percent of out-of-school teenagers surveyed say they often spend their days helping their parents at home with household chores.

The above results tend to prove that the specific socio-economic situation of the household plays a decisive role. Undoubtedly, out-of-school children act for the balance of the household by participating in the domestic tasks or professional activities of the parents. The time «freed» by non-schooling is put to the service of the socio-economic stability of the household. Of course, it is not possible here to assess the extent of the domestic tasks entrusted to children or the type of assistance given to parents in their work. A lot of research addresses these questions. They are interested in social relations within the household, the sharing of light work[34] between the members of the household and the restrictive dimension of these tasks which, because they are carried out on behalf of the parents, cannot be identified as work[35]. As confirmed in Figure 20, one in four parents considers it more important for their child to work; this ratio rises to one in three parents when it comes to explaining the non-schooling of adolescents between ages 15 and 18.

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[34]According to ILO Convention No. 138, «light» work must be safe for the health and development of the child and must not prevent him from going to school or «benefiting from his training».
[35]Bernard Schlemmer, «The ILO, the measurement of 'child labour' and the question of schooling», Cahiers de la recherche sur l'éducation et les savoirs [Online], Special Issue No. 1 | 2005, posted October 01, 2012, accessed September 07, 2021. URL: http://journals.openedition.org/cres/1978

3.2. Resilience factors: why do some parents keep their children in school?

The dynamics of schooling depend mainly on the relation to education.

An analysis was performed to identify the determinants leading to a high level of education within the household. In a context particularly affected by a variety of conflicts and threats, schooling decisions are limited. This analysis was contextualized to the extent that it took care to integrate a series of «local» adversities that could threaten the schooling decisions of the interviewed parents[36].
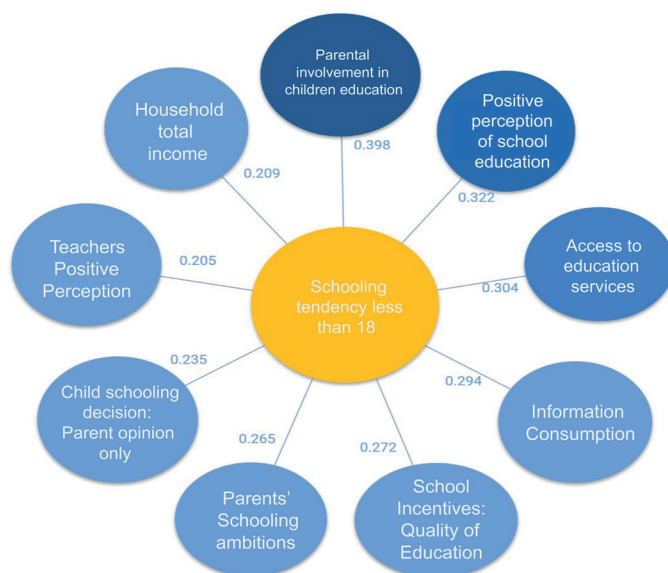
The analysis seeks to understand what resources and determinants encourage parents to send their children to school. In other words, **it is an approach aimed at identifying the resilience factors of households that maintain a high level of schooling despite the existence of a series of adversities that could force parents to drop their children out of school.**

Concretely, the model answers the following question: why do some parents keep their children in school and others not? To the extent that it is possible to assess the level of schooling within the household (i.e. number of children in school and duration of their schooling), it becomes statistically possible to distinguish between factors that determine a high level of schooling and those that act as obstacles. The following figure shows the positive determinants that drive parents to send their children to school[37].

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[36]See section 1 for a detailed analysis of the types of adversities.
[37]The analysis did not reveal any significant negative indicators.

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Figure 21 : resilience factors associated with the trend towards school enrolment[38]

The results of the modelling reveal a major idea: **schooling strategies depend largely on the parents relationship with education**. Parental commitment to schooling, positive perception of the teacher's mission, positive perception of education, quality of education, schooling ambitions, all act as determinants of the household's level of schooling and all relate exclusively to the way parents view school education. **In the face of the same level of adversity, the parents who keep their children in school are the ones who value education.** This result is quite intuitive: the more parents value school education, the more they will tend to send their children to school.

While the positive relationship to education encourages children to attend school, exposure to conflicts and various threats or school dysfunctionality do not really appear to be obstacles to it. The relationship between adversities and household education is not significant. Statistically, they are linked with the schooling level, but this link is so low with negligible impact. **In other words, if the parent puts a high value on education, cyclical adversities have little influence on parents' schooling decisions.**

It should also be noted that financial situation and access to education services act as factors of resilience. The higher the household's salary, the more likely it will be to keep its children in school. There is a strong correlation between the socio-economic situation of the household and access to services in general. The financial stability of the household seems to guard against adversity and allows parents to keep their children in school. Access to services and socio-economic status isimportant for the number of children attending school in the household. On the other hand, exposure to conflicts and threats such as school dysfunctionalities are not explanatory factors for decisions not to attend school.

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[38]The figure associated with each indicator describes the degree of influence that this indicator has with the dependent variable (household level of education). In other words, the higher this figure, the more the phe-nomenon described by the indicator is decisive in the level of schooling within the household.

Does **School functioning** affect schooling tendency?	Not at all	⊗ ⊗
Does **Security** affect schooling tendency?	Not Really	⊗
Does **Parents' financial situation** affect schooling tendency?	To some extent	⊕
Does **the relation to education** affect schooling tendency?	Yes, mainly	⊕ ⊕

The relation to education is a set of internalized values specific to the household. Threats are contextual and take place in the community environment in which the household resides. The elements that encourage parents to value school education are stable at the heart of the home. They determine the decision to attend school much more than the constraints and adversities which are external to the family unit.

Therefore, values (relation to the education of the household) and capacity for action (socio-economic situation of the household) influence schooling decisions independently of threats which are external to the household. These two determinants are the main levers explaining the level of schooling in the three surveyed regions.

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Resilience Factor 1: The relationship to school education

In general, the surveyed parents have a positive image of school education (figure 22). Most of them tend to consider school education as a tool for social integration: nearly 4 in 5 parents consider that school is the best way to succeed socially and financially and that it is a launchpad for integration into the labour market. On the other hand, opinions are less unequivocal when the topic turns to the quality of the education being provided and the effectiveness of the institutions responsible for delivering it (figure 23). In other words, it is easy to build consensus around the benefits of school education, but as figure 23 shows, nearly one in three parents question the effectiveness of education in preparing young people for working life. Almost one in four parents consider that only some basic school knowledge is necessary to be able to work and that school education can to some extent appear as a waste of time.

Figure 22 : positive relation to school education
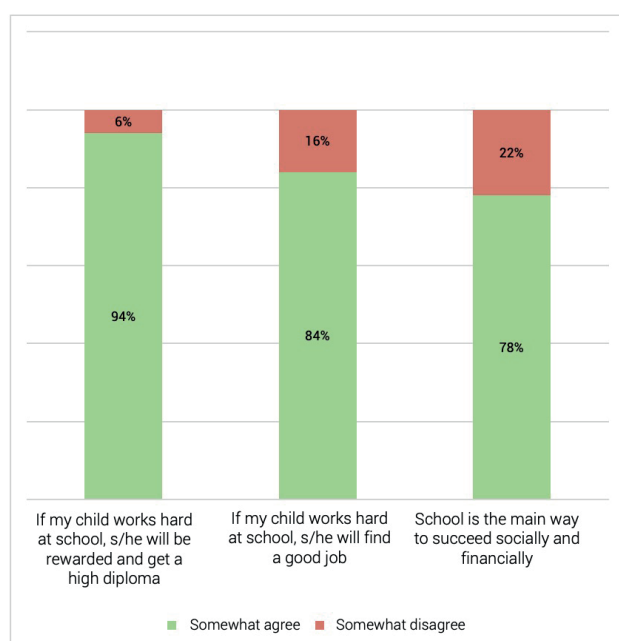
Figure 23 : negative relation to school education
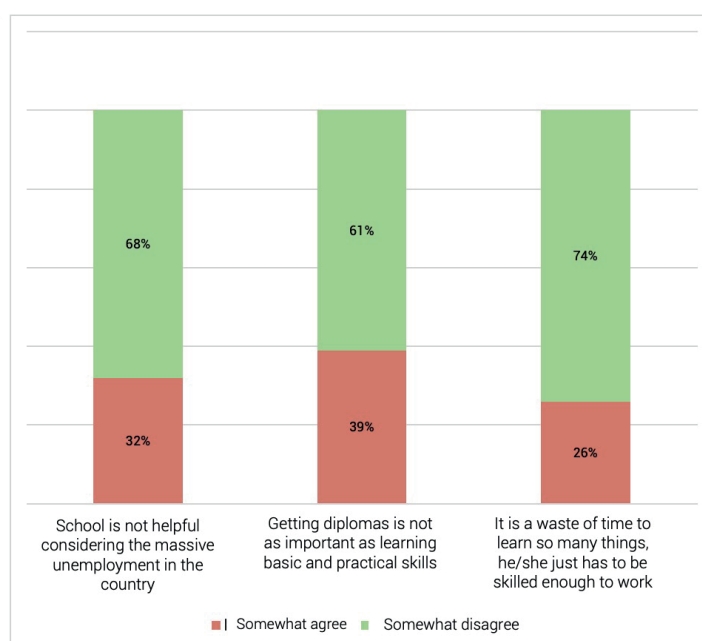
Geographical disparities are also evident with parents located in the Cercle of Gourma Rharous apparently less convinced about the benefits of school education. It should also be pointed out that this type of relation to school changes with the level of parents' education (i.e. the more parents are educated, the more they tend to have a positive perception of school education).

SCORE also assessed the opinions of teachers (Figure 24). The first indicator (in yellow) relates to educational practice: it is a question of discipline in class, the strict nature of teachers, common respect, etc. The indicator provides information on how parents view the exercise of pedagogical practice. The second indicator (in red) assesses teachers' ability to fulfil his/her mission of training good citizens and preparing children to enter the labour market.

This relates to the ability of the school, and more specifically that of the teachers, to offer students the necessary knowledge and skills required for social integration and personal development.

Figure 24 : parents' perception of teacher by cercle
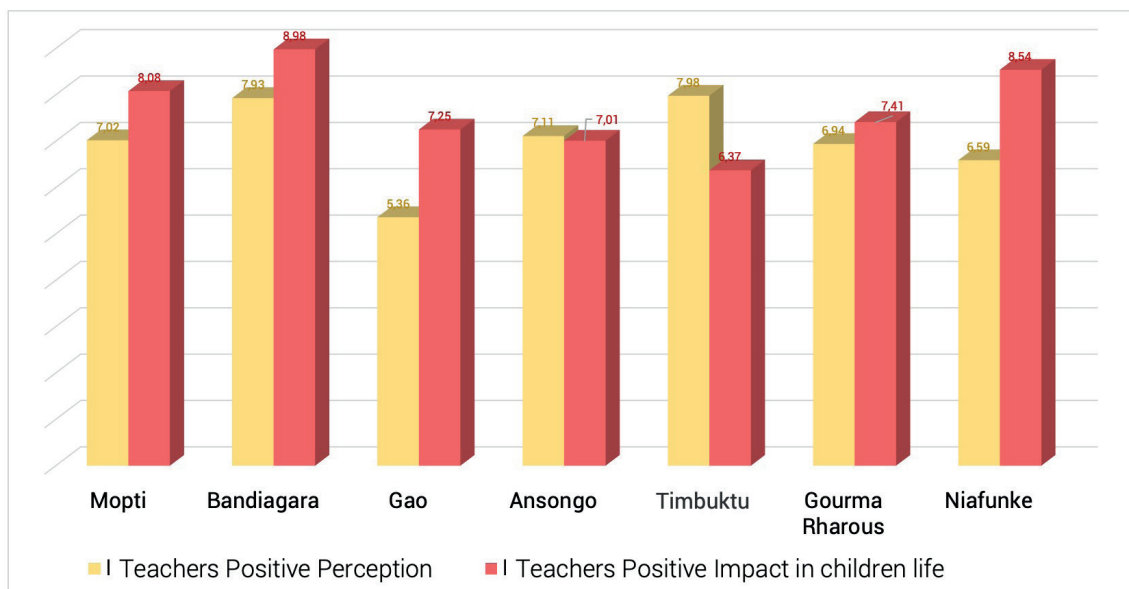
Parents in Gao seem least convinced by the educational skills of the teachers. The score (in yellow) is much lower than elsewhere. Beyond the Gao Cercle alone, it is throughout the region that parents seem to question teachers' practice the most. The score for the Gao region is 6.0 while the Mopti and Timbuktu regions record scores of 7.41 and 7.09 respectively.

As a determinant of the trend towards school enrolment, the positive perception of teachers is a crucial issue in parents' schooling choices. **Restoring parental confidence in teachers' educational practice, particularly in the Gao region, should encourage children's schooling.**

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The importance of parental commitment in schooling

Parental commitment includes parents' interest in their children's school life as well as their investment in terms of monitoring and supervising the school trajectory. It reflects the educational model and style of parents as well as their relation to the school space and the educational community[39]. Parental commitment does not only reflect the propensity of parents to supervise the child's work, but it also integrates socio-emotional dimensions such as encouragement, forms of communication around school life and the future of the child[40]. In this sense, the parents' commitment to school cannot be reduced to a simple supervision of homework. This also requires investment with school stakeholders and a particular focus on school life.

Figure 25 : components of the indicator «parental engagement in schooling» (proportion of parents who answered «often» and «always» to the following statements)
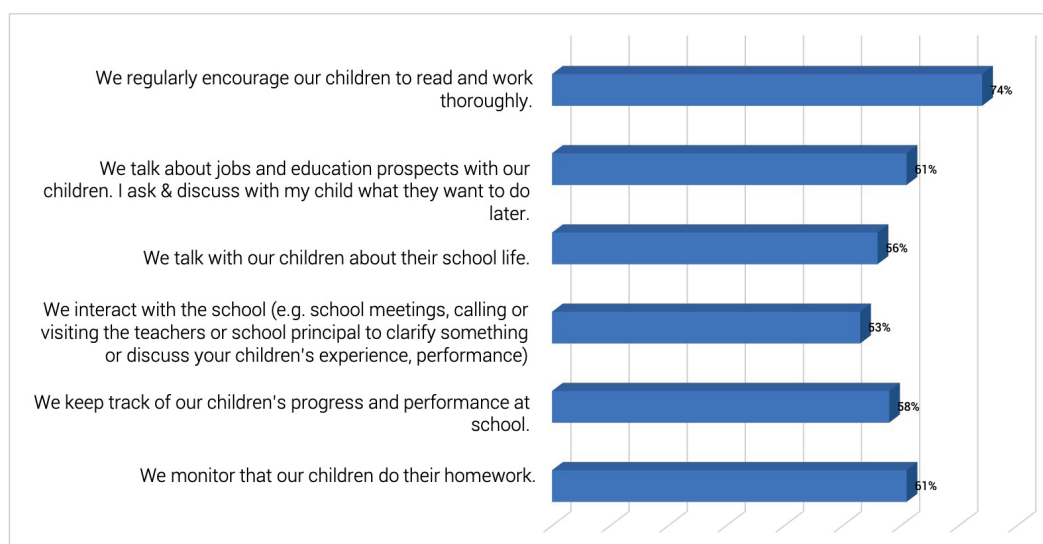
The links between socio-economic inequalities and educational trajectories have been explored for several decades now. Bourdieu and Passeron showed as early as the 1960s the role of cultural, social and economic capital in academic success[41]. These analyses have given rise to numerous studies that have tried to observe inequalities related to parental commitment in schooling or the relationship between parental commitment and academic success. Research conducted by UNESCO in Mali in 2003 highlighted the importance of "school comfort" for keeping children in school.

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[39]Poncelet, D., & Francis, V., (2010), «L'engagement parental dans la école des enfants. Questions and challenges», The International Journal of Family Education, n°28, pp. 9-20.
[40]Deslandes R, & Cloutier R., (2005), «Parenting practices and academic success according to the family structure and gender of adolescents», French Journal of Pedagogy, vol. 151, pp. 61-74.
[41]Bourdieu P., Passeron J.C., Les Héritiers, Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1964 & Bourdieu P., Passeron J.C., La Reproduction, Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1970.

The existence of school capital at home is an important determinant for the schooling of children. This is based on material elements such as the presence of a lamp or a worktable at home, on pedagogical elements such as parents sparing children obligations related to domestic work after school or doing paid work in parallel with school[42].

The present modelling first made it possible to reveal the decisive role played by parents' school involvement. **The more parents are involved in monitoring their children's schooling, the more children are educated in the household. The influence of this indicator is greater than any other, so it is a crucial determinant for improving the level of schooling in Mali.**

Second, the analysis makes it possible to reveal the elements correlated with parental commitment. Logically, the level of commitment of parents increases with their level of education. The higher the level of parent's education, the more they will tend to be involved in monitoring their child's schooling (and therefore the more likely these ones are to be in school for a long time). The level of parents' education is of course linked to what has been called their instruction level, that is to say the set of skills held by parents (e.g. mastery of French, mastery of a foreign language, mathematical and computer skills). This instruction level is then particularly correlated with the commitment of parents.

Parents' interest in and commitment to school life depends on a range of conditions. Parents with good literacy skills, knowledge of school life, and who possess other life skills are more likely to possess the skills to support the academic efforts of their child. Identifying indicators correlated with parental commitment makes it possible to propose the model parent who is engaged in the school life and is prepared to support his child.

This kind of parent has a positive relation with education, considers that teachers are capable of succeeding in their educational mission, agrees that the school is a legitimate means of social integration, and cares about the quality of teaching within the school. This parent combines certain individual dispositions such as a high level of education and committed civic behaviour. Finally, this parent confirms that access to education is easy and available in his locality.

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[42]Onaté M.K, Guèye M. & Nseka Vita T., (2003), Schooling of children in Mali according to the profile of households and study of their retention in school, UNESCO

Parental ambitions for the child and the child's inclusion in decision-making within the household

It appears that when the parent is the sole decision-maker in schooling choices, the children in the household are more educated. More than one in three parents reported that the fact that the child did not like school had been a reason for the child dropping out of school. Parents who do not consult their children when deciding whether to keep the child in school or not are therefore more likely to keep children in school. Parents were also asked what their children's educational trajectory should be. Only half of parents believe that all their children should go to school until the age of 18. **Twenty-three percent of parents believe that their children should not be in school beyond the age of 10.**

Logically, when parents' academic ambitions are high, the level of schooling within the household is maintained despite the existence of various constraints. The schooling of children is becoming a priority that must be met despite the obstacles. On the other hand, when school ambitions are low, the decision to drop out of school becomes easier when the household faces disruptions.

Resilience factor 2: the socio-economic situation of the household

The results of the analysis show that the economic situation of the household influences schooling choices: high incomes allow the household to better withstand adversities and encourages parents to keep their children in school. SCORE analysis identified a nexus of relations between various socio-economic elements that draws a **continuum between education and socio-economic integration.**
Indeed, parents' level of education, the economic situation of the household (salary and purchasing power), access to education services (and other services) and children's schooling appear to be all correlated and structure a stabilized network where economic «comfort» and education are strengthened.

Strong socio-economic disparities are observed depending on the area of residence; households living in cities generally have more purchasing power and higher incomes than households living in the countryside. The financial situation of the household increases with the education level, and schooling attendance improves with the level of parents' education. This creates an interconnected network where the level of schooling within the household is closely linked with the level of parents' education and the financial stability of the household.
In addition, access to services is interlinked, creating a positive chain of results as shown in figure 26.

Figure 26 : indicators correlated with access to education services

High level of education (fluency in French, another language, mathematical and computer skills)

Socio-economic data (household income, number of children in school)

Access to other types of services (health services, justice and security services, infrastructure)

Individual skills (critical thinking and problem-solving skills)

Civic attitudes (civic engagement, adherence to laws and consumption of information)

Statistically, access to education services is linked to a bundle of socio-demographic data. These create a particular socio-economic environment in which individual skills, level of education and instruction, economic situation, civic attitudes and access to State services are combined. Education is at the heart of the network where parents' level of education and children's level of schooling are linked, and where this level of education influences the quality of the socio-economic situation of the household, which facilitates better access to public services (especially education services).

This continuum of education/socio-economic integration is a critical pro-poor nexus where education must be thought of and promoted as a tool to help individuals escape poverty. This dynamic then creates a virtuous cycle where negative strategies for adapting to poverty can be avoided, such as child labour and early marriage. Education acts at the heart of this nexus as a resilient development lever. Here, the development of policies promoting pre-primary education, particularly among vulnerable populations, can prove to be a strategic lever to strengthen school enrolment levels in Mali[43].

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[43]UNICEF, (2019), Report «United Nations Children's Fund, A World Ready to Learn: Prioritizing Quality Early Childhood Education, UNICEF, New York, April 2019.» https://www.unicef.org/media/57956/file/Un-monde-pret-a-apprendre-2019.pdf

Trends in school enrolment according to the Conflict Scan

As shown in this third section, the relationship to school education and the values attached to education are a major condition for enrolment strategies. The Conflict Scan tool reports on how the representations associated with the notion of education are constructed through different levels of analysis: the community, parents and children. According to the community, education is the set of actions implemented to transmit knowledge to the child. It refers not only to the transmission of moral and cultural knowledge but also to the development of children's intellectual faculties. For these communities, education is not only about formal schooling and formal education, but also about the transfer of knowledge and moral values to children, which in turn facilitates their integration into the community. For children, education is synonymous with the acquisition of concrete knowledge such as literacy and numeracy. For out-of-school children, education consists of the acquisition of codes of conduct and values to protect against deviant behaviour and facilitate socialization with loved ones. Finally, for parents, education is a combination of knowledge: it is about acquiring practical knowledge that facilitates integration into the community and the labour market.

Among the reasons given for low levels of schooling, the Conflict Scan mentions the elements associated with the socio-economic situation of parents. The low incomes of parents and the need to use children for field work (girls and boys) or domestic work (girls) to provide for the family appear to be drivers for children dropping out of school, while the early marriage of girls is also significant (see table 3). Finally, the lack of parental commitment to school, the lack of monitoring children's school attendance by parents and the low attention paid to school results are additional out-of-school factors. More generally, the Conflict Scan sees parents and children's lack of awareness of the importance of school as a major driver of low school attendance.

These conclusions are superimposed on the results from the SCORE analysis, which also notes that the distance of parents from the school institution is the main reason explaining the school dropout phenomenon. It is this lack of knowledge of the school world that can lead parents to question the competence or professionalism of teachers. The Conflict Scan also reports that contro versies over children's educational outcomes threaten school enrolment. The prospect of children performing poorly at school is a cause of disappointment, which prompts parents to take their children out of school. Added to this is often the idea that the labour market is perceived as particularly closed. The lack of employability prospects after school also acts as a factor encouraging out-of-school tendencies.

SECTION **4:** School governance and school life according to adolescents and teachers

SCORE survey: School status and schooling patterns in the regions of Timbuktu, Gao and Mopti.

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SECTION 4: SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND SCHOOL LIFE ACCORDING TO ADOLESCENTS AND TEACHERS

Section four analyses the child's perspective and seeks to identify the characteristics that promote the adolescent's attachment to school. The fact that the child does not enjoy school is a recurring reason for parents to take their child out of school. Often, the teenager who is not interested in school manages to convince his parents of the need to end the school experience. The result of the analysis presented in section 3 (Figure 21) also shows that the unilateral decision of the parent is a resilience factor that tends to keep the child in school. In other words, when parents are attached to school and the value of education, they will tend to veto their child's preference to drop out of school. For these kinds of parents school is a non-negotiable priority for which the child has limited input. On the other hand, for many parents who do not share this value system (i.e. attachment to school education, positive perception of teachers,...), the child's opinion can influence the choice of schooling[44]. and the child's lack of interest in school is a driver for unschooling. The purpose of this analysis is to uncover the factors that encourage children's interest in education and reduce the chances of school them dropping out of education prematurely.

4.1. Why are children attached to school?

The adolescent's attachment to sociability related to the school environment should be understood as the situation in which the student feels close to his/her classmates, maintains a positive relationship with the school staff and finally considers himself personally happy to be in this environment. This indicator, therefore, combines three dimensions: the relationship to other students, the relationship to teachers and finally the level of individual satisfaction. Figure 27 shows the series of elements that were used to measure this phenomenon. It is estimated here that the more sensitive the individual is to social interactions at school and satisfied with his/her situation, the less s/he will tend to consider his dropping out of school.

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[44] 39% of parents Justify the choices of dropping out of school of their child (aged between 15 and 18) by the child's lack of interest in school.

Figure 27 : elements measuring attachment to school sociability[45]


Boys Girls

Reading : 74 percent of the boys surveyed are «totally» happy to be in school[46].

The results are relatively similar across genders. Scores for this indicator are also relatively homogeneous across all Cercles (average score of 5.5). Nevertheless, teenagers in Bandiagara are slightly more attached to interactions at school than elsewhere (score of 6.2). While the results for the level of personal satisfaction are relatively positive (the last two bars of the graph), adolescents are less satisfied with their interactions with teachers or other students. The results also show teachers reporting a deterioration of the teaching environment due to the volatile security situation: **84 percent of teachers consider that conflicts have had a devastating effect on children's education.**

This feeling of satisfaction is not fixed and absolute, it evolves according to a variety of factors that causal analysis has identified.

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[45]Only children who were still in school or who had been in school answered questions relating to school life.
[46]For each of the statements in the graph, the teens were asked to choose between 3 options: totally agree, more or less agree, and strongly disagree.

Figure 28 : levers strengthening the child's attachment to school
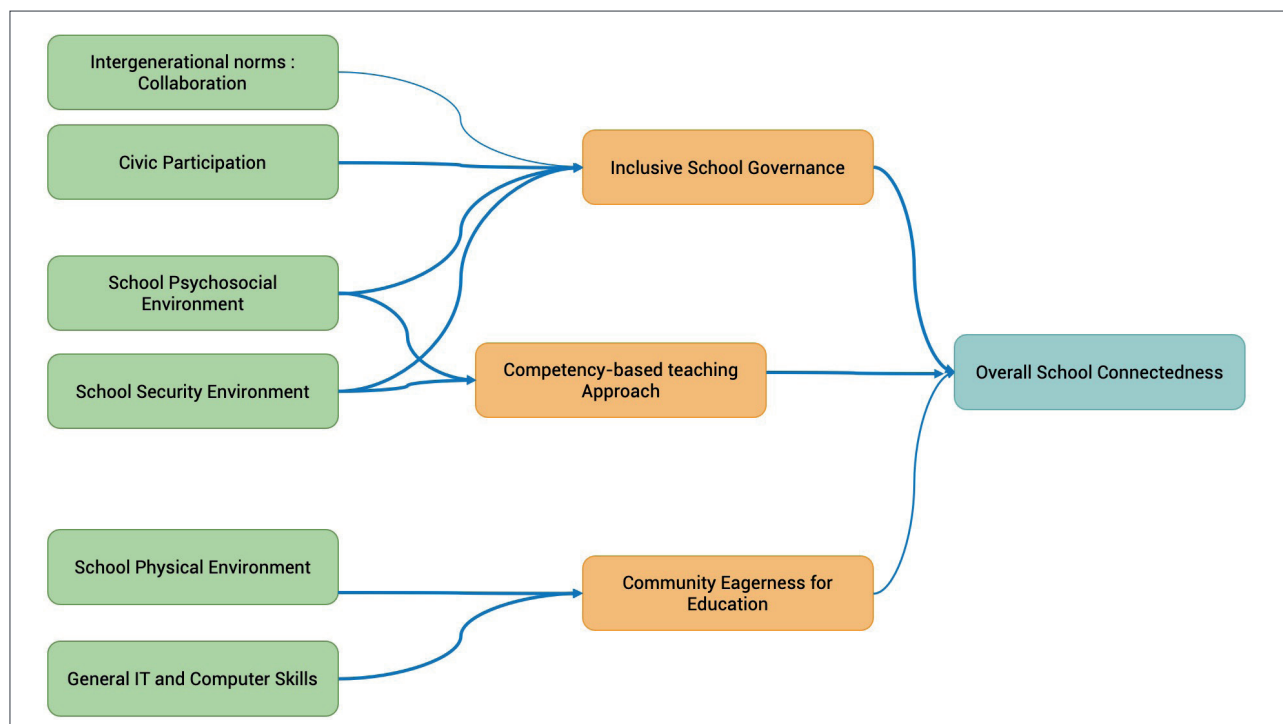
It should be noted that children's attachment to school does not seem to be particularly influenced by the level of safety and the conflictual context (only the indicator «safe environment at school» appears in the causal analysis). The analysis shows that this level of attachment is mainly determined by three determinants: inclusive governance in schools (1), school education that places personal development and competency-based learning (APC) at the heart of the school experience (2) and finally an educational environment within the community (3). Each of these three determinants are themselves influenced by other variables (in green in Figure 28).

Inclusive school governance

Students' attachment to school grows when they feel they are developing in an inclusive environment, which considers their interests and listens to their opinions. This environment must also be open to the outside (i.e. parents must be involved to some extent) and immune to any form of discrimination.

Figure 29 : elements measuring the type of governance in schools
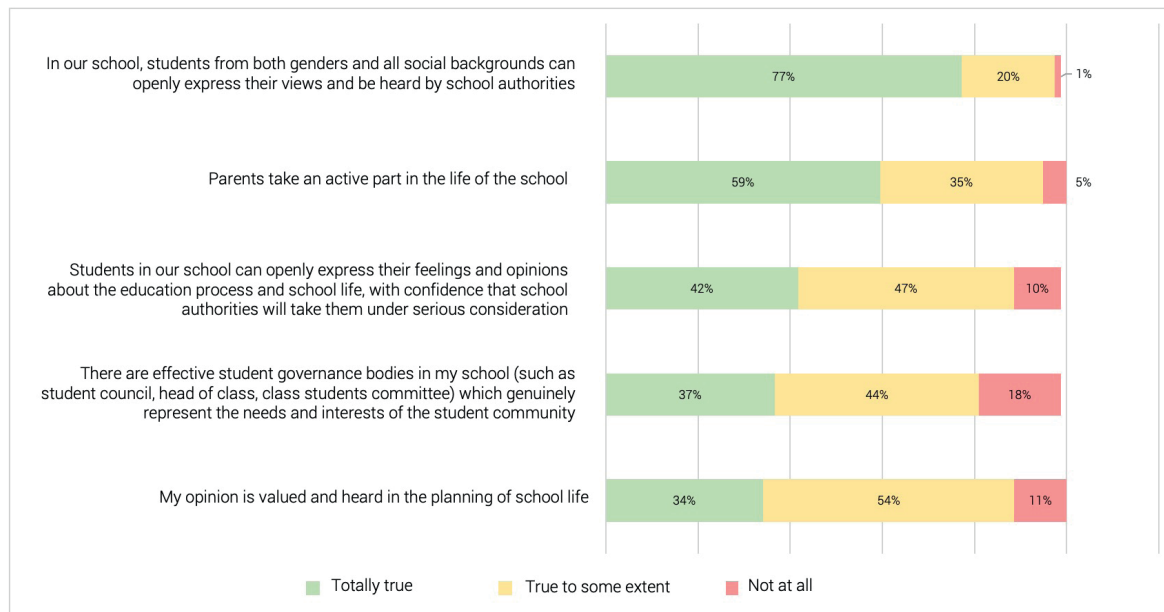
Reading : 77 percent of students consider that all students (regardless of their ethnic group or gender) can «totally» express themselves freely.

Some improvements can be considered here. For example, only 37 percent of students report being able to rely on procedures that make it possible to represent the students' opinion in the school's operation. **The development of methods for students' representation within the school such as class councils or student representatives are all mechanisms that would improve the feeling of involvement of adolescents and thus facilitate their attachment to the school.**

Objective of personal development and competency-based learning at school

The second factor identified is more associated with the pedagogical approach developed by the school. The indicator «objective of personal and educational development» assesses a specific type of educational method: a model of education that favours the development of critical thinking, autonomous thinking and inspired by competency-based learning[47]. The primary mission of the school is not fundamentally the issuance of diplomas but rather the formation of students' spirit, culture and curiosity. This mission is to foster a teacher-student relationship based more on listening and discussion and not on a model of authority aimed above all at imposing respect and discipline within the classroom[48].

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[47]The competency-based approach is an active, constructive, cumulative and dynamic process under the guidance of students (and not a process of passive accumulation of knowledge provided by teachers). Skills are conceived as complex know-how and integrate a relatively large set of resources: knowledge, know-how, interpersonal skills, tools, etc. https://cpu.umontreal.ca/expertises/approche-par-competences/
[48]SeeD/Interpeace/Indigo Côte d'Ivoire, (2021), The Determinants of Social Demand for Islamic Education in Côte d'Ivoire, UNICEF

Figure 30 : elements measuring the relation to education within the school
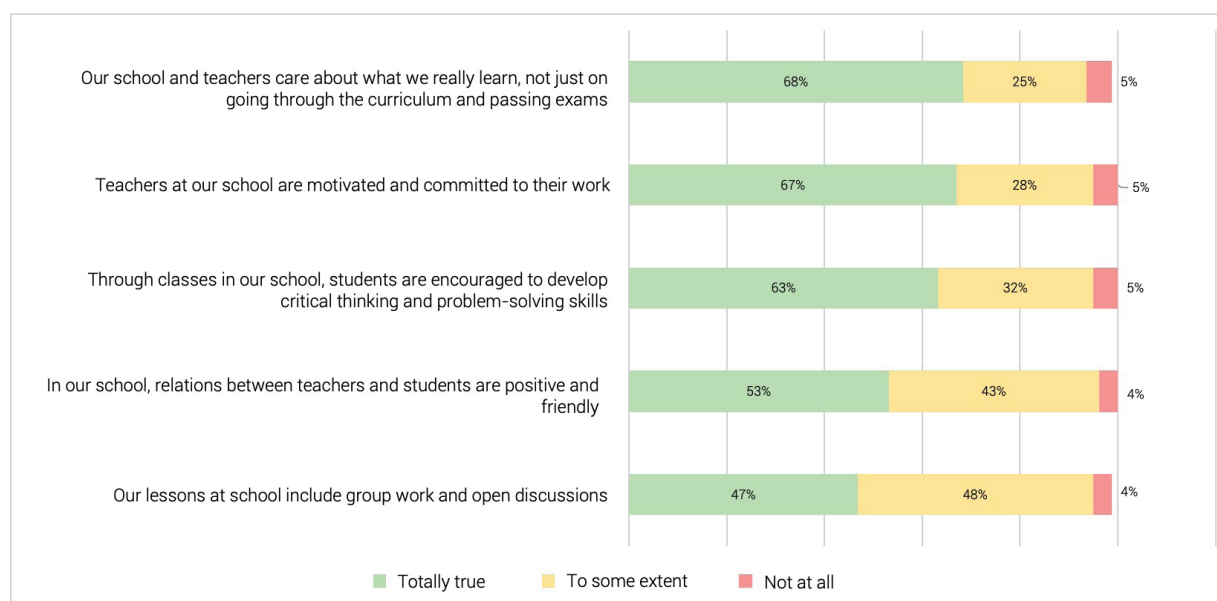
Most of the surveyed students tend to consider that the educational approach promoted by the school is a step in the right direction. Two in three students feel that their teachers are willing to teach them and that they are motivated and invested in their mission. Group work and opportunities for classroom discussion could nevertheless be developed to allow students to feel more invested in their school experience[49].

Educational environment within the community[50]

The community environment – outside the school – influences the level of students' attachment, and a community-based educational environment enhances the adolescent's attraction to the school experience. In other words, the more the student is immersed in a community concerned with developing education, the more s/he will tend to enjoy school.

Research highlights the benefits of a family-centred approach, emphasizing parental knowledge and its cultural capital, and parents' appetite and ability to transmit knowledge that can facilitate their children's academic success. There is now an abundant literature highlighting the role of the child-family-community relationship in the personal development of young people[51]. In this regard, schools are placed at the heart of communities. Therefore, they play a key role in the socialization of children.

[49]Obviously, pedagogical approaches and their impact depend on the student/teacher ratio. Overcrowded classroom situations make it increasingly difficult to develop interactive practices focused on exchanges between students and their teacher.
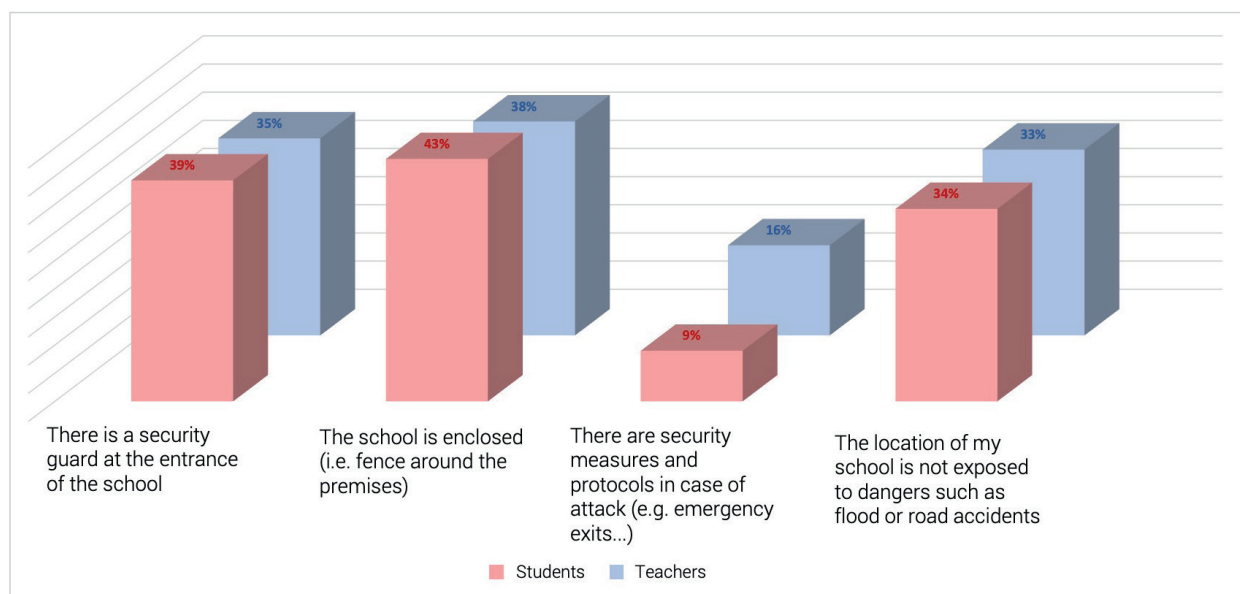[50]A detailed description of this indicator has been proposed in section 2 of the report.
[51]Deslandes R., (2010), «The essential conditions for the success of school-family-community partnerships», Centre de transfert pour la réussite éducative du Québec

The community promotes norms and values, and structures beliefs which frame and organize the child's relationship with the world around him. The child is more likely to respect the school and its teachers if the community establishes a set of norms that sustains the legitimacy of the school as an institutional asset, and education as an intrinsic value of community growth and wellbeing. The promotion of educational modalities by the community is clearly a way to encourage students to appreciate the school world. The existence of extracurricular services such as homework help, day camps during holiday periods or other types of educational support programs within the community are crucial for students' academic success. **As access to education outside of school is a driver of success, the community has a role to play, especially when parents' struggle to ensure this mission.**

The safe environment at school

As observed in the second section, the issue of safety within the community is an essential condition for school functionality. The security issue is also at the heart of the school. Institutions must «live with» the risks of attacks and propose safety policies and risk prevention measures.

**Figure 31 :** existing school safety measures according to teachers and students

Reading : 39 percent of students say there is a watchman at the entrance of the school.

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As shown in Figure 31, efforts must be made in the area of school safety. The data collected from students and teachers is homogeneous. There is agreement that there is a lack of safety measures within schools. Less than one in two children report that their school has a perimeter gate, and only 39 percent say that there is a guard at the entrance of the school. Very few schools seem to have contingency measures in place to address security-related incidents and only 16 percent of teachers indicate they are aware of such measures. One can imagine that students are less informed than teachers about the existence of such measures (9 percent).

Heatmap 6 : safety environment at school (children's sample)

School Security Environment
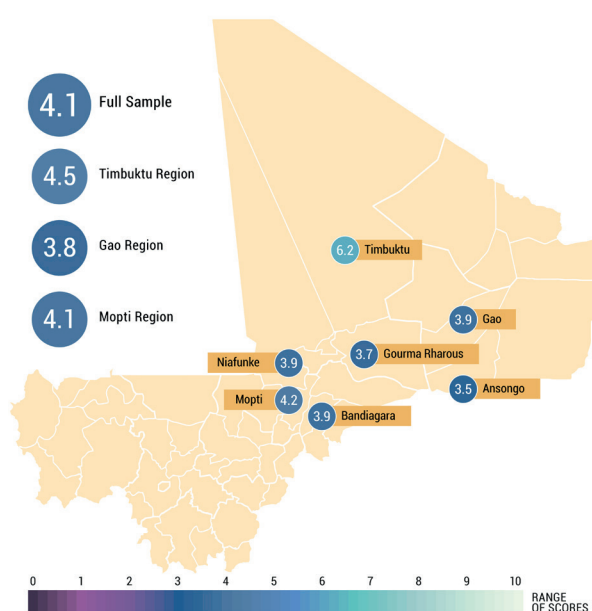
School safety preparedness varies by region. Heatmap 6 reports on the safe environment at school (indicator based on the aggregation of the items mentioned in Figure 31). Schools in the Timbuktu Cercle seem to be best prepared for safety. The score in this Cercle is significantly above the average score. Ansongo has the lowest score. Moreover, according to the «teacher» data, the scores are particularly disparate when comparing schools located in urban areas (score of 5.50) and those located in rural areas (score of 2.91).

Therefore, **safety and risk reduction measures need to be operationalised in order to enhance safety within the school – these policies need to be developed particularly in rural areas.**

Here, too, efforts could be made to improve teachers' capacities for action. Only one teacher in two masters the knowledge related to first aid. Here too, differences are observed according to the Cercles.

Teachers in Timbuktu seem to be best prepared for possible threats (score of 6.00). On the other hand, teachers in Ansongo (score of 2.29) are more aware of their safety shortcomings[52]. **In general, the average score of this indicator is relatively low (score of 4.35) illustrating a need for teachers training and preparation for risks.**

Figure 32 : safety Competencies (teachers' sample)
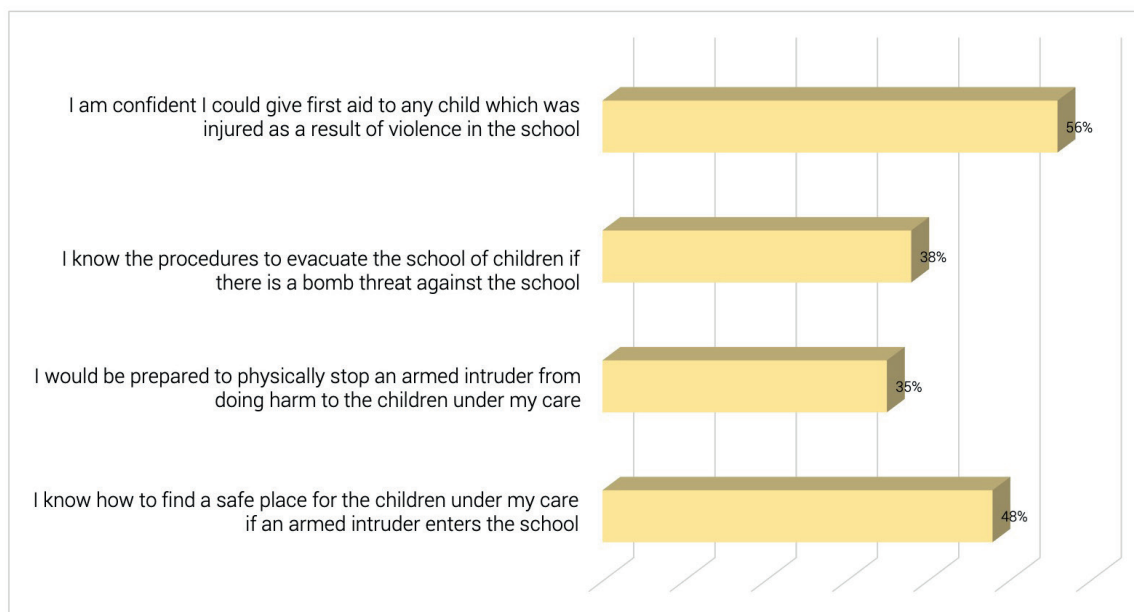
From this perspective, training workshops have been developed by SFCG and UNICEF teams in the field around the theme of «Reduction/Responses to conflict risks, disasters and COVID-19 prevention/control» (C/DRR). Some 290 teachers (including 78 women) were trained in three regional workshops of two days each (11 pedagogical animation centres were involved in the project). These trainings were mostly appreciated by the teachers and met their expectations[53]. The results of the analysis show that this type of training is beneficial for strengthening access to education, and therefore need to be further developed.

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[52]The indicator «ability to protect students» was constructed by aggregating the items appearing in the figure 32

[53]A teacher of Gourma Rharous reported: « Today, I feel a change in behavior at my level. I feel much more inclined to deal with conflicts and disasters. This training is really great because it changes the person who follows it and takes them to make arrangements for future disasters. »

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The physical and logistical environment at school

A series of questions related to teaching conditions as well as the school's physical environment were submitted to teachers and students. The first four columns of Figure 33 aim to understand the teaching conditions. There is a noticeable discrepancy between teachers' and students' answers to questions about the facilities and equipment.

In addition to the lack of materials and equipment, there is a lack of staff, since only a third of students and teachers consider that there are enough teachers in the school.

Figure 33 : teaching conditions and physical environment at school
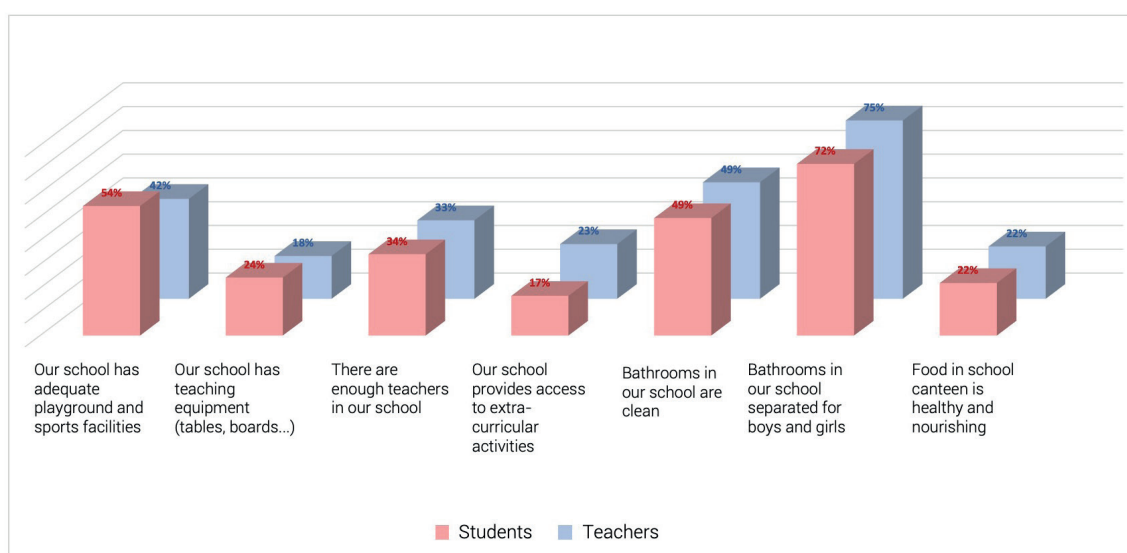
Reading : 54 percent of students report that there is a playground and sports fields in their school.

The issue of access to and separation of boys and girls toilets is the subject of specific attention in the context of SFCG's work. The situational analyses show that most schools have toilets (some are in poor condition). It is notable, however, that only 62 percent of toilets are separated by sex in the Gao area. Not all children have access to school   canteens, with 48 percent of schools in Timbuktu and 58 percent of schools in the Mopti region lacking this facility, while almost none of the school children in the Gao region have access to a canteen.

Finally, the «psychosocial environment» indicator is more closely linked to the social universe within the school. This indicator assesses the extent to which students «feel comfortable» at school, which includes being protected from bullying and marginalization and able to enjoy time with friends and find sources of fun.

Figure 34 : psycho-social environment
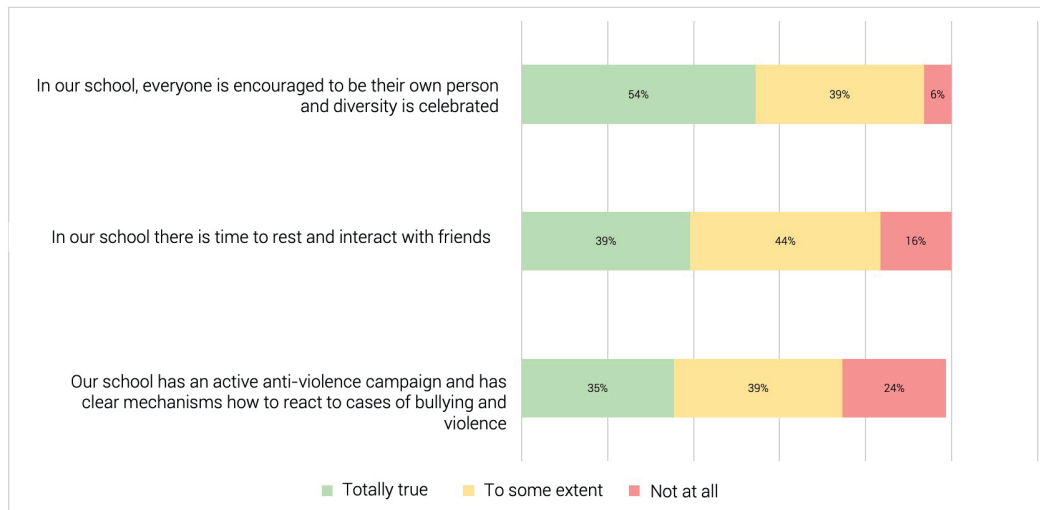
It is important that comfortable learning conditions are in place for school functioning. These include the establishment of a safe place protected from external threats, a space where material conditions are sufficient to allow everyone to study and finally an internal regulation that makes school life comfortable, ensuring students feel protected from bullying and have appropriate spaces (e.g. playgrounds) to socialise and enjoy themselves without teacher supervision. These material and psychosocial conditions allow the development of an educational approach based on the inclusiveness and personal development for the student. If these dynamics are combined with a community environment conducive to educational development, students will be more likely to appreciate sociability at school and to feel attached to the school experience – thereby reducing the chances of children dropping out.

4.2. Teachers' views of the school environment

Teachers' situations

Most surveyed teachers have completed the necessary training and hold the diploma required to practice the profession. More than four in five teachers have the diploma. Twelve percent have started but have not completed the training and five percent are working as volunteer teachers without having followed any specific training.

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Figure 35 : teacher qualification level
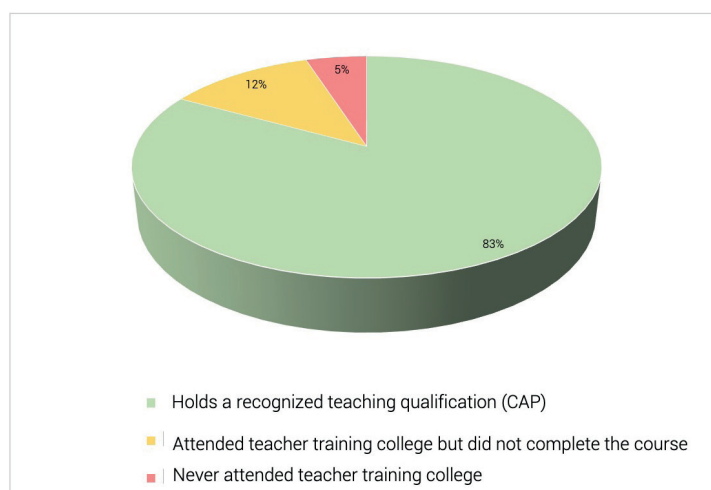
Figure 36 : teacher participation rate
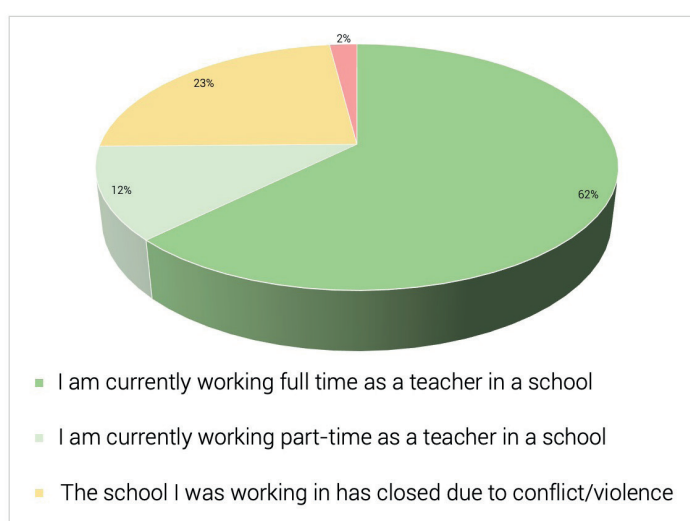
About two-thirds of the surveyed teachers currently work full-time and 12 percent work part-time, **while nearly one in four teachers is now unemployed due to the closure of the school in which s/he worked[54]**.

Figure 37 provides information on the occupations of teachers who have seen their schools close. Thirty-five percent say that they devote their free time to teaching out-of-school children. It should also be noted that 58 percent of them would like to teach but cannot. **With three in five teachers ready to share their knowledge with young people** in their community, it is necessary to put in place modalities that would make it possible to exploit this opportunity.

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[54]The issue of the absence and flight of teachers from the areas where they have been assigned is a major issue in the operating conditions of schools. Unfortunately, here, the data collected does not make it possible to identify which of the unoccupied teachers remained on site after the closure of the school and who returned to their locality of origin.

Figure 37 : situations of unoccupied teachers

- I am using my time to teach children who are unable to attend school
- I want to teach children who are not in school, but I do not know how to organize lessons
- I have lost my teacher's salary and I have not found another way to earn money
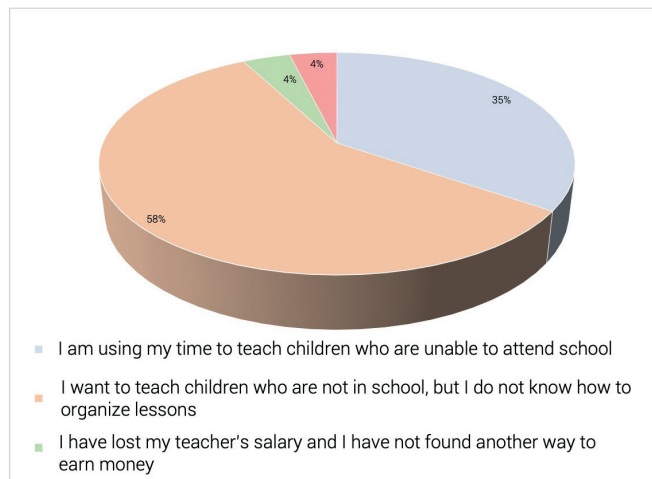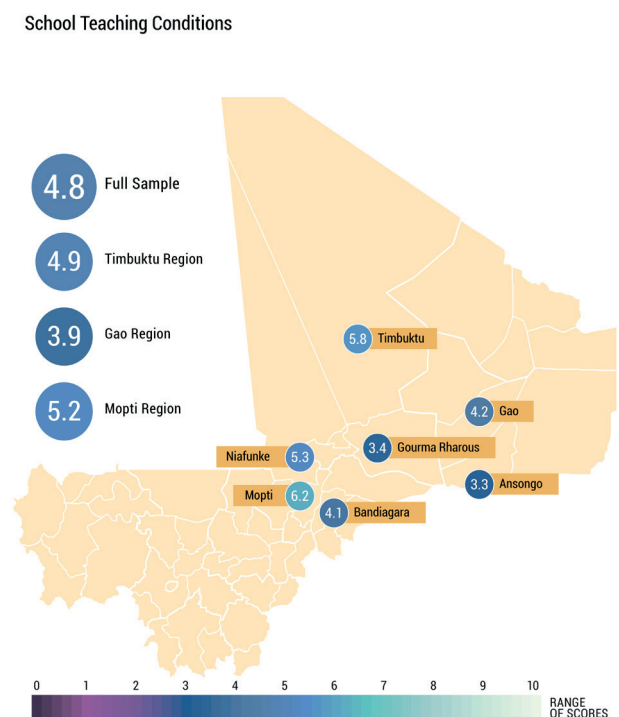
The presence of teachers willing to teach out-of-school children in the community is an asset that should be used locally to minimize the social damage caused by high dropout rates. **Local and community authorities have everything to gain from developing modalities to act as an intermediary between out-of-school children in the community and unoccupied teachers willing to teach in the locality.** The aim here is to restore the family-child-community nexus by relying on the availability of teachers within the community.

School life according to teachers

Heatmap 7 : teaching conditions (sample teachers)

A set of indicators were developed to capture teachers' general feelings about their working conditions and school life in general.
Heatmap 7 reports on teaching conditions according to the teachers interviewed. Teachers in Mopti are the most satisfied, while teaching conditions in Ansongo and Gourma Rharous are the least conducive to a healthy leaning environment. In general, an average score of 4.8 shows a mixed feeling among teachers, the level of satisfaction is relatively negative (below 5). Most teachers agree that the conditions are not satisfactory due to several reasons including the dearth of equipment or lack of staff[55].

School Teaching Conditions

4.8 Full Sample
4.9 Timbuktu Region
3.9 Gao Region
5.2 Mopti Region

5.8 Timbuktu
4.2 Gao
3.4 Gourma Rharous
5.3 Niafunke
3.3 Ansongo
6.2 Mopti
4.1 Bandiagara

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
RANGE OF SCORES

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[55]For a more detailed analysis of the material conditions of teaching, see the situational analyses produced by SFCG as part of this project for each of the regions.

Heatmap 8 : teacher support (teacher's sample)

Beyond the material conditions SCORE also assessed whether teachers felt supported in their daily educational mission. Heatmap 8 shows the extent to which teachers feel helped by their supervisory authorities. For example, 53 percent of them consider that the Malian state has not made education a priority, while three in five teachers believe that the government has abandoned them. On the other hand, 64 percent of teachers believe that local authorities are doing their best to help schools.

Conflict situations and threats such as Covid-19, have affected the educational action of teachers. For example, 65 percent believe that the measures taken by the government have had harmful effects on educational conditions. The urgency and severity of the impacts of conflicts and threats such as Covid-19 on educational practices require renewed support from the competent authorities.

Support for education
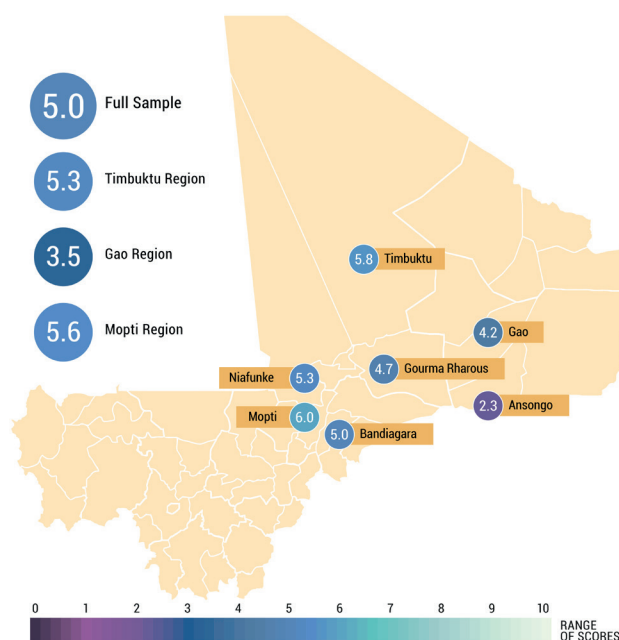
School life according to the Conflict Scan

The Conflict Scan identified several disputes relating to school governance. Significant challenges concern tense relations between teachers and the education authorities, both central and local; disputes involving teachers and parents; and problems between school staff and the school board.

Conflicts between teachers and state authorities concern the transfer of competences from the State to local authorities and defining the leadership of education policy at the local level. Currently, schools are accountable to both central and local authorities effectively placing them simultaneously under two forms of government supervision.

At the same time schools are disrupted by teachers' strikes, usually over wages. The feeling of abandonment described earlier in this section (three in five teachers feel «abandoned by the state») can be interpreted in the light of these observations, with the sense of isolation and lack of support among teachers partly explained by unpaid salaries.
According to Conflict Scan, tensions between teachers and parents are mainly related to unjustified absences of teachers and children's physical punishment. Conflicts between school staff and the school board are twofold. First, there are conflicts of interest between the school board and school staff due to a lack of awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the school board. Second, these conflicts relate to the non-involvement of staff in the management of school canteens.

The Conflict Scan shows that challenging daily conditions of school life and difficult learning conditions prompt out-of-school choices. For children, the reasons given are stress, boredom at school, hostility of some students and fear of being punished at school by teachers.

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KEY MESSAGES AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the SCORE analysis make it possible to draw a general framework of the programmatic approach. This would involve interventions and public action programmes aimed at improving schools' operations and the enrolment rates in Mali, conceived through the prism of the school-family-community relationship (SFC). Known as an ecosystem approach, the goal is to understand different environments in which children and adolescents develop, and acknowledge that events which take place in the family and community have an impact on students' experience of school life. A lot of research has been developed in this direction and has made it possible to update positive results at several levels and has given rise to the development of different tools facilitating the operationalization of this ecosystem approach[56].

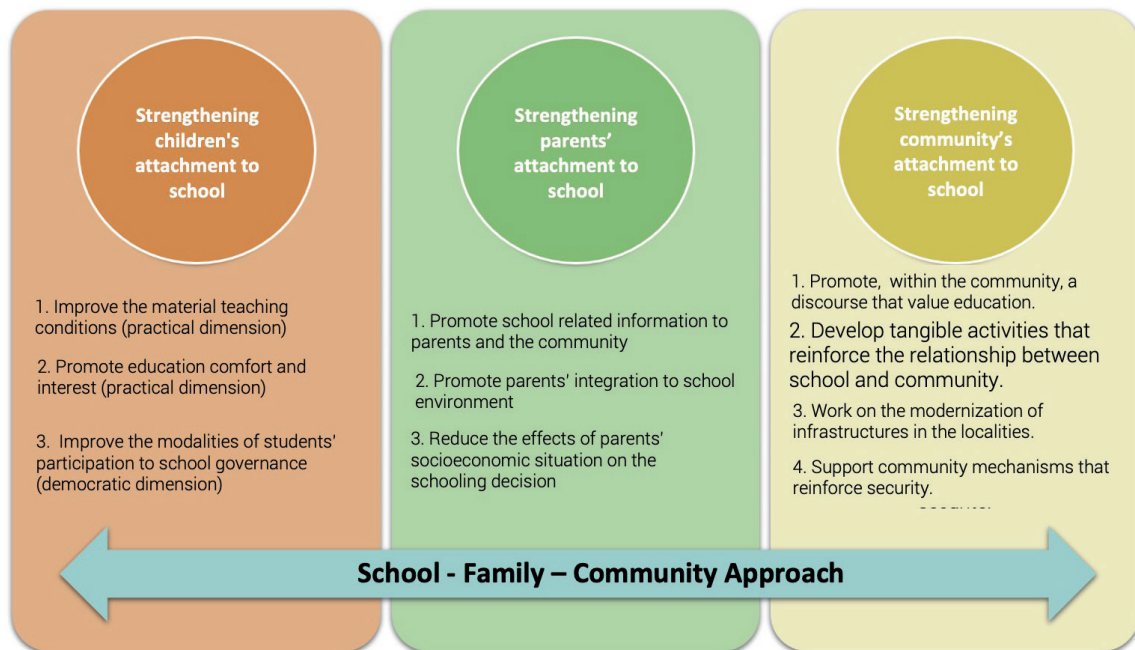### Advantages of the school-family-community relationship

Beneficiary group	Advantages
Children	Improved school attendance, better knowledge and academic results, better personal development
Parents	Better knowledge of the school world, improvement of the ability to follow schooling and to intervene in the school experience, proactivity within the community, better access to services
Teachers	Better knowledge of parents, more positive attitude towards parents, integration into the community, valuing professional experience
Community	Young people in the community more easily reachable and identifiable, which benefits the well-being of the community and promotes more harmonious development

Here, the results of the various statistical analyses conducted as part of this project tend to suggest that programmatic interventions guided by the SFC approach could be particularly effective. The recommendations are based on the observed results and reflect three main lines of action.

a) interventions must be carried out to strengthen children's attachment to school
b) familiarize parents with school
c) encourage the community's attachment to school education

Each of these main axes can then be divided into a series of complementary and interdependent orientations.

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[56]Here, it is not strictly a question of promoting the action format and the type of programming as they are developed in the context of research (mainly conducted in Quebec) but rather to insist on the school-family-community relationship as a general framework for programming interventions aimed at improving the level of schooling in the country.

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Strengthening children's attachment to school

1. Improve the material teaching conditions (practical dimension)

2. Promote education comfort and interest (practical dimension)

3. Improve the modalities of students' participation to school governance (democratic dimension)

Strengthening parents' attachment to school

1. Promote school related information to parents and the community

2. Promote parents' integration to school environment

3. Reduce the effects of parents' socioeconomic situation on the schooling decision

Strengthening community's attachment to school

1. Promote, within the community, a discourse that value education.

2. Develop tangible activities that reinforce the relationship between school and community.

3. Work on the modernization of infrastructures in the localities.

4. Support community mechanisms that reinforce security.

School - Family – Community Approach

Axis 1. Strengthening children's attachment to school

Justification for the action

The fact that children do not like school is one of the main reasons for their dropping out of school. Indeed, for more than a third of parents, their child's lack of interest in school is a reason justifying the choice for not sending the child to school. Therefore, improving children's attachment to school is an entry point for action: the more children enjoy school, the less likely they will be to convince their parents of the merits of a school dropout decision.

Three sub-axes of intervention

1. The material dimension could be considered as a first step. We are referring here to issues related to student safety and logistical conditions of teaching. The existence of a safe environment within the school appears to be a factor encouraging the student's attachment to the school. This security can be ensured in several ways. The actors involved in the governance and financing of the school's operation should assume a leading role at this level in order to set up safer infrastructures (e.g. fence, systematic presence of a guard, application of contingency measures, etc.). Teachers could also be involved in risk reduction, prevention and response measures (e.g. training and courses relating to first aid and contingency measures and solutions). Finally, the community and parents could "take charge" of certain measures and devices to ensure safety within the locality "outside" the school. **The development of a safe environment within and outside the school must result from a collective effort maintained by all actors (SFC) and must be put at the service of students and the quality of teaching conditions.**
Indeed, the improvement of security conditions must be accompanied by an effort to improve the teaching environment (e.g. ensuring pupil access to equipment such as tables, chairs, books, sports fields).

2. The pedagogical dimension also counts as a potential driver of the student's attachment to school. This would involve tutoring strategies aimed at restoring the confidence of students and cultivate the child's emotional attachment to school. Support courses would help to improve the academic level of students in difficulty and thus facilitate their integration into school life. This type of intervention would also make it possible to take over from parents who are not very involved in their children's schooling. Consideration could also be given to developing a competency-based approach (APC) promoting forms of education focused on personal skills and qualities important for the child's future. This type of teaching based on the development of critical thinking, autonomy, and more oriented towards practical skills and listening to students could promote children's school attachment.

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3. Finally, the democratic dimension, more specifically **the question of students' participation in school governance, appears to be a fundamental factor in attachment to school and school performance**[57]. Strengthening the integration of students into governance procedures can take many forms. The establishment or strengthening of student council-type representation structures and their active participation in decision-making procedures relating to school life would, for example, be a means of encouraging the integration of all. These types of modalities could, to some extent, delegate particular skills and offer forms of leadership to students on specific topics. Activities would include the organization of sports and cultural activities; action formats aimed at connecting with community actors and/or parents; setting up awareness campaigns against bullying and violence at school; and participating in the drafting of the school rules of procedures. In general, the participation in school life, the feeling of representation and the decision-making commitment of students make it possible to develop the civic dimension. They are all dynamics that facilitate integration through citizenship and strengthening positive citizenship.

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[57] https://www.stir.ac.uk/news/2015/02/pupil-participation-in-school-life-is-key-to-doing-well/

Axis 2. Strengthening parents' attachment to school: improving school enrolment

Justification for the action

Parent's decisions not to send children to school are rarely only linked to conflicts and security concerns within the locality. Instead, the relationship the parent has with education (i.e. the value education has for parents) and the socio-economic situation of the household are more important factors. The courses of action to be developed must then ensure that the image of school education is enhanced among parents and the impact of parents' own socio-economic situation in their schooling decisions for the child are removed from the equation.

Three sub-axes of intervention

1. A first type of intervention aimed at increasing parents' attractiveness to school must be based on the communication channel and take the form of an information campaign on the «school world». **Awareness-raising work with parents can be built around the education/socio-economic integration continuum:** deployment of a virtuous cycle where parental education, financial comfort, access to governance and children's education are self-sustaining. The discourse must be built around the relationship between school education and the future economic integration of the student. This type of campaign can also rely on the participation of teachers from the community.

2. A second type of intervention could **at the integration of parents into the «school world».**
As observed, the commitment of parents is a major condition for keeping children in school and in general the lack of knowledge about the school environment is a hindrance to schooling. Various modalities allowing the integration of parents into the school can be imagined. This includes the following:

• organization of activities requiring the participation of parents which calls upon their knowledge or experience,
• regular dissemination of information on school-life (e.g. school journal,…),
• strengthening of representation structures, such as parent-teacher associations.

The purpose of these interventions should be to encourage the commitment of parents: to reassure them and to facilitate the exchange of information between the school and the household. In this sense, programmes can be developed to share school resources or develop tutoring strategies. Strengthening the links between school and parents can be based on the intervention of a third actor.

For example, a great deal of research has shown the essential role played by social workers[58]. Establishing and financing educator positions that that are designed to promote a healthy relationship between parents and school will support this goal.

3. The socio-economic situation of households – their financial arrangements as well as access to the State services they enjoy – is a factor influencing schooling choices. Educational policies should be developed to ensure that the level of household income is not an obstacle to children's schooling.
Financial support arrangements could be put in place indexed to household income – families below a certain threshold would have access to subsidies to cover the various costs associated with their children's schooling. Secondly, access to services in certain localities should be strengthened, and schools should operate within the context of communities' commitment to and capacities for delivering education to children and young people.

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[58] Bowen N.K., (1999), "A Role for School Social Workers in Promoting Student Success through School-Family Partnerships", Children & Schools, Volume 21, Issue 1, Pages 34–47, https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/21.1.34

Axis 3. Strengthen the community's attachment to the school

Justification for the action

School functionality is primarily determined by two dynamics: how education is encouraged within the community and a sense of security at the community level. Interventions should focus on strengthening these two dimensions.

Four sub-axes of intervention

1. The first line of action would be to promote a discourse that values education within the community. The aim would be to develop a strategy for the collective mobilization of the community to promote a positive image of school education. The discourse should focus on the idea that school education is a necessary resource for improving the living conditions and daily lives of children, their families, their communities and society in general. The development of this type of campaign must be based on the involvement of community leaders, who must become «ambassadors of the school[59]». Teachers and educators should also be portrayed positively by opinion leaders to strengthen their credibility. It is also possible to imagine the implementation of events that celebrate the educational successes of students and the creation of opportunities to recognize and value the work of teachers within the community (e.g. implementation of modalities allowing the sharing of personal experiences).

2. Beyond community-based speeches and awareness-raising campaigns, programmes should be developed to facilitate the organisation of tangible activities that establish a relationship between the school and the community. These activities would «showcase» school successes and demonstrate how reciprocal relationships between school and community help grow the welling of the population: to show how the school could support the community and vice versa, while seeking to mobilise resources at the community level to support the implementation of educational activities within the local area.

This type of intervention can be structured around the creation of pedagogical collaboration activities: **provision of educational spaces within the community and workshops to share specific knowledge of certain parents** (e.g. information and orientation day where parents would come to inform students about their respective professions, for example).

The community could also take charge **of the organization of schemes that connect unoccupied teachers and out-of-school students**. SCORE results confirm that many unoccupied teachers would like to be able to teach but do

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[59] It should be noted that actions developed by UNICEF and its partners are based on this type of intervention. Here, it is young students who are designated ambassadors to provide a response to the phenomenon of non-schooling or school dropping out. Since 2017, Young Back-to-School Ambassadors have been helping to strengthen dialogue in their communities about the importance of education through door-to-door activities, radio broadcasts and community dialogue sessions. https://www.unicef.org/mali/communiqu%C3%A9s-de-presse/adaptation-des-offres-%C3%A9ducatives-pour-un-retour-l%C3%A9cole-dans-un-environnement

This recommendation calls for the designation not of students but of opinion and community leaders as ambassadors in order to capitalize on the level of trust they are credited with by local populations.

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not know how to do it. The establishment within the community of networks and spaces for connecting these teachers and children could limit situations of school failure and initiate an educational impulse within the community. The aim here would be to multiply and strengthen initiatives such as the Gateway Accelerated Schooling Strategy Centre (SSA/P)[60] or temporary Learning Space (EAT)[61] that encourage out-of-school students to return to the formal school curriculum.

Extra-pedagogical collaborative activities could also be set up. Collaborations and partnerships between schools and community associations could emerge. It is possible to imagine the organization of extracurricular activities initiated by the actors of the community in partnership with the schools: sports or cultural activities set up within the school grounds after the day of classes (e.g. drawing lessons, sports).

This type of collaboration would make it possible to concretely restore the links between the school and members of the community. This would help establish precise and practical relationships between educational institutions and its community environment.

3. The modernisation of community infrastructure would be an opportunity for developing a civic spirit around schools and students. This type of intervention should be calibrated in such a way as to strengthen civic responsibility based on volunteerism. Mini projects around the restoration or maintenance of schools that may involve parents, teachers and community actors could be initiated. Similarly, actions involving volunteers from the student body could help improve the environment, including clean-up campaigns of public spaces or helping the elderly in the community. Instilling a strong volunteer spirit, with a focus around the school, would help students to use skills learned in their classes, while consolidating the community's appreciation of the school, where the school gives something back to the daily life of the community.

4. Strengthening safety at the community level is also a priority if school functionality is to be improved. In this respect, the situation of the Timbuktu Cercle is better than other Cercles observed. Information exchanges between different Cercles will help to transfer knowledge about best practices on how to initiate security improvements. In this context, C/DRR risk reduction activities in schools could be developed in close collaboration with parents and community leaders, thus helping to develop ecosystem-based approaches that is inclusive and comprehensively embedded in local realities.

[60] https://www.unicef.org/mali/recits/une-classe-passerelle-pour-retourner-%C3%A0-l%C3%A9cole
[61] https://www.unicef.org/mali/recits/dun-centre-dapprentissage-temporaire-vers-une-%C3%A9cole-formelle

Elements for localized interventions

The above set of recommendations has been developed based on the interpretation of the SCORE results and the inclusion of the qualitative Conflict Scan analysis. The recommendations are cross-cutting – they are based on the aggregation of data collected in the three regions. Nevertheless, although the dynamics are generally relatively similar across regions, some local peculiarities have been identified. The table below is intended to suggest localized planning of the proposed interventions. Each of the sub-axes of intervention is encouraged according to the respective local realities.

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Areas of intervention	Forms of intervention	Indicators concerned	Timbuktu	Gao	Mopti
Axis 1. Strengthening children's attachment to school	Material dimension: improving security and practical teaching conditions	*Safety at school, physical environment,...*	++	+++	+
	Pedagogical dimension: promoting educational comfort and interest	*Approach by skills, psychosocial environment,...*	++	+++	+
	Democratic dimension: acting on the modalities of student participation	*Inclusive governance, relations with educational staff,...*	++	+++	++
Axis 2. Strengthening parents' attachment to school	Promote information about the school environment to parents and the community	*Positive perception of education, perception of teachers, confidence in school actors,...*	++	++	+
	Promote the integration of parents into the school environment	*Educational level of parents, school commitment of parents,...*	+	++	+
	Reducing the effects of the socio-economic situation of the household on schooling choices	*Access to services, income, purchasing power,...*	++	+++	++
Axis 3. Strengthen the community's attachment to the school	Promote a discourse that values education within the community	*Educational environment within the community, support for community leaders,...*	++	+++	+
	Develop tangible activities that strengthen the relationship between the school and the community	*Community value of education, youth-friendly environment,...*	+	+++	++
	Working on infrastructure modernization in localities	*Access to services, access to infrastructure,...*	++	+++	+
	Supporting community-based security mechanisms	*Personal safety, threats and adversities, school safety,...*	+	+++	++

+++ indicates the intervention is an essential priority for the region. ++ indicates the intervention is a high priority and + indicates the intervention is much needed but can be addressed after essential and high priority interventions have been implemented.

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