

Women's Participation in Peace and Reconciliation Processes in Mali

Perspectives from Segou, Mopti and Tombouctou



Jenny Lorentzen

Nana Alassane Toure

Bassirou Gaye

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Jenny Lorentzen
Doctoral Researcher, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO).

Nana Alassane Toure
Independent Consultant, Mali.

Bassirou Gaye
Research Assistant, Mali.



Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)
Hausmanns gate 3
PO Box 9229 Oslo
NO-0134 Oslo, Norway
Tel. +47 22 54 77 00
www.prio.org

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Abbreviations

ACHPR	African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
CAFO	Coordination des Associations et ONG Féminines du Mali
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSA	Agreement Monitoring Committee
CVJR	Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
FBA	Folke Bernadotte Academy
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
RECOTRADE	Réseau des communicateurs traditionnels pour le développement
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UN	United Nations
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

1. Introduction

This report presents findings from a study about the participation of women in peace and reconciliation processes currently underway in Mali. The findings are based primarily on focus group discussions with men and women carried out in Segou and Mopti in central Mali, and Tombouctou in northern Mali, in December 2018. The objective of these discussions (Box 1) was to **identify concrete factors that contribute to and/or hamper the possibilities for women's meaningful participation in peace and reconciliation processes in Mali**. Fulfilling these objectives included providing concrete examples of how men and women are involved in supporting women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes at the local level.

Women's meaningful participation is considered essential for the overarching objective of creating conditions for inclusive and sustainable peace and reconciliation. The concept "meaningful participation" refers to the idea that "women not only be present, but that their concerns are heard and taken on board, they have the opportunity to articulate their contributions and expertise, to ensure that gender perspective and analyses inform and shape peace processes, and that outcomes benefit the whole of society."¹ In that regard, this report seeks to learn more about the local dynamics of women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention, resolution, and management, with an aim to offer recommendations for how women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes in Mali can be supported further.

In 2012, Mali experienced **an armed rebellion** in the North, followed by a coup d'état. Since then, the country has endured through an unprecedented multidimensional crisis, consisting of political, security, economic, and humanitarian elements. This crisis has considerably affected communities in central and northern Mali, and deteriorated inter- and intra-community relations, which are essential for the optimal functioning of the local economy.

Given the physical, psychological, and symbolic violence that **women in Mali** have suffered, they are among the social groups most deeply affected by the current crisis. Many women were displaced or left behind as their husbands and sons left the home to fight. The current security situation is still preventing women from moving around the country safely, restricting their access to markets and limiting their ability to organize across communities.

On the national level, the peace process has been guided by the **Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali** (hereafter the Algiers Agreement), which was signed in Bamako in June 2015 by the Malian government and two coalitions of armed groups, after 10 months of negotiations. The Algiers Agreement seeks to put in place frameworks for sustainable and inclusive peace as one of its primary goals. To this end, several mechanisms have been adopted for its implementation at the national level and in the northern regions. These mechanisms include the Agreement Monitoring Committee (CSA), the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Commission, the National Council on Security Sector Reform (SSR), the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (CVJR), and the establishment of interim authorities and joint patrol mechanisms (MOCs) in the northern regions.

Discouragingly, the **implementation of the Algiers Agreement** has been slow and difficult. Continued clashes between factions in the North and disagreements over key elements of the agreement threaten to collapse the peace process. Appointments to the interim authorities in the northern regions and the criteria for former combatants who will participate in the DDR process have

¹ UN Women 2018, page 11.

produced several delays.² Observers have noted that the agreement prioritizes the return of the state authority to the North in military and security terms, but without proper attention to the role of the state in delivering much-needed basic services to the population. Other recurring criticisms against the peace process cite the lack of inclusion of youth, women, civil society and other marginalized groups.³ Finally, because the implementation of the peace agreement has suffered constant delays, and because many of the mechanisms for its implementation are in the military and security sectors, the inclusion of a broader segment of the population in the implementation mechanisms at the local level appear to have been limited so far.

A second complicating factor is the *deteriorating security situation in Mopti and Segou in central Mali*. While the Algiers Agreement covers the northern regions where the 2012 rebellion took place, the effects of the crisis have increasingly affected the central regions that are currently experiencing higher levels of insecurity than the North.⁴ This dynamic has led observers to refer to Mali in terms of multiple crises.⁵ Consequently, there are multiple peace and reconciliation processes underway as the country transitions out of conflict and toward peace. It has become clear that the peace and reconciliation process cannot succeed without confronting the situation in the centre of the country. The inclusion of perspectives from Segou and Mopti in central Mali in this study, therefore, represents an attempt to take these considerations into account.

While the conflict in the North has been inspired by rebel groups' grievances against the Malian state, the conflicts in the centre are mainly inter- and intra-communal in nature. This factor has potential consequences for the nature of peace and reconciliation processes across different regions and communities, and implies that women's participation in such processes must go beyond their participation in the mechanisms outlined in the Algiers Agreement. For this reason, *we sought to explore women's meaningful participation at the local level along two dimensions: In the mechanisms that are outlined in the Algiers Agreement, and in local structures and mechanisms identified by focus group participants.*

In our analysis, we make an analytical distinction between the national-level peace and reconciliation process and the multiple peace and reconciliation processes taking place in different localities across the country. When we use the term "local structures and mechanisms" for conflict resolution we refer to local processes of conflict prevention, resolution, and management, and how women and men are able to participate in processes that affect them and their communities. *Paying attention to local structures and mechanisms for conflict resolution is important because these are deeply embedded in local communities and necessarily form the basis upon which a broader engagement by the population in the national-level peace and reconciliation process must be built.*

Box I. Objectives

- A. Identify factors that contribute to and/or hamper the possibilities for women's meaningful participation in peace and reconciliation processes in Mali;
- B. Provide examples of how men and women are supporting women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes at the local level;
- C. Provide examples of what factors are viewed as essential for inclusive and sustainable peace and reconciliation.

² Boutellis and Zahar 2017, page 40; United Nations 2018.

³ Boutellis and Zahar 2017.

⁴ International Crisis Group 2019.

⁵ SIPRI 2019, page 1.

2. Methodology

The findings presented in this report are based primarily on empirical data collected from six focus group discussions in Segou, Mopti, and Tombouctou (two in each location), with approximately 60 participants in total.⁶ To guide the discussion, we developed an interview guide (appendix 1), which we pilot tested beforehand with a focus group in Bamako. Revisions were made to the guide following this exercise. The interview guide allowed us to identify common themes and highlight relevant differences across the focus groups.

We emphasize that the findings represent a reflection of perceptions, which, in turn, reflect the composition of the focus groups. Each group was comprised of 10-11 participants and conducted with men and women separately. Separating the groups on the basis of sex was intended to make the participants comfortable to share their views and experiences freely. In our experience, in the Malian context, women and men may be more reluctant to express their views when they are together in the same group, especially on the topic of women's rights.

To better identify areas of contention, we sought to include a variety of perspectives and actors in the focus group discussions. The focus groups included representatives of several youth and women's associations, students, elected officials, traditional leaders, village chiefs, members of traditional and professional guilds such as RECOTRADE, as well as people who were not a member of any organizational or associative structure (see appendix 2). We complemented the focus group material with written sources such as policy documents and relevant background literature. These sources provided us with additional context with which to interpret the focus group discussions.

⁶ Languages used during the discussions were French, Bamanankan (or Bambara, spoken by a majority of the Malian population, and a national language of Mali), and Songhay (spoken mainly in Tombouctou and Gao, and a national language of Mali). In addition to French, Bamanankan was used in the focus group discussions in Ségou and Mopti, and Songhay in Tombouctou. As our team had limited knowledge of Songhay, we asked participants who knew how to speak French and Songhay to translate certain expressions used by the participants. This approach gave participants the opportunity to freely navigate between French and their mother tongue in order to better express their ideas during the discussions. With the permission of the participants, we recorded and later transcribed all the focus group discussions using a voice recorder. The quotes presented in the English version of this report have been translated from French by the author.

3. The Malian Context

3.1. Women's Rights in Mali

The population in Mali is socially and ethnically diverse, and Malian society is highly stratified and hierarchical with regard to age, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic background. These social factors mean that power is concentrated among older men, in spite of the fact that half the Malian population is female and 48% under 15 years old.

Deep structural inequalities between men and women limit women's presence in the public arena, and women lag behind significantly in terms of literacy compared to men: 45% to 22%. Women's roles, however, are not static in Mali. The internal diversity of the society means women have varying freedoms and limitations depending on their social group. Women in Tuareg communities in the North, for instance, are known for occupying strong positions, but this example tends to be the exception.⁷

Among the legal and political frameworks relevant for the participation of women in peace and reconciliation processes are the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol). Beyond these documents, the Malian constitution of 1992 guarantees equal rights to all citizens regardless of sex and the country adopted a national gender policy in 2010 – although the provisions of this policy have not been fully implemented.

Mali has ratified CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol without reservations, but national legislation on women's rights has been a subject of controversy for many years. While the Malian state is secular, more than 90% of the population is Muslim and the tenets of Islam strongly influence the personal and social spheres. Over the past two decades, more conservative versions of Islam have gained a stronger position in Malian society and religious leaders have begun to exert influence over political life. Some of these religious actors openly oppose efforts to promote gender equality and women's rights, and have managed to block legal reforms on several occasions. In 2009, an attempt to revise the Family Code was blocked by the Islamic High Council (HCI). HCI mobilized massive street protests against the proposed changes that had been endorsed by the National Assembly and forbade the President to sign the law.⁸

However, and importantly, Malian women's activists continue to struggle for non-discrimination and equality before the law and brought the case to the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) in an attempt to exert a counter-influence to the HCI. In May 2018, the ACHPR found the Malian government to be in violation of the Maputo Protocol and demanded it modify its legislation. The ruling specifically noted that Malian Family Code violates women's rights as recognized under international law by allowing child marriage for girls (at 15-16 years), by not always requiring consent for a marriage to be valid, and for discriminating against women in matters of inheritance.⁹

⁷ CEIDES 2017, page 10 ; Lackenbauer 2016, page 30. CIA 2019.

⁸ Diallo 2009.

⁹ ACHPR 2018.

3.2. Women's Participation in the Peace and Reconciliation Process

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda is the international political framework that explicitly addresses women's participation in matters relating to peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts. The agenda consists of nine resolution texts adopted by the UN Security Council between 2000 and 2015, with the foundational United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) adopted in 2000.¹⁰

Mali launched its first National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in 2012. This work, however, was little known and implemented, due in part to its launch coinciding with the 2012 crisis. The second NAP was launched in 2015 for the period 2015-2017, and its overarching goal was to promote women's participation in the implementation of the Algiers Agreement. The second NAP, however, suffered from a lack of funding to support its implementation, and when UN Women assessed this work in 2018, they found that only 50% of the planned activities had been carried out. The second NAP was further beset by challenges concerning how to decentralize its commitments from the national to the local levels.¹¹

A third NAP is currently under development by the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family supported by UN Women, where a technical team has been established to coordinate and follow-up its development and implementation. The technical team includes a specialist on Women, Peace and Security seconded by the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA). Focal points have been appointed in the government ministries whose work will be affected by the NAP and be responsible for its implementation. FBA is currently supporting capacity-building of these focal points.

In December 2015, the president signed a decree calling for a 30% quota for female appointments to national institutions and legislative bodies. This action was seen as a victory and a result of many years' struggle by many women activists that we have talked to in Mali, and the timing of this decree is worth noting. In 2015, the peace process had offered very little in terms of including women and the Malian government had been receiving increased attention from international partners and donors who were eager to see progress in the area of women's rights. To date, the quota law has been applied but without regularity. Local elections in November 2016 and the minister cabinet appointments following the 2018 Presidential election have met the 30% standard, but the peace process and its related bodies and mechanisms fall short. Many activists and observers therefore remain skeptical to the degree of its application and doubt that the law's stipulations are well-known among the population.

Efforts to support women's participation in the peace process at the national level have largely taken place via the *Plateforme des Femmes Leaders*, or Women's Platform. Formed in Bamako in 2014 with the support of MINUSMA, the Women's Platform is a network of women's organizations who collaborate to influence the peace process. The Women's Platform was envisioned to help women organize in relation to the peace process, and to put forth women's demands in a unified voice. Individual members also received training through the Women's Platform, and MINUSMA supported several workshops for women to discuss and find agreement on their priorities. In sum, the Women's Platform has mainly provided a forum for bringing together women who are active in civil society and hold established positions within the women's movement at the level of the capital.

¹⁰ UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security: 1325 (2000); 1820 (2008); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2009); 1960 (2010); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013); 2242 (2015); 2467 (2019).

¹¹ République du Mali 2019.

Since the signing of the Algiers Agreement, activists (including members of the Women's Platform) have argued that women need to play a stronger role in monitoring its implementation.¹² In this regard, it is worth noting the recent (July 2018) creation of a women-led and independent consultative forum to monitor the implementation of the peace agreement.¹³ To date, however, the consultative forum is not yet operational, and it has not yet defined its terms of reference and working methods. The forum does have the potential to promote women's meaningful participation and a gender perspective in the peace process, but it needs both financial and political support to realize this potential. The forum will need to ensure that its members are representative and that the concerns and expertise of women at the local level inform the discussions. The forum will also need to establish regular communication with other mechanisms in the peace process (such as the Agreement Monitoring Committee and the committees that work on SSR and DDR).

On the issue of transitional justice, a law passed in 2018 allows for understanding, reconciliation, and reintegration of those responsible for crimes during the 2012 crisis, provided they express genuine repentance for those offenses. The only crimes exempted from this law are rape, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Such cases have been referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC), which has been active in Mali since receiving a formal request from the government in 2013 to investigate alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed since January 2012.¹⁴ Though the ICC's involvement seems a promising development, the court has yet to post a conviction on conflict-related sexual violence, including rape. Crimes of this nature are particularly challenging to prosecute, as they often lack physical evidence and survivors are reluctant to testify.

The Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission (CVJR) has the potential to play an important role in this respect and it is the only mechanism in the Algiers Agreement that has a clear gender perspective in its mandate and working methods. The presence of gender expertise, including two experts on gender and transitional justice seconded by UN Women, has played a key role in enabling a gender perspective in the commission. The CVJR is a truth commission tasked with investigating human rights violations (individual and collective), especially those committed against women as well as children. To collect testimonies the CVJR established regional offices throughout the country with female officers to speak with female victims. To date however, the work of the CVJR has consisted of collecting testimonies and it is unclear what will happen with these statements.

3.3. Tradition, Culture and Women's Participation in Conflict Resolution

Legal pluralism is an important feature of Malian society: traditional and conventional systems of justice and conflict resolution co-exist and work in a complementary fashion. Some of these traditional systems are local and/or regional in scope and influence, and many "Maliens regularly seek out local leaders such as village heads (*chefs*) and/or religious leaders (Muslim, Christian, "traditional" or "animist") to assist in conflict resolution."¹⁵ These so-called traditional mechanisms for managing conflict therefore often play a very prominent role in society. Most of these traditional systems follow Islamic legal principles, especially in regard to marriage, divorce, and inheritance. In some regions, Muslim leaders appoint experts in Islamic jurisprudence called *quadis*, who provide leaders with counsel and advice.¹⁶

¹² Lorentzen 2017.

¹³ United Nations 2018.

¹⁴ International Criminal Court 2013.

¹⁵ Soares 2009, page 400.

¹⁶ Soares 2009.

Existing work on the topic of women's roles in local governance in Africa, in general, and in the Malian context, in particular, reveals that women are typically the least involved social group in the mechanisms that govern conflict resolution and management.¹⁷ Women's lack of involvement often stems from the gendered division of roles and responsibilities between women and men, and reasons linked to culture, religion and tradition. Many scholars consider this cultural dimension as an obstacle to women's public participation since it lends support to norms, customs, and religious beliefs that limit women's rights.¹⁸

¹⁷ Sadiki 2008, page 14.

¹⁸ Hamilton & Dama 2003, page 5 ; ACORD 2016, page 17.

4. Focus Group Findings

Below we present the main findings from our focus group discussion in three sections:

1. Women's meaningful participation in the processes related to the Algiers Agreement and its implementation;
2. The participants' perceptions of women's participation in local mechanisms for conflict resolution; and
3. Challenges and opportunities to women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes.

Following these sections, we conclude with some final thoughts and a set of recommendations intended to illuminate potential entry points for women in Mali's peace and reconciliation processes.

4.1. Women's Participation in the Algiers Agreement and Its Implementation

4.1.1. Lack of Knowledge about the Agreement and Its Implementation Mechanisms

Many participants expressed a lack of knowledge about the Algiers Agreement and the different mechanisms for its implementation. While all the participants clearly stated they had heard of the Algiers Agreement, most argued that they were not well-informed about the content and the Agreement's many social, political, legal, and territorial implications.

Talking about the Malian reality, when you want to hide information, you put it in a document. People do not hear about it on the radio; on TV, they do not talk about it. National channels, especially the ORTM, are not watched by women. So you have to go to the tontines¹⁹ to explain the agreement to women.²⁰

Many respondents spoke in terms that indicated they believed the content of the Agreement to be confined to "elitist circles" that prevented ownership of the document by the communities that were most affected by the crisis. Other respondents said that women were the least informed in all three locations. However, some respondents were careful to differentiate among groups of women. It was noted that women who are active in (national or international) NGOs, civil society associations, or who are civil servants were more familiar with the content of the Algiers Agreement.

We must first understand the agreement, its content, and then seek to know the mechanisms of its implementation. This requires going beyond the elitist circles. We must reach out to women, old people, young people,

¹⁹ Women's loans and saving groups.

²⁰ Female participant, Segou.

to explain in their own language. Go to households, where women are in kitchens.²¹

Some participants noted that properly informing the population about the Agreement would be essential to creating sustainable and inclusive peace and reconciliation in their communities. However, others noted that the Agreement suffers from a general lack of support in the population, which could indicate low local ownership of the provisions, especially among women. This could explain the lack of enthusiasm that some of the participants expressed about the agreement and its implementation mechanisms.

I think that the agreement was not made on the basis of consultation with the populations. It's not only women who are not involved. Nobody is involved in fact. We do not know who is doing what on behalf of whom.[...]²²

Further, many of the participants said that they were not familiar with the mechanisms that have been adopted for the implementation of the Algiers Agreement. Some women said that were not even aware such mechanisms existed. According to the participants, women's participation is not significant in any of the mechanisms, in any of the three localities.

On the list, there are women, but in the cantonment, there are not enough women. I made myself well informed. [...] at the regional level, the intermediate authorities they are putting in place, there are almost no women; at the circle level there are also no women.²³

We did observe a slight difference in understanding among the participants of the three localities. In Mopti and Segou, the men and women had difficulty citing the existing mechanisms of the Algiers Agreement. In Tombouctou on the other hand, several of the participants, including some women, were able to name some of the implementation mechanisms and the role of women in those mechanisms. This finding may be explained by the fact that the Algiers Agreement and its implementation mechanisms cover the northern regions.

Key Findings

- Implementing the Algiers Agreement, and properly informing the public about its content and mechanisms, will be essential for peace and reconciliation.
- Women appear to have generally less knowledge about the Algiers Agreement than men.
- Women's participation is not significant in any of the mechanisms for implementing the Algiers Agreement, and women's knowledge about these is generally very low.

²¹ Male participant, Mopti.

²² Male participant, Tombouctou.

²³ Female participant, Tombouctou.

4.2. Women's Participation in Local Mechanisms for Conflict Resolution and Management

As we have argued in the introduction to this report, women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes must necessarily go beyond their participation in the mechanisms outlined in the Algiers Agreement and the activities that take place at the national level. Accordingly, this section explores women's meaningful participation in local structures and mechanisms as identified by the participants in our focus groups. Since local structures and mechanisms for conflict resolution are deeply embedded in local communities, these necessarily form the basis upon which a broader engagement by the population in peace and reconciliation process must be built. Understanding the forms of women's participation in these local mechanisms can provide a basis for further supporting the meaningful participation of women in peace and reconciliation processes.

4.2.1. Circumstantial and Irregular Participation

The participants in the focus groups identified several formal and informal mechanisms when referring to the prevention or resolution of conflicts in their communities. These mechanisms include negotiation and mediation, dialogue, sensitization, inter and intra-community mediation, raising awareness of the destructive consequences of conflicts, and other mechanisms that build on longstanding customs and social characteristics of Malian society, such as the *Sanakuya*.²⁴ Women's participation was, however, perceived by many of the participants as circumstantial and irregular.

*[...] they do not participate publicly, but they participate through consultation by their husbands.*²⁵

In the locations where we conducted our focus groups, the choice of one type of actor or mechanism for conflict resolution over another appeared to depend on the nature of the conflict being faced. Women's participation in these mechanisms, then, was seen as largely dependent on the particular circumstances of an individual conflict, rather than being a regular and necessary practice.

*It depends on the conflict. If it is with women, women are mobilized. Men are also mobilized for the problems of men. But in the villages, the conflict is managed according to a process and according to its size.*²⁶

Size and scale of the conflict also have some influence on who will be involved in its resolution, and women are more often mobilized for conflicts that are smaller in scale. It was also noted that women's participation usually only takes place under men's approval and supervision.

yes and no, because the involvement of women is not direct as with men. In our community, women are a being of the inside. So with this mentality, they are not visible directly in conflict management. But in the

²⁴ Those in a *sanankuya* ("joking relationship") may treat one another as if cousins or close family members with whom familiar jokes or humorous insults are exchanged.

²⁵ Female participant, Segou.

²⁶ Female participant, Segou.

*RECOTRADE, there are women blacksmiths who intervene a lot but most often at the request of men or their intervention will be made under men's supervision. In all, they cannot intervene without the men not knowing even if it is the husband who is informed. [...]*²⁷

While it was clear from the discussions that women's potential for conflict resolution and management is usually not emphasized, we also found that women do play important roles in conflict resolution in their communities. Some participants noted that women are involved in committees and associations that collect information about situations that may lead to conflict. Through this work, women carry out sensitization and mediation campaigns in their communities to resolve conflicts that may emerge or have already emerged. In the following excerpt, a participant from Mopti described her work in this regard after being asked how conflicts are managed in their community:

*What I will say is that at this level and at the level of the promotion of women, we do mediations in the community and the family. We work with Christian and Muslim leaders. If it is a problem that concerns Muslims, we will address the Muslim leaders. The same goes for Christians. Generally, they are people who are greatly respected because of their age and their relationship with those around them. If the problem is more serious, we have police officers and judges who can intervene. We do this so that there is no imprisonment. Judges are used but not within the framework of the justice system.*²⁸

We also found that women's circumstantial and/or irregular interventions are possible occasionally due to the flexibility of local systems and mechanisms, and a general reluctance for people to take conflicts to the level of the court system.

Me, I am a member of a commission which makes observations of fields devastated by domestic animals. Once, there was a gentleman who came to tell us that his field was destroyed by the cattle of another person. After our investigation, the rest of the case had to be managed in court. That is when the sister of the gentleman whose field had been destroyed intervened so that the case would not be brought to court. She told me 'this case will not go to court.' So, she called her brother in front of me to tell him to drop the case in the name of their brotherhood and her status as a woman. That's how the case was dropped. My travel costs were paid for

²⁷ Female participant, Mopti.

²⁸ Female participant, Mopti.

and the gentleman said he definitely forgave. You see how the place of the woman is important in calming problems.²⁹

Key Findings

- Women play important roles in local conflict resolution but their participation is rarely emphasized, and is largely circumstantial and irregular.
- While the nature of local conflict resolution mechanisms often inhibits women's participation, women can occasionally make interventions due to the flexibility of such local systems and mechanisms.

4.2.2. Between Traditional and Formal Systems for Conflict Resolution

Participants in all three locations reported having access to both traditional and formal systems and mechanisms for conflict resolution and management.

[...] If there is a problem: the family intervenes. If it goes beyond the family, the neighborhood chief or village chief can intervene. In case they cannot find a solution, the local authorities are consulted. If it goes beyond that, the case goes to court.³⁰

The idea in this excerpt was widely shared by other participants from all three locations and shows that the dynamics of conflict management can follow a process consisting of a series of steps that moves from the family to the judicial body. However, according to the testimonies in this study, very few conflicts reach the level of the courts.

In our communities, when there is a problem [...], it is the parents who try to find a solution, to bury the problem without others knowing about it. If they see that it doesn't work, they will go to see a respectable person in the neighborhood, or the imam of the mosque where they pray. Now, if it goes beyond this level, they are referred to the qadi.³¹ The qadi is chosen for a specific area. Each qadi handles the problems in his locality. Sometimes the problem goes beyond the competence of the qadi. If it's far too complicated for him, he transfers the problem to the justice system. But consensus is privileged. A case that ends up in the justice system is really an extremely serious case.³²

²⁹ Male participant, Segou.

³⁰ Female participant, Segou.

³¹ Qadis are religious actors who traditionally serve as judges. Their judgment is based on Islamic principles.

³² Male participant, Tombouctou.

To avoid taking a conflict to the courts, participants said several actors would be engaged to find solutions beforehand. Some of the actors noted include members of RECOTRADE, the traditional chieftaincy, religious leaders, and qadis. The intervention of RECOTRADE actors was especially visible in Segou and Mopti, while in Tombouctou qadis play a more prominent role in the prevention and management of conflicts.

Interaction between traditional and formal systems for conflict resolution and management has become more prominent after the 2012 crisis erupted. Since then, traditional mechanisms have been revitalized and there is an increasing tendency to seek out traditional authorities for preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts. This tends to be especially true for conflicts related to land and marital life. However, the increased interference between traditional and formal systems for conflict resolution may have negative consequences for women if these traditional mechanisms and actors do not respect women's rights.

This revitalization is likely linked to the crisis and the weakening of state institutions, thus enabling traditional institutions and mechanisms to flourish in its wake. These developments could present a potential barrier to women's meaningful participation in peace and reconciliation processes, as traditional structures occasionally devalue women's roles and rights. In this situation, it would become necessary for actors working to support women's participation to apply gender analysis to programming and execution, and to consider the consequences for women's participation.

Key Findings

- The revitalization of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, and increased tendency to seek out traditional authorities, may be a factor that hampers the meaningful participation of women in peace and reconciliation processes.

4.2.3. The Significance of Gender Roles

As we have seen, while participants insisted that women's potential in conflict resolution and management is rarely emphasized, they were also able to provide several examples of women contributing to conflict resolution in their communities. During our discussions several participants – both women and men – also emphasized that due to existing gender roles, women can play a role in local conflict dynamics that could either be constructive or destructive for peace. They expressed that women are sometimes invisible, but no less important, actors, and they emphasized how male and female roles and responsibilities are perceived and can be used in Malian conflicts to instigate violence.

I am in a WhatsApp group [...]. In this group, women incite violence by telling the men that they have talked a lot, that their talk has lasted too long, that now they must act by taking up weapons to defend their loved ones [...].³³

This quotation suggests that women are both promoters of peace and of conflict in the sense that they have a socially accepted power in many societies that allow them to animate or appease conflicts

³³ Female participant, Mopti.

of any kind. Somewhat surprisingly given the marginalized position of most women in Malian society, this idea was endorsed by many of the actors we encountered in our research.

In our society the woman is the key to war and peace. If you want war, it is she who is pushing the man to make war and it is she too who is pushing the man to make peace. It is true that it is the man who is acting, but it is the woman who is always pushing it.³⁴

Following from this logic, women have it in their power to end conflicts and to put a stop inter- and intra-community hostilities. For this reason, some participants suggested that communities must use the power that women possess to prevent or resolve conflicts.

[...] in places where the army is killing families, children, innocent people... Sometimes women go out and tell the men that they are not men, saying that people come here to kill us without any reaction from you. And the man, he is really sensitive to that especially if it's the truth. [...] There are young girls who tell young men, you are not an accomplished man because you do not have a motorcycle, a car. A young girl says: You, you are nothing; you do not have that, you miss this, etc. So the young man does robberies, steals things. [...] if the mentality of women changes towards peace, towards reconciliation, if she sees the man doing robberies, doing bad things, she will say: You, you are nothing, you are stealing. Right away, he'll give it up.³⁵

On one hand, we might interpret these statements as calling attention to women's untapped potential that urges communities and leaders to recognize and support women's contributions to conflict resolution. Furthermore, these statements also recognize women as conflict actors, which implies that women could be potential spoilers to peace and reconciliation processes should they remain excluded. In other words, women's participation is absolutely crucial for the durability and sustainability of peace and reconciliation processes.³⁶

On the other hand, these statements portray men as relatively passive actors, whose behavior is to a large extent dictated by women. Other studies have noted that similar notions are common in many countries and regions, but have found that despite the existence of such notions most women are still invisible and do not have a voice.³⁷ It is therefore a risk that such statements serve to validate or endorse women's exclusion from peace and reconciliation processes by reflecting false notions about women's participation and roles in inciting conflict or promoting peace, and about women being the ones dictating terms to men. This highlights the ways in which gender roles and gender stereotypes matter in conflict and peace, and the importance of supporting the construction of non-violent identities and behavior among both women and men.

³⁴ Female participant, Tombouctou.

³⁵ Male participant, Tombouctou.

³⁶ See also Lackenbauer et al. 2016.

³⁷ Fink, Zeiger & Bhulai, page 19.

Key Findings

- Gender roles were posed as an underlying factor that could be used for violence or peace. According to participants, women in Mali have the potential to play a role that can be either productive or destructive for peace.
- Because of women's influence on conflict dynamics, their participation in peace processes is essential to ensure a durable and sustainable peace and reconciliation.

4.3. Challenges and Opportunities to Women's Meaningful Participation

On a more fundamental level, gender inequality and women's and men's roles in society set the conditions for women's meaningful participation. The challenges and opportunities raised in this section highlight the importance of women being given the opportunity to formulate and articulate their contributions, and that their concerns are being heard and taken into account.

4.3.1. Norms and Practices about Women's Place in Society

Discussions revealed certain norms and practices linked to tradition/culture and religion that constitute potential challenges to the effective participation of women in the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts at the local level. For example, some traditional and religious authorities are reluctant to involve women. This reluctance is not openly expressed, but rather manifested by the fact that these authorities do not explicitly encourage women's involvement and show little enthusiasm for supporting their participation.

*[...] the traditional organizations, the traditional authorities, are not interested in women as a resource in the resolution of conflicts.*³⁸

The participants explained this reluctance primarily in terms of customary and religious practices and beliefs. As tradition holds that women belong in the household, and not in the public sphere, some actors extend that logic to mean that women should not be involved in public affairs or engage in activities outside the household. If a woman is to do that, her family (usually her husband, her father, or her brother) must first agree – which is oftentimes unlikely. As one participant from Tombouctou explained:

*[...] I think there is [reluctance] especially the religious, for issues related to religion, but there are also cultural issues. We, the Tamashek, we say that the woman is the panties of the man. If she is touched, raped, it is as if his panties are touched. So to avoid that, we prefer that she does not get involved with external affairs. We keep her in the home.*³⁹

³⁸ Male participant, Mopti.

³⁹ Male participant, Tombouctou.

These examples illustrate that men have a key role to play in supporting women's participation. We see that men can support women's involvement as husbands, brothers, and fathers. However, and perhaps even more importantly, traditional and religious actors are important gatekeepers who must be encouraged to offer their support to women's participation. Because these authorities are respected in their communities, their support has the potential to contribute to changing the attitudes and practices in the community.

Key Findings

- Traditional and religious norms, practices, and beliefs about women's roles in society are understood to be factors that hamper their participation in peace and reconciliation processes.
- Traditional and religious authorities and male family members can help to enable women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes.
- Working to ensure support from traditional and religious authorities and male relatives is crucial when seeking to promote women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes.

4.3.2. Support to Women's Participation

Participants indicated that support to and consolidation of women's networks are an opportunity to promote the meaningful participation of women in peace and reconciliation processes. Strengthening and consolidating women's associations and networks could enable women to forge, in collaboration with men, effective conflict resolution strategies and an inclusive and participatory climate for peace and reconciliation processes currently underway in Mali.

Participants in all three locations pointed out that there are a number of national and international actors who support women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes, and identified a number of civil society and human rights organizations, as well as local, regional, and national women's associations. These groups include, among others, the Coordination des Associations et ONG Féminines du Mali (CAFO), which is the largest umbrella organization of women's associations in Mali, but also the small associations which exist in a large number all over the country.

The small associations and women's networks also act on this⁴⁰

Participants also pointed to the work of the Malian government through its institutions in charge of women's issues, such as the Ministry of Women, Children and the Family. And finally, they referred to national and international NGO's, UN Women, MINUSMA, as well as other international partners and funders.

There is CAFO, NGOs, women's organizations. Some partners even require the participation of women in order to benefit from their funding.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Female participant, Tombouctou.

⁴¹ Male participant, Mopti.

The fact that some partners condition access to funding on women's involvement was noted by several of the participants. We are not able to judge the effect of this practice based on the discussions in the focus groups, but it was clear that the participants considered this as supportive of women's participation.

We also noted that, in general, activities meant to support women's participation usually consist of sensitization campaigns, advocacy and training. While these activities and programmes help to overcome some challenges to women's participation, they do not necessarily promote the meaningful involvement of all categories of women. Based on the discussions, as well as our own observations, we find that this support tends to be more directed towards women who are "active": those women who belong to certain associative or professional category. Many women, such as those who have devoted themselves (willingly or not) to a life as a housewife, seem to be forgotten.

Key Findings

- The existence of organizations and networks supporting women's participation is a factor that contributes positively to peace and reconciliation processes. Further strengthening women's associations and networks can contribute to overcoming barriers to women's participation.
- Sensitization campaigns, advocacy, and trainings must seek to reach all categories of women.

4.3.3. Empowerment for Inclusive and Sustainable Peace and Reconciliation

The empowerment of women was identified by many of the participants as necessary for sustainable and inclusive peace and reconciliation in their communities. Several participants also stressed that women's empowerment, including awareness raising, education and emphasizing the role of women, will contribute positively to promoting women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes.

*To consider the woman as an element that constitutes [society]. Men and women make up society. She has a role to play. Give her the opportunity to go to school, to express herself [...]*⁴²

No specific examples of men's involvement in supporting women's participation emerged from the focus group discussions. But this does not mean that men are altogether absent from supporting women's participation. Rather, such examples were not discussed. Possibly our participants felt it was more important to communicate other aspects, or such support is not very visible in their communities. The focus group discussions, however, underscore the idea that men have very important roles to play in supporting women's participation, and that men can be empowered to support the participation of women in many ways, including through awareness raising.

*some men do not accept that their wives go out all the time. But with awareness raising, the men are beginning to understand.*⁴³

⁴² Male participant, Tomboctou.

⁴³ Female participant, Segou.

Key Findings

- Women's empowerment was identified as a necessary factor for sustainable and inclusive peace and reconciliation.
- Male and female attitudes that represent barriers to women's participation can be positively influenced through awareness raising.

4.3.4. Lack of Knowledge about Existing Legal and Political Frameworks

At a fundamental level, it was clear from the focus group discussions that many participants lacked knowledge about national and international political and legal texts and frameworks, including conventions, treaties, and laws that address women's rights and their participation in conflict prevention, resolution, and management. This lack of knowledge sets the foundation for how one can work to support women's participation in the peace process.

We also note that participants lacked knowledge about the Women, Peace and Security agenda, which confirms UN Women's findings that the previous NAPs have not been properly disseminated at the local level. On this point, participants reiterated that this lack of knowledge was especially critical among those women who are not a member of an association or an organization that would provide access to training initiatives.

I am the only one to have done trainings on 1325. I am in an association which allows me to benefit several formations. You see, women really need training and information on conventions, texts, laws that speak about them.⁴⁴

This lack of knowledge was evident among both women and men. While it is our understanding that most often it is women who are targeted for dissemination efforts to inform them about their rights, there is also a need to target men with knowledge about relevant women's rights texts and instruments. Such efforts may influence attitudes towards women's involvement and equip both men and women with the knowledge needed to implement changes to existing practices and mechanisms for conflict resolution in their communities.

Key Findings

- Both men and women lack knowledge about existing (national and international) political and legal frameworks about women's rights.
- Mainly women who belong to associations and organizations tend to be the recipients of dissemination efforts and information campaigns about women's rights and UNSCR 1325.
- Informing women and men about women's rights may support changes in attitudes, which, in turn, may contribute to changes in practice.

⁴⁴ Female participant, Tombouctou.

4.3.5. Need for Appropriate Training

Several participants in all three locations raised the issue of training and workshops specifically to promote women's participation in peace processes and on the contents of the Algiers Agreement. They noted that empowering women and revitalizing their roles and contributions to conflict resolution would positively influence on-going peace negotiations and conflict resolution. They also observed (as noted in the previous section) that trainings and workshops would be helpful for improving general knowledge about women's rights and the Algiers Agreement among women.

According to some participants, women must be offered to be trained in the same way as men are trained. The following statement highlights the idea that women's participation can take different forms, and that appropriate training may be one factor that affects whether women's participation will take place in a meaningful and effective way. According to this participant, it is a problem when women are not offered appropriate training.

The problem is that men are trained and women are generally not. So you have to train women just like men. This is missing. We involve women, but we do not prepare them for their involvement, we do not train them in this way.⁴⁵

Several participants also complained that existing training frameworks are not properly adapted to the local realities in their communities, and do not allow participants sufficient time to internalize the themes of the training modules. In this way, women are not enabled take ownership of the training content. As this participant, who had taken a training on UNSCR 1325, explained:

The problem is that the trainings that should be conducted over the course of one week are done in two days and that's it. So that cannot be well understood unfortunately. The trainers mix everything in a space of two days. So we really have to review the duration of training so that the modules are well understood.⁴⁶

Some participants expressed concern that when women are targeted for trainings, it is usually targeted to women who are active in associations and organizations or in public offices. Women who do not belong to these categories are often overlooked and miss out on the benefits of training, awareness raising, or advocacy efforts.

We have always been interested in the same women from the associations, the same women from the organizations. We really need to get out of this scheme to spread information about the agreement. To go tell the women in their kitchens that the agreement is not only for the Tuaregs, for the rebels, but for all Malians. [...] if we remain in the workshops, in the

⁴⁵ Male participant, Segou.

⁴⁶ Female participant, Mopti.

meetings, the agreement will always remain in the hands of women's associations, -groups, -organizations.⁴⁷

The organization of trainings and workshops was thus identified as factor that can contribute to women's meaningful participation in peace and reconciliation processes. However, for this to happen it is important that trainings target both women and men, that they target different groups of women, and that the training content, -design and execution are adapted to local needs and realities.

Key Findings

- Training and capacity building to promote women's participation in peace processes and on the contents of the peace agreement were identified as factors that can contribute positively to women's meaningful participation.
- Training organizers must consider how to effectively target both women and men with training in a way that does not exclude central groups.
- Trainings must be adapted to local needs and realities. Men and women should be offered the same form of training.

⁴⁷ Male participant, Mopti.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This report has sought to identify concrete factors that contribute to and/or hamper the possibilities for women's meaningful participation in peace and reconciliation processes in Mali. The analysis has been focused on identifying the local dynamics that affect women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention, resolution, and management, with a view to offer recommendations for how women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes in Mali can be further supported. The findings highlight the need to consider both the specifics of the Malian peace process and the more fundamental conditions related to gender inequality in the country.

One of the main findings of this report concerns the *implementation of the Algiers Agreement* and its mechanisms. The content and the potential implications of the agreement are little known among the participants in our study. This also goes for the implementation mechanisms, all of which are little known and in which women's participation remains low at both national and local levels.

When it comes to the individual mechanisms in the Algiers Agreement, we note the (so far largely unrealized) potential that the *Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (CVJR)* could have for peace and reconciliation processes in Mali. Our recommendation is therefore that attention and support is given to the continuation of the work of the CVJR in general, and that this work will be carried out in a gender-sensitive manner, in particular.

Another important finding is that despite being almost absent from the mechanisms in the Algiers Agreement, women play crucial roles in *local mechanisms for conflict resolution* in their communities. Women's contributions in these local mechanisms are however often circumstantial and irregular. This is especially, but far from exclusively, the case when it comes to traditional mechanisms for conflict management. It is therefore crucial that structures are established to make sure that the concerns and expertise of women at the local level is represented and informs discussions at the national level.

We find that women's involvement is often a result of the *flexibility of existing practices* of conflict resolution. This presents a tension: On the one hand, the flexibility of current practices allows women to participate and contribute under certain circumstances. On the other hand, this flexibility has also allowed for an increased tendency to seek out traditional actors and systems for conflict resolution, which do not necessarily promote women's rights or participation.

Further, we identified *certain traditional and religious norms and practices* that govern women's place in society, which in some cases are seen to pose a challenge to women's participation. This included a lack of support to women's participation from traditional and religious leaders as well as family members. Special attention to the role of these actors can positively affect the possibilities for women's meaningful participation in peace and reconciliation processes.

Further, our findings highlight *the importance of gender roles* for conflict and peace. As women have the potential to be both conflict actors and promoters of peace in their communities, their inclusion is essential to ensure the sustainability and durability of peace and reconciliation processes. Further, it is important to support non-violent identities and behavior among both women and men. This includes the construction of non-violent masculinities, and raising awareness among men about the many roles they can play for more peaceful families and communities.

Given that gender inequality and women's roles in society set the conditions for women's meaningful participation on a more fundamental level, we recommend that supporting awareness-raising and promoting positive attitudes for women's participation need to be part of a **long-term process to raise gender equality** and ensure more women's participation in the formal peace process mechanisms.

It is clear that a large number of associations and organizations at the local, regional, national and international level support women's participation through various initiatives. The existence of associations and networks already working in this domain clearly represents an opportunity to build on. The participants also identified **women's empowerment** as factor that will contribute to promoting women's participation, and emphasized that education, capacity-building and awareness-raising can contribute positively in this regard.

Our analysis also identified several **knowledge gaps** related to the ongoing peace and reconciliation process which should be addressed. A challenge to women's participation is the lack of knowledge among women and men about national and international political and legal frameworks that promote women's rights.

We identified specific knowledge gaps concerning **UNSCR 1325** and the related 1325 NAP, and we found that there is a gap between the national and local levels regarding the dissemination and local implementation of the 1325 NAP. Efforts to support the local dissemination and implementation of the 1325 NAP should be increased through trainings, capacity-buildings, and information campaigns at the local level.

We further recommend the development of a **decentralized implementation structure** to promote women's participation and the implementation of the 1325 NAP at the local level. Establishing structures to ensure that the concerns and expertise of women at the local level are represented and inform discussions at the national level is important in this regard, and this will for example be essential in the work of the newly-established women's consultative forum.

A related concern is the need for **training initiatives** to be adapted to local needs and realities, and to target both men and women as well as different categories of women. This was identified by the participants in the focus groups as a necessary precondition for women's meaningful participation in peace and reconciliation processes.

A final concern, discussed repeatedly throughout all groups, is **the gap between different categories of women** in Mali. Participants frequently noted that women who are not active in associations and organizations, work in public offices, or belong to a social elite, are often left out of trainings, capacity-building initiatives and peace and reconciliation processes more generally.

Based on our findings, on the following pages we present a set of recommendations intended to illuminate future entry points in the field of women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes in Mali.

Box 2. Recommendations for Strengthening the Meaningful Participation of Women in Peace and Reconciliation Processes in Mali:

The Algiers Agreement and its mechanisms:

- Promote dissemination of knowledge about the peace agreement and its implementation mechanisms;
- Reduce the knowledge-gap between men and women, and between different groups of women, about the peace agreement and its implementation mechanisms;
- Use a gender perspective in order to identify how to reach both men and women with information, for example by considering alternative spaces (such as *tontines*) to reach “ordinary” women when disseminating information about the peace agreement;
- Support the continuation of the work of the CVJR in general, and that this work will be carried out in a gender-sensitive manner, in particular, for example through promoting the existence of gender expertise within the commission and/or training of its members; and
- Support the establishment of structures to make sure that the concerns and expertise of women at the local level is represented and informs discussions at the national level.

The I325 NAP:

- Support the local dissemination and implementation of the I325 NAP through trainings, capacity-buildings, and information campaigns;
- Support the development of a decentralized implementation structure to promote women's participation and the implementation of the I325 NAP at the local level; and
- Establish structures to make sure that the concerns and expertise of women at the local level are represented and informs discussions at the national level, for example in the women's consultative forum.

Training and capacity-building:

- Conduct inclusive and appropriate training to strengthen the capacity of women to become significantly involved in peace and reconciliation processes at local and national levels;
- Specifically target women that do not belong to the associational, organizational, or social elite;
- Support training and capacity building initiatives on UNSCR I325, the skills and practices of conflict resolution, and the contents of the peace agreement;
- Ensure that training and capacity building initiatives target both women and men, and that they target different groups of women; and
- Ensure that training initiatives are adapted to local needs and realities.

Women's empowerment:

- Promote recognition of women's potential influence on conflict dynamics, and that their participation is a prerequisite for the sustainability and durability of peace and reconciliation processes, for example through awareness-raising and information campaigns, documentation of best practices;

- Support women to become more conscious of their potential contributions to peace and reconciliation in their communities by revitalizing and endorsing women's roles in conflict prevention, mediation and resolution;
- Promote women's empowerment through education, economic empowerment, and freedom from violence;
- Support networking activities and organizational capacity building initiatives to strengthen women's associations and networks in order to overcome barriers to women's participation;
- Ensure that sensitization campaigns, advocacy, and trainings reach all categories of women;
- Increase knowledge about normative and legal frameworks about women's rights among both men and women, and among all categories of women;
- Support legislative reform to uphold and respect women's rights as recognized under international law; and
- Support women's empowerment and women's networks as part of a longer process to raise gender equality.

Targeting men and traditional/religious authorities:

- Recruit a broader range of actors to proactively involve women in peace and reconciliation processes;
- Empower men to support the participation of women through awareness raising and knowledge about relevant women's rights instruments and texts;
- Support non-violent identities and behavior among both women and men, including the construction of non-violent masculinities, and raising awareness about the many roles men can play for more peaceful families and communities;
- Target traditional and religious authorities, who can help to enable women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes, with initiatives to promote support for women's participation; and
- Engage traditional and religious authorities as partners in a constructive and inclusive dialogue, highlighting the benefits of women's inclusion for society at large.

Cultural sensitivity:

- Consider the nature of local mechanisms for conflict resolution, as well as local cultural practices, when implementing programmes to support women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes;
- Take advantage of the flexibility of local practices that may enable women's participation, while at the same time work to ensure that women have access to non-discriminatory mechanisms for justice and conflict resolution; and
- Combat the existence of certain norms and practices that consider women as individuals who should not engage in public affairs, as well as attitudes about women's roles in society which constitute barriers to the meaningful participation of women, through for example awareness raising.

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Appendix I: Focus Group Interview Guide

1. In your community, what are the mechanisms for conflict management and reconciliation?

Follow-up questions:

- How are women involved in these activities?
- Who supports women's participation?

2. Tell us about women's participation in the peace process?

Follow-up questions:

- As women are the first victims of the crisis, what needs to be done to promote and strengthen their participation in peace processes? (who will do it)
- Who supports women's participation?

3. Which mechanisms for the implementation of the peace agreement do you know in your region/community?

Follow-up questions:

- How are women involved in these mechanisms?
- Do men and women have different strategies to influence?
- Who supports women's participation?

4. Are some reluctant to women's involvement?

Follow-up questions:

- If so, how do you explain the reasons for this reluctance?
- How can it change?
- What can women / men do to support women's participation?

5. Are you aware of any legal instruments that can promote women's participation (national and international)?

Follow-up questions:

- Do you know UN Resolution 1325?
- Do you have any idea of its degree of application, especially in relation to peace processes?

6. What does it take in your community to have peace and reconciliation?

Follow-up questions:

- What do you want to change?
- What roles for women in this area?
- The delay in peace processes: Can it improve if we involve women?
- What do you consider essential for lasting peace?

Appendix II: List of Participants Focus Groups

Segou - Women			
#	Capacity	Organization	Age Group
1	Member of an association	CAFO	40-50
2	Housewife	Family	35-40
3	Teacher	Public school	35-40
4	Member of an association	CAFO	30-40
5	Farmer	Private sector	40-50
6	Merchant	Private sector	30-40
7	Housewife	Family	30-40
8	Young activist	Conseil régional de la jeunesse	15-35
9	Young activist	Conseil régional de la jeunesse	15-35
10	Traditional Communicator	RECOTRADE	40-50
11	Koranic teacher	Mederssa A	30-40

Segou - Men			
#	Capacity	Organization	Age Group
1	Local president	Conseil régional de la jeunesse	15-35
2	Young activist	Pionne Mali	15-35
3	Tiler	Private sector	30-40
4	Merchant	Segou Market	40-50
5	Merchant	Segou Market	40-60
6	Head of Family	Family	45-55
7	Teacher	Lycée Segou	30-40
8	Teacher	Ecole fondamentale Segou	30-40
9	Traditional Communicator	RECOTRADE	40-50
10	Young Muslim	Union des jeunes musulmans	15-35
11	Head of Family	Family	50-60

Mopti - Women			
#	Capacity	Organization	Age Group
1	Leader	Local branch, Maison de la femme	40-50
2	Merchant	Marché de Mopti et Ségou	40-50

3	Trainee	Maison de la femme	40-50
4	Project leader	Radio Faïda Guinda	35-45
5	Member of an association	Conseil communal de la jeunesse	15-35
6	Member of an association	Conseil communal de la jeunesse	15-35
7	Elected representative	Town Hall	40-50
8	Member of an association	Association pour le progrès et la défense des droits des femmes (APDF)	35-45
9	Member of an association	CAFO (Mopti office)	40-50
10	Member of an association	Association des femmes leaders de Mopti	15-35
11	Housewife	Family	30-45

Mopti - Men

#	Capacity	Organization	Age Group
1	Village chief	Chieftaincy	50-60
2	Health worker	Hospital	30-40
3	Young activist	Conseil régional de la jeunesse	15-35
4	Young activist	Conseil régional de la jeunesse	15-35
5	Young activist	Conseil communal de la jeunesse	15-35
6	Teacher	Lycée Hamadou Dicko	30-40
7	Building Technician	Private sector	30-40
8	NGO worker	National NGO	30-40
9	Carpenter	Private sector	35-45
10	Merchant	Private sector	30-40
11	Jeweller	Private sector	30-40

Tombouctou - Women

#	Capacity	Organization	Age Group
1	Member of an association	Association Gouma-tiéré	15-35
2	Member of an association	Association TAMALA	30-40
3	Housewife	Family	30-40
4	Housewife	Family	30-40
5	Member of an association	Association NAFAYAYA	15-35
6	Member of an association	Association RPPM	30-40
7	Housewife	Family	30-40
8	Member of an association	RDDM	40-50
9	Housewife	Family	30-40
10	Craftswoman	Private sector	40-50

Tombouctou - Men			
#	Capacity	Organization	Age Group
1	Member of an association	Association NAFA-HAYA	15-35
2	Member of an association	AJTS pour la paix	15-35
3	Member of an association	Association NAFA-HAYA	30-40
4	Member of an association	Association des jeunes Touareg pour la paix	15-35
5	Member of an association	Association kaninothendi	30-40
6	Member of an association	Association Annana	30-40
7	Member of an association	Association Anoura	30-40
8	Member of an association	AJDE Tombouctou	15-35
9	Motorcycle repairman	Private sector	30-40
10	Former tour guide	Private sector	40-50

Women's Participation in Peace and Reconciliation Processes in Mali

Perspectives from Segou, Mopti and Tombouctou

This report presents findings from a study about the participation of women in peace and reconciliation processes currently underway in Mali. The findings are based primarily on focus group discussions with men and women carried out in Segou and Mopti in central Mali, and Tombouctou in northern Mali, in December 2018.

The objective of these discussions was to identify concrete

factors that contribute to and/or hamper the possibilities for women's meaningful participation in peace and reconciliation processes in Mali. The findings identified highlight the need to consider both the specifics of the peace and reconciliation processes taking place in Mali and the more fundamental conditions related to gender inequality in the country.

An important finding is that women play crucial roles in local conflict resolution and management, but they are almost absent in the mechanisms for the implementation of the Algiers Agreement. It is therefore crucial that structures are established to make sure that the concerns and expertise of women at the local level is represented and informs discussions at the national level.

Jenny Lorentzen

Nana Alassane Toure

Bassirou Gaye

