



Right2Grow **Mali**
Annual Report 2023
Summary



Reporting period: 1 Jan 2023 - 31 Dec 2023
Report submitted by: Action contre la Faim

Programme Overview 2023

Country name	Mali
Programme number	PoV activity number 4000004339 Impact number: 100001237
Lead Partner	Action contre la faim (ACF)
Reporting period	January 2023-December 2023
Lead implementing Partner	Action contre la Faim Action contre la Faim-Spain - Mission Mali
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1. Programme Context

1.1 Changes in the country context

The Right2Grow program in Mali operates within a volatile national context characterized by security and political instabilities. The situation in Mali is marked by a nutritional crisis exacerbated by recurring food crises and security challenges in the North, Centre and South regions. Prevalence of global acute malnutrition exceeds WHO thresholds, with 11.1% of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) and 2.1% of severe malnutrition, while in the Kayes region, rates remain high at 11.9% of GAM and 1.5% of severe acute malnutrition (SMART 2023). Regarding the Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) sector, although 86% of households have access to drinking water, only 19% practice water treatment, and only 18% use private latrines, highlighting significant sanitation gaps (ENSAN 2022). Health indicators are very low in the regions and in rural areas. Access to water in urban areas is prioritized to the detriment of rural areas, leading to social tensions and conflicts over resources.

1.2 Risks and mitigations

The Malian government has set itself the objective of improving food security and the nutritional status of women and children. The country also wishes to improve its capacities in terms of monitoring nutritional and food problems and to ensure that these issues are taken into account in national and community policy frameworks. However, despite a clear and committed desire to improve the situation, the challenges remain significant, particularly in terms of financing, governance and coordination of stakeholders.

1.3 Implementation Challenges

The WASH sector continues to receive funding below Sanitation and Water for All commitments, remaining below the 5% target. For its part, nutrition is only financed at less than 1% of the state budget. At the same time, the suspension of budgetary aid by certain Western countries has significantly affected investments in basic social services. Nevertheless, the political context, marked by major institutional changes and the referendum on the new constitution, presents both challenges and opportunities for influencing policies in favour of nutrition and WASH.

At state level, integrating nutrition into Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Programme (PDESC) and drafting legislation on the right to food and WASH present major challenges in Mali. Historically, PDESCs have often prioritized sectors such as education, health, and agriculture, potentially sidelining nutrition-related aspects. This highlights the need to raise awareness among policymakers and the public regarding the interconnectedness of nutrition with economic, social, and cultural development. Effective coordination among ministries and stakeholders, alongside significant financial, human, and technical resources, is essential for successfully integrating nutrition into PDESCs and developing legislation on the right to food and WASH.

On the other hand, insufficient mobilization of financial resources by local authorities complicates the situation, hindering initiatives at the local level. This issue underscores the importance of robust lobbying and advocacy efforts to secure policy changes and increased allocation of resources to these critical sectors. A review of national and local budgets from 2020-2022 revealed low funding allocations for nutrition by local authorities, emphasizing the urgent need for enhanced financial support for nutrition and WASH initiatives. Positive steps have been taken since December 2023, aiming for political validation of the water and sanitation policy in 2024.

Additionally, challenges related to resource management and contextual adaptation were addressed through robust planning, effective coordination, and adaptive management strategies, such as mid-term reviews and adjustments to programme plans. Another challenge faced by the project was inadequate coordination among programme partners, leading to inefficiencies in activity implementation and potentially jeopardizing set objectives. Addressing this challenge requires strengthening regular exchange sessions to foster common understanding and effective collaboration among stakeholders. Operational adjustments are necessary to prevent activity gaps caused by conflicting schedules between partners. Furthermore, enhancing mutual learning among partners and improving the advocacy skills of citizen watch committee members are essential.

1.4 Cross cutting issues

Integral to the programme's approach is its commitment to addressing cross-cutting issues, including gender, disability, youth, and climate change. The programme actively promoted gender mainstreaming through targeted training and awareness campaigns, ensuring the inclusion of women's perspectives and needs. As part of the ambition to further mainstream inclusion in the programme, efforts have been made to include a section on inclusion in all the activities' terms of reference. Logistical adaptations have been made during the preparation of activities to meet the specific needs of people with disabilities, and awareness-raising campaigns have been carried out among local elected representatives, government technical services, the media and other stakeholders to raise awareness and mainstream

the effects of inequalities linked to gender, disability and age. In addition, beneficiary databases have been regularly updated to include data disaggregated by disability, gender and age, to ensure an equitable approach.

2. Programme results

2.1. Demand and investment in basic social services for nutrition and WASH (Pathway 1)

In order to strengthen the production and marketing of nutritious food, trainings for women's and youth groups in marketing and selling local nutritious products were conducted. Six community structures have been equipped to process these products, while annual local fairs involving nine CBOs/women's groups have been organized across beneficiary communes. These fairs not only promote WASH and nutrition products but also facilitate the sale of goods on local markets and foster mutual support among women processors.

Additionally, initiatives have been undertaken to raise awareness of good practices in WASH and nutrition. Radio broadcasts have been utilized throughout the year to disseminate information to the local population, and a virtual campaign on menstrual hygiene management has been launched, specifically targeting women and young girls.

Leaders and political authorities have been actively engaged in implementing commitment plans for community development. Annual local consultation meetings have been held to enlist the support of leaders and political authorities, resulting in the integration of nutritional activities into communal development plans and the provision of financial support for nutrition and WASH initiatives.

Table 2.1 Pathway 1 results

Code	Indicator	Baseline value	Target (year 3/overall)	Year 3 achievement	Notes/ comments
1.1.	Number of advocacy actions in which communities formulate requests for improved services (WASH and nutrition)	96	168	147	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -02 Participation of the 24 municipalities in the borough committees for the orientation, coordination and monitoring of development actions. -Participation of the 8 citizen watch committees in the administrative accounts, i.e. the drafting of the 2024 primitive budgets. -4 local consultation frameworks organised in the circles of Sikasso, Koutiatla, Koulikoro and Kolokani -55 citizen watch committees involved in drawing up the PDSEC, the primitive budget and ordinary sessions in the communes of Diomatene, Kignan, N'Golonianasso, Zanfigue, Sikasso, Koulikoro, Ouolodo, Meguetan and Sirakorola, Tienfala, Nonsombougou, Tioribougou and Kolokani. 2 participations by OMAES in the high-level advocacy workshop in Bamako and the advocacy workshop for the involvement of members of the National Transition Committee (CNT)

					-2 participation by SUN-OSC in the high-level advocacy workshop in Bamako and the advocacy team for the involvement of members of the National Transition Committee (CNT)
1.2.	Number of advocacy message notes at advocacy events in which CBOs set out requests for service improvements	0	96	145	National and local advocacy notes on water, crossing bridges and revitalising the sanitation commission, mobilising resources, etc. within the following frameworks: Scaling Up Nutrition, internutrition technical committee, local committee for guiding, coordinating and monitoring development actions, communal committee for guiding, coordinating and monitoring development actions, meetings with town councils and community leaders. This performance can be explained by the fact that CSOs took advantage of several national and local advocacy opportunities that were not initially planned.
1.3.	Number of decision-makers present at advocacy events in which CBOs put forward requests to improve services	288	264	357	The participating authorities are sub-prefects, presidents of district councils, local councillors, secretaries-general of town halls, heads of local services, and so on. At this level, the performance can be explained by the good collaboration maintained by the CSOs with the authorities, who attach vital importance to participation in CSO activities.
1.8.	Proportion of targeted barriers to good nutrition and/or WASH services successfully addressed by joint community and/or private sector initiatives.	0	20%	48%	-Adoption of the constitution -Validation of the new National Water Policy, -Networking of the private sector, -Access to budgetary information for analysis of national and communal budgets, etc. - Support for 2 nutrition support groups in Kignan and M'Pessoba, -Solution of the Zanfigue cereal bank problem, -Extension of standpipes to other neighbourhoods in N'Gouni, -Repair of the pump supplying the N'Gouni water tower.

2.2. Civil Society Empowerment (Pathway 2)

Several initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen CSOs and citizen watch committees, particularly on governance tools. These training courses have enabled watchdog committees to gain a better understanding of awareness-raising issues and to adopt a more effective approach to their citizen monitoring activities in the areas of nutrition and WASH. At the same time, twelve savings and credit groups have been set up to support the activities of communities, particularly women, in the field of nutrition and WASH. Local partner Association des Jeunes pour la Citoyenneté Active et la Démocratie (AJCAD), in collaboration with other Right2Grow partners, has developed an electoral

advocacy plan to promote the prioritisation of WASH and Nutrition in the social projects of candidates in Mali's general elections.

Right2Grow's support for the national Sanitation and Water for All committee has enabled regional focal points to be set up, and Sanitation and Water for All activities to be directed at local level. Training has also been provided to citizen watch committees on image and video-taking techniques, helping to better document community initiatives. documentation of community initiatives. Strengthening the networks of journalists monitoring public investment has been a priority, with the publication of numerous press articles aimed at raising public awareness of nutrition and WASH issues.

A competition was organised among journalists to encourage publications on the themes of the Right2Grow programme. The competition helped journalists to publish articles on these subjects, with prizes awarded for the best contributions. Finally, support was provided to strengthen the network of nutrition parliamentarians, in particular by involving them in the advocacy process for the inclusion of food in the constitution. This strategic alliance led to the constitutionalising of nutrition in July 2023, with fifteen members of the *Conseil National de Transition* (National Transition Council) pledging to support advocacy for the operationalisation of the right to food.

Table 2.2. Pathway 2 results

Code	Indicator	Baseline value	Target (year 3/overall)	Year 3 achievement	Notes/ comments
2.1.	Number of times CSOs have succeeded in creating space for their demands and positions. (by setting the agenda, influencing the debate and/or creating space for engagement)	16	40	63	08 communal consultation meetings, 02 parliamentary advocacy meetings, 34 <i>Comité Communal d'Orientation, de Coordination et de Suivi des Actions de Développement</i> (CAOCSAD) meetings in which the citizen waych committees presented their advocacy note with a view to influencing debates in favour of taking Wash and nutrition into account in the PDESC and budget, 1 world climate change day, 5 <i>Comité Local d'Orientation de concertation et de suivi des Actions de développement</i> (CLOCSAD) meetings held in Kayes and Bafoulabé, 1 inter-nutrition technical committee, 8 citizens' day meetings organised for good governance.
2.3.	Number of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs, for, by or with their membership/ constituency	0	198	29	-2 parliamentary pleas, -1 plea during the week of inclusive breastfeeding and World Food Day -3 CLOCSAD; -4 World Days; -4 orientation frameworks for local elected representatives on nutrition -4 consultation frameworks -3 awareness-raising on menstrual hygiene management -4 communication campaign on climate change -3 frameworks for the restitution of citizen monitoring reports

					-2 sessions on forums and learning about good practice in nutrition and wash
D.1	Number of CSOs/NGOs with increased L&A capacity	0	8	8	6 NGOs/CSOs, -24 community-based CSOs -4 Associations and cooperative society All the CSOs manage to present advocacy notes, which is the primary objective of the support provided. The other dimension is the number of successes recorded by these advocacy actions, as evidenced by the changes achieved.

2.3. Adoption and mainstream of multi-sectoral approach to undernutrition (Pathway 3)

The Right2Grow project in Mali has undertaken several significant activities aimed at enhancing multi-sectoral approach to undernutrition. Dissemination workshops for the Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan (MAPN) 2021-2025 were conducted in Kayes, shedding light on nutrition issues. Evaluation of food and nutrition security integration into PDESCs by CAOCsADs in Kayes and Bafoulabé offered improvement suggestions. CCOCSAD/CAOCsAD meetings in the 24 communes addressed food security, WASH, and women's empowerment, enhancing access to agro-market garden produce. The project contributed to improving the 2024 budget notes, strengthening synergy among stakeholders for multi-sectoral funding of nutrition. An electoral advocacy plan was implemented to integrate nutrition into future candidates' programs, advocating for a multi-sectoral approach.

A journalistic campaign promoting good nutritional and WASH practices through a competition fostered innovative ideas. Television and radio debates raised awareness of the multisectoral nature of nutrition and nutritional quality in Mali. Support for the Sanitation and Water for All National Committee's Action Plan accelerated the adoption of the National Water and Sanitation Policy, promoting mutual accountability. Workshops monitored 2022 plans, drawing up and financing 2023 CHC plans, leading to concrete actions like toilet construction and water point extension. Biannual regional evidence documentation meetings shared citizen watch committees recommendations with local authorities and community leaders. Annual support for holding CLOCSADs for each Cercle resulted in citizen watch committees sending advocacy notes on nutrition and WASH. Forum exchange and sharing of experiences between intervention zones and awarding model municipalities encouraged experience sharing and rewarded exemplary municipalities. Finally, support for the implementation of Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement champions led to significant changes such as the inclusion of the right to food in the constitution.

Table 2.3. showing pathway 3 results

Code	Indicator	Baseline value	Target (year 3/overall)	Year 3 achievement	Notes/ comments
3.2	Number of laws, policies, standards/attitudes, and decisions blocked, adopted, improved at national, regional, municipal and local level for sustainable and	4	2	8	1 adoption of a new constitution incorporating the right to food and sanitation, 1 validation of the new national water policy at an interministerial meeting, 01 decision to appoint regional Sanitation and Water for All focal points, inclusion of sensitive nutrition activities in social, economic and cultural development programmes in the communes of Nonsombougou, Diomatenè, Tioribougou and Ouolodo.

	inclusive development.				
3.3	Percentage of public budgets allocated and implemented for nutrition and WASH services (increased funding)	WASH: 3.62% in 2020 Nutrition: less than 0.7% of the health budget in 2018	2.3% (Average increase in WASH and Nutrition)	WASH: 0.60 Nutrition: 0.21	The national 2022 budget has been analysed and the results are in the process of being validated by the inter-nutritional technical committee.
	Percentage of public budgets allocated and implemented for the nutrition service (increased funding)	Nutrition: less than 0.7% of the health budget in 2018	0,90%	0,21%	The national 2022 budget has been analysed and the results are in the process of being validated by the inter-nutritional technical committee.
	Percentage of public budgets allocated and implemented for WASH services (increased funding)	WASH: 3.62% in 2020	3,7%	0,6%	The national 2022 budget has been analysed and the results are in the process of being validated by the inter-nutritional technical committee (CTIN).
	Increase in municipal budgets devoted to WASH and Nutrition	0	5%	Kayes (3.07%), Koulikoro (1.55%), Sikasso (1.92%).	Analyses of the 2020, 2021 and 2022 budgets of the 24 communes have been carried out and the results are in the process of being validated by the CTIN.

2.4. Donors and international development actor's coordination to address the underlying determinants of undernutrition (Pathway 4)

Right2Grow partner in Mali, AJCAD, has played a key role in coordinating international efforts to combat undernutrition through major initiatives: they participated to half-yearly steering committee meetings, which provided an opportunity to assess the progress of activities and discuss recommendations for better planning. They also highlighted the challenges encountered in implementing the programs.

They supported Action Contre la Faim's multi-sectoral nutrition review, during which a national plea was made to the government and donors on the operationalization of the Nexus and the empowerment of women, with the emphasis on agro-ecology. Right2Grow has supported the activities of the national Sanitation and Water for All committee, in particular its participation in international forums on water and sanitation. This has strengthened Mali's commitment to regional and international initiatives.

Œuvre Malienne d'Aide à l'Enfance du Sahel (OMAES), in partnership with World Vision and the SUN Académie network, organised an advocacy workshop to mobilise financial resources for nutrition and WASH. The meeting brought together government representatives, technical and financial partners, civil society organisations, nutrition experts and the media. The workshop resulted in recommendations to strengthen political and financial commitment to nutrition and WASH. It also encouraged CSO participation in regional and international discussions to broaden the impact of advocacy.

Table 2.4 showing pathway 4 results

Code	Indicator	Baseline value	Target (year 3/overall)	Year 3 achievement	Notes/ comments
4.1	The degree of success of R2G's and its partners' lobbying and advocacy roles with donors and international players.	2	Medium	Medium	-01 Functional Sanitation and Water for All Committee -Integration of nutrition into 7 new social, economic and cultural development programmes: Diomatene, N'Golonianasso, Zanfigue, Ouolodo, Tioribougou, Meguetan, Sirakorola -Follow-up of the recommendations of the 2021-2025 multi-sector nutrition action plan, -Consultation of 16 civil society organisations during the drafting of the primary budget, -Functionality of 2 regional multi-sector consultation frameworks (local committee for the orientation, coordination and monitoring of development actions).
	Number of multi-stakeholder discussion and advocacy forums in which R2G members are involved as part of the humanitarian-development nexus	2	20	5	2 Sanitation and Water for All meetings, 1 water conference, 01 sanitation forum, 1 participation in the inter-nutrition technical committee. At this level, the political context has limited funding for the revitalisation of several frameworks at national level.
	Level of implementation of the Nutrition for Growth and SWA commitments and the recommendations of the humanitarian advocacy notes	Low	Medium	Medium	02 SWA commitments fulfilled -Follow-up of Sanitation and Water for All commitments -Follow-up of Nutrition for Growth recommendations and commitments -Follow-up of the recommendations of the multisectoral nutrition action plan.
4.2	Extent to which donors integrate the WASH-Nutrition nexus as part of the humanitarian-development nexus to address the underlying determinants of undernutrition.	Low	Medium	Medium	Follow-up on Sanitation and Water for All commitments - Follow-up on Nutrition for Growth recommendations and commitments - Follow-up on the recommendations of the multisectoral nutrition action plan.

G.1	# meetings involving multi-sector coordination between humanitarian and development actors and donors on WASH and nutrition to share experiences and strengthen the evidence base	5	9	6	-1 annual multi-sector nutrition review, -1 CTIN, -2 Sanitation and Water for All meetings -2 multi-sector magazines
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3. Advocacy Initiatives, impact stories and learning

In 2023, the Right2Grow project in Mali embarked on a multifaceted advocacy campaign aimed at catalysing legislative and financial support for nutrition and WASH initiatives. Recognizing the pivotal role of advocacy in effecting change, the project undertook various strategic actions. These included leveraging the influence of the WASH Journalists' Network through targeted publications, engaging in robust lobbying efforts directed at key stakeholders such as the Sanitation and Water for All Committee, the National Transition Council, and relevant ministries, and orchestrating advocacy meetings both nationally and locally to galvanize support and commitment.

3.1. Reflection on learnings and communication of results for scaling

Several impactful advocacy initiatives were spearheaded by the Right2Grow project during the year. Notably, national advocacy efforts sought to operationalize the nexus approach and promote women's empowerment, with a specific focus on agro-ecology. This involved supporting multi-sectoral nutrition reviews and mobilizing women towards active participation in these initiatives.

Additionally, advocacy endeavours were directed towards positioning WASH as a catalyst for social change, encompassing comprehensive studies, result dissemination, and community engagement initiatives. The project also championed a multi-sectoral approach to nutrition through workshops involving local stakeholders, dissemination of strategic documents such as the 2021-2025 MAPN, and evaluations of existing local development plans to ensure alignment with food security, WASH, and gender considerations.

Another critical aspect of the advocacy strategy involved presenting advocacy notes to pertinent authorities, serving as a conduit to highlight opportunities for promoting nutrition and enhancing access to WASH facilities. These notes, meticulously crafted and presented by the citizen watch committees during local coordination meetings, underscored the importance of various interventions such as agro-market gardening, local processing initiatives, and improved household and school-level WASH infrastructure.

Furthermore, the project actively advocated for women's empowerment through forums and actionable initiatives aimed at facilitating access to resources, fostering participation in cooperatives, and enhancing capacity-building efforts for civil society organizations. This comprehensive approach sought to bolster local governance frameworks and foster collaboration between diverse stakeholders, including CSOs, elected representatives, and the private sector.

Central to the advocacy efforts was the adoption and application of the "Bridge for Voices" (B4V) approach, which facilitated dialogue and engagement with decision-makers at the grassroots level. Through vigilant citizen watch activities conducted by the citizen watch committees across intervention communes, community needs related to WASH and nutrition were systematically identified and communicated to relevant authorities. Subsequently, concerted efforts were made to lobby municipal authorities, resulting in tangible outcomes such as improved access to drinking water, enhanced waste management practices, and revitalized activities to combat malnutrition.

In terms of achievements, 2023 witnessed notable strides at both national and local levels. Key accomplishments included the strengthening of capacities among key stakeholders, leading to tangible improvements in national legislation pertaining to nutrition and WASH. Additionally, heightened media involvement in monitoring government policies and investments underscored a growing commitment to accountability and transparency in these critical sectors.

At the local level, the revival of multi-sectoral frameworks such as CLOCSAD and CAOCSAD facilitated meaningful exchanges on development issues, empowering civil society groups to articulate advocacy grievances effectively. Local authorities demonstrated increased investment in nutrition by integrating it into development plans, while the private sector contributed through innovative business models aimed at enhancing access to nutritional products within communities.

Learning emerged as a cornerstone of the Right2Grow project, with a concerted focus on innovative approaches, working methods, and specific topics relevant to the Malian context. Through targeted learning themes and activities, stakeholders were equipped with the tools and insights needed to drive sustainable change effectively.

Moreover, the project's commitment to reflective learning was evidenced by the meticulous documentation and analysis of activities, allowing for the identification of key success factors, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. This iterative process facilitated the formulation of practical recommendations aimed at enhancing the efficacy and scalability of advocacy strategies and methodologies.

Furthermore, active participation in cross-national learning initiatives, such as the learning week organized by the Global team in Kampala, Uganda, provided invaluable opportunities for knowledge exchange, strategic reflection, and the identification of best practices. By leveraging these collaborative platforms, the Mali team was able to glean insights from successful advocacy endeavors in other contexts, thereby enriching their own approach and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

3.2 Testimonies from partners on advocacy efforts

My name is Aminata Souaré Coulibaly. I'm the president of the Association des transformatrices en agroalimentaire. I live in the village of Tienfala. Before the Right2Grow project arrived in our community, the commune of Tienfala was home to the final disposal site for solid and liquid waste that served the district of Bamako. The population suffered enormously from the management of this site, which produced foul smells, a proliferation of flies and mosquitoes, insalubrity and groundwater pollution. This had a considerable impact on the quality of life of the local population, with diarrhoeal diseases among children to name but a few.

So, after the local consultation framework organised between local decision-makers, CSOs, CBOs and technical services in December 2021 and May 2022, we have organised ourselves into a pressure group made up of young people, women and people with disabilities and have formulated a request for support in terms of sanitation materials and equipment and the construction of a transit depot for storing solid waste produced by households. In view of the stakes involved, the communities frequently made lobbying visits (informal meetings) to the town hall, and the citizen watch committees, in the course of their participation in meetings organised by the town hall, raised the problem of the management of the Noumoubougou final transit depot and its impact on the environment. The pressure group, made up of women and young people from six neighbouring villages directly affected by the negative impact of the Noumoubougou landfill on the health of the population, discussed the situation with the local authorities and called for the creation of an Economic Interest Group (EIG) and the construction of a transit depot for the collection and storage of household waste at Tienfala, in order to mitigate the impact of the waste on the environment. Following an inspection visit to Tienfala by former Environment Minister Modibo Koné in 2022, the Tienfala town council agreed to create sanitation and hygiene facilities for the municipality of Tienfala, and to build a transit depot at Tienfala Gare in 2023, and to create and provide the EIG with tricycles, 113 dustbins, wheelbarrows, shovels, etc., after raising 10 million euros.



This community initiative has helped to improve local sanitation and hygiene policy in the municipality of Tienfala through the creation of an economic interest group made up of young people and women from six (6) riverside villages. Today, the GIE provides a service for the collection and storage of solid waste produced by households at the Tienfala Gare transit depot.

4. Partnership and collaboration reflections

In the 8 communes of Mali, the Right2Grow project has fostered robust collaboration among various stakeholders, including local authorities, civil society organizations, administrative bodies, and technical services, in partnership with STOP SAHEL. This collaborative effort has facilitated the seamless integration of WASH and nutrition agendas, with new policies reflecting a holistic approach encompassing nutrition and gender considerations. Moreover, local actors, especially citizen watch committees, now play a pivotal role in promoting WASH and nutrition within their communities.

Efforts to transfer power to civil society organizations have been intensified through capacity-building programs such as the Citizen Control of Public Action (CCAP) program. The active engagement of citizen watch committees in citizen monitoring activities has yielded tangible results, such as increased community awareness and improved tax collection rates.

Furthermore, the project has engaged in strategic partnerships and collaborations with other organizations and initiatives. Cooperation with Action contre la Faim's NAVARRA project included co-organizing an Village Savings and Credit Association training workshop, while collaboration with other Action contre la Faim projects facilitated regional workshops and debates on nutrition. Additionally, partnerships with FIRKA and Affaire Mondiales Canada enabled the organization of fairs and debates on nutrition, respectively.

A mechanism for mutual accountability between stakeholders, including government departments, CSOs, and the private sector, has strengthened advocacy efforts for the constitutionalizing of the right to water and stimulated private sector commitment to funding WASH and nutrition. Strategic cooperation with partners, both at the national and local levels, reflects the project's commitment to achieving concrete and sustainable results in nutrition and WASH.

Furthermore, collaboration with the Dutch Embassy has been instrumental in country steering committee meetings, where achievements and success stories were shared, and recommendations were made for enhancing efforts to combat malnutrition. The Embassy's expertise has been mobilized to address the multisectoral nature of nutrition in Mali, with quarterly newsletters being sent to extend and improve strategic partnerships between the Right2Grow project and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Overall, these collaborative efforts and partnerships underscore the project's commitment to empowering communities, enhancing nutrition and WASH outcomes, and fostering sustainable development in Mali.

5. Programme reflections

Following the mid-term review, significant adjustments and decisions have been made in the implementation of the Right2Grow program in Mali. One notable change is the concerted effort to enhance the communication strategy, ensuring the comprehensive involvement of all stakeholders. This initiative aims to streamline communication

channels and facilitate better coordination among implementing partners, civil society organizations, and local authorities.

Furthermore, a pivotal shift in approach towards transferring power has been initiated within the consortium. This entails delegating most activities of the lead organizations to implementing partners. This delegation of responsibilities includes tasks such as collecting and compiling the results framework for 2024/2025 and coordinating learning activities and strategic steering committees. The overarching goal of this transition is to empower local actors and foster greater ownership and sustainability of project initiatives.

To enhance effectiveness and efficiency, thematic organization of activities for 2024 has been proposed. This thematic approach enables partners to collaborate more closely, identifying optimal methods for joint activities and leveraging each other's strengths. Moreover, a review of targets for certain indicators in the country results framework has been undertaken post-mid-term review, ensuring alignment with project objectives and contextual realities.

In a bid to improve access to budget information, a partnership framework has been developed with the General Budget Directorate. This initiative seeks to establish mechanisms for retrieving and analyzing budgetary information for informed decision-making and resource allocation. Additionally, efforts are underway to build the capacity of citizen watch committees in drafting advocacy briefs. These capacity-building sessions aim to enhance the quality and impact of advocacy efforts by civil society organizations.

Reflecting on the theory of change and results framework, adjustments have been made to 10 indicators in the results framework to ensure relevance and alignment with project goals. Despite these changes, the overarching theory of change remains consistent with national policies and community needs, with an emphasis on strengthening coordination and multi-sectoral collaboration.

Several key successes have been achieved during the reporting period, including national legislative changes to incorporate food and WASH into policy frameworks. At the local level, increased community engagement and awareness have led to tangible improvements in areas such as tax collection and the inclusion of nutrition activities in local development plans. These successes underscore the importance of community-led initiatives and multi-sectoral governance structures in driving sustainable change.

Analysis of the implementation rate compared to the budget consumption rate reveals satisfactory progress in executing planned activities within allocated resources. While the context may have influenced the rate of budget expenditure, partners have effectively utilized funds to implement planned activities, ensuring efficient budget management.

Lessons learned from the program include the importance of robust planning, effective coordination, and flexibility in adapting to local needs. Additionally, promoting multi-sectoral approaches and fostering community ownership have emerged as critical strategies for sustainable development.

6. Conclusion and way forward

In summary, the Right2Grow project's advocacy endeavours in Mali in 2023 constituted a concerted effort to drive legislative and financial support for nutrition and WASH initiatives. Through strategic interventions, collaborative partnerships, and reflective learning practices, the project made significant strides towards fostering sustainable change at both national and local levels, thereby laying a solid foundation for continued progress and impact in the years to come.

The concerted efforts to strengthen communication strategies, transfer power to local actors, and streamline thematic organization of activities reflect a proactive approach towards enhancing program effectiveness and sustainability.

Adjustments made post-mid-term review, such as revising targets for certain indicators and action plan revision, demonstrate adaptive programming tailored to the country context.

Regarding budget execution, it should be noted that the level of implementation of 2023 activities planned in the action plans is very satisfactory: all partners succeeded in implementing all of the activities planned. The burn -rate of allocated funds also remains very satisfactory: 2023 budget was fully spent without over-execution, which demonstrates adequate budgetary planning and management.

Looking ahead, the Right2Grow in Mali will keep its direction based on the recommendations made during the mid-term evaluation that do not lead to a profound change in the strategy.

In the spirit of sustaining results, the program will continue to implement capacity building for community actors and promote their empowerment to represent the needs of their communities. The Citizen Watch Committees will be better equipped to design advocacy notes and community mobilization strategies by creating a partnership with existing community groups.

The program will continue working on a strong community leadership and request demonstration of clear political will. The subjects on advocacy in favour of financing the nexus, the establishment of a national steering committee of the nexus and the financing of communities for community resilience in the face of climate change will be carried out, taking advantage of any framework in mutualization of complementarity.

Finally, an inclusive approach to actions, with strong participation from different categories of the population, will keep being favoured. More emphasis will be placed on connecting women's groups trained in agricultural processing to the private sector on nutrition by helping them to grow formally in the private sector and gain access to financing.

Continued engagement with strategic partnerships, such as the Dutch Embassy, and collaboration with other CSOs and the private sector will be essential for leveraging resources and amplifying program impact. Emphasis will also be placed on monitoring and evaluation to ensure accountability and track progress towards achieving program objectives.

Overall, the program in Mali is well-positioned to build on its achievements and address emerging priorities in the final years. By remaining adaptive, responsive, and inclusive, the program aims to leave a lasting legacy of improved nutrition and WASH outcomes, contributing to sustainable development and positive change in communities across the country.