Building Capacity
for Advancing Child Protection in Mali

A project submitted to Middlesex University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Professional Studies
(Child Protection)

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Abstract

UNICEF is the UN worldwide agency committed to promote children's rights across countries. Such a mandate is particularly significant in African countries like Mali where children under the age of 18 make up 50% of the population and who experience widespread violation of rights. In 2011, when I was chief child protection in this country with a role to manage UNICEF's interventions and human resources charged to protect children against various forms of violation of their rights, I embarked on research aiming to investigate conflicts experienced by Child Protection Workers (CPWs) related to their personal beliefs/practices and professional agenda. The methodology of the research was action oriented in line with my intention to put this work at the service of CPWs in Mali and beyond to improve their practice. I worked together with them to explore various dimensions of cultural conflicts and what it takes to manage it effectively in the context of Mali. The Key findings could be summarised as follows:

- CPWs are involved in various forms of violation of children's right: Violence, Child Labour, Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)…

- The cultural conflict experienced by CPWs is among challenges that limit the programme from achieving better results. It also impacts negatively on the workers through lack of job satisfaction, low self-esteem and health problems due to the clash experienced between UNICEF expectations and local community values.

- Socio economic determinants interrelate with strategies in the management of cultural and practice mismatches experienced by CPWs.

The analysis of CPWs' positioning through what I call 'Triangle Model' provides insights into various types of CPWs encountered in respect of the distance separating them from their professional values/agenda. Answers to questions raised by the triangle model is likely to help guide policies and strategies to build the capacities of CPWs and to support them to adjust to their professional agenda. This project also demonstrates that to face cultural discrepancies, stakeholders will need to go one step beyond 'ordinary' strategies to experiment with more contextualized initiatives. Recognition of inherent power in workers and communities should be seen as part of any theory of capacity building itself based on the framework of social constructionism.

Acknowledgements

To my children Anike, Ayinde, Aremou and Tunde for your encouragements as you contended with all the challenges facing children whose father is too busy.

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To the research participants. You showed interest in this study, shared your concerns, your questions and your hope for a better protection of children in Mali. You trusted me to voice out your voice and our journey has been exciting. A qualitative study relies tremendously on people who accept to open up their lives to serve as a mirror for others. Thank you.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

5-HTTLPR	: 5-HydroxyTryptamine (serotonin) Transporter Gene-Linked Polymorphic Region
ACRWC	: African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Children
BICE	: Bureau International Catholique pour l'Enfance
CARITAS	: Charity (a Catholic church NGO)
CBC	: Communication for Behavior Change
CBOs	: Community Based Organisations
CCA	: Common Country Assessment
CMT	: Country Management Team
CNDIFE	: Centre National de Documentation et d'Information sur la Femme et l'Enfant
CPD	: Country Programme Development
CPR	: Country Programme Recommendation
CPW	: Child Protection Worker
CRC	: Convention on the Right of Children
DHS	: Demographic and Health Survey
DProf	: Doctor of Professional Studies
DPS	: Doctorate in Professional Studies
ECAPDEF	: Étude sur les Connaissances, Attitudes et Pratiques en Matière des Droits de l'enfant et de la Femme au Mali
ECOWAS	: Economic Community of West African States
EDSM	: Enquête Démographique et de Santé du Mali
ENTE	: Enquête Nationale sur le Travail des Enfants (National Survey on Children's Labour)
ERNWACA	: Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa
FACM	: Formerly Abducted Child Mothers
FGDs	: Focus Group Discussions
FGM/C	: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GBV	: Gender-Based Violence
GCSE	: General Certification of Secondary Education

GDP   : Gross Domestic Product

GVRC   : Gender Violence Recovery Centre

HIV   : Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HRBA   : Human Right Based Approach

IDPs   : Internally Displaced Persons

IDR   : Institutions' Directors and Representatives

INSTAT   : Institut National de la Statistique

IWBL   : Institute for Work Based Learning

KAP   : Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices

KU   : University of Kansas

LSA   : Local Staff associations

MACEC   : Mission d'Appui à la Consolidation de l'Etat Civil

MDG   : Millennium Development Goals

MDSSPA   : Ministère du Développement Social, de la Solidarité et des
                  Personnes Agées

MDX   : Middlesex

MH/CD   : Mental Health/Chemical Dependency

MICS   : Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys

MNLA   : Mouvement National pour la Libération de l'Azawat

MPFEF   : Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme, de l'Enfant et de la Famille

MTR   : Mid Term Review

MWCF   : Ministry for Women, Children and Families

NGO   : Non-Governmental Organization

ODI   : Overseas Development Institute

OECD   : Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OHADA   : Organisation pour l'Harmonisation en Afrique du Droit des Affaires

ORTB   : Office de Radio et Télévision Nationale du Bénin

P2D   : Personal and Professional Development

PBUH   : Peace Be Upon Him

PEF   : Protective Environment Framework

PNG   : Persona Non Grata

PNLE   : Programme National de Lutte contre l'Excision

(National Programme for the Fight against the Practice of Excision)

RAL   : Recognition and Accreditation of Learning

ROCARE   : Réseau Ouest et Centre Africain de Recherche en Education

SIDA   : Swedish International Development Cooperation

SitAn   : Situation Analysis

U5MR   : Under Five Mortality Rate

UCW   : Understanding Children's Work

UEMOA   : Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine

UN   : United Nations

UNCRC   : United Nation's Convention on the Right of Children

UNCT   : United Nation's Country Team

UNESCO   : United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

UNFPA   : United Nations Population Fund

UNHCR   : United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF   : United Nations Children's Fund

URTNA   : Union des Radiodiffusions et Télévisions Nationales d'Afrique

USA   : United States of America

VAC   : Violence Against Children

VEPS   : Victorian Early Parenting Strategy

WCARO   : West and Central African Regional Office

WFP   : World Food Programme

Profile of participants quoted throughout the report

Participant (Code in the report)	Gender	Status: National /Foreign	Age	Seniority (Number of years in child protection)
CPW N29	Female	Malian, UN National staff	43	4
CPW N28	Male	Malian, UN National staff	37	5
CPW N54	Male	Malian, Governmental staff	54	20
CPW N7	Male	Malian, Governmental staff	34	3
CPW N34	Male	Malian, Governmental staff	44	6
CPW N28	Male	Malian, UN National staff	48	10
CPW N1	Female	Malian, International NGO staff	45	13
CPW N19	Male	Malian, International NGO staff	39	6
CPW N78	Male	Malian, UN National staff	55	7
CPW N87	Male	Malian, International NGO staff	31	11
CPW N42	Female	Malian, National NGO staff	34	4
CPW N40	Male	Malian, UN National staff	60	15
CPW N33	Male	UN Expatriate staff	57	28
CPW N51	Male	Malian, Governmental staff	56	9
CPW N39	Female	Malian, UN National staff	42	7
CPW N56	Male	Malian, Governmental staff	50	15
CPW N6	Female	Malian, International NGO staff	41	8
CPW N65	Male	Malian, Governmental staff	38	12

IDR N85	Male	Malian, Governmental staff	45	15
IDR N35	Male	Malian, National NGO Director	48	12
IDR N48	Male	Malian, Governmental staff	48	17
IDR N47	Female	Malian, Governmental IDR	55	18
IDR N38	Male	UN Expatriate staff	50	21
CPW N82	Male	Malian, Governmental staff	57	27
CPW N89	Male	UN National staff	48	17
CPW N63	Female	Malian Governmental staff	55	30
CPW N52	Female	Malian, Governmental staff	40	11
CPW N30	Male	Malian, UN National staff	38	1
CPW N22	Female	Malian, UN National staff	43	6
CPW N20	Female	Malian, Governmental staff	58	8
CPW N50	Female	Malian, Governmental staff	48	9
CPW N32	Male	Malian, National NGO staff	35	5
CPW N42	Female	Malian, UN National staff	46	4
CPW N4	Female	Expatriate staff of an International NGO	45	3
CPW N23	Male	Malian Governmental staff	38	1
CPW N86	Male	Malian, Governmental staff	47	5
CPW N66	Male	Malian, Governmental staff	56	3
CPW N21	Male	Malian, Governmental staff	45	5
CPW N49	Female	Malian, Governmental staff	49	19
Retired CPW	Male	Malian, Former Governmental staff	72	32
CPW N84	Male	Malian, Governmental staff	30	1

CPW N25	Male	Malian, UN National staff	33	4
CPW N77	Male	Malian, UN National staff	37	4
CPW N79	Male	Malian, Governmental staff	32	2
IDR N36	Male	Expatriate international NGO staff	48	16
CPW N61	Male	Malian, Governmental staff	29	1

Part 1

Chapter 1: Introduction

This introductory Chapter traces the background of the challenges that motivated the undertaking of this research. The chapter also explains the research objectives, target audience, how research question emerged and how it was sharpened along in line with my working position; before introducing the readers to the whole structure of the thesis report.

1.1   Background and context of the research

The research took place in Mali and it involved Child Protection Workers (CPWs) from governmental institutions, NGOs and technical agencies that are supporting programmes formulated to promote and protect children's rights. In addition to being the employer of the researcher, the role of the United Nations Children's Funds (UNICEF) consists in building and promoting partnerships for child protection.

Known worldwide for its leadership on issues regarding children, UNICEF has developed tools and strategic actions for strengthening child protection. The Protective Environment Framework (PEF) set out with UNICEF Operational Guidance defines 8 broad elements critical to good protection (UNICEF 2008). These run from communication for social change to service provision for children. Interconnected, these elements work individually and collectively to strengthen protection and reduce children's vulnerability. UNICEF's work in securing a protective environment in line with human rights is oriented towards advocacy for legislation reform through evidence based and knowledge management, the provision of essential basic social services for children and combating harmful traditional practices. UNICEF has been providing support to Mali since the country's independence in 1960.

1.1.1   Cultural, Socio Economic and Geographical Context of Mali

A vast landlocked Saharan and West African country of 1 241 238 km², Mali shares 7000 kilometers borders with Algeria in north, Niger in east, Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire in south, Guinea in south-west, and Senegal and Mauritania in west. Its population in 2015 was estimated at 17 735 000 inhabitants of which 75, 4 % live in rural areas (INSTAT 2015). With 48.8% of people aged below 15, Mali is

characterized by its young population. On average, seven in ten people (70.5%) have no education level. Only 0.8% of the population has reached a level of higher education (Ibid). The war that started in 2012 resulted in significant retrogression that

jeopardized the democratic gains and progress made since 1990. Estimates suggest 200,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and 160,000 Malian refugees are spread across Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Niger (UNHCR 2013; WFP 2013).
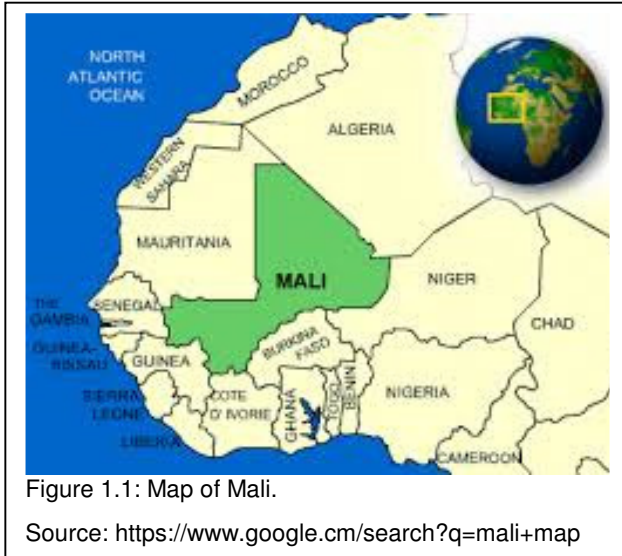
Figure 1.1: Map of Mali.

Source: https://www.google.cm/search?q=mali+map

Following the signing of a peace agreement between belligerents, the reunification of the country and the effective administration of state power in the northern part is an ongoing challenge under discussion between the central government in Bamako and the rebels. Despite all these difficulties, Mali is presently ruled with democratic principles aligned on international human rights' conventions.

Beyond armed conflict, Mali's recent political history is inseparable from the National Conference of March 1991 that was a central landmark in the march of the country towards democracy. Following the recommendations of that conference, Mali engaged in the redistribution of state power in three directions (OECD 2011):

- From public to private. The state relies, as of now, on private initiatives for missions previously under its jurisdiction.
- From central to local. The state delegates some of its prerogatives to decentralized entities and levels it considers better positioned to play them.
- From national to supranational, in the sense that the process of regional integration includes several aspects of economic management (currency,

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customs, business law ...) in common frameworks of ECOWAS[1], UEMOA[2], OHADA[3] ...

This state reform that has empowered both the locals and the West African Community is very relevant to the perspective of this study. It is in line with the recognition of the role of grassroots entities and also provides opportunity for some comparative analysis of the positioning of Mali among the west and central African states in general and with regards to the rights of children in particular.

Mali is a poor country. Poverty is more pronounced in rural areas than in urban settings and the most vulnerable households are those headed by agricultural workers. The war has increased the vulnerability of people in general and children in particular.

The economy is based primarily on the agricultural sector (which represents over 40% of GDP, 3/4 of exports and involves nearly 80% of the population). According to the 2012 report from the Agency for the Environment and Sustained Development, this sector will continue to play a leading role in the economic development of the country. Industry and mining are also expected to expand significantly. Mali is the third African gold producer behind South Africa and Ghana.

Human development indicators rank Mali among the least developed countries. Nearly 62% of household expenditure serves to purchase food products (INSTAT 2015). The proportion of the employed male population is higher than the employed female population.

The majority of households are sedentary. Nomadism is mainly practiced in the northern regions of the country (Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal). Although few foreigners (0.76%) coming from neighboring countries can be found within the territory, Mali is not really an immigration country that attracts other nationalities. This low proportion of migrants is among factors contributing to the maintenance and preservation of numerous cultural practices as local culture is poorly influenced by external realities.

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[1] ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States
[2] UEMOA : Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine
[3] OHADA : Organisation pour l'Harmonisation en Afrique du Droit des Affaires

Bambara is the most spoken language and Islam the most practiced religion (more than 90% of the population).

Analysis of marital status signals that 85% of women and 63% of men are married. This disparity can be accounted for through the polygamy arrangement that is still widely practiced in Mali. Singles are more located in urban areas than in rural areas. 69% of married women want a child or another child (EDSM V 2013). This population is distributed among 2.4 million households living in 1.3 million compounds, or 6.1 persons per household. Bamako alone, with 1.8 million people represents more than half (55%) of the urban population (Ibid). Fertility rate averages 6.8 children per woman

Malian household is generally large. It varies between 9 persons in rural area and 7 persons in urban zones. Nearly 3 out of 4 Malians lives in a household of 7 persons or more. This facilitates and reinforces the social control over individuals in the sociologic context of Mali. More than 90% of households are led by men (INSTAT 2015).

Above described context of Mali impacts directly and indirectly on the situation of children as it influences both behaviour and interventions in favour of their rights.

Children are confronted with two groups of challenges regarding rights' violation. The first group concerns harmful traditional practices, at the top of which are ranked early marriage and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) ranking top. FGM/C is defined by the World Health Organisation as procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injuries to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons (UNICEF 2010). The second group is composed of more classical cases of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitations of all sorts**,** like begging children usually called 'street children'.

1.1.2 Major Achievements and Challenges in Child Protection

The coverage of basic education increased to about 3.9% per year until the war started in 2012. The gross enrollment rate was nearly 80%, which remains below the average for Sub-Saharan African countries. General secondary and higher education have witnessed a much faster school coverage at + 14% and + 18% respectively per

year (OECD et al 2011). However, education stakeholders remain concerned about gender disparities which have decreased very little. Sexual exploitation and unwanted pregnancies are among the causes that discourage girls and their parents in relation to schooling.

The urgency to improve the situation of children's health can be viewed in the table below that ranks Sierra Leone and Mali at the worst positions among the 24 countries constituting the West and Central African Region (WCAR) in terms of child mortality (combination of Under Five Mortality Rate (U5MR) and absolute numbers) in 2011 due to various root causes, including those related to insufficient protection and inadequate care. In these 24 countries put together, the number of children that die per day is roughly equal to 2 times the number of people who died in the World Trade Centre during 11/9 attack (New York).

See Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: Children's deaths per day in Mali and West and Central African regions: how many more twin towers?
Source: Data from Child Mortality Progress Report 2012 (IGME estimates)

	Pop under five (2010)	U5MR in 1990	U5MR[4] in 2011	No. of Under-five Deaths in 1990	No. of Under-five Deaths in 2011	1990 child deaths per day	2011 child deaths per day
West & Central Africa Region	**69 825**	**198**	**131**	**2058**	**2096**	**5638**	**5742**
Nigeria	26 569	214	124	876	756	2400	2071
DRC	11 848	181	168	312	465	855	1274
Mali	2 912	257	**176**	103	121	282	**332**
Burkina Faso	2 955	208	146	87	101	238	277
Niger	3 085	314	125	125	89	342	244
Cameroon	3 055	145	127	71	88	195	241
Chad	2 006	208	169	55	79	151	216
Côte d'Ivoire	2 969	151	115	76	75	208	205
Ghana	3 533	121	78	67	60	184	164
Guinea	1 658	228	126	58	48	159	132
Sierra Leone	970	267	185	43	42	118	115
Benin	1 506	177	106	37	36	101	99

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[4] U5MR: Under-five Mortality Rate

Senegal	2 081	136	65	41	30	112	82
CAR	651	169	164	20	25	55	68
Togo	863	147	110	22	21	60	58
Congo	623	119	99	10	14	27	38
Mauritania	513	125	112	10	13	27	36
Liberia	681	241	78	22	12	60	33
Guinea-Bissau	240	210	161	9	9	25	25
Gambia	287	165	101	7	6	19	16
Equatorial Guinea	107	190	118	3	3	8	8
Gabon	639	94	66	3	3	8	8
Cape Verde	51	58	21	1	0	3	0
Sao Tome and Principe	23	96	89	0	0	0	0

Equally, the reduction of the rate of FGM/C over the years from 1996 to 2006 is too slow as shown in the table 1.2 below. The regressive tendency even seems questionable given the results of the latest survey. Although DHS V could not be conducted in the regions of Gao, Kidal and Tombuktu due to the war situation, a comparison excluding these three regions still shows the same disturbing reality that the decade-long steady progress made between 1996 and 2006 has paused and the situation has worsened in 2013.

Table 1.2: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting Evolution of the practice
Source: DHS II, DHS III, DHS IV and V

	1996	2001	2006	2012-2013
Mali	**93.7**	**91.6**	**85.2**	**91.4**
Mali Urban	89.8	89.5	80.9	91
Mali Rural	95.6	92.5	87.4	92

Following the programme approach, interventions in this area are coordinated by the National Programme for the fight against FGM/C (PNLE) with sustained support from donors, UNICEF and UNFPA[5] in particular. UNICEF led the group of funding and technical partners, facilitated synergy among programme components and supported the development of national policy and action plan 2008-2012 for the abandonment of MGF/C in Mali. This framework enabled the implementation of interventions in a

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[5] United Nations Fund for Population Activities

more strategic and harmonized manner. Likewise, notable progress was recorded at the institutional level in line with the creation of the PNLE structure by the government itself.

The registration of children at birth has registered good progress in recent times. Reports from specialized Institutions (UNICEF 2011; Plan Mali 2010; MACEC 2011) confirmed that birth registration rate had been steadily increasing. In 2008, 73.84% of children were registered at birth at national level with 72.3% in Kayes, 71.49% in Koulikoro, 87.2% in Sikasso, 68.47% in Ségou, 47.98% in Tombouctou, 37.09% in Gao and 90.79% in Bamako. In some specific circles where partners have concentrated particular efforts (Bla and Dioila), the rate reached over 90%.

Figure 1.2: Evolution of Birth Registration from 2004 to 2010 (Based on Figures from MACEC)
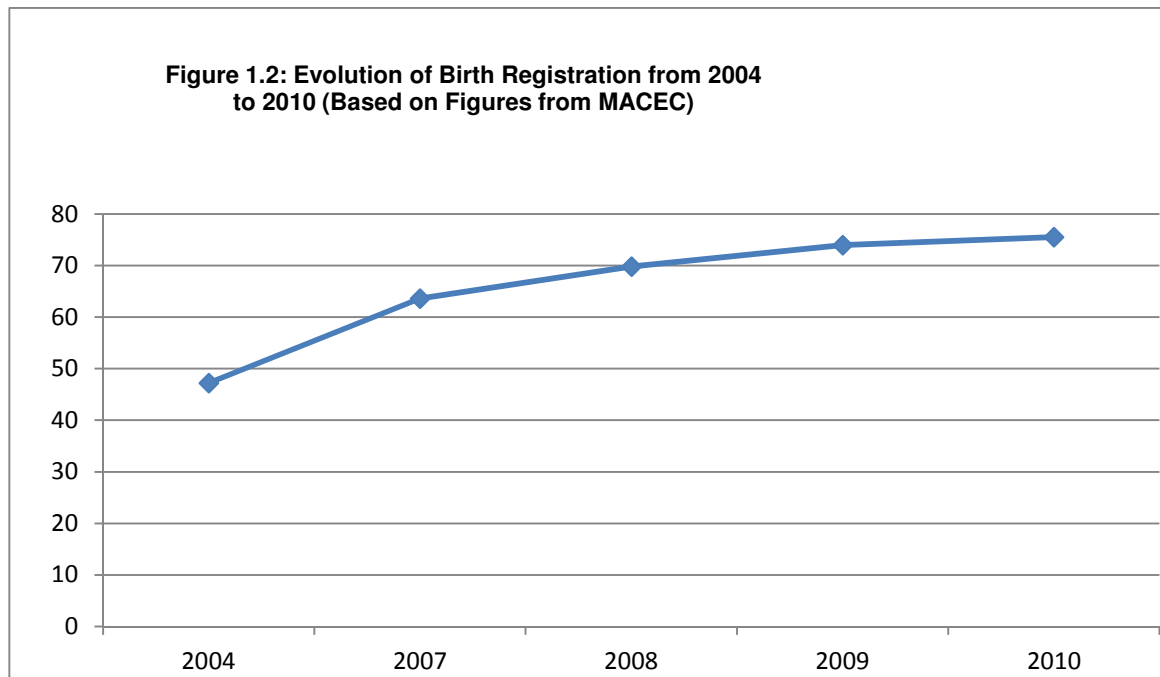
We should however not underestimate the fact that the area of birth registration is less sensitive than issues like female genital mutilation/cutting, as people are more susceptible to advancement in these less sensitive domains.

With regard to efforts on legislation and policy, Mali has ratified the major international conventions that guarantee the rights of children (UNCRC, ACRWC, CEDAW…)[6]. Before questioning the implementation of these measures, their

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[6] UNCRC: United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child
ACRWC: African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
CEDAW: Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

adoption in itself is already progress. It is indeed only based on these texts that institutions and programmes have been able to settle and develop their activities. Similarly, studies on Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) on the rights of children are conducted periodically to help measure how the adoption of the texts is reflected in everyday behaviour of citizens.

Ratified by all countries except the USA, Somalia and South Sudan, the Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most important universal point of reference among universal instruments on children's rights. Entered into force as an international law on the 2nd of September 1990 on the occasion of the world first summit held at the initiative of UNICEF and 6 countries[7] including Mali, the CRC is the only international convention that has registered the largest adhesion/ratifications within such a short period of time.

Based on the gap between these ratified conventions and the reality of the situation of children, some commentators usually affirm that pushing the state to ratify international tools is useless. Such an opinion is not wise. The ratification of international conventions is highly strategic for the work of UNICEF and partners on the ground. It was helpful to intensify communication and awareness raising activities to cover segments of the population that are poorly informed about children's rights as stated by these texts. International and civil society organizations are all there to call upon the Government to correct the existing gaps between national legislation and internationally ratified conventions. It would have been more complicated to push for a comprehensive, coherent and child-sensitive national legislation without these international instruments. Ongoing debates on the law against FGM/C among NGOs and the network of members of the parliamentary groups would not have been possible without the solid international basis provided by CRC and the African Charter. In the same manner, although the controversy surrounding the National Code on Family and Persons has limited progress towards its adoption, we should recognize the fact that steps have been taken for a complete change in the rules which were fundamentally born by the argument that having ratified the international convention, Mali cannot continue to allow situations like:

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[7] In addition to Mali Other Countries are Canada, Mexico, Pakistan, Sweden and Egypt

- discrimination against children based on their sex with regard to inheritance or marriage for example;
- the early marriage of girls since the law currently in force requires a minimum of only 15 years for the girls to get married when it is clearly provided by the conventions that they are still children up to 18.

Spurred on by UNICEF under my direct responsibility (from 2006 to 2011), efforts have been made to improve the institutional framework and coordination at national and regional levels. The consultative framework put in place has allowed for a better flow of information between stakeholders and better coherence of interventions. In responding to the lack of information to guide child protection work, I established an unprecedented holistic routine based information system on child protection through a triangle partnership (International Service, Government and UNICEF). This unique experience in Mali was recalled by research participants as an important achievement in child protection and appreciated by various stakeholders.

The evaluation conducted by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) in 2010 also made same the statement with regards to the Segou initiative: "the programme has contributed in making some progress in terms of monitoring and evaluation of the situation of children at the national and regional levels. Emphasis should be made to generalize the preliminary experiences from Segou" (Cormont Toure 2010 p.2). SIDA recommendation to scale up the experience resulted in new important funding allocation by the Swedish government to UNICEF that enabled the experience to be expanded to new regions like Kayes and Bamako in 2011.

However, the Ministry for Women, Children and Families (MWCF)[8] needs to take ownership of this coordination mechanism and integrate them into its regular working processes. This will involve changes in attitudes and behaviour but also a strategic management of human resources. Otherwise, the persisting problems of the institutions - strongly highlighted by the formal assessments (Cormont Toure 2010; UNICEF 2010) - with regards to the distribution of missions and collaboration among state structures, and between the State and civil society in protecting children's rights will continue to jeopardize interventions.

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[8] This department was created in 1997

Despite all the measures taken, only a few results have been achieved for children and the contrast between official statements and the reality on the ground is still astounding as shown in the table 1.3 below with numerous problems facing children.

Table 1.3: Main Issues affecting Child Protection in Mali

Issue	Prevalence & Source
Child labour (5-14 years), total	32.7% (EDSM V, 2012-2013)
Child marriage (before 15), total	20% (EDSM V, 2012-2013)
Child marriage (before 18), total	50% (EDSM V, 2012-2013)
Birth registration, total	84.3% (EDSM V, 2012-2013)
Female genital mutilation, women (15-49 years) , total	91.0% (EDSM V, 2012-2013)
Female genital mutilation, daughters, total (0-5 years)	73 % (EDSM V, 2012-2013)
Opinions in favour of the maintaining of FGM/C practices (%) women & men	72 et 79 (EDSM V, 2012-2013)
Prisons without quarters for minors	76 % (CNDIFE, 2008)
Children in custody (detained) with adults	277 (CNDIFE, 2008)
Gross enrolment in primary school for girls	79.9% (Education Statistical year Book 2014)
Gross enrolment in primary school for boys	68.5% (Education Statistical year Book 2014)
Percentage of children 12-59 months immunized against measles	73.0% (Boys: 73.3%, Girls: 72.6%) (MICS, 2010)
Children under 18 years old living in poor households	50 % (MICS 2010)
Children who are outside the educational system	20 % (MICS 2010)
Children not registered at birth	19 % (MICS 2010)
Women aged 15-49 years who justify for a man to batter his wife for one reason or the other	87% (MICS 2010)
Distribution of population by religion	
Muslims	94.84 (RGPH 2009)
Christians	2.37 (RGPH 2009)
Animists	2.02 (RGPH 2009)
Other religions	0.04 (RGPH 2009)
No religion	0.45 (RGPH 2009)

While acknowledging efforts made by the Government of Mali to improve on the situation of children, the UN Committee - charged to follow-up on progress being made by countries in the application of the UN Convention on the Right of Children (CRC) article 44 - noted persisting problems that need to be addressed to improve on children's rights. Policies, legislation, information systems, monitoring and coordination need to be revised and cultures must evolve and services improved to be in conformity with the convention ratified by Mali (Geneva Committee on CRC 2007).

In the same vein, the evaluation of the child protection programme undertaken in 2010 by the Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation (SIDA) concluded that various constraints related to the national context have limited the performances of the programme. If official mechanisms are promoted without shared values that support these mechanisms, results sought for children would be compromised. Paying attention to what workers believe and do to establish a dependent relationship with outcomes of what they profess must enter into our managerial thinking (Scourfield 2003).

A national survey conducted in 2009 on Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice (KAP) showed how urgent is the necessity to address people's ignorance on child rights in Mali (MPFEF 2013) with regards to both rights' holders and those who have the obligation to provide these rights.

Though figures are alarming on the situation of children, the stakeholders are still at the starting point of reflection to elaborate a more contextualized global policy and strategies that will help to move forward the children's agenda. Better governmental efforts in the field of child protection would add content to a regularly claimed political will by national authorities who have already taken some measures to enforce the position of Mali as an African country that promotes children's rights.

When I was appointed Chief of Child Protection for Mali in June 2006, I realized that UNICEF cooperation agreement with the country could not deliver a global and complete response that covers the totality of the needs expected. I therefore clearly identified the scope of the challenges that the country would have to face before it could have an effective child protection environment.

It was common to hear that child rights abuse and exploitation of children in all its forms are consequences of economic poverty of the country. Such an assertion is not meaningless. However, in addition to the pure economic perspective that has an impact on deprivation and poverty, it is reported that in the scale of importance, the child rights situation is mainly a consequence of non-shared values of justice and equality in their favour (UNICEF 2008). When in Mali (and most African countries), elders' rights are well established and aged people almost venerated, children are seen more as beneficiaries of their society's magnanimity than real right holders. Several ratified legislations are not implemented and a widely shared belief among networking groups of technical institutions supporting Mali is that an important part of legislation on children is adopted to satisfy international community demand rather than to really improve children's situation.

In my daily work and interaction with partners and colleagues, I discovered that many of them, including staff in highly strategic positions, believe in the necessity of harmful traditional practices that violate children's right. For instance they were still perpetrating FGM/C and early marriage as they do not necessarily perceive these as rights' violation (MPFEF 2009; UNICEF 2009). A great deal of child rights violations associated with traditional practices are basically the consequences of non-questioned multigenerational beliefs and values that people (including various workers and programme managers within institutions committed into fighting against these practices) are reluctant to abandon.

Likewise, working with the Governmental National Programme, with NGOs or even with UN agencies that fight for child rights improvement does not ensure or guarantee exemplary behavior of staff towards children. It is erroneous to assume that workers have common view on these problems. Numerous appeals from partners invited UNICEF to design socio psychology tools that can equip them to face their own internal values' conflict before they could engage in public denunciation of harmful traditional practices. For UNICEF and its partners to contribute to an effective change in social norms for children, it is urgent that they review and refine their strategies. International context that 'push' governmental authorities to adopt *show off laws* that are not implemented must be displayed within the local 'cultural web' (Senior and Fleming 2006) to establish a dialogue among progressist thinking and status quo

forces. Only after this effort, can there be identified a workable package of interventions that will not be perceived as neo colonialism dictates because they are not aligned with the local cultural ideology that informs on existing ways of living and their numerous prejudices against children. Ethno-cultural awareness and acceptance of policy, strategy and interventions designed to fight harmful traditional practices on children is a vital necessity for success. Interventions implemented so far are aligned with modern state views, which in reality does not necessarily mean much in the people's daily lives.

1.2   Research Aims and Objectives
1.2.1   Aims

This study aims to investigate conflicts experienced by Child Protection Workers (CPWs) related to their personal beliefs/practices and professional agenda to protect children against violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of all sorts, including those caused by harmful traditional beliefs and practices in Mali. Such understanding will help later to improve human resources' capacity building strategies by going beyond 'iceberg motivated interventions' to integrate national cultural context that limits workers to implement interventions in child protection more effectively. Indeed, my analysis and interpretation of interventions designed to date for workers' capacity building revealed that these interventions are based on visible manifestations of people's behaviour instead of questioning and targeting root level and 'invisible' causes of these behaviours. Going beyond iceberg driven interventions appeals for preliminary understanding of the hidden (but most important) side of motivations that guide workers' behaviour.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

- To explore personal beliefs and practices of workers regarding main protection issues dealt with by the child protection programme in Mali

- To investigate existing contradictions between personal beliefs/practices of workers and their professional agenda

- To examine if and how contradicting values impact on workers and their capacity to deliver for child protection

- To identify best practices developed at both personal and institutional levels in response to cultural conflict in child protection and to draw the lessons learnt

- To provide workers and the whole protection networking group in Mali with an opportunity of self-reflection and learn to foster a change in the programme management for children

- To formulate recommendations for decision-making by UNICEF and its partners', in particular with regard to the Mali/UNICEF cooperation agreements on child rights' promotion.

1.3   Rationale

In partnership with government authorities, UNICEF identified various groups of vulnerable children in need of protection and designed a cooperation agreement in response to these problems. However, considering that the impact of these interventions is limited by a national context marked by many harmful traditional practices on children, UNICEF is determined to ensure that these rooted cultural harmful beliefs and practices (including in workers) are publicly discussed for policy improvement for children and that workers at all levels are equipped to deal effectively with child protection issues. This research is my personal contribution to this great challenge.

1.4   My Working Position vis-a-vis the Project Rationale

After working as a child protection officer with UNICEF for 7 years in Benin Republic and South eastern DR Congo, I was appointed in 2006 Chief of Child Protection in UNICEF Mali. My major duties and responsibilities[9] in this position were to:

- Ensure the preparation of the Situation Analysis and its periodic update;

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[9] See the full Job Description in appendix 1.

- Prepare the sector's inputs for the Country Programme Recommendation (CPR) and all related documents, (e.g., Plan of Operations, Project Plans of Action);

- Participate in the formulation and development of programme goals, strategies and approaches for the UNICEF plan of cooperation;

- Plan, implement and monitor assigned activities;

- Participate with UNICEF/government/and other partners in the development of strategies, methodologies and the identification of new approaches for improving protection programme delivery, with emphasis on advocacy, community participation and social mobilization;

- Review and evaluate the technical, institutional and financial feasibility and constraints of programmes/projects in coordination and collaboration with government and other partners;

- Provide technical support to government and non-government organizations at the national, regional and provincial levels in the planning, development and implementation stages of the protection programme; to plan, organize and conduct training and orientation activities for government personnel and beneficiaries to ensure capacity building at the central and regional levels, and expansion of coverage of services;

- Undertake field visits, and surveys in order to monitor and evaluate project implementation. Identify problems and propose remedial action. Identify alternative courses of action, to accelerate/improve protection programme delivery;

- Develop the work plan for the sector and monitor compliance to ensure objectives and targets are met and achieved. Guide and supervise professional and support staff. Ensure their training needs are met, and provide on-the-job training;

- Coordinate activities and exchanges information/ideas with other programmes, to contribute to the achievement of overall country programme objectives. Participate in establishing effective monitoring, information and

reporting systems, and in the development of communication materials and strategies to support advocacy and community participation;

- Participate in the preparation of all programme reports for management, Board, donors, budget reviews, programme analysis, annual reports.

Thus, my interest in this project is in line with my daily office tasks. My personal and professional interests interrelate in investigating the phenomenon of cultural mismatches that can hamper the performance of workers in the achievement of goals set to improve children's rights in Mali.

This project's outcomes will equally offer me the opportunity to enhance my political maturity within the field of child rights promotion and to assist UNICEF as a whole, starting from my office, and its partners in making more strategic and relevant decisions in staff capacity building for the enhancement of child protection. Furthermore, my ability and personal ambition to serve at a higher managerial UNICEF position will also be reinforced and justified in this project.

1.5   How Did my Research Question Emerge and How was it Sharpened Along?

Several dynamics influenced the emergence of my research question and the way I framed it. The table below explains these dynamics. Added to this, the table also aims at helping my reader to get a clear sense of my journey of inquiry and the choices I made along the way.

Table 1.4: How did my research question developed?

When?	Opportunities/ Challenges/motivation	Evolution of the research question
June 2006, on joining the UNICEF Mali team	I realized that the main challenges of the child protection Programme component were basically linked with Harmful Traditional Practices, with Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) topping list (85 % of girls and women under 49 in Mali are cut). However there was still a need to improve	What type of interventions are in place in Mali environment to ensure that workers are really committed and empowered to deliver effectively?

	considerably data collection and information on various other child rights' abuses	
March 2007	I decided to put in place a routine based monitoring and data collect system that informs 'quantitatively' child protection rights' abuse and opens the window for deeper qualitative analysis on Mali protection programme performance : Segou data collect system (subject of my successful RAL claim at level 8)	What are main thematic and issues affecting child protection in the country and how do stakeholders respond accordingly?
October 2007 to March 2008	Following discussions on the 2008-2012 UNICEF/Mali Cooperation agreement, I realised that an important fringe of social workers and programme partners, including those in highly strategic positions were privately in favour of the perpetuation of a number of practices (mostly traditional practices) hampering children's rights.	What proportion/ percentage of the child protection staff represents 'non convinced' staff in the whole national child protection network and what can be done to make them real partners of the programme?
February 2010	Having discovered the Institute for Work Based Learning (IWBL) in Middlesex University and the opportunities it offers, I was interviewed for the M/DProf programme by the admission panel. I discussed my concerns with the panel and I proposed a more academic formulation of my research question	**Advancing Child Protection in Mali: An Action Oriented Research with workers and stakeholders who experience cultural conflicts in their daily work.** To develop an understanding of the role played by workers' cultural values and beliefs in correlation with their professional practices and results obligation in child protection; to give cause for self-reflection; to provide interactive training material and tools for workers.

March 2011	I received encouraging feedback from the MDX Programme Approval Panel. But I also noted and agreed with constructive comment that I needed to be more realistic and focused.	**Building Capacity for Advancing Child Protection in Mali** Given the time frame remaining for me to complete my contract in Mali and taking into account my RAL at level 8 implications for the scope of my research, I decided to follow recommendations from Viva Presentation and to reduce the scope of my research only to understanding the topic of cultural mismatches on workers and to providing recommendations for stakeholders on the way forward.
September 2011	I was moved from Mali to Cameroon UNICEF office and from the role of Chief Child Protection to the role of Deputy Representative whose main job consists in coordinating the entire UNICEF Programme	**Building Capacity for Advancing Child Protection in Mali**
Mars 2012	War and Rebellion in the northern Mali. Coup d'Etat and political unrest. The country was split into two parts.	
December 2013 to June 2014	Efforts to reflect on the impact of the war on my research work and to anticipate the official and public reception of my findings within the new programmatic and political environment in Mali.	

1.6   Target Audience

Various actors (social front line workers, programme officers within UNICEF and UN agencies, agents within governmental institutions and NGO) working in the child

protection field are included in the definition of child protection workers and targeted by this study. The sampling process of these participants is explained in the methodology.

1.7 Research Project and Doctorate Programme of Studies

The present research is the final part of the submission for the Doctorate in Professional Studies. Certainly the most visible and probably the most important, the project is however part of interrelated components that form the whole doctorate programme. Started in 2010 with the review of previous learning, it was an unprecedented exercise of self-reflection, self-revelation and 'self-validation' where I learnt that my actual job at UNICEF was more than just a sum of activities accomplished daily on the demand of UNICEF. It is also a mirror of 'me' - with my beliefs, conditions, values, strengths, weaknesses and imperfections - as well as the expression of the conditions of participants in child protection programme. Therefore, the project does not stand alone. It builds on earlier work and experiences successively submitted to the University, which contribute to academic credits already accumulated as part of my doctorate programme. Taking into account these already achieved credits, the project is tailored to be a middle size one in scale for the attainment of 240 credits at level 8 in completion of all the Doctorate programme requirements. Insisting on the fact that the project is part of the wider academic work already achieved without also underlining that it comes as a contribution to various activities already completed or ongoing in UNICEF geared towards advancing child protection would be an incomplete statement. My professional activities and academic programme interact in a positive tandem that has created a supportive and motivating context for me to achieve this doctorate.

Typical of much work-based research and with regards to the great enthusiasm and positive comments made during the data collection phase and beyond by participants, the project has not only been part of wider academic requirements, but also a practical response to a given specific professional situation: improving the capacity and capability of workers through sincere communication among stakeholders and their institutions for child protection enhancement.

This study is a communication channel, an initiation of multilateral 'talks about talks' (Mitchell 2005) and an enhancer of human resources charged by their profession to promote children's right. Extra effort (additional time and funds) has been invested to reflect the impact of war on this work and to anticipate the official and public reception of my findings within the new programmatic and political environment in Mali.

Participants have insisted on the project's relevance, the first initiative to openly discuss the situation of child rights in relation to the conflicting perceptions between local culture and professional agenda. Wide and persistent encouragement from research participants is one of the strongest signals of the interest raised by this piece of work. In the form of letters or phone calls, these encouraging messages continued to reach me even after my re- assignment now in another country and in spite of the ongoing armed conflict situation in Mali.

The project's conclusion will be shared nationwide through various meetings with protection networking thematic groups. Managerial bodies within interested institutions will also be targeted for the improvement of their HR Management strategies. An increasing number of organisations willing to develop more relevant interventions have already manifested their interest to have the conclusions of the research. Given that child protection thematic is a challenge in neighbouring countries as well, this research is very likely to have broader appeal and interest. Findings will therefore be presented through several conferences in UNICEF Dakar regional office for WCARO countries.

1.8   Structure of Thesis

This thesis report is composed of 2 distinct parts. Part 1 constitutes chapters 1 to 3 and Part 2 takes up chapters 4 to 6. The present chapter 1 is the general **introduction**. The remaining chapters are structured as following.

Chapter 2, dedicated to **literature review,** provides explanations on the approach followed to identify and gather relevant sources that informed my thinking before moving on to the second part to provide a critical engagement with these sources. This was done through defining main concepts of my research thematic as well as referencing rationale, theories and framework that I considered worthy to provide a clear understanding of my methodology and analysis. Given that the outcome of this

research is basically to provide understanding and recommendations to the management of cultural mismatches/inconsistences that hamper child protection programmes' implementation, on the one hand, and considering the great quest for knowledge on this subject shown by the targeted audience, on the other hand, the importance of this literature review goes beyond a simple academic requirement. It is also a contribution put at the disposal of stakeholders to deepen knowledge and understanding of the subject with which I am dealing. Apart from being fragmented on children's issues indeed, literature on child protection in developing countries and in Mali, in particular, remains silent on the perspective of workers about their work and how they understand their native traditions and cultures in relation with international motto of 'Children first' promoted by UNICEF and its partners. The literature review also provides information on international law on the protection of children ratified by Mali on which institutions partners base their work.

Chapter 3 focuses on **the methodology** used for the research. The rationale behind the research approach and design is provided. With regard to the learning agreement made between the researcher and Middlesex University in pursuing the research, the chapter captures certain changes made to the initial proposal due to unforeseen circumstances in the process of the project, such as the war situation that hindered the smooth implementation of the initial planning.

The project findings are discussed in part 2 of the report throughout chapters 4, 5 and 6. The key findings that have emerged from the analysis of the data are outlined. While an important part of these findings is directly related to the research questions, further findings although not directly related to the research questions are also included. The connection between cultural references of the worker and the demands of their professional agenda is made to identify conflicts of values, how it is perceived, experienced by the worker and the employer and what responses they make. In Chapter 4, the research participants **recognized cultural mismatches and harmful practices as a challenge in programme management** and explained its various manifestations before Chapter 5 focuses on how age**, gender and other socio economic determinants interrelate with strategies in management of mismatches by CPWs**. In this same chapter, I took advantage of my reflection and observation about the management of cultural mismatches to propose a "***Triangle***

model" of child protection workers' positioning vis-a-vis cultural mismatches. The triangle model paints 5 types of CPWs in Mali and it constitutes a key contribution of this research in term of institutions' strategies to build CPWs' capacity. Chapter 6 (Responses to mismatches and way forward) presents **the perception of IDRs** and highlights differences and similarities in that perception with ordinary CPWs. It also identifies responses provided by institutions so far to manage cultural mismatches. The same chapter presents my **additional** r**ecommendations** based on the findings from the research, identifying for stakeholders what attitude and possible actions need to be in place at both the individual and institutional levels to improve the management of cultural mismatches. Some concluding words and a reflexive account of my personal learning and professional journey closes the chapter.

Chapter 2: Review of knowledge and information

2.1 Introduction

In the first section of the literature review, I will provide explanations on the approach followed to identify and gather relevant sources that inform my thinking before moving to the second part to provide an analytical presentation of these sources. Given that the outcome of this research is basically to provide understanding and recommendations to the management of cultural mismatches/inconsistences that hamper child protection programme implementation on the one hand and considering the great quest of knowledge on this subject shown by targeted audience on the other hand, the importance of this literature review goes beyond a simple academic requirement. It is also a contribution at the disposal of stakeholders to deepen knowledge and understanding of the subject I am dealing with. Apart from being fragmented on children issues indeed, the literature on child protection in Mali is not prolix on the perspective of workers about their work and how they understand their native traditions and cultures in relation with international motto of *'Children first'* promoted by UNICEF.

2.2   My literature review approach

2.2.1   Building on my RAL at level 8

At the beginning of my DProf study I claimed credits for the Recognition and Accreditation of my previous Learning (RAL). In the RAL at level 8 in particular, I identified two main areas of interest in accordance with the learning outcomes of DPS 5120. These areas were (1) Information System on child protection and (2) Behaviour Change Promotion on harmful traditional practices. These two areas layed the foundation for my current work on capacity building to strengthen child protection.

The first case dealt specifically with system building for data and Information on child protection, Indeed, in response to the lack of information to guide child protection work, I have initiated and established through a triangular partnership (involving UNICEF-Mali Government and International Service NGO) an unprecedented, holistic and continuous basis information system on child protection in Segou, one of the 8 regions of Mali. The concrete outcome of this initiative is a disaggregated

information captured by 15 indicators on 9 main protection issues facing children in the country for presentation through the web window known as Malikunnafoni: a Malian national socio- economic information system that can be consulted worldwide by whoever is interested in Mali Development profile at the web address http://www.malikunnafoni.com. After 3 years of its implementation, this pilot was successfully evaluated and adopted as an integrated part of national mechanism to produce quantitative information on child protection issues in Mali.

The second case focused on the use of "Mobile Video and Theatre as instruments for Capacity Building in favour of behaviour Change". I analyzed the use of these tools in local communities to influence parents, religious authorities and other stakeholders in their decision making with regard to child protection against harmful traditional practices. Although all these stakeholders are not Child Protection Workers (CPWs) in the sense of the definition included in my DProf project, the tight relationship between CPWs and these various stakeholders integrates my RAL 8 into this review of literature and my DProf research as a whole. Therefore, patterns of learning of my RAL at level 8 are relevant together with this review of literature to advance knowledge and stakeholders' capacity on child protection in Mali.

2.2.2: Phases of the literature

My literature review followed two distinct phases:

- A preliminary reading of the literature that helped me while formulating my research objectives and assisted me in locating my concerns within the existing body of knowledge around change management and child protection in general.

- Searching for literature in a more focused way on cultural and intrapersonal conflict management by workers in child protection programme.

From the first to the second phase, I specified my search parameters from broad to narrow, reducing the chances of finding myself in either a position with too much material, much of which was not necessarily relevant readings or conversely not enough material. Prior experiences taught me that the more I keep reading, the more I will encounter references to authors, subjects, topics, terms and words that are relevant to my research concerns and that can be used in my search for other relevant material.

To ensure that the three languages with which I work, interact and think enrich each other instead of constituting a handicap to the research activities that are reported in both French and English respectively for working environment and academic imperatives, I kept using dictionaries, thesauruses and dictionaries of antonyms and synonyms to help me find different terms for similar concepts ensuring that my submission is written in robust English.

Sources consulted include books, journals, website pages and the Internet, records, letters and memos, government publications and official statistics, UNICEF and UN publications, policies, directives on human resources management, programme guidelines, cooperation agreement documents, various reports, conference papers, master degree and doctoral theses, newspapers and magazines. To provide insights as an account of main juridical concepts, I have prioritized legal sources, law materials and interpretive texts, commentaries, specific treaties and Convention to academic writings that cannot create law. This literature review and the way I have framed my topic call for a series of initial definitions that are highly pertinent in the spirit of my research objectives and in helping my reader to understand my journey of inquiry.

2.3 What Do We Mean By……..?
'Child', 'Child Protection', 'Child Protection Workers' and 'Building capacity' in the context of *'System Approach'?*

2.3.1 The Child
The WordReference.com English Dictionary defines the child as 'a young human being below the age of full physical development, an immature or irresponsible son or daughter of any age.' These concepts of immaturity and irresponsibility are central factors that contribute to make the child a vulnerable person and member of a particular category that needs special attention. However, the dictionary said nothing about the age. Until which age can a human being be considered a child?

According to Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC 1989), a child is defined as 'every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, maturity is attained earlier'. Although this convention is the most widely accepted human rights treaty in the world

and the most important international reference source of law for children (the text is ratified by all countries worldwide except USA and Somalia), it fails to be firm about eighteen years limit, and as a consequence, allowing countries to decide differently.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) avoids such ambiguity by removing the possibility for states parties to envisage maturity under eighteen years: 'a child means every human being below the age of 18 years' (ACRWC 1990 article 2).

Considering that Mali has ratified both instruments and given that more univocal, the ACRWC definition is the one used at operational level by child protection's institutions working in Mali, the word 'child' in my research report refers to the human being below the age of 18 years.

However, it is important to recognize that the above legal approach of childhood does not gain support from the social constructionist paradigm. Hendrick (1997a 9-10) suggests a working definition of social constructionism as "the way in which our lives and our institutions are socially produced, that is by ourselves, rather than naturally or divinely given". In this same perspective, Twum-Danso (2008) commented that childhood should then be distinguished from biological immaturity. It is not a natural or universal feature of human groups, but a specific structural and cultural component of many societies. In other words "though biological immaturity may be natural and universal, what particular societies make of such immaturity differs throughout time and between cultures" (Hendrick 1997 p.9). In Jenks' view, all contemporary approaches to the study of childhood are committed to the view that childhood is not a natural phenomenon and cannot be analyzed as such (Jenks 1996). It is the same view that Twum-Danso shares when she affirms that the "social transformation from child to adult does not follow directly from physical growth and the recognition of children by adults and vice versa, is not singularly contingent upon physical difference" (Twum-Danso 2008 p. 400).

Understanding childhood from both legal and social construction perspectives and relating it to particular cultural settings is important for the good comprehension of the whole discussion of the findings of this study. Given precisely that this project aims at understanding CPWs and their motivations for better adjustment of capacity

and capability interventions, it will adopt the social construction perspective. However, the use of the social construction theory to understand the complex relationship/interaction between the participants, other stakeholders and the environment is not opposed to Bandura's updated view of the social theory that highlights the significance of the individual's self-regulation and self-efficacy to control their lives (Bandura 2001). The individual consciousness is the very substance of mental life that not only makes life personally manageable but worth living for him/her. Consciousness involves "purposive accessing and deliberative processing of information for selecting, constructing, regulating, and evaluating courses of action. This is achieved through intentional mobilization and productive use of semantic and pragmatic representations of activities, goals, and other future events" (Bandura 2001 p.3). As a 'social agent', a human being intentionally makes things happen by his/her actions. As such, the social construction as my perspective for this work is not a truncated understanding that omits the "prime features of humanness such as subjectivity, deliberative self-guidance, and reflective self-reactiveness" (Ibid).

2.3.2 The Child Protection and the Child Protection Worker

As we were seated side to side in a conference room, a man wanted to know about my exact job and my functional title. I told him I am a Child Protection Chief. Then he replied with astonishment: *"Ah, I didn't know you are a policeman and that UNICEF also recruits policemen."*

This anecdote reveals the necessity to discuss what is meant by 'Child Protection' on the one hand and 'Child Protection Worker' on the other hand. This need is not only an external driven need intended for people outside of the profession, but clarification is also needed within the body too. Working sub domains are multiple with an extended list of job descriptions.

Some use *child welfare* when others prefer *child protection*. However, there is broad consistency amongst authors and the definitions they propose. ''At the core of child protection are the child and family welfare and social protection, the justice and security sectors, which traditionally play a lead role in preventing and responding to abuse, violence and exploitation of children'' (UNICEF and Hall 2010 p.2). Child

protection is synonymous to child and family well-being and is part of a broader set of family and social protection (Waldfogel 2000). The experience of risk, vulnerability and deprivation is linked to children's dependence on the care, support and protection of adults, and their voicelessness within the family and broader society in the context where precisely the weakening of these families and community structures contributes to better 'victimization' of children (UNICEF and ODI 2009).

Indeed here and elsewhere, two categories of child protection systems co-exist: "the traditional child protection system, through which support for children is provided within the family and the immediate community; and modern child protection structures set up by development agencies." (Ochen et al 2012 p.9). Based on what they have studied in Uganda in area of reintegration of the formerly abducted child mothers (FACM), Ochen, Jones and McAuley rightly draw attention to the fact that the efficacy of community-based structures to protect children could be severely hampered by the creation of modern structures. That important finding of their study needs consideration beyond Uganda frontier. It also applies in every context like Mali where "the social expectations within the community include the notion of collective responsibility to watch out for and protect the children of the community" (Ibid). When a member of the community finds a child in danger or in the wrong, he/she is expected to take action to protect or correct him/her (Ibid).

Ray (in Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010 p.64) prefers the expression "children in the poorest and most difficult situations" instead of ''Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances'' coined by UNICEF in the 1980s to refer to these vulnerable groups of children because children, he argues, understand and accept this expression. He also notes that vulnerable children vary by location and should be identified within each country and local context.

From this perspective, vulnerable children comprise those living in all forms of deprivation including economic deprivation and difficulties to access social services: a very large group of children estimated in excess of 2.5 million from across a wide spectrum of socio professional categories of populations in Mali. However, the child protection programme in Mali is particularly designed for children within this group who, additionally to a large and generalized consequence of poverty are also

confronted with violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation of all sorts and are for this reason considered at a higher risk (UNICEF 2008).

The overwhelming majority of the literature consulted on child protection comes out of international legislation and materials from institutions like UNICEF, Save the Children and other International NGOs.

It is not possible to attempt a definition of child protection out of the broader domain of children's right which itself is embedded in a wider human rights concept. The first effective attempt to promote children's right in international framework was the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child*, known as the Declaration of Geneva adopted by the League of Nations in 1924. After World War II, the International Community's commitment to human rights improvement was fuelled by people's desire to never again witness the Nazi's extermination of Jews, persons with disabilities and those who are vulnerable. The idea to put children at the centre of these vulnerable people induced constant pressure from NGOs and finally, on the 20th November 1989, the UNCRC was ratified by the United Nations. Entered into force on the 2nd September 1990, the UNCRC is a promise that the international community has made to children to respect their rights and protect them (Funky Dragon 2007).

Commenting on article 4 of the UNCRC on the protection of rights, UNICEF wrote: ''Governments have a responsibility to take all available measures to make sure children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. When countries ratify the Convention, they agree to review their laws relating to children. This involves assessing their social services, legal, health and educational systems, as well as levels of funding for these services. Governments are then obliged to take all necessary steps to ensure that the minimum standards set by the Convention in these areas are being met. They must help families protect children's rights and create an environment where they can grow and reach their potential'' (UNICEF[10] 2005 p.1). Therefore, with the UNCRC, the focus on children that has long been a moral imperative has officially shifted to rights' imperative at international level although as rightly noted by Ochen, Jones and McAuley, usually limited government

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[10] From: http://www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean/children_23539.htm

support and reduced donor funding hamper the establishment of a good child protection system (Ochen, et al. 2012).

The Convention is founded on the principles of universality, non-discrimination and accountability at both international and national levels with a set of recognized standards that are often referred to by courts and institutions.

The American Heritage (R) Dictionary of the English Language (2007) defines a right as ''something that is due to a person by law, tradition, or nature; a just or legal claim.'' Rights serve as rules of interaction between people, and, as such, they place constraints and obligations upon the actions of individuals or groups. As human beings, children are entitled to such basic power and liberty in order to survive, and develop to their full potential. These include food, shelter, education, freedom from abuse and to be looked after if they get sick… Every single person regardless of his/her age has *human rights.* Beyond rights recognized to every human being, those of children are of utmost importance because they are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation compared to adults and therefore need special rights.

The protection of children is about taking adequate measures in fulfilling these rights. As a duty bearer of last resort, the Government carries the responsibility to ensure that other rights bearers like families and CPWs do effectively provide these rights. With regards to the implementation of children's rights in several countries, it is affirmed that "little will change unless considerable investment is made in working with adults to sensitize them to children's participation rights and the positive impact of their realization'' (Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010 p.15). This includes "pre- and in-service training on the rights of children for all professionals working with and for children, and parent education programmes" (Ibid). Insisting in its preamble that the situation of most African children remains critical due to the unique factors of their socio-economic, cultural, traditional and developmental circumstances, the ACRWC lists a long chain of measures that it believes will contribute to the protection of the child. 'Child protection' as well as other locutions like 'Promotion of Rights', 'Welfare', 'Rights', 'Best Interest' are indistinctively used to stress various needs that State party and adults should guarantee to ensure the development of children. ''Protective measures […] include effective procedures for the establishment of special monitoring units to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have

the care of the child'' (article 16 paragraph 2). The family as the natural unit and basis of the society shall benefit from the support of the State for parental role in protecting and providing care to children.

After insisting on the children's rights, the African Charter also balances these rights with an obligation on the part of children to work for the cohesion of their family and to assist them, to serve the national community by placing their physical and intellectual abilities at its service, to strengthen social and national solidarity, to preserve and strengthen African cultural values and to contribute to the moral well-being of society (ACRWC article 31).

The balance between child right on the one hand and the maintaining of culture and rules established by the society on the other hand is very significant and key concern in this thesis. Also, these are fully discussed by the participants and will be revisited later in my analysis of the original data.

The above provision of the article 31 of the ACRWC has aroused long debates among jurists within and outside the continent. They questioned the relevance of obligations attributed to children in a charter that was precisely intended in promoting rights to correct massive abuses and violations noted. As much as their grief is easy to understand regarding some too vague aspects (obligation inviting children to preserve and strengthen the independence and the integrity of their country, obligation to contribute to the best of their abilities, at all times and at all levels to the promotion and achievement of African Unity…), I would temper the way they criticize the charter. Indeed, the ACRWC proves to be more precise and clear than the UNCRC on several important aspects like the definition of the child (article 2 cited above), the interdiction of 'the use of children in all forms of begging' (article 29) and prohibition of harmful social and cultural practices like child marriage and the betrothal of girls and boys (article 29) while the UNCRC in its quest to largely mobilize countries failed to be clear on these important points. Having made such progress, it is acceptable that the African Charter initiated some effort in contextualizing the children rights as far as essential content of these rights are not compromised. This raises the debate of universality versus relativism on which I will focus later.

Save the Children defines child protection as ''measures and structures to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children" (Save the Children 2009 p.1) with the requirement of a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approach that closely links sectors like education, health and criminal justice through formal and informal routes. Governments, multilateral agencies, donors, communities, carers and families are also identified as actors of such work in partnership with children whose capacity should be strengthened to protect themselves. It is important indeed to emphasize with Professor Jones and her colleagues that ''conceiving child protection within a structure, which combines both formal, informal, family, community and government systems, is good practice. […] Child protection should be based on the intersections and inter-relationship between these structures and agents'' (Ochen et al. 2012 p.7).

Save the children insists on the fact that child protection work aims at strengthening the capacity of all actors to protect children and "to develop systems and mechanisms that provide meaningful protection for all children in the long run. It seeks to address the root causes of child protection failures such as chronic poverty, insecurity, power imbalances and harmful traditional attitudes and behaviours'' (Save the children 2007 p.2).

2.3.3 Capacity Building and System Approach

One important point is revealed in the above definition: children's rights abuses are mainly driven by power imbalances and harmful traditional attitudes and behaviours. Consequently the most appropriate approach to child protection should be stakeholders' capacity building. UNICEF comes to the same conclusion when it affirms that Child protection relies on people and organizations properly equipped to carry out the work. ''The fulfillment of children's rights, including those to protection, depends on a global movement in which everybody not only understands and respects their duties to children, but also acts upon them'' (UNICEF 2004 p.3). Since 2010, UNICEF has been promoting *a system approach* in child protection with input from more than fifty people from eighteen organisations. The System Approach means an advocacy for collective responsibility and a redesigning of the tasks expected of workers so that they are better tailored to the skills and capacity of human

beings. Putting a common purpose of protecting "children from violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect, as well as man-made and natural emergencies, as a matter of a child's fundamental rights" (UNICEF 2010 p.14) at the centre of a partnership among children, families, communities, States, and formal and informal organizations, the System Approach calls for a shift of focus of child protection to examine how the existing system can be strengthened to fulfill contextualized expectations to protect children in a manner consistent with their rights. With the System Approach, thematic areas are not approached in isolation. Strategies that target street children can focus on addressing the immediate safety needs of these children or it can address the fact that many of these children are on the streets because they cannot live safely at home. One cannot make substantial inroads in reducing the number of street children unless one also addresses the risk factors children face in their own homes (UNICEF 2010).

As with all systems, the important idea in this approach is the *nested nature* of various levels of stakeholders' participating in child protection. Children live in the context of a family, the family itself is nested within family system, which is nested within a local community (itself a system) and the wider social/societal system (Stevens 2008; Mulroy 2004). Each level plays important role in shaping what the system looks like in its totality and "the strength of the system depends on effective interaction across various system levels" (UNICEF 2010 p.20).

An interesting point of the system approach that is the most relevant to my research is the recognition that more than the previous single approach in child protection, this new approach requires full human capacity building as the system cannot operate without skilled personnel. In other words, the extent to which a system is able to achieve its goals is more heavily dependent on capacity than any other factor and there is consensus among authors and program planners that this particular feature is critical to the achievement of system goals and the protection of children (Save the Children 2009; UNICEF 2008; UNICEF 2010).

In order to examine the point at which, and the circumstances in which the State is mandated to intervene to protect children, the Australian[11] legislator considers that

a child is in need of protection if he/she is under the risk of abuse or neglect and (a) no-one with parental responsibility for the child is willing and able to protect him/her; (b) no-one with parental responsibility for the child is willing and able to provide him or her with adequate care and protection; (c) if there is a serious or persistent conflict between the child or young person and the people with parental responsibility for him or her to such an extent that the care and protection of the child or young person is, or is likely to be, seriously disrupted (Australian Children and Young People Act 1999).

Clearly these conditions highlight the narrow definition that limits child protection to its sense of care giving. The idea implicitly raised by the Australian legislator's view of child protection is a confirmation of the centrality of the role of family in child protection. It is mainly when the family fails to assume its role to protect the child that public institutions should intervene, justifying the role of specific child protection front line workers and the necessity for them to be equipped for these interventions.

It is useful in this subsection to quote a recent statement by Anthony Lake, the UNICEF Executive Director with regard to challenges to be faced by organisations including UNICEF if they want to improve their partnership on children's right.

'We must work hard not only to identify common ground and maximize our comparative advantages, but also to encourage open dialogue, even about complex, sensitive issues. This is especially true in addressing attitudes and practices sometimes associated with religious beliefs which harm children physically or emotionally' (UNICEF 2012 p.iii).

In this sense, I lengthily considered the issue of whether I should focus on **capability development** rather than **capacity development** as indicated in the title of this research report. After reflection and careful review of literature, I came to a conclusion that both notions complement each other and the subtleties hidden in each of them

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[11]Although Australia is very far from Mali with a different socio economic and programmatic context, my literature review also benefited from the significant production of materials available in that country on child protection and social work.

is smoothly taken into account in this work, particularly in the set of my final recommendations. Indeed, according to UNICEF, capability development refers specifically to development of knowledge and skills through training and other learning opportunities, and is directly related to development of technical and functional competencies while "capacity development is dependent not only on training initiatives to build competencies but also on organizational support at structural and policy levels (for example staffing, structure, […] resource allocation and agenda setting)" (UNICEF 2008 p.12).

UNICEF's appeal calls for the courage to think out of usually comfortable institutional frames of reference. Being open to dialogue entails being also ready to hearing totally contradicting positions. Discussing about complex and sensitive issues is time consuming and institutions should be aware of this to avoid truncated conversations. It also especially requires various kinds of institutional support to workers who on behalf of their institutions are required to engage these sensitive debates, particularly in the context of diplomatic settings where the only evocation of the acronym PNG (Persona Non Grata) is sufficient to restrain initiatives. UNICEF has demonstrated commitment to help organisations in providing important cultural and religious perspectives of child protection through its website:
http://www.unicef.org/about/partnerships/index.php.

2.4 In Between Universalist and Relativist Approaches of Children's Rights

My research is situated in the framework of the universal appeal for Human Rights-based approach (HRBA) in programming to strengthening the capacity of both rights-holders and duty-bearers. Consequently, it is helpful to set out through this section key legal considerations and principles that position Mali among international community as State and important duty-bearer in providing children's rights. Having ratified the UNCRC, the ACRWC and other main relevant right conventions, the country has reaffirmed[12] its commitment to align to core principles and standards derived from international human rights law. It follows that every aspect of the

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[12] The constitution of Mali states in its Article 116 that ''Treaties and accords that are properly ratified or approved have, from the time of their publication, superior authority over laws of the State.''

national response to children's right violation should be anchored in the rights and obligations established by international rights law (United Nations 2010) dully ratified by Mali. The point here is to affirm my total adhesion to the statement that makes indisputable the universality of human rights.

However, agreeing that human rights are universal is not sufficient. It is also important to clarify my positioning with regard to the debate on universality versus relativity in approaching children's and human rights.

A number of years ago, Twum-Danso focused her thesis (Searching for the middle ground in children's rights) on the approach that it is not the language of universalism or relativism that is required to implementing the convention on the rights of the child in Ghana. What is needed in order to effect change on the ground, she affirmed, is the language of compromise that reflects both the principles underlying the Convention, as well as the values of the societies in which children live (Twum-Danso 2008). The author was right indeed to remember that understanding the position of cultural relativists on children's rights in the context of this age of globalisation has led African countries, after the declaration of the UNCRC, to adopt the ACRWC.

If we follow the path of the analysis from relativists, we can conclude that what is viewed and accepted nowadays as "universalism" derives from something that was "relativist" at a given point of history. It is a crystallization of systems of rights based on notions of childhood that emerged and were consolidated in the West in the nineteenth century (Boyden in Twum-Danso 2008 p.103).

The ACRWC was consequently initiated to address the social and cultural specificities to African countries such as the importance of children having duties and the concept of the extended family. In that, the ACRWC has tried to follow the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights - otherwise known as the Banjul Charter (a pivotal tool in influencing the development of African continent standards on human rights) - in the view that "individual rights cannot make sense in a social and political vacuum, unless they are coupled with duties on individuals" (Hansungule 2004 p.4).

However, my analysis and comparison of the ACRWC and UNCRC reveals that at the end of the day, the African charter proves more precise and more rigorous in several important points than the UNCRC. The most concrete example in support of

this view is the definition of the child as stated within both texts. Once again, the definition of the child is with no possible contestation clearer and more imperative in the Charter (article 2) than what can be read in the article 1 of the UNCRC. In total, when based on the well-known strategy of remaining vague and ambiguous so that States parties can interpret it in their own ways without pressing for a consensus on their specifications (Oksenberg Rorty 1994) the UNCRC was deliberately imprecise to gain large and universal adhesion, the ACRWC was a posteriori more progressive in several noteworthy aspects. The more stringent perspective of the ACRWC at the conclusion of the relativists African lawyers' effort certainly means that in the depths, both perspectives though supported by distinct paradigms - relativism is social constructionist paradigm driven - result in quasi similar outcomes. Human rights in their content are not easily subject to manipulative interpretation. What is good for Chinese children is good for Malian and American children. Consequently, the universality of approach in rights application provides legal ground for the definition of main rights violation facing children in Mali. This said, the means to achieve children's and human rights should be locally appropriate and contextually determined. I call this relativism in means for applicability of the universality in rights' content. The UN as stated below adheres to and encourages this theoretical path to better attending to children rights:

"While there are many ways in which a human rights perspective will change the way we as an organisation do things, our strength will remain our ability to identify and respond in practical, country-specific ways to the situations that rob children of their chance to realize their full human potential. The ability to influence, shape and help implement policies and programmes of action for children, to stimulate public dialogue on issues that affect the quality of children's lives and to monitor and publicize progress for children will continue to be UNICEF's main business. A rights approach to programming builds on these strengths" (UNICEF 2001 p.242).

The same view is echoed by Hanson who pleads that human rights should no longer be addressed solely as a top down process, but also with a bottom up understanding "in order to attend to human rights from below" (Hanson 2011 p.3). One of the corollaries of the bottom-up approach in rights promotion to legitimate internationally ratified treaties is that rather than silencing down the existence of competing and

conflicting visions, "the treaty body system should on the contrary include mechanisms and procedures that acknowledge differences and encourage transparent dialogue over divergent views and priorities" (Hanson 2011 p.3).

2.5 Child Participation

The literature review values children's participation to support their own rights' promotion. Contrary to popular belief that seems to view in children's participation another recent western cultural invasion, the notion of children's participation is an ongoing effort since 1929 with the Polish doctor and pedagogue Janusz Korczak whose visionary and radical proclamation is still guiding reflection on the way to make children full actors of their rights: "Children are not the people of tomorrow, but are people of today. They have a right to be considered seriously, and to be treated with tenderness and respect" (Korczak 1929). From this author to more contemporary thinkers, there is a wide recognition that children are active agents in constructing their childhood and they should also be active participants in child research projects (Woodhead in Percy-Smith and Thomas 2009). Institutions have echoed these reflections by elaborating several "child-centred, child-enabling and child-empowering" projects underlying participation. The abundance of reflections on children's participation, the enthusiasm and effort of the institutions to translate these reflections into operational and ground projects allow me to affirm that children are considered as one of the first and most important link in the chain of child protection *workers*. Consequently, my reader might legitimately expect that this study includes children as full participants. However, I have not included them within my research as such. The importance I am attaching to the literature on children's participation aims at opening the window as wide as possible to see by analogy what capacity building strategies designed to improve child participation could also be relevant to adults charged with the duty of protecting children. Not integrating children as child protection workers in this research is not to say that their participation seems somewhat an empty rhetoric in an authoritarian settings where elders are almost venerated and respect for them is demanded, including by the threat of violence: beatings are still widely considered as part of education means. It is not also to say like Woodhead (in Percy-Smith and Thomas 2009 p.xxii) that "projects to empower children in contexts where many adults are disenfranchised and have little power to

improve their lives can at best seem idealistic, and at worst counterproductive, or even exploitative". I am rather of the opinion shared by numerous researchers that non manipulative children's participation has all types of benefits for the entire society and for children in particular. It increases a self-esteem, self-control, personal and collective efficacy as well as greater sensitivity to the perspectives of others and greater hope for the future (Percy-Smith and Thomas 2009). Children's participation does not diminish adults' roles and as social actors, children's perspectives about their lives and experiences are invaluable for understanding the realities of their life (Twum-Danso 2008). Children's participation increases adults' challenges to scaffold children's rights effectively and appropriately with respect to their situation (Percy-Smith and Thomas 2009; UNICEF 2010). It is widely understood and accepted that promoting children's rights to participation and promoting adults' responsibilities are inseparable.

However, the perspective of relationship between worker-employing Institution within the framework of professional responsibility of the worker and how this matches with his/her global responsibility in the private sphere that I seek to understand would obviously be lacking if I was to consider children as workers.

Although my work is not focused on thematic of children's participation, one of the tools that have influenced the model I am proposing for better understanding of workers' positioning vis-à-vis culture and professional requirements (see chapter 5) is the theory of "ladder of children's participation" developed by Hart in 1992 and still considered to be the most influential model in the field of child participation.

2.6 Child Protection: A Value Based Work

The literature emphasizes the value base of social work and child protection. Each social worker must understand that his/her profession has at its core some very deeply held values that serve as the "foundation for the ethical basis for practice, which in turn is the justification for the very existence of the profession and the interventions social workers undertake" (Simmons 2003 p.4). Focus is particularly directed on frontline workers as the power possessed by them in the field justifies to a great extent the high degree of their obligation and accountability (Ibid).

The two terms *ethic* and *value* frequently appear hand-in-hand in the definition of value. The working definition of the terms says "values pertain to beliefs and attitudes that provide direction to everyday living, whereas ethics pertain to the beliefs we hold about what constitutes right conduct" (Corey and Callanan in Simmons 2003 p.4). The literature identifies several core values for child protection workers. Though authors appreciate these core values more from the perspective of front line workers in contact with clients, these values apply widely to other workers.

The child protection worker needs to understand that first and foremost, his/her first value must be the protection of children from harm. That is enhancing the welfare of children from holistic perspective: legally and judicially, socially and culturally, emotionally and psychologically. Though the worker may be by his/her job position focused on a single aspect of protection, it is in his/her duty, with support of his/her employing institution to build his/her partnerships in a way that allows for remaining dimensions to be covered (Simmons 2003).

Another core value is the preservation of families. The family is the fundamental unit of the social structure assigned with the primary responsibility of child rearing. "Preserving the integrity of the family unit is not only a fundamental child welfare value, it is also a basic public policy goal. Thus it is usually the best bet to identify and capitalize on the strengths of the family and the resources of the support system around it to keep the family intact" (Simmons 2003 p.7). The attention of front line workers in particular is drawn to the necessity of respect for families who have their own ways of doing things, their traditions and cultural considerations and practices. Schools of Social Welfare's guiding principles generally insist that workers should respect families and honour their practices. "Just because something is different from the way the worker is used to does not make that practice abusive or neglectful" (Ibid). Respect for persons, client self-determination and individualized intervention (attention to individuals' specific needs and situations) are all part of core values. However, Callanan (in Simmons 2003) notes that the value of self-determination (autonomy) is very much a notion of western culture with its emphasis on individualism. Workers with clients coming from more African and Eastern traditions should be alert to the possibility that their clients do not share this particular value. Callanan's warning is particularly relevant in the context of my research not only with

regard to clients and the worker, but it also raises the problem of divergent perspectives between supervisor and supervisee when both are from 2 different cultures: Western and Malian. Loyalty too - being faithful and acting with fidelity - is an important value in a variety of situations that the child protection worker can face at both level of the ground and that of his/her institution.

2.7 Workers' Identities vis-a-vis Value Based Work

One might reasonably ask why I care, what motivates my interest to discuss identity in line with the values above. There are several reasons for this. First, national identity is widely invoked in Mali as conflicting with international view of child protection although the country has subscribed to several international conventions. It follows that working in child protection in Mali to a large extent entails fighting against various aspects of people's life considered as their culture and part of their identities. This led me to a journey on literature on identity and to the debate on universalism versus relativism in the approach of human rights as already discussed.

Understanding what is meant by identity gives room for understanding on how "general" beliefs and attachment to practices prejudicial to children's welfare like Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), early marriage etc. really constitute or not part of people's identity with the objective to appreciate Malian workers' capacity (those who share this identity) to cope with conflicting requirements of child protection work mostly aligned to international perspective. Secondly, even if these general attachments are considered to be national and social identities, it is useful to understand how they are formed. Is identity fixed or not? How can it evolve?

A simple but relevant definition suggested by academic authors of a person's identity is how one answers the question "who are you?" (Fearon 1999). It is distinguishing characteristics (beliefs, desires, moral commitments…) more unchangeable that a person takes a special pride in. As opposed to personal identity, social identity refers to "a social category, a set of persons marked by a label and distinguished by rules deciding membership and (alleged) characteristic features or attributes" Fearon (1999 p.2). These "Social categories" are defined by implicit or explicit rules of membership. To ask about the identity of a given person equates searching in which social category he places himself or is placed by others. It is also trying to understand

how the person feels and what he thinks about the content and rules of membership. Fearon views content of a social category also as physical attributes like behaviours expected of members in given situations or in the case of roles to be exercised, thought typical of members of the category. But contestation and dispute may arise about the membership or the content of a social category.

In consistency with above definition of identity, individuals are put into one of two categories: in-group or out-group. Such categorization, even based on artificial and temporary distinctions, can greatly affect individuals' perception and evaluation of others on the one hand, and more importantly, cooperative behavior on the other hand (Robinson 2009). This is important for understanding individuals' dynamics in positioning and repositioning, as "the benefits enjoyed by in-group members can be extended to out-group members by re-categorization" (Robinson 2009 p 4).

What about the inverse sense of the arrow? There is an assumption that out-group membership has no benefit. My belief is however that conversely, some benefits are attached to out-group position too that can be shown to in-group members, attracting them by the same occasion out of their in-group. In his article *Ethnic Identity and Constitutional Design for Africa*, Selassie remembers indeed how an old European saying identifies an ethnic group sharing same identity as a group of "persons united by a common error about their ancestry and a common dislike of their neighbors" (Selassie 1992 p.8). This means that a notion of unity and the belief of being different from others (identity) may be an erroneous perception. It can be helpful sometimes for individual to think out of the box and to realize that he is not necessarily different from "outsiders" and that what is good for people external to his/her ethnic group can be good for him too. My approach is not to justify a well-known classical constitutionalism emphasis on individual rights and consequent failure to adequately address ethnic claims (Selassie 1992). What I am saying is that if we agree that the universalism approach in right promotion cannot be branded to justify ignoring ethnic and specific identity claims in constitutional design in young African States (because recognition of ethnic claims can protect and advance important fundamental values), it is important and prudent to deal with the motivations underlying specific ethnic claims with further reflection. According to Chanock (commented by

Twum-Danso 2008), discourses in which culture is invoked as an argument against universalism largely belong to stakeholders, not to those who may need their rights protected. In same vain, Twum-Danso (2008 p.115), rebounding on Hatch (1983) underlines how ''cultural relativism has been charged with neutralizing moral judgment and thereby impairing action against injustice''.

The theory of "the law of Non-transferability of law" that questions the validity of using western models of laws and affirms that a legal institution certainly produces different effects in different socio-political-economic contexts (Seidman in Selasie 1992) should be balanced with another law I would call the Law of Non-Exportability of Law, by which if sets of characteristics and attributes of ethnic identities are not good enough to attract outsiders and gain acceptance of UN community, the conclusion to be drawn should be to review it within the national bill of rights. If law-making in Africa cannot be ''an a priori exercise in taking principles from on high and parachuting them" (Horowitz in Selassie 1992 p.5) into local settings, nothing should avoid borrowing freely from international legal principles. "In defining ourselves, we rely heavily on others' views of us, real or imagined, and on our connections with others, ethnic or otherwise" (Selassie 1992 p.8). True yesterday, this principle is perhaps even more relevant today in the context of globalization. It applies for individuals but also for institutions as they can rarely engage in self-definition without some reference to their external environment (Seidman in Selasie 1992). Therefore, as a member of the "civilized international community" Mali cannot escape the necessity to adjusting to some universal references.

One motivation of several authors to study ethnic identity versus nationalism in Africa is that they believe that strong ethnic identification in the context of several minorities in State is detrimental to democracy. However, they focus on democracy in terms of election and voting (Robison 2009; Horowitz 1982) or in terms of economic development. Negative relationship is also found between ethnic diversity and the underprovision of public goods. Democracy should also strongly refer to a situation of a State where laws are really implemented and citizenship recognizable through similar practices, obligations and daily civic acts: marriage, inheritance, conflicts' resolutions, etc. The effectiveness of the democracy should be measured in the capacity of the State not to display its constitution and bill of rights including

internationally ratified conventions only for show off and external use, but to really implement them. Equally, expectations of the citizens about democracy should not be limited to votes and change at the head of the state as we frequently witness in the region[13]. Popular exigencies should also be about smooth functioning of public services through professionalism of people hired for this purpose. Although the history of child protection is littered with tragic stories suffered by children individually and collectively following misbehaviour of people charged to protect them, I have never seen protestation or movement whereby citizens/associations request justice or corrective actions be taken by public authorities in Mali. In other words, there is no demand on the part of the public for an explanation of how the services failed children and an assurance that steps will be taken against perpetrators to prevent further cases (Munro 2005). When the recent evolution of the child protection profession calls for system approach, stakeholders in Mali still have difficulties to even understand that sanction is a major feature of professional life and that everybody in general and child protection front line workers in particular should know that their fate is to be caught up and punished if they commit any form of child right abuse. Of course, as we will see through research findings, rare exceptions exist to confirm the general tendency to casualness. While one of the whole perspective of this work is about placing child protection in system approach, it should not be totally opposed to some traditional solutions still in vogue in several countries that ''punish the culprits and so encourage the others to be more diligent'' (Munro 2005 p.378).

Indeed, when Munro (2005) in justification of her appeal to the system approach complains about the 'blame' culture's manifestation that has significantly increased the risks of punishment to individual workers in the UK and western context, in great extent the public and child protection services in Mali are still to integrate that the respect of the law starts by the fear of the police officer. The threat of punishment should not only apply for individual workers, but also to child protection services as an effective way to modify their behaviour. Such threat cannot exist out of a demand

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[13] When popular protestations of years 1990-2000 in Mali brought the country to democratic regime, the most recent and telling example of the vivacity of poplar protests in the neighbouring Burkina Faso resulted after only 3 days into the resignation of President Compaore from his role as head of state as he was trying to modify the constitution to remain in power for life after having exercised it for 27 years.

for greater transparency and accountability in public services (Munro 2005). Power (1997) calls this 'audit society'. I call it social control. Children rights will not improve as long as citizens will not extend their social control beyond elections to cover the performance of public services in West Africa. Individuals still view access to public services mostly as favor than right. If the 'new management' inspired from western countries like UK assumes that public bureaucracies are inherently inefficient, the main cause of services inefficiencies in African settings is mostly linked to citizens' weak demand, absence of pressure and control over duty bearers.

When in the context of Mali, an observer may rejoice that some inter-ethnic cooperation factors (joking kinship or social dramatizations for example) and religion (Islam) consolidate the living-together within the frontiers of the country[14,] multiple ethnic cultural practices operate unfortunately against a strong sense of national identity that would have favoured democracy and human rights' implementation. Nationalism - a doctrine that says State and cultural boundaries should be congruent, forming a space where feelings of affection, loyalty and identification with politically defined at the national level are shared (Robinson 2009) - is still in embryonic stages and largely stifled by various ethnic manifestations. In other words, ethnic diversity makes nation-building more difficult than it would be with a culturally homogenous group.

I am not saying that States with various cultures are necessarily condemned to have lower level of nationalism. My point is that in Mali just like other sub-Saharan African countries, individuals identify with the State generally only to the extent that it is able to provide public services to them (Azam 2001). For the rest, people identify mostly with ethnic group than members of State. Indeed, there exists a wide range of distinct cultures in Mali even if the contours delimiting a particular culture can prove difficult to establish by a stranger, given the predominance of the Bambara language. Ethnic cleavages provide grounds for the perpetuation of various cultural manifestations among which some are clearly indexed as harmful traditional practices hindering children's rights regardless of the national laws. This means that in these areas at

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[14] It would be interesting to analyse the consequences of recent political and military development to contain islamists' movements on inter-ethnic cooperation in Mali

least, individual ethnical identities are prevailing over national identity. A survey done in 2005 by Robinson to measure the level of nationalism in sixteen African countries shows that Malians are less nationalist and more tribalistic than their neighbouring country people in Ghana, Benin and even Senegal that shares large borders and ethnic groups with Mali. Confronted with this diversity of practices and social codes within its society, the State finds itself at a loss to know how to respond and how to take account of cultural diversity for common interest (UNESCO 2009).

In its attempt to provide explanations to this challenge, the literature has established a macro-level correlation between the degree of national sentiment and level of modernisation. Some authors think that increased education, industrialization, urbanisation and greater intra-State migration are correlated with national identification (Anderson 1983; Robinson 2009).

Commenting on the successful example of Tanzania, Miguel notes that four conditions have contributed to nationalism in this country: "the widespread use of Kiswahili as a second language, the nationalist content of primary school education and the use of Kiswahili in schools, equitable regional distribution of State resources in the early post-independence era, and the personal attributes of the first political leader, Julius Nyerere" (Miguel in Robinson 2009 p.30). Mali's realities were/are of course different from Tanzania case.

A discussion on identity without a perspective from Taylor would be a truncated literature. In *The Sources of the Self*, the author affirms: "My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand" (Taylor 1989 p.27). This perspective clearly signals that self-identity is deeply intertwined with our understanding of the good. Henceforth, because the individual is aware that at least he/she is made of and supported by a given culture, he/she works to maintain and protect it. This is helpful to understand the willingness of people, including CPWs in Mali when they show strong attachment to their culture, to their identity.

According to Taylor, the same way the liberal State is legitimately charged with protecting individuals, it in the same way must also secure conditions for their self-determination and promote their cultural survival. In same line, Oksenberg Rorty (1994 p.153) wrote that "protecting and promoting the variety of cultures is a way of assuring the diversity of opinion that robust critical public deliberation requires." Taylor believes that our self-understanding is inevitably conflicted because modern conceptions of the self inherit every layer of our archaeological history. Any choice would result into conflicts. It follows that for individuals to preserve their authenticity and form a genuine community, there is a necessity to have in place a "politics of recognition" that promotes the protection of individual rights to the cultures that historically constitute at least part of their identity (Oksenberg Rorty 1994).

A flow of legitimate questions that follow could be: What is the interest to preserve "authenticity" if even we can agree on what is authenticity? In whose interest should we preserve authenticity? It must not indeed be forgotten that cultural descriptions are politically and ideologically laden. As Oksenberg Rorty precisely reminds us, even an individual's claim to recognition as a human being carries a political agendum. The ground realities offer examples of how cultural descriptions and interpretations can be diverted to serve hidden objectives of individuals, group of individuals or entire communities. If "Politics of recognition" will result in very prejudicial outputs for people, it better not exist as the costs for its failures to solve problems would be greater than the costs of status quo. "There is no profit in avoiding the dangers of foxes if the outcome is simply to be devoured by lion" (Locke in Hague and Harrop 2004 p.5).

Likewise, in associating the identity with the idea of cultural change, the challenge is how to sustain cultural change in order to help individuals and groups to manage diversity and new practices more effectively. UNESCO advocates investing in intercultural dialogue.

When Richardson (in Oksenberg Rorty 1994) - suggests that moral conflicts can be resolved by using the method of reflective equilibrium to specify interpretations of indeterminate general moral norms (values, ends, and principles) and by deliberating how best to specify and sometimes modify highly shared general norms, Gutmann and Thompson (1996) proposed an analysis of conditions that would justify

introducing moral disagreements in the discussions of public policy. In fact, several authors' perspective situates the resolution of cultural mismatches at the level of public policies. This view is useful, but incomplete. Becoming self-respecting and active citizen is not possible if an individual remains a passive consumer of his/her cultural achievements (Rorty Oksenberg 1994). He/she must rather develop activism and engagement in continuous interpretation of his/her world. With regard to human and children's rights, both efforts at institutional and individual levels are what I call Capability and Capacity Building for Advancing Children's rights within a given cultural context.

If we don't have the same approach to child protection, it is also because we don't have the same view of childhood. Bearing in mind that ''childhood refers more to a position in the social hierarchy than to biological age'' (Twum-Danso 2008 p.107) is likely to help in developing relevant and more contextualized strategies to work toward better attainment of children's rights. The child protection worker himself is a child of a given community and culture that UNESCO (2009 p.3) defines as the 'whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group, including not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs'.

The central question I am raising through the foregoing discussion is to know if the defence of a specific culture, identity and all related notions can justify and legitimize harmful traditional practices on children and the positioning of CPWs with regards to these concerns. This and various other questions raised above will be further analysed in subsequent chapters. In the section below, I review the position of the religions vis-a-vis child protection.

2.8 Child Protection in Islam and Worldwide Known Religions

Research done by UNICEF in collaboration with academic institutions like Al-Azhar University helped to develop manuals that inform on how Islam religion perceives children and how it deals with their care, protection and development. Important extracts from Quranic verses, *hadiths* (sayings from the prophetic tradition) and

sunnas (traditional social and legal norms and customary practices) that provide useful guidance on children's rights (UNICEF 2012) are helpful in the context of my research to enlighten workers in analyzing positions they believe derive from their religion. In other words religion is one of the strongest elements that influence personal values with gender, social class, rituals, and traditions (Rabotin 2010). For this reason and considering that 93% of Malian people are Muslim[15], I have included hereafter extracts on Islam's position on major children's right violations with regard to adults' expected positions towards these issues.

2.8.1 Violence Against Children

Islam views human life as a sacred gift from God. The Qur'an repeatedly stresses the sanctity of life (hurmat al hayat). The life of every individual – regardless of gender, age, nationality or religion – is worthy of respect. There is no distinction made between young and old, male or female. Corporal punishment and other forms of humiliating treatment of children conflict directly with the advice of the Prophet, which recommends treating those who are under the age of seven as children (employing tenderness and compassion), those from age seven to fourteen with care and concern and those from fourteen onwards as close friends (with trust and cooperation). The Prophet emphasized: "Be generous, kind and noble to your children and make their manners good and beautiful" (UNICEF 2012 p.19).

2.8.2 Education in Islam

The importance of educating children has been emphasized in Islam. The first verse of the Quran revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) indicates the importance of Education in Islam. The verse started with the word "Iqr'a", a command that means 'read' in Arabic (Surat Al-Alaq verse 1). This implies the concepts of 'learning', 'exploring' and 'seeking enlightenment'. Hence, Muslims believe that Allah has created humanity with a command that people must seek knowledge in order to become stronger in their faith. Other verses of the Quran emphasize the high status of those who are knowledgeable and those seeking knowledge (see UNICEF 2012; Abuarqub 2009).

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[15] Source: Pew Forum 2009

2.8.3 Health in Islam

The hadith referring to the life and health of the child states that "It is a grave sin for one to neglect a person whom he is responsible for sustaining" (Al-Azhar University and UNICEF 2005 p.29). Al-Baqara, verse 233 remembers that the "mother shall give suck to their children for two whole years, [that is] for those [parents] who desire to complete the term of suckling, but the father of the child shall bear the cost of the mother's food and clothing on a reasonable basis" (Al-Baqara, verse 233 in UNICEF 2012 p.34).

2.8.4 Gender Equality and Islam

The Qur'an and numerous hadith invite Muslims to treat children, males and females alike, with indiscriminate justice and impartiality. A hadith narrated by `Ali Ibn al-Ja`d from Abu Huraya states: 'The best of you in God's eyes is the best in terms of morality, and the best of you is the one who is most excellent to his daughters and wives' (Browning and Bunge 2009 pp.174-175).

Islam's position on above issues has provided ground for partnership between religious and children-focused institutions like UNICEF in several countries to build solid partnership and make great strides in education (with focus on girls), immunization, promoting breastfeeding, fighting against Female Genital Cutting…(UNICEF 2012). The development of such partnership led to the important public commitment by religious leaders during the Religions for Peace's Eighth World Assembly in 2006 in Kyoto (Japan). The Kyoto Declaration was a great commitment to take leadership in religious communities and the broader society.

Mentioning the official view of the religion is worthy in the context of Mali where people including child protection workers invoke Islam to justify harmful traditional practices like FGM/C, street and begging children, early marriages and other restraining factors to girls' education. This misuse of religion has been acknowledged by Multi-Religious Commitment to Confront Violence against Children: "Through omission, denial and silence, we have at times tolerated, perpetuated and ignored the reality of violence against children in homes, families, institutions and communities, and not actively confronted the suffering that this violence causes" (UNICEF 2012 p.47).

UNICEF's work has also illustrated how a combination of community dialogue processes that followed this commitment helped in countries like Egypt to examine the role of FGM/C in the socio-cultural context and foster consensus against it. Religious leaders have affirmed that there is no religious basis for the practice of FGM/C and that the practice must be abandoned.

This example provides understanding of how religious and cultural values, beliefs and norms are often overlapping and intertwined in a subtle way that can be confusing for unaware believers, including child protection workers. It also highlights the importance of engaging in processes that clarify the distinctions between pure religious values and other cultural considerations in order to appropriately respond to difficult child rights challenges (UNICEF 2010).

My theological literature journey allows me to affirm that like Islam, the other worldwide known religions (Baha'I, Buddism, Hinduism, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism and Christianity) also recognize children's rights and appeal for all to respect these rights. Christians for example believe that human beings are created in the likeness of God, with dignity and inherent rights of children, women and girls. The cornerstone of Christian belief is the example of the life of Jesus Christ who demonstrated high regard for the inviolable dignity of children and women, respected them and entrusted them with his mission (UNICEF 2012).

My perspective in this work is therefore in line with official religions' statements that confirm my initial suspicion: none of the revealed religions is in itself an obstacle to the realization of children's rights. The problem however lies in the diverted interpretation that some religious leaders are making of the provisions contained in the holy books. These amalgams will be discussed in this research.

2.9 The Role of Communication and Management in the Challenge of Improving Change for Child Protection

Although we commonly approach changes in the perception as causal arrow of the behaviour, some theorists think that it is the behaviour that leads through a process of habituation, then to new attitudes and beliefs (Kiesler read in Therer 2006). Whatever the direction of the causal arrow and nature of the causal loop, my study

seeks to act as a communication channel, an initiation of multilateral 'talks about talks' (Mitchell 2005) and an enhancer of human resources charged by their profession to promote children's right in Mali.

Theories informing my thinking with regard to the role of communication in bringing good practices of child protection programme management in Mali have been summarized by Ford and Ford (1995). Indeed, analyzing the wide literature produced on the importance of communication in the area of change management in general and within organization in particular, these authors have summarized an overview of written reflections on the subject so far. This overview shows two distinct phases in writers' interpretation of the role played by communication in bringing change.

The first group of theorists see communication as a tool that is used within a change process for announcing and explaining change to prepare people for its positive and negative effects (Beckhard and Pritchard, 1992; Jick 1993). The position taken by the second group represented by Ford and Ford (1995) in the role of conversations in producing intentional change is that producing change is not a process that uses communication as a tool, but rather it is a process that is itself created, produced, and maintained by and within communication (Ford and Ford 1995; Donnellon 1996).

It doesn't matter whether we agree with Ford and Ford or with first category theorists; what matters here is to concur with these authors that producing intentional change is not possible out of intentional communication and to firmly establish the communication as the very medium within which change occurs. Thus in their daily work to advance children's rights, the child protection worker and his/her employing institution are at the heart of the communication and change management process.

Agreeing that such change - defined as the difference(s) between two or more successive conditions or states - is intentional (Ford and Ford 1995) implies that it is in the responsibility of both parties to perceive what is in the new condition that is not in the original (Smith 1982). It also implies that consciously and deliberately they establish circumstances that are different from what they are now and then work through some set of specific and contextualized interventions in collaboration for the attainment of *'an intended difference'*. Contextualizing interventions is necessary, since "the meanings ascribed to the term are a product of a specific cultural, social

and historical context [...], what is considered to be abusive in a particular society, alters over time and in relation to circumstances and context." (Jones and Trotman Jemmott (2009 p.2)

To stimulate public dialogue there is need for the creation of intentional communication conditions. It is obvious that when we talk about intentional communication, we understand deliberate and organized communication. But here, the adjective 'intentional' is also synonym of 'sincere' communication. By 'sincere communication', I mean the communication that is designed in its process as well as its content to free genuine mind expression among partners in dialogue. A communication that acknowledges clearly the power imbalance generally in favor of recruiting/employing institution and that seeks to consequently create an environment of free negotiation as a mean to achieve nonnegotiable objectives of the Institution; a communication that recognizes at least each party as he/she is when coming to contract conclusion, not only with his/her competences and qualities, but also with his/her faults and culture.

Workers' behaviour and beliefs indeed are among important obstacles to the promotion of change. They themselves need changing before the global environment can move more quickly towards change. One determinant of their perception of right violation problems is culture, 'the socially inherited, shared and learned ways of living possessed by individuals in virtue of their membership in social groups' (Avruch 1998 p.1). Considering that ''[in] social interactions, people generally prefer to be like others in their reference group and it is in their interest to conform'' (Bichieri 2006 p.2), a different individual conception results in conflict of perception and beliefs. Social norms in place create normative expectations where people's action reflects concerns about what others will think of them and may do to them if they don't conform. This is the case in Mali with the perpetuation of several children's right violations like FGM/C, early marriage, exploitations and violence. Having met with and working for institutions that 'push' them to develop contradicting beliefs, some workers in child protection field have developed new preferences. They now believe that cutting their girls, marrying them early, hitting children or submitting them to exploitative labour for example are not good practices. But because empirical expectations prevail around, these new genuine preferences are unfortunately

hidden to each other. This phenomenon known as *pluralistic ignorance* creates a vicious circle in which genuine preferences can remain hidden for a long time (Bichieri 2006). Understanding the impact of cultural influence in people, particularly those charged to design or implement programmes to face these problems is especially important for practitioners who work in multicultural contexts, since culture affects many of the communicational processes. In response to this cultural conflict situation where colleagues involved in programme perceive themselves to be torn between goals, one of the most advanced form of resolution suggested by Avruch (1998) that I judge relevant entails bringing the participants to integrative-problem solving, where they maximize their joint gains rather than settle for minimizing respective losses. There is consequently a need to develop communication among individuals in this situation to speak out their thoughts, beliefs and attitudes. Although I am aware of the fact that not all conflicts can be boiled down simply to failures of communication or mutually faulty interpretation (Avruch 1998), I view this need of moving from *pluralistic ignorance* to *common knowledge* and awareness of genuine preferences as the central perspective of this research.

I am aware of the fact that the possibility for a given system to bring change from the inside is an ongoing debate. Some authors like Lord (quoted in Gomez 2008 p.6) eloquently affirm that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house". But I do share an alternative perspective that genuine change is possible if we can succeed in supporting people to modify the master's tools and make it their contemporary tools. Noting that Malian social workers and policy makers are not comfortable with pure western culture should not give room for conclusions that they are necessarily eager about cultural vestiges of their ancestors' harmful traditional practices. Things are changing and an increasing proportion of Malian population has demonstrated that peoples can borrow rice from other cultures though they refuse to eat it with chopsticks (Woodrow 1887). If everyone has culture, everyone has potentially *several* cultures in the sense that he/she is competent to make 'translation' across local cultural boundaries for a *multiculturalist* world. Regardless of what cultural chauvinists might believe, culture is not timeless or changeless. It is dynamic (Avruch 1998).

Talking about social norms and change, people usually tend<u>s</u> to place much attention on negative behaviours. It should be recognized however that there are some positive social norms to be promoted and that the aim of the discussion is not to invite people to abandon all traditional practices that form their identity. This prior recognition has important pedagogic interest in the Malian context. The point here is to avoid confusing the call for change towards better rights with the fight against people's identity. Making people's identity possible is part of the process that contributes to a resolution of conflicts (Hancok in Mitchell 2005). Once this precaution is taken and amalgam avoided, my perspective espouses Mitchell's opinion of having a good framework of 'De-Isolation' of workers and their 'Re-Communication' in facing main obstacles to change. These obstacles are situated at four levels: - policy determinants (those perceived as core identity issues), - psychological determinants (gains evaluation, losses and resultant willingness to take further risks), - social determinants (social norms that support consistency rather than flexibility, steadfastness rather than learning from experience, willingness to sacrifice for the cause rather than accepting that the time has come to cut losses) and - political determinants (internal rivalry and potential challenges to the existing leadership in family and community, appearing to mistake by changing (Ibid).

These sociological and psychological perspectives on identity and social cohesion have influence the way I have designed this research to challenge not only the status quo in workers' practice, but also our collective complacency in the system and working approach dominated by assumptions and little room made for discussion on social contexts (Gomez 2008; ODI & UNICEF 2009).

Both Save the Children and UNICEF at the global level recognize that many staff and managers, because of their *personal or cultural beliefs* do not perceive children's rights issues as relevant and that such mismatches should be addressed in a constructive way*.*

While acknowledging efforts by the Government of Mali to improve the situation of children, the UN Committee - charged to follow-up with countries on their progress on the application of the UN Convention on the Right of Children (CRC) article 44 - noted persisting problems to be addressed for children rights improvement. Policy, legislation, information system, monitoring and coordination as well as cultures and

services must be revised to conform to the ratified convention by Mali (Geneva Committee on CRC 2007).

More recently, the child protection programme's evaluation undertaken by the *Swedish* Agency for International Development Cooperation (SIDA) concluded that various constraints related to the national context have limited its performance. The dissemination of this study's conclusion was helpful in highlighting important aspects not previously considered by national networking group on protection. (UNICEF and SIDA 2008). If official mechanisms are promoted without shared values that support these mechanisms, results sought for children would be compromised. Paying attention to what workers believe and do to establish dependant relationships with outcomes of what they profess must enter into our academic and managerial thinking (Scourfield 2003 cited by Gomez 2008). Working with the Governmental National Programme or even with UN agencies for children rights is not a guarantee against private violation of some rights, and it is erroneous to assume that we have common view on problems facing children. It is therefore understandable that most of interventions have not produced expected results (Adam and UNICEF 2010; Diakite 2010). As work acts to achieve goals which are implicit in the identity of the individuals (Billett 2006), fighting child rights abuse and harmful traditional practices with staff and partners who are themselves culturally under influences of 'pretended benefits' of these practices is pure illusion. Successful change is tribute of worker's capacity to connect policy, belief in policy and resulting practice in a meaningful way (Wharf and McKenzie 2004). If values and goals are not frankly shared among partners, how can they successfully implement the programme?

UNICEF in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania has developed a course titled 'Advances in social norms and implications for programming'. This initiative is clearly a confirmation of the awareness by the organization that underlying determinants of child well-being, including socio-cultural determinants must be addressed. With concrete examples on various rights' violations, the initiators justify the relevance of the course with affirmation that experience by UNICEF in applying the human rights based approach to programming has given rise to the need to improve organizational capacity by showing more attention to socio-cultural determinants (UNICEF 2012). There is nothing new in the organisation's position

when it affirms that harmful social norms are key determinants of the deprivation of multiple rights of children.

Recognizing that violations of human and children's rights have been traditionally analyzed mainly at the level of the individual, inducing that remedial programmes have sought to change behaviour by focusing on individuals or on households instead of widening interventions to many other peoples connected to targeted individual, is an interesting progress in the organization approach. A progress that is encouraged in large extent thanks to the child protection department work that helped to perceive the limitations of interventions focused on individuals when the behaviours are relational to and governed by social norms and an individual's behaviour is conditioned by the behaviours of people around him/her. Which behaviours in a specific context can either be beneficial to the child's survival, development and participation or may act as a major barrier (UNICEF 2012).

However, when the designers of this learning affirm that it will provide UNICEF and UN partners' staff with the necessary knowledge, understanding and the practical tools to address social norms and stimulate positive social change for children in a variety of environments and cultures (Ibid), they are once again targeting the global programmatic environment, falling as always into the same trap of assumption that these staff are ready to disseminate good practices that will change their environment.

I am arguing that in our work for new social norms, the fundamental question to start with is not what the worker must do with regard to children's rights; It is rather who the worker is. In other words, what is his/her innermost positioning before targeting what he/she ought to do in the framework of his/her job description. Addressing a variety of developmental challenges across sectors and designing strategic programmes that induce consistency of behaviours with the protection, survival, development and participation of all children should begin with (a) recognition of the strategic position and role of those in charge of such programme implementation and (b) inverse assumption that these workers may be captive of their own harmful traditional practices while recognizing at the same time that they may also conversely benefit from favorable good traditional practices of their native culture.

As Rue (2001) puts it, it is an imperative obligation for each of us to clarify his/her value system. If this task is envisaged for all, people in positions of influence are particularly targeted. Rue's enumeration of these people (parents, clergy, teachers, coaches, supervisors, managers, directors or executives) includes social workers like child protection staff. Though it takes courage to face our authentic self, the author notes that "when we clarify our values, we do a great service to ourselves and a great service to all of those with whom we come in contact" (Rue 2001 p.14).

However, contrary to Rue, I don't believe that such exercise should necessarily be concluded by the "commitment to protect and care for that authentic self" (Ibid). If the clarification of self-value leads us to a conclusion that what we call value is no longer holding maybe because our window of perception of the world has changed or for any other reason we deem sufficiently important, we must have a second stage courage to acknowledge change in our value instead of necessarily seeking to "create ways to honor them through action" (Ibid). Having such level of courage is not easy, for our values are who we are, they 'follow us more closely than our shadow' (Ibid) and abandoning them can be felt as self-destruction.

Another statement made by Rue in the context of the job is that he has rarely found situations where people were fired because they were technically incompetent. Rather, he has found many situations where people's contracts were terminated because their value system clashed head-on with that of their supervisor or hierarchy.

Our values are the elements deep within our belief system that influence every aspect of our reality, from family to work and from friends to our larger world. Values drive our behaviours and why we do things and they are the triggers to how we feel about something, the impression of right vs. wrong. As Rabotin (2010 p.45) puts it, the "feeling of culture is similar to the feeling of swimming in a calm, cool pool. The only way you can see how deep the water is, is to climb out of the pool and look back down into its depth." We know about the comfort each of us can feel when our values encounter our work requirements. When we honour our values, we feel enthusiastic and alive. But when we ignore them, we feel forced and unhappy (Rue 2001).

However building synergy among values in today's complex world is not easy and this is recognized by the literature on values-based coaching and leadership. Some

values are said to be universal while there are specific values linked to specific cultural contexts.

Rabotin regrouped universal values under four headings: Respect, Recognition, Reward and Relationship before pointing out how in the context of globalization, companies adopt generic core values, ''often with the Anglo-Saxon bias, and expecting the foreign entities to abide by them. Needless to say confusion, tension and misunderstandings are often the result'' Rabotin (2010 p.43). This tension is not surprising as the staff is modeled within national or local values that are influenced by politics, religion and local customs. When what he/she encounters in his/her job position does not fit into his/her norm values, his/her natural tendency is one of rejection even if this rejection may not be openly formulated. The successful coaches and leaders for such tension management are not those who will content themselves in just parroting their headquarters by calling to Respect, Recognition and well-known slogans. They are likely those who are aware of the fact that as "social beings" looking for compatibility and cohesion, our brains scan our environment in search of what is familiar (Rabotin 2010). Because of this awareness, they will help their team members to develop perspectives that may be partially or totally new and acceptable as values and behaviours in reaching their organisation's goals.

It must be acknowledged that the building of a coaching relationship takes time. It consequently needs to be unlocked over time because it is ultimately about a relationship based on trust. As Leonard and Murphy (1995 p.8) remind us, ''Any significant long-term change requires long-term practice, whether that change has to do with learning to play the violin or learning to be a more open […] person''.

It is only with realism in programme management that child protection partners can have the chance to finally exclaim that cultural borders have come down as we move south to north within the country and from countries other than Mali, promoting continuity in main principles of child protection (Rabotin 2010).

Faced with the repetitive complaint in Mali which stresses that the child protection programme is not attributed a required quantity of human resources (UNICEF 2009) I argue that while it is legitimate to ensure that the programme does have enough nembers of staff, another more intelligent question is how many people are engaged

sincerely in child protection? Even if we build a reasoning that around the world, there is a general recognition that childhood confers a special status upon children, including recognition of their vulnerability and need for protection, and once again, how this protection should be provided is far from universal. "Differences in child protection responsibilities and strategies are tied to geography, political and social history, religion, wealth, social structure, and a more general sense of purpose that blends cultural beliefs about how to protect children with everyday realities" (UNICEF 2010 p.14).

Years before the above reflection by UNICEF, prior academic courses and professional experiences had led me to a strong understanding that the most effective organizations are those governed by strategic communication and ruled by leaders and 'coaches' committed to helping others learn and discover their strengths and weaknesses. My literature review has consequently involved side trips into what could be ingredients for effective coaching and leading.

Jossey-Bass commenting on the subtleties regarding information versus knowledge; education versus training; learning versus teaching in competence building remembers Carl Rogers' words: ''only learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered, self-appropriated learning'' (Jossey-Bass 1987 p.1). We can create and organize the opportunities and the environment, but the learning belongs ultimately to the learner. He argued that "the role and status of a coach take precedence over those of a teacher as teaching is usually understood. The coach's legitimacy does not depend on his scholarly attainments or proficiency as a lecturer but on the artistry of his coaching practice." Based on this, he concluded that the question should not be how much you know, ''but rather how effectively you can help others to learn'' (Jossey-Bass 1987 p.2).

If we take the idea of coaching seriously in the context of child protection programme implementation to support workers to overcome contradicting beliefs, what might be its implication for organizational management? Are our institutions ready to accept and engage in the management preliminaries it entails? For the coach to respond in an effective way to the learner, he/she has to take necessary time for listening and engaging in dialogue that can be time consuming and not in harmony with administrative official calendar for showing results. As a designer, he/she has to

juggle variables, 'reconcile conflicting values, and maneuver around constraints' (Jossey-Bass 1987 p.2).

Leadership development too is presented as a path to self-insight and professional growth (London 2002). There is a way to go for leadership to be the means of dealing with chaos while "management thinking is characterized as the search for certainty" (Lawler 2005 p.227). Institutions have first to admit the existence of conflicting values within their internal environment and being ready to discover more about the problems facing workers as the coach is trying to solve individual problems. Are senior managers and directors ready to admit openly these contradictions? These are some of the important questions that must be discussed openly as the consequences of an appeal for sincere workers' capacity improvement in child protection context. Not analyzing this readiness level before engaging the organization in coaching effort could put the management in a position of finding itself surprised at some consequences that may even be more complicated to handle than initial situation for which solution was sought. In such situation, the less an organization considers itself as a socially constructed reality in which the known reality is interpreted, constructed and maintained through discourse (Ford and Ford 1995; Berger and Luckmann 1966), the more difficult the management of the situation will appear. If on the contrary, the organisation adopts a constructivist view, the coach or the change agent will use its interventions not only to bring about a greater alignment of the staff with the ''true'' reality as stated by the organization, but also to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct realities in a way that can bring about different performances resulting from new realities in which the staff and his/her organization are more effective in achieving the outcomes to which they are committed (Ford and Ford 1995).

Obviously the challenge with the work of the coach is that of having a good balance between two conflicting positions: that of being disconnected from the organisation as coaching engagements happen "behind closed doors" meaning that coaching goals do not correspond with organisational requirements due to the high degree of confidentiality between the coach and coachee (Chapman 2006) and that of acting to generate impact on the organization's business. When it is constant that managers dream to rely on predictable behaviours of their subordinates, organisations that

choose to have recourse to coaching should understand that surprise, though contrary to organisational predictability and stability is essential to learning. They should be ready to cope with the dilemma that "any noteworthy learning which involves a significant change in the knowledge structure and underlying values, which is essential to organizational adaptation, disrupts the constancies on which organisational life depends" (Chapman 2006 p.229). Once again, the straightforward question in the context of child protection programme in Mali is that of the margin for workers' knowledge and understanding not to be 'a mirror of some underlying "true" reality as stated by employing organisations (Ford and Ford 1995).

Several authors have questioned the degree of autonomy of the coach and leader. Stacey (2001) has challenged "the concept of command and control in leadership" before Griffin (2002) who also rejects the systemic view of leadership that usually presents leaders as independant individuals who can stand inside and outside an organisation and change it autonomously. Stacey is also convinced that the formulation of an organisation-wide 'shared vision' is another illusion since the future is not predictable. To avoid the trap of this double illusion, he pleads for the concept of *self-organisation* based on inner strength in lieu of the classical notion of *workers' empowerment* that he presents as powerful tools of manipulation (Stacey 2010). This view is similar to that of London (2002) that self-insight can provide imminent approaches that we can take to get around each corner in life.

Although I have experienced practical situations that led me to better understand Stacey's perspective on inner strength, I find it difficult to apply it widely in the context I am dealing with in Mali. Yes of course as we will see in the analysis of findings of this research, some workers have demonstrated their own effort, skills and abilities that helped them to make better decisions based on self-insight to align with imperatives of their jobs. However to base analysis on these isolated cases for a systematization of self-organisation as a ruling strategy for workers' capacity building would sound more like an invitation to inaction than anything else. Effort must be made at least at communication level to precisely improve self-organization. Turning inward to see what is necessary for us to advance toward the new age world (London 2002) is a time-consuming process requiring lots of meditation and preparation that

is not easy in a day- by-day surviving strategy that characterizes several workers I am talking about here.

For leadership to be action, the leader, based on clear vision can also initiate conversation and engage people to interact instead of waiting to emerge only during ongoing interaction between people 'as an act of recognition' (Yukl 2006). In other words, the appeal for the leader to enhance communication within and between groups is a vain appeal if this communication has not yet emerged. It is not possible to enhance something that does not exist. I would then place the ideal leader for my study context closer to the extreme view of the heroic leader and a bit far from the impotent figurehead within the interval of an accurate conceptualisation of leadership proposed by Yukl. This author defines leadership as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives" (Yukl 2006 p.8). Leaders are individuals who have enhanced capacities for taking the attitudes of the other members of the team to enhance communication within and between groups. Simply put, "Leaders act and leadership is action" (Griffin 2002 p.213). The action-centred leadership model first developed by John Adair (1973), is very popular in the UK. It suggests that successful leaders address needs at three different levels: the task, the team and the individual. Going beyond the traits or characteristics of a leader, Adair (1973) focused more on the competencies required to work well with changing parameters. This leads to the necessity for a leader and a worker to review their values in the light of job requirements.

Reviewing the literature on the communication role through only the change management lens would not reflect the entire reality of Mali situation. **Another important dimension is health approach.** Indeed, the communication material produced on FGMC and early marriage during the last 10 years in Mali shows that the discourse on health with regards to harmful practices against children are predominant over the rights perspective. Particular emphasis is put on FGM/C where the role of health workers ranges from data collection and evidence producing on relationship between FGM/C practice and health-related issues to advocate for abandonment of these harmful practices. Indeed, one of the well-known bottlenecks in fighting several children rights abuses including violence against children (VAC) is

the challenge of the measurability of these abuses and demonstrating the value of the social good that will come from interventions compared with their cost (UNICEF and OWG 2014) as Governments and partners need to be assured that progress in reducing denounced practices can be tracked and monitored at an affordable cost. In the case of the specific VAC that represents the FGM/C, this concern is largely solved by information and evidences made available on the consequences of FGM/C and the cost it represents for families and the whole country. Health discourse seems to be more accessible and more appropriate perspective for public education in the sense that it reduces endless discussions and polemic with religious fundamentalists as most of them are opened to revisit traditional practices only on the condition and evidence that it has harmful impact on people's health.

The preponderance of the health discourse is to a large extent a consequence of this evidence. However, there is a paradox that despite this health discourse, professional cultural mismatches are encountered and described within health sector too. This will show in the study findings.

2.10   Conclusion

I have framed this whole review of literature as part of capacity building at the disposal of both institutions and workers. Balancing between universalist and relativist approach in attaining human rights, significant amounts of consulted documents point to the cultural challenges to be reconciled with dominant western practices view of child protection. Awareness of this challenge would help in saving considerable resources in terms of time and financial investment that occur in programme management. Together with the findings of the research, this critical step of literature research will help in the formulation of change management in programme implementation.

Now that I am responsible for the whole UNICEF programme coordination (of which child protection is only one component) and though I am presently working in another African country, this literature review provides me a strategic thinking opportunity for more successful coordination of my work in promoting children's rights. In the next chapter, I will focus on the methodology I used for the research.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I have provided description and justification of the methodological framework underlying the research approach, its design and the rationale behind these. To clarify my methodological approach, I have reviewed several work-based studies: Ask 2011; Bartels-Ellis 2010; Twum-Danso 2008; Menelaou 2004 and other authors. The clarity and accessibility of their perspectives were very beneficial to my thoughts.

In chapter 2, I raised my reader's attention to the fact that the literature on child protection in Mali is silent on the perspective of workers about how they understand their native traditions and cultures in relation to their job requirements. As a consequence there is a gap in information and insights into the relevant and culturally rooted strategies to be adopted in the framework of capacity building for those who are charged to promote children's rights by their function. How they are perceived by and how they perceive their institutions' role, how individual members and the wider organization might interact to face challenges related to the attainment of set objectives within institutions towards children's rights are all important challenges and the focus of this research. From the contribution and the recommendations of this study, UNICEF and its partners will have gained greater understanding and a more rigorous basis for the adjustment of their interventions.

3.2 Informing Theories for my Research: Social Constructionism

Though Burr (1995) believes that it is difficult to form a single definition for Social Constructionism because it draws its influence from a number of disciplines, it is widely admitted that a social constructionist view implies that meaning is constantly created among people, in relationship to one another. We are indeed profoundly and solely social beings existing in relationship with our world and with others (Gergen 1999). Burr's reflection remembered by Brooks (2002 p.2) is important in that she offers four foundational assumptions under which social construction can be recognized:

1. ''A critical stance towards taken for granted knowledge'' with its corollary invitation to be critical to the idea that our observation of the world unproblematically yields its nature to us;

2. The ways in which we commonly understand the world is historically and culturally specific;

3. ''Knowledge is sustained by social processes'' involving daily interactions among people and our current understanding of the world is a product of these interactions;

4. ''Knowledge and social action go together'' and there are numerous social constructions.

As Shotter (1993b) puts it, with social constructionism, language is no longer seen as a means to represent reality that exists out there. It is seen as shaping reality, because reality and us are intimately interwoven. The language becomes a process of sense-making between human beings in the sense that "our thoughts, our self-consciously known thoughts, are not first organized at the inner center of our being (in a nonmaterial 'soul', or a physiological 'lingua mentis') […]. They only become organized, in a moment-by-moment, back-and-forth, formative or developmental process at the boundaries of our being" (Shotter 1993b p.46).

My intention here was not to prolong the review of the literature which is the object of chapter 2 but to continue to guide my reader through my report, providing him/her with understanding of how crucial and exciting is the social field for me when it comes to capacity building for advancing child protection. I ''realized within a systemic swim, a process that eclipses me but which is also constituted by my participation" (Gergen 1999 p.216). Through my research design in working with participants as well as making sense out of my findings, social constructionism theory has played a critical role. A concrete example was how social constructionism, and particularly the theory developed by Bichieri (2006) on social norms creating *normative expectations* in combination with *pluralistic ignorance* with regard to the challenge of making collective change, has helped me to readjust and position Focus Groups Discussions (FGDs) over more individual tools in data collection. It soon became clear to me that resorting to well-known proverbs and sayings provided by participants and discussed in groups are powerful efforts to engage with them in fruitful and collective

interpretation of an unclear reality and helping both participants and myself to make sense of it. Clearly, this perspective is grounded in social constructionism epistemology that invites us to notice and identify what we are actually perceiving and feeling in the current situation.

This relativistic ontology recognizing multiple realities and a subjectivist, interpretive epistemology (Ask 2011) has guided this research. This was helpful for me as it increased my attention and capacity to be careful about myself and my academic background as a person who studied law. I understood that I should manage with caution readymade approaches of international laws that colonize my work environment and our ways of thinking within predetermined perspectives.

It was interesting that the whole data collection process alongside, participants' reflections reminded me constantly that social constructionism was not only my choice as researcher, but also and implicitly the preference of research participants too. A typical example is when a participant in interview affirms: *"If programmes ignore that child protection cornelian principles do not unfortunately transform workers into Cornelius, we are aware that we are not Cornelius but Malians."* More than being intended only for the programmes, I also understood such reflections as an appeal for me to explore my sensations and feelings and to be able to detach myself from my previous assumptions or at least to disclose them in the process of my research.

As already demonstrated in my literature, reconciling relativism (implied by constructionism) with a universalistic discourse favoured by the United Nations has not been a problem for me since a large part of literature produced by the UN itself has demonstrated that dealing with human rights and relativism are not necessarily contradicting. In line with my perspective, the table 3.1 below provides an outline of how the research methodology and key elements informing research process are connected (Bartels-Ellis 2010).

Table 3.1: Key elements of the research process - framework for the research (Adapted from Saunders et al. 2000 in Bartels-Ellis 2010 p.39)

Epistemology
Social constructionism - acknowledging the research concerns itself with the different meanings that participants construct in their interactions in the world of work and in their living environment
Theoretical perspective
Interpretivism - acknowledging that research falls within the domain of social as opposed to natural sciences, deals predominantly with the actions of individuals and is primarily qualitative
Research approach
Inductive as the aim is to identify what the research infers and thereby assist in constructing theories and models from its empirical data for the specific work context and potentially more broadly
Research methodology
Principally qualitative but a small amount of quantitative is included
Timeframe
Data were collected during several periods in line with combined methods used, the iterative approach of the analysis and the time available in the evolving context of Mali
Data collection methods
Participatory methods: focus groups discussions, interviews, workshops and observation

3.3 Rationale of the Research Perspective

This research falls within the domain of social sciences which are said to be imprecise when compared to physical sciences focused on objective words and 'attempts to systematize knowledge through generalizable principles' (Fox and Green 2007 p.11). Rather, the paradigm of this research deals with socially constructed

words. I interact with participants, interpreting data and recognizing my own position in the research to illuminate the situation of children's rights in Mali. This is a qualitative and flexible research that seeks to act as a change agent from collective as well as individual experiences of participants and their perception of world. Consequently, the research adopts an inductive approach. As an insider researcher, I had the advantage of having knowledge on the study environment, 'its culture, its jargon and its personal network'' (Gray 2006 p.375). This was a useful advantage for me as my methodology is action oriented.

The above perspective in the context of work based imperatives, in the best interest of children and my academic development needs have all prevailed in the design of this project. Based on the literature review pertaining to this study, based also on my preference for analysis of words rather than numbers, the research design followed a qualitative approach based on action oriented research approach as main pre-determined methodologies.

3.3.1 Qualitative and Inductive Approach

Qualitative research is a set of investigative techniques which gives an overview of the behaviour and perceptions of people while exploring their views on a particular topic in an in depth manner than in a survey. It refers to a research method focused on the observation of social phenomenon in nature (ROCARE/ERNWACA 2013; Taylor and Bogdan 1984). It generates ideas and hypotheses that can help understand how an issue is perceived by the target population and to define or identify options related to this issue. Although it deals with data difficult to quantify, it does not reject the numbers or statistics but does not position them in priority as does quantitative research.

Because this study is interested in knowing the factors affecting some aspects of the behaviour of social actors such as Child Protection Workers (CPWs) who are facing the realities of their professional agenda, the qualitative perspective is the natural angle for me to address this research with an inductive approach: a scientific method that obtains general conclusions from individual premises.

Though this work falls in the reference of inductive approach as opposed to hypothetico-deductive frame, I recognize that I have conducted it with my sensitivity

also termed "perspective" by Glaser and Strauss (1967) who clearly establish distinction between this 'theoretical sensitivity' and 'theory'. The theoretical sensitivity of the researcher is a perspective with which he/she perceives the empirical data Strauss (1993). Although the principle is to enter the ground to explore with the fewest possible presuppositions and the least possible hypotheses to be tested (Starrin, Dahlgren, & Larsson Styrborn, 1997; Guillemette 2006), we should recognize that there is a difference between an empty head and an open mind (Dey 1999).

3.3.2 Action Oriented Approach

The action oriented approach is a common and frequently used method for conducting social science research. For a number of reasons I have chosen this approach in conducting this work.

I would like this research to contribute to solving practical problems: conflicts of perspectives and change. I want it to *lead* to social action (Kurt Lewin in Gill and Johnson 2006) and 'to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation […] by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework' (Rapoport in Avison et al 2001 p.20). Precisely, as *collaboration* and *problem solving* are the fundamental aim of my research, action oriented research was appropriate to bring the work to it term. Recognizing my place as full participant, action oriented research approach allows me to acknowledge my involvement as researcher practitioner instead of false allegation of total detachment from research settings.

The final intention of appropriation of the outcomes of this study by stakeholders pleaded for exclusion of other approaches, particularly those commanded by positivist frames of references and their deductive tradition, fixing rigorously the research process from the beginning of the study which I have considered at the first stage of my reflection. Although there is no independent or neutral point from which an observer might objectively observe the world (theory-laden), (Gill and Johnson 2006 p.28), I had no predefined hypotheses or statement to test in an experimental manner in this research. I approached it as an open qualitative contribution from an inside perspective that will result in knowledge or theory creation for the advancement of children's agenda in Mali (Brannick and Coghlan 2007).

Key internal influences on this study comprises the following:

- My institution (UNICEF)'s interest as a knowledge institution that seeks to constantly develop and maintain its leading position on children related issues;
- Recognition that results achieved for children in Mali is insufficient and that the need to improve is urgent;
- Recognition that a 'children first' appeal in the national culture that obviously puts 'elders first' needs further research and contextualization;
- My commitment to promote dialogue among international and national cultures regarding human rights imperative;
- My goal to become a well-recognized expert in the field of child protection.

External influences are related to

- Mali's internal relevant legislations like the Constitution of 1992;
- Ratified international legislations on human rights;
- Ratified legislation on children and women rights: the CRC, the ACRWC, Maputo protocol etc.;
- Report from UN Committee on Mali regarding Children rights;
- Report from African Expert Committee on Mali regarding Children rights;
- SIDA's 2010 evaluation on the child protection in Mali inviting for further research and actions aiming at improving stakeholders' capacity for child protection.

Acknowledging that international obligations justified in great extent my presence in Mali and constituted an important motivation of this research, it was however important to reconcile this reality with the provision that a child of a given community or nation has a right to enjoy his or her own culture (CRC, article 30). The research design has integrated this cardinal imperative. To this context of qualitative action oriented research is associated a triangulation approach that supported the inquiry and accuracy of findings in relation to research questions showed in table 3.4.

Action oriented research approach pleads for attention to avoid on my part the risks and disadvantages of 'preunderstanding' that could lead me to substitute my view to that of participants because I am too close to them and to the data (Brannick and Coghlan 2007). Instead, I preferred to favour a collaborative reflection that could look back over what had been done to enable extraction of ''the net meanings which are the capital stock for intelligent dealings with further experiences' (Dewey 1983 p.110). To avoid the risk of too rigid and too researcher view dictating tools, I considered among a variety of methodological tools available to support inductive approach of this research as mental stimulus to prompt 'free' opinions of participants with the aim that their determination will run beyond the timeframe of the study to concrete actions and steps in resolving the challenge of child protection in Mali. Thus the necessity of seeing things *through participants' eyes* (with its associated risk of going too native that I constantly managed) was highly strategic for the ownership of the study findings and outcomes that will inform development of more appropriate and relevant interventions.

3.4   Research design: Sampling and Scope

It was important to have a clear idea about who is a CPW, what is the role devoted for him/her and what authority he/she has before proceeding with the sampling.

As shown in literature review, I have spent a fair amount of time reflecting on whom I should include within the boundary of CPW concept and to be involved as participants in my inquiry. On the one hand, a wide definition of CPW includes parents and other stakeholders involved in child and family welfare. On the other hand, a narrow comprehension like the one proposed by the Victorian Early Parenting Strategy (VEPS) 2010 that limits CPWs to those who are authorized by law and relevant legislation 'to investigate and to report where there is a concern that a child or young person is at significant harm and the child's parent or caregiver is unwilling or unable to protect the child from harm' (VEPS 2010 p.1).

In the context of this study, neither too broad nor too narrow a definition is adopted. In accordance with the definition of child protection provided in literature review, the definition of CPW I have adopted is somewhat between the two approaches above. It includes workers who, in direct contact with children or not, have professional

responsibility at any level (policy and legislation, law enforcement, care giving, advocacy and technical support) to ensure that support is offered to minimize or to avoid the risk of harm to children. This definition is in line with UNICEF's perspective of child protection workers that targets diverse persons involved in system building interventions from governmental institutions, NGOs, United Nation Country Team (UNCT) and decentralized entities.

No specific participants in FGDs and interviews were identified prior to the launching conference. Contacts at the Ministry for Women, Children and Families (MWCF) at both national and regional levels, at the Ministry of Justice, within UNICEF and other UN agencies operating in the country, in national and international NGOs, in Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and decentralized bodies all provided guidance on the best persons to target for the constitution of FGDs in accordance with the five venues agreed (during the launching conference) to host these FGDs: Bamako, Koulikoro, Segou, Mopti and Kayes. Participants from other regions were distributed in FGDs according to their proximity to these five regions unless they chose otherwise.

The majority of participants for individual interviews were identified during the FGDs.

The study was designed to involve participants from all 8 regions of the country. In my effort to have an acceptable sample, I also constantly kept in mind that though members of organizations are not equal, all must have equal opportunity to participate (Walker and Takavarasha 1998) and the larger the sample, the lower the likely error in generalizing (Robson 2002). While some workers concentrate on single and specific functional areas, others work at several levels. Thus it was not an easy exercise to categorize them within exclusive functional boxes in child protection since some of the participants intervened at several levels. However, taking into account both the nature of the intervention of their employing Institution and specific job descriptions of workers, I have classified them into 3 functional categories:

(1) Policy making (High level Governmental officials in Ministries, people working on legislation, programmes designers and planners);

(2) Care giving (this involves direct front line workers in contact with children);

(3) Technical & fund supply (UN and NGOs' agents, bilateral and multilateral cooperation's local workers).

As such, to "acquire in-depth information from those who are in a position to give it" (Cohen et al 2007 p.100), a purposive sampling method was employed and consequently, there could be no claim that my sample was representative. Simply, it involved only a group that represented itself (Bartels-Ellis 2010). However, though sampling in qualitative data cannot be considered to be representative in the same way as quantitative research, my study populations were distributed in various socio-professional categories from the 8 regions of the country with a net predominance of participants in the district of Bamako where employing institutions are mainly located. The total number of CPWs in Mali were estimated at 1110, at the time of data collection (MWCF 2010), I involved a total of 96 participants in my sample as detailed in the table 3.2 below. This total research population is deemed consistent with the available resource, research questions, desired outputs and in meeting academic requirements in terms of time frame and rigour of analysis.

Participants included two groups: (1) Child Protection Workers and (2) Institutions' Directors, Representatives, Human Resource Officers and Programme Coordinators.

Socio professional categories, ethnical origins of workers, duty stations of affectations meaning distribution by region (table 3.2), sexes and ages of workers have all been among criteria of this sampling.

It should be mentioned that although coming from the 8 regions, participants were mostly recruited from institutions belonging in one way or another to the wide networking group of UNICEF partners. This may well mean that other hard to reach CPWs were underrepresented in the study though most of the institutional actors involved in the protection of children in Mali gravitate around this leading organization. My positionality therefore influenced the sampling.

Table 3.2: Study participants: distribution by region, functional area and data collection methods (96 participants for 28 interviews and 10 focus groups)

Sample			Sample			Total study participants for all functional areas
Individual interviews (Grouping)			Focus Groups Discussions (Grouping)			
Bamako & Koulikoro	Southern [16] regions (Kayes, Segou & Sikasso)	Northern regions (Kidal, Tbctou, Mopti & Gao)	Northern regions (Kidal, Tbctou, Mopti & Gao)	Southern regions (Kayes, Segou & Sikasso)	Bamako & Koulikoro	
28 individual interviews			10 FGDs involving 68 participants			
Total research population:						**96**

I designed and developed the research in a way that allowed for the following:

a) The possibility for me to still manage the project with the challenge of being reflexive and focused despite my departure from Mali before the completion of the study due to the nomadic character of international professional function with UNICEF;

b) The part of field work involving interviews and FGDs could be delimited over the second semester of year 2011 to mid-2012 and benefit from the first long period of research participant, all being consistent with an action oriented research approach;

c) The use of purposive sampling with participants recruited from the eight regions of the country and the district of Bamako though a qualitative data cannot aim to be representative in the same way as quantitative research;

d) Grouping of respondents and a variety of data collection methods can favour high level of triangulation;

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[16] Excluding Bamako and Koulikoro where workers of national levels are mostly located, making them more easily accessible.

e) Use could be made of the research recommendations aiming at building workers' capacity for the advancement of child protection work.

3.5 Who are Child Protection Workers in Mali?

The analysis of research participants' profiles provides an insight on the backgrounds of CPWs in Mali: their origin, ethnic group, educational background, age… (table 3.3). Participants in this research are various Policy Makers, Care Givers, Technical and Funding providers who intervene by their professional function in child protection Work in Mali.

The table 3.3 is a summary of characteristics that I also highlighted separately in additional figures. Given that several participants' families are a mix up of two or more ethnic groups, there are limits to what can be deduced from participants' classification according to ethnic groups (Figure 3.1). It is acknowledged that the Bambara ethnic group that constitutes the majority of CPWs makes a comparative analysis of attitudes among different ethnic groups almost impossible.

Table 3.3: Overview of Research Participants' Profile

Overview of Participants' Profile					
Gender	Men			Women	
	68 (71%)			28 (29%)	
Matrimonial status	Single	Married		Divorced	Widow
	10 (10%)	80 (83%)		2 (3%)	4 (4%)
Number of years in child protection	Less than 1	1 to 5		5 to 10	10 to 15	More than 15
	3 (3%)	27 (28%)		25 (26%)	20(21%)	21 (22%)
Education level	Primary	Secondary		University	Plus Koranic school	
	0 (0%)	14 (15%)		82 (85%)	An average of 70% of the 96 participants.	
Employing Institution	Gov official	UN staff		NGO staff	Other staff (CBOs)	
	46 (48%)	22 (23%)		25 (26%)	3 (3%)	
Ethnic group	Bambara	Fulani	Soninké	Sonrhaï	Dogon	Others
	44 (46%)	12 (13%)	3 (3%)	7 (7%)	4 (4%)	26 (27%)
Number of children in charge	0	1-2		3-4	5-6	above 6
	8 (8%)	28 (29%)		31 (32%)	16 (17%)	13 (14%)
Functional area	Policy making	Care giving (in direct contact with children)		Technical & fund providers		
	16 (17%)	50 (52%)		30 (31%)		

However, discussions and comments from participants suggest that in Mali, this majority ethnic group is also one of the most reputedly attached to traditional practices. It was recalled that the word 'Bambara' adopted by the French colonizers was derived from 'Ban-mâna', which implies an association of 'Ban' (refusal) and

'mâna' (master); meaning 'those who refused to be dominated', not only by more recent French colonization, but also by islamic invasion around 1818.

Figure 3.1: Distribution of Research Participants by Ethnic Group
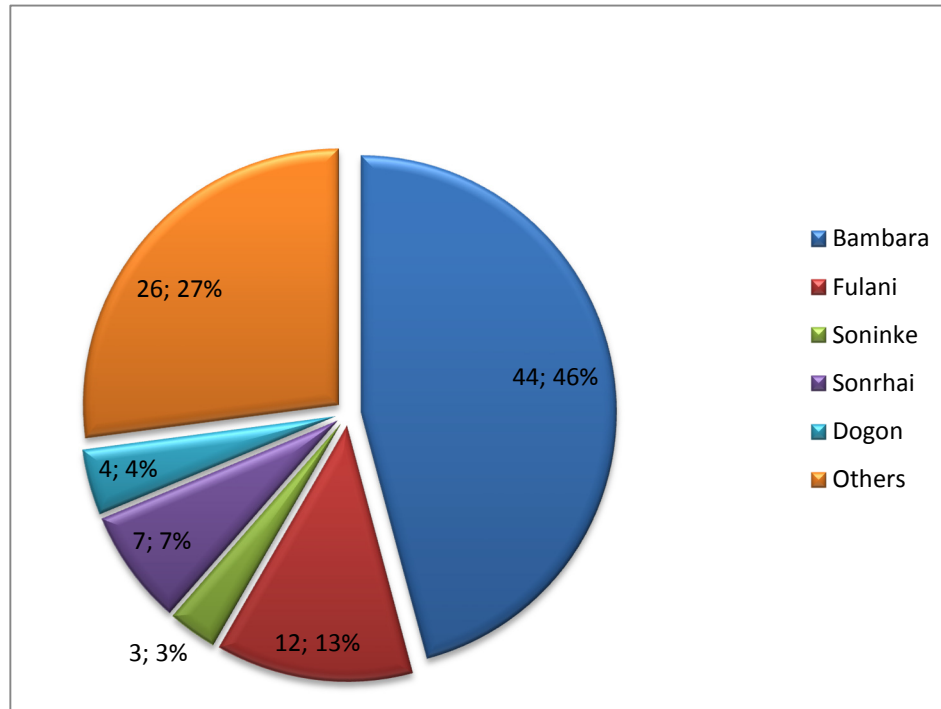
Talking precisely about the Islamic religion, it should be noted that the essentially Islamic religious profile of the Malians is reflected on my research participants' profile who are constituted of 85% Muslims while the remaining 15% declared they are Christians. This proportion of Muslim participants in the study (85%) does not match with the proportion of 92% of Muslim Malian in general population because of the involvement in the study of several International CPWs from charitable institutions from churches (CARITAS, BICE[17]…). Although comparative analysis is impossible with regards to religion and ethnic group as already said, self-classification or classification by others according to ethnic group or religion matters.

3.5.1 Institutions' Directors and Representatives (IDRs)

Institutions' Directors and Representatives (IDRs) play various roles according to the global direction of child protection institutions, its representation, Human Resources

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[17]BICE: International Catholic Child Bureau

Management and country programmes design. They have the responsibility to ensure that these programmes are elaborated in line with their headquarters' directives and the Mali national priorities as stated in reference working documents (PRSP, MDGs[18] and the national bill of laws). In reality, IDRs too are child protection workers though for the interest of this research they are classified separately.

3.5.2 Child Protection Workers (CPWs)

From previous chapters, we already understood who CPWs were and what roles they are expected to play. The figure 3.2 below shows the distribution of participants in the three areas of policy making, care giving and technical and funding supply. People working in the area of care giving represent more than half of the participants (52%).

Figure 3.2: Distribution of participants by functional area
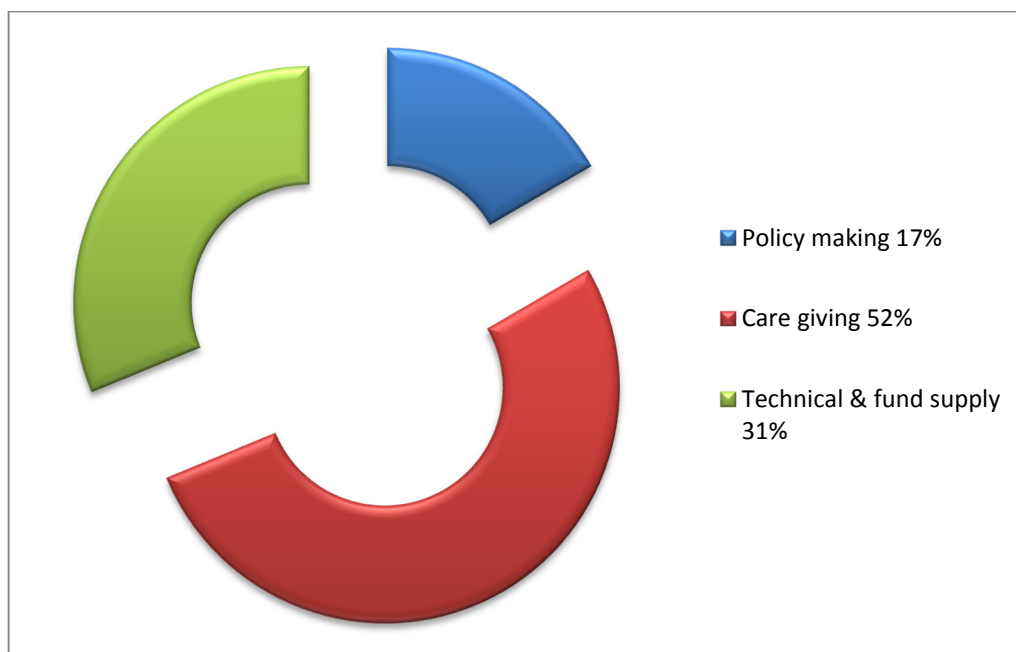
It should be noted that when a staff member operates in more than one functional area, he/she was classified in the category deemed more important and more time consuming in his/her job description.

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[18] DSRP: Document of Strategy for the Reduction of Poverty
 MDGs: Millennium Development Goals

Another point of attention is the distribution of CPWs among expatriates and Malian workers. Eight expatriate staff (6 men including 1 European and 2 women including 1 European) have actively participated in this research through individual interviews as well as Focus Group discussions. Even though they are a minority, their opinion and perspective on the subject of study are well reflected in the findings chapters. To highlight these opinions and perspectives with the intention to signal if and how they are different from Malians' perspective, I systematically flag up in the findings chapters when a participant is an expatriate.

Figure 3.3: Distribution of Participants by Employing Institutions
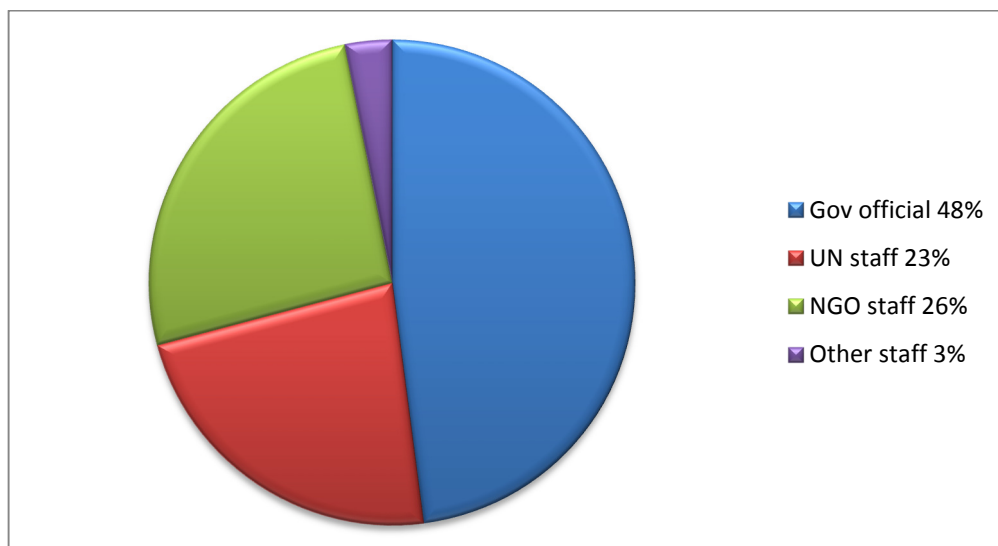
governmental institutions constituted 48% of participants recruited at both national and local levels. NGOs participants represented 26% and UN agencies including UNICEF 23%. The remaining 3% are shared among Community Based Organizations and grassroots level informal organizations (See the figure 3.3 above).

Provided that half of the participants came from government structures, the opinions expressed through interviews and FGDs are actually assumed to fairly reflect perceptions from the state administration on the one hand and those from the non-

state administration on the other hand with regard to the management of the protection of children in Mali.

83% of research participants are married (figure 3.4) and parents with an average

Figure 3.4: Participants matrimonial status
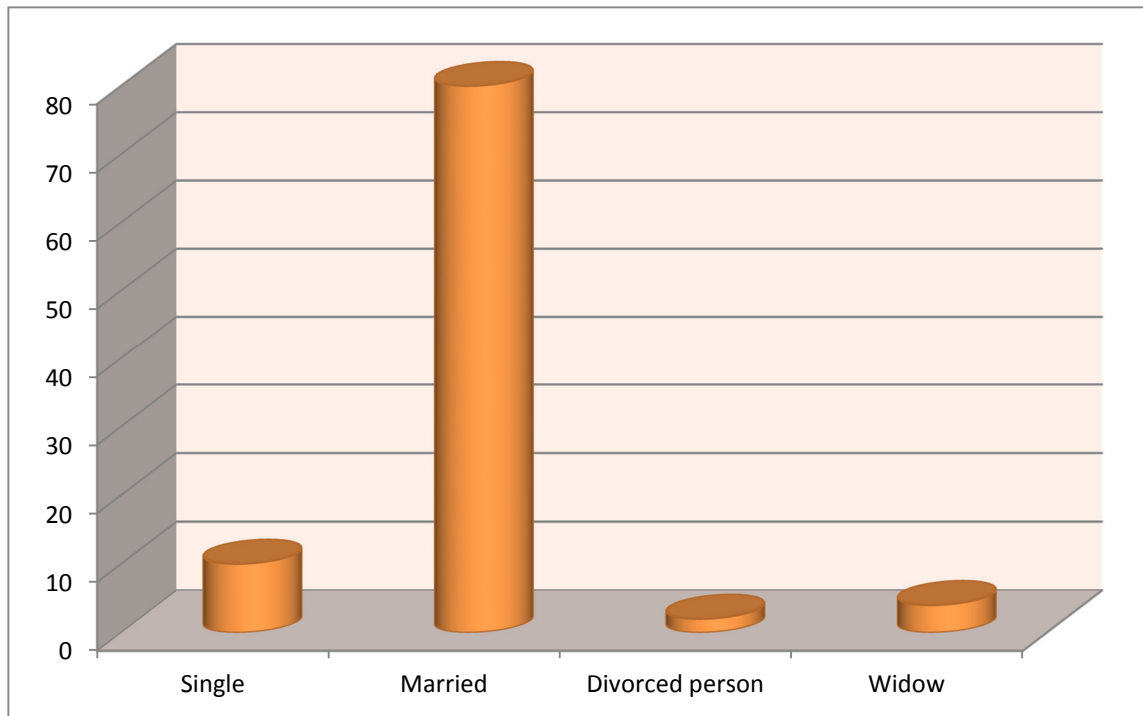
number of three/four children in charge per participant (figure 3.5). More than 63% of the participants have more than 3 children in their charge. The sample being overwhelmingly married and parents, it is impossible to have comparative analysis among participants with regard to this determinant. However, having responsibility for dependents is of importance for this qualitative research as participants' relationship with their own children enriched personal stories collected from CPWs. This will be shown in the analysis of the research findings. Being married and being a parent has always been regarded as core values in African societies. The CPWs are not different from the population in general with respect to the number of children and the value they place on procreation. In their analysis of the importance given to procreation in many African societies, the priest Dominique Nothomb (1992) argues

that procreation is so strong in some African communities that before the birth of the first child, the marital relationship is absolutely not stable. The spouses and their families are reluctant to undertake some types of activities that would render sacramental and indissoluble 'the marriage-in-construction' not yet concluded. While this statement may seem a bit exaggerated in other contexts, it however reflects the general malaise that couples without children endure in the Malian context. The high value they attribute to procreation is another tangible proof that the CPWs, despite their rational education received in colleges and universities, despite the different sensitization they are exposed to on concepts such as 'family planning' and 'birth control' are rather more concerned to be in line with their traditional societal values.

Figure 3.5: Number of children in charge by CPW
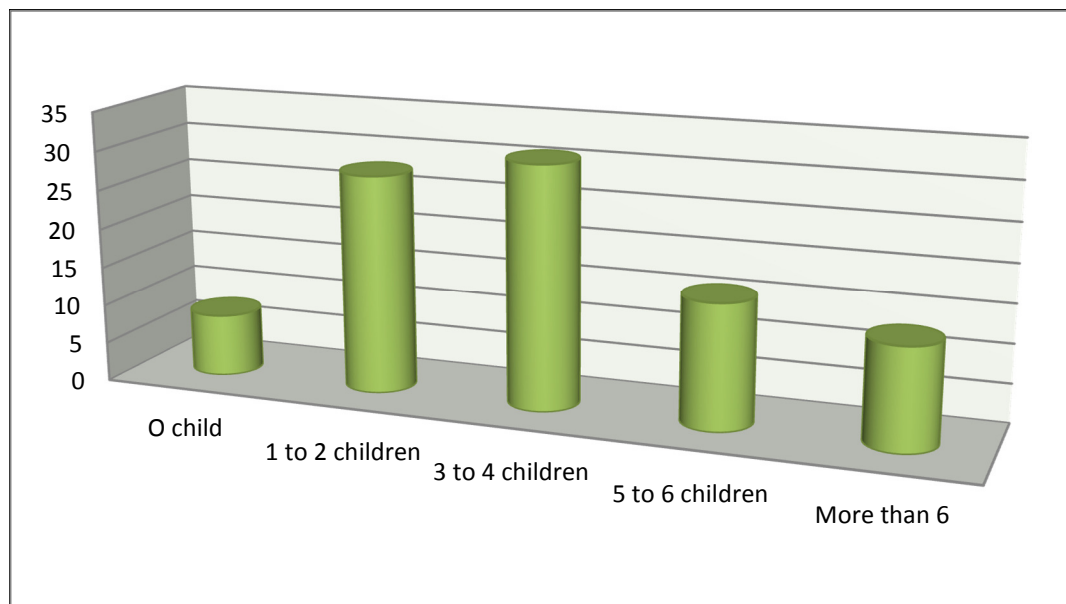
Another consideration that could have had interest in this research is the initial/academic training of participants. However, though they were recruited from NGOs and UNOs (that put emphasis on competency and profiles) on the one hand and governmental institutions on the other hand, the distribution of participants by educational background in various domains like jurists, sociologists, medical attendants, social workers, teachers and others veils one important reality that approximately 70% of Governmental CPWs are originally teachers. Added to the fact

that 85% are graduates, this, once again renders a comparative analysis impossible. In considering why the child protection profession has attracted such a higher percentage of teachers, participants explained that the Ministry in charge of children and women at its creation in 1997 was constituted mainly of people who were teachers by profession, before other profiles came on board later on as the agenda of this leading Ministry grew.

3.6   Values and Belief Systems Related to Research Design and Methodology

As Gill and Johnson (2006) put it, decisions on methodological matters are largely determined by the philosophical assumptions the researcher implicitly and explicitly makes by adopting his 'mode of engagement'. This research follows an interventionist approach of action oriented strategy. It seeks to empower UNICEF and the national child protection network partners in their approach to child protection management.

Considering the fact that I was already working with the vast majority of these partners, the action oriented research strategy, through its interactive and collaborative method helped me to have a more helpful balance of power in my relationship as researcher with study participants. It also contributed to break down the traditional distinction of the role of researcher and research subject in an inductive approach to generate new and collective ideas that seeks through methodological processes to add to one's own body of knowledge and to that of others (Howard and Sharp 1983). Once again, the action oriented research approach differs from the too rigid and prescriptive approaches like Experiments in that it is not conducted on people (the researched) by the researcher. Rather, researcher and the researched come together to seek practical solutions to their problem (Kent et al 2009). This method consequently offered a good opportunity to recognize and valorize participants as active subjects and 'co-owners' of the study instead of considering them just as inanimate object of study. I was cognizant of the implication of this option as an implicit appeal to my own capacity for *reflection-in-action* (Schon 1983). For a shared theory to be generated, it was important to discuss and validate differences of vision between participants and UNICEF's perception on approach to children's

right through a rigorous inquiry approach and social interactive model that explain these differences. From there, could then start a 'perspective transformation' (Mezirow 1981) that was helpful in freeing individuals from their habitual ways of thinking.

3. 7   Methods

To enable full participation of research participants in capturing more adequately tacit knowledge as legitimate additions to data collection and analysis (Robson 2001), I have preferred methods that take into account the great oral tradition of Malians. The guiding documents used for Individual Interviews and FGDs with Research Participants is attached in appendix 2.

3.7.1   Literature Reviews

The approach of my literature review was described in section 2.2 of the chapter 'Literature review'. I have also extended this effort to the review of institutions' policies, code of conduct and main rules regulating professionals who work on child protection domain. This policy review has mainly been conducted with Human Resources responsible within institutions to facilitate the recruitment process of staff. Concrete implementation of these policies were verified later during interviews and focus groups to identify gaps between institutions' statements and their practices on the ground. I also exploited reports and other relevant documents: program documents (business plan, evaluation reports, supervision reports), the national policy documents, studies and thematic reports.

3.7.2   Interviews

In order to have a private and relaxed atmosphere with (1) some workers at high political levels within ministries, NGOs and community based organisations and (2) Institutions' Directors, Representatives, Human Resource Officers and Programme Coordinators, I conducted individual interviews with these categories of participants (Sample in appendix 3). This technique indeed was appropriate to gain some deep understanding about aspects of people's life, emotions and feelings from their own point of view. These complex matters, not easy to quantify play important part in child

protection. Interviews were semi structured and not rigid to capture several human dimensions, personal life stories of workers regarding coherence/incoherence among various set of norms and beliefs regarding their professional actions. Each lasted between three-quarters and one-and-a half hours. While some researchers prefer to undertake their interview via another person as ''an attempt to bring a little more objectivity to the process and to potentially 'free up' participants to talk more candidly'' (Bartels-Ellis 2010 p.47), I preferred to ensure by myself the conduct of my interviews except three that were conducted by two colleagues due to the impossibility for me to return to Kayes and Mopti regions where these three interviewees were not available to honour our first appointment. Undertaking these interviews by myself was useful to better ensure a good understanding of what people said and not multiply researcher bias to several people. Moreover, I have also experienced the opinion advanced by authors that the data collection phase in a social domain in particular is already the starting of the process of analysis to be done later. Therefore, as much as possible, it should be ensured by the same person: the researcher.

To conduct interviews, the researcher needs to be able to hold conversations with other people. Interviews are not always an easy option for collecting data (Denscombe 1998) though many people are tempted into thinking that interviewing is simple, since this is the skill we use in our everyday lives (Kent et al 2009).

The interviews were semi-structured, taped and open ended to better allow the exploration of feelings, beliefs, thoughts and experiences of CPWs about the phenomenon under investigation (Halcomb and Andrew 2005). One of the practical implications of this choice was the significant amount of time I had to allocate for the transcription of these interviews. My feeling is that Britten (1995) is right when he wrote that for every hour of taped interview, six to seven hours is required for verbatim transcription. It was not only time consuming, but also complex though I did these just after I returned from the field to reduce technical dilemmas and a range of human errors like misinterpretation of content and language errors associable to this exercise (Wellard and McKenna 2001).

3.7.3 Focus Group Discussions

To (2010 p.45) views FGD as ''the most expedient way of garnering information''. This affirmation was confirmed by my experience in field work. However for focus group to be an efficient method of collecting data on a subject about which very little is known, I needed to take appropriate measures. Homogeneity of the group in terms of background and perspectives is emphasized by several authors as one of the important conditions leading the participants to feel free to share their opinions. In the same vein, reflecting on some methodological issues related to the use of focus groups in social and behavioural researches, Ejazuddin Khan et al. (1989) raised the issue that not much is known about the effect of the moderator's style on the results of interviews. However, there is unanimity on the fact that more skill is required of the facilitator in FGDs than for individual interviews.

Sharing the above opinion, my belief with regard to this research is that my working style which favours respect, simplicity and lot of humor in relationship with the majority of the participants for the past five years before the study positively impacted on the general atmosphere of confidence that prevailed during the entire discussions. FGDs should be conducted in an environment that is conducive to conversation. Obviously, this has been the case in the context of my work in Mali whereby I had adopted necessary flexibility to explore unanticipated issues during these discussions.

Apart from preparing two different question guides for institutions' directors on the one hand and CPWs on the other hand, I ensured constituting several groups in each of these two categories with 'similar' characteristics according to criterion of job level and nationality affiliation to increase the quality of the data. However, these groups mixed up several ethnics, sexes and ages, which I believe was also benefiting in the diversity of experiences which prompted and enriched conversations.

Much has been said by authors about the size of a FGD which should usually be composed of seven or eight people. This size is deemed favourable to yield a variety of viewpoints and good participation. However, groups can have a larger size range like four to 12 members (Sherraden 2001). Though it is generally believed that smaller groups tend to be dominated by one or two people while larger groups inhibit

the participation of some members, one of my FGD was made of three people who fully participated in a balanced manner.

I conducted a total of ten (10) FGDs that involved sixty eight (68) respondents: 61 Malians, four from neighboring countries (Benin, Senegal and Burkina Faso) and three from Rwanda and European Union. These FGDs (sample in appendix 4) were important in opening up new questions and perspectives that led me to consider some issues that I had not taken into account prior to my fieldwork.

As with the interviews, to ensure that my reflections remained fresh for future analysis, after each session, I immediately reviewed the field notes of my FGDs and expanded on the initial impressions of my interactions with participants. I took note of major ideas that were triggered by the discussions. The verbatim transcription of FGDs were more difficult and more complex than individual interviews as participants' excited interventions crossed each other most of the time. I was capable of overcoming these difficulties only because of my first-hand knowledge from my involvement in the discussion process.

3.7.4 Workshops

I organised 2 workshops. The first one served as the launching event with participants at Bamako level to capture their appreciation of the project for adjustment (Appendix 5). During the half-day-long workshop, I presented the lay-out of the project and received participants' appreciations, views and various comments that helped me to finalize the proposal. The venue for the focus group discussions as well as their calendars were agreed upon at this occasion though later, the realities of the country forced me to partially review the agreed elements. During the second workshop I presented the draft of the research report which was validated by stakeholders who also established an action plan for the implementation of the recommended steps in the study. In addition to respecting the protocols surrounding the realisation of studies in the country, these workshops were highly strategic for the 'ownership' of the study and its recommendations in particular.

3.8   Data Collection

I was contented that data obtained from the above methods did not show notable differences. Even though the basic assumption was that individual interviews would bring somewhat more sensitive, deeper and detailed data about understandings of individuals as compared to FGDs, they were not really different.

Data collection spanned for four months reflecting some difficulties of the calendar management following the unanticipated war that occurred in the country, research methods described above and my strategic choice of analysis reflected on figure 3.6 (Research Process). National counterparts, UNICEF staff and various stakeholders were fully mobilized for the study. The two workshops (but also interviews and FGDs) were helpful to identify possible political and technical challenges linked with the use of final recommendations of the study and to start strategic alliances susceptible to advance the discussions on capacity building beyond the completion of the study.

The launching and explanatory conference of July 12th, 2011 was the starting point of the data collection through interviews and FGD conducted in two phases. The first phase of data collection conducted in August/September 2011 opened with the testing of the data collection tools. This Pilot phase involved two interviews and one FGD all realized in Bamako. The feedback obtained from the advisory panel on the tools and lessons learnt from the pilot phase were helpful to improve the validity and practicability of the interviews and FGD guides, eliminating ambiguities. The second phase which involved additional data collection was conducted in November/December 2011. For both phases, interviews and focus groups with participants were conducted in the regions of Segou (involving also Sikasso), Kayes, Mopti (involving also Kidal and Tombuctou), Koulikoro and the district of Bamako.

For all methods together except the workshops, a total of 96 participants were involved in the study. The totality of interviews and FGDs were taped with the consent of participants.

The different data collection methods fit into each other to help me to weave together findings and propound coherent explanations about cultural conflicts experienced by workers. For example, data obtained through FGDs served as a check against participants' subjective reporting during interviews.

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To adjust with the last realities of Mali and unforeseen time constraints for both the participants and the researcher, I increased the number of FGDs and decreased the number of individual interviews as the latter were more time demanding than the first. My profound sentiment was that this last arrangement has mostly been beneficial for the robustness of the collected data rather than hindering it. Of course it demanded more on the analysis side as FGDs data are more difficult to transcribe and analyze than individual interviews.

Some interviews not previously planned were realized as people were asking to be involved. I could not decline the opportunity to gather generously offered information at risk of frustrating my working partners with the "scientific" pretext of respecting scheduled sample. Thus several additional interviews were carried out as part of informal discussions for better insights into the subject of my inquiry.

3.9   The Process of Data Analysis

Once again, the purpose of the study was to inform on cultural conflicts experienced by workers between personal beliefs/practices and professional agenda on the child protection programme in Mali against violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of all sorts. The understanding would help to improve human resources' capacity building strategies by integrating more effectively national cultural context that limits workers from implementing interventions in child protection. To achieve this objective, my study employed the historical and conventional practice in qualitative research for thematic analysis (Bernard 2006; Aronson 1992) which involves searching through data to identify any recurrent patterns. The exploratory power of this popular technique was helpful in relating themes identified in literature, observations, interviews and FGDs.

Though connections are usually established between thematic analysis and grounded theory (described by Glaser and Strauss 1967), it is not as dependent on specialised theory as some other qualitative techniques. For the analysis to be expedited and insightful, the researcher should be extremely familiar with his/her data (Mukamurera et al. 2006; Lofland and Lofland 1984). To ensure data familiarization,

it was important that I carried out the data collection, transcription and translation by myself.

My data analysis was undertaken for the following: (1) data transcript, (2) organization (identifying patterns and themes), (3) review of data (4) sharing and discussions.

3.9.1 Data Transcription

The narrations were taped and transcribed verbatim. Long and time-consuming work, the transcript of the interviews were hand-written. Everything that was said by the interviewees was transcribed. Verbal discourses were supported by the description of gestures and mimicking. I experimented the relevance of the assertion that transcription forms part of the data analysis process (Wellard and McKenna 2001) though this has been challenged by several authors. Transcriptions were coupled with the exercise of translation (from French into English) with its advantage[19] of increased concentration on the meanings of data.

After interviews were transcribed, I undertook the work of translation from French into English for the purpose of reporting and better communication with my Advisors. Having personally done the whole process of interviews, taping, transcripts and translation, it was easier for me to consider and address the interplay of spoken language and the nuances of conversation (Silverman 1997) since I was on the ground during the data collection. I could also come back to listen to the tapes as needed as part of the additional thematic analysis.

3.9.2 Organisation (identifying patterns and themes)

The data analysis process linked the overarching research goals for the study with my aspiration to give ''voice'' to CPWs and recognizing the importance of communication not only in the process of understanding workers beliefs and practices in relation with their professional agenda to promote children's rights, but

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[19] However, it should also be noted that translations had had a great disadvantage of being too much time consuming, impacting negatively on my schedule and delaying my deadlines.

also in possibly new institutional policies that could be inspired from the study. I designed my data collection tools in a way that ensures that what emerged could be traced back at any time to the actual words of the participants if needed.

According to Andreani and Conchon (2001), qualitative data processing can be carried out from two different points of view: a *semantic* view and a *statistic* view. Semantic analysis is conducted by hand in accordance with content analysis approach. By successive approximations, it examines the meaning of the ideas and words. With many other authors (Morrison et al. 2002), Andreani and Conchon noted that studies conducted by professionals often follow this traditional approach rather than statistical treatment approaches based on computer processing software. An approach that proceeds by counting words, sentences where pieces of categories are then involved.

The extent to which one method is preferred by professionals and the other by academics is disputable. However, my personal preference in this study was that of analysis by hand highlighting and underlining for later grouping the key words, phrases and ideas expressed. Although I did not undertake computerized coding, letter codes representing each of the research questions highlighted in table 3.4 were inserted in the transcripts to ease my manual copy and paste later on. This was done as soon as possible after FGDs and interviews to preserve details (Ask 2011) and *hot thinking* that follows each conversation. As the themes evolved with my fieldwork, I had to modify some of these rough categorizations later.

The corpus of raw data was consequently guided by the main lines of the research questions allowing for emergence of thematic organization of the data. Thomas (2006) rightly defined the inductive approach in research as a systematic procedure for analyzing qualitative data where the analysis is guided by specific objective.

My preliminary analysis categories were grounded in the conceptual framework defined by the specific objectives of the research and the main related questions as highlighted in the below table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4: Research objectives and questions

Objectives	Main Research Questions
-To explore personal beliefs and practices of workers regarding main protection problems dealt with by child protection programme in Mali -To investigate existing contradictions between personal beliefs/practices of workers and their professional agenda -To examine if and how contradicting values impact on workers and their capacity to deliver for child protection	- Who are child protection workers in Mali? - What is expected from workers as part of their employer institutions in terms of values in the area of child protection? - What are the cultural values of the workers in relation to child protection issues? - What is the nature of the correlation (conflictual, correspondence) between these values and the professional agenda of the workers? (Are these values adequately protecting the right of the child as recognized by international conventions?) - How the workers perceive and live the discrepancies between their cultural values and their professional agenda in the working institution and outside the working environment? (What is their dilemma if any? And how they go about it) - How do the management by workers of these discrepancies affect the professional attitudes, commitment and practices of the workers? - What is the impact of these attitudes and practices on the performance of workers and the achievement of the objectives of the whole program? - To what extent the poor results of the programme could be partly attributable to the cultural values conflict of the workers?) - How institutions and programs traditionally address the issue of cultural conflict? - What are the outcomes of these institutional initiatives?
- To identify best practices developed at both personal and institutional levels in response to cultural conflict	- Are there any best practices (institutional or individual) in response to cultural conflict management? - What are these practices and how are there contributing to minimize cultural conflict?

in child protection and to draw lessons learnt	- Which lessons can be learned from these experiences? - How these practices could be used for child protection improvement in the Malian context?
-To formulate recommendations that will serve as an input to UNICEF and its partners' decision-making regarding Mali/UNICEF cooperation agreements on the promotion of children's rights.	- What suggestions could be made to reduce the negative effects of cultural conflict on workers attitudes and professional practices (in terms of training, recruitment and induction (orientation) process, working environment, etc. - What are the implications of the outcomes of the research findings on the definition and planning of the priorities of the Mali – Unicef cooperation programme? - What will be the role of each of the main stakeholders in reducing cultural conflict in the definition and planning of the programme?

However the richness of data came to complete this initial grid analysis as room was made for adjustment of the categories according to the data collected and the meaning it conveyed. In other words, I managed to respect the primary purpose of the inductive approach "to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data" (Ibid).

With slight nuances, the same questions were directed to the two groups of respondents: the directors of institutions and the CPWs. Thematic organisation of data collected from these questions then became the basic structure for the presentation of the analysis (Holliday 2002), necessary discussion and report of the whole findings. My analysis followed the process outlined by Bartel-Ellis (2010) made up of

• "Electronically cutting and pasting of individual responses so that all those relating to specific questions could at points be reviewed together and it was easy to move from a 'total picture' of one group of data to such a picture of another group of data" (Ibid p. 55);

• Noting occurrences of phrases, proverbs and ideas. In the context of my study, the ability to decrypt and give back some proverbs received from participants was important not only for data analysis, but also to increase the responsiveness of stakeholders on the report;

• Highlighting CPW's 'positive' and 'negative' perceptions about his/her work; his/her understandings of institutional message/position; convergent or contradictory data for interpreting of similarities and differences between respondents (example: some of the participants requested for something and others stated inverse opinions as with the appreciation of the background profile of CPWs, for example when some participants believed diversity as an advantage, others see it as a hindering factor for job implementation);

• Highlighting by bolding rich intriguing participants quotations that struck me, recurrent popular sayings and arguments used to justify rights' violations (Example: *'When you do not want your child to cry, it is* he/she *who will make you cry'*) or conversely appealing for rights implementation.

All these data were important for later access as most of these became key pieces of the evidentiary warrant to support my propositions, recommendations or theory and served as illustrative examples throughout the report (Colomb and Williams 2003; Erickson 1986; Lofland et al. 2006; Bartel-Ellis 2010). Some quotes were even so provocative that I considered using them as part of my sub title or title throughout the report.

3.9.3   Data Review

Though researchers traditionally present data collection and data analysis as two distinct processes, ground realities were rich in lessons in that the boundary between the two stages could sometimes be blurred. Indeed, to adjust to some difficulties, especially the consequences of my transfer from Mali before the conclusion of the study and the armed conflict in the country, I was obliged to return once more to the field to refine a number of data already collected and also to enlarge my understanding of some information received from first data collection. This back and

forth between the data collection and their analysis (showed in below figure 3.6 adapted from Grady 2010) on the one hand and the work to integrate feedback from validation workshop and individuals on the other hand had had significant contributions on the quality of data collected, the level of profoundness and likelihood of my interpretations as it allowed for useful adjustments.

Figure 3.6: Research Process (adapted from Grady 2010)

Interviews and FGDs with participants: transcript, validation and collation

Engagement of CPWs and participants; Research Design and methodology

Analysis and review; Evaluation and write up
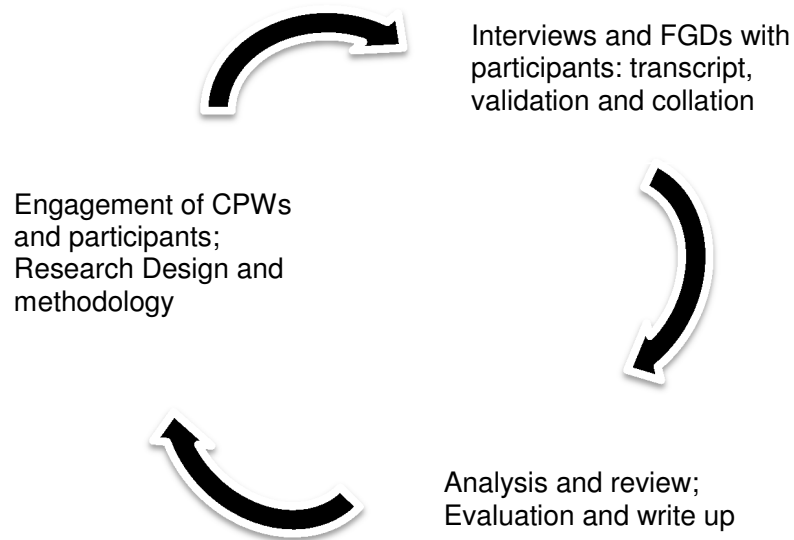
The first phase of data collection allowed me to better adjust the data to be searched in the next step, as well as prepare accordingly individual interviews and focus groups to obtain details necessary for an understanding of the processes involved and check my first thoughts on the data to make sure of their plausibility. This was also an important way of going beyond my previously set sample to envisage more ''objectively'' the point of reaching the data saturation for a good credibility of the research (Mukamurera et al 2006).

3.9.4   Sharing and Discussion of Emergent Themes

Iterative process was not only between the researcher and the data. It was also between the researcher and the participants. In reviewing again, repositioning and

reorganizing my data, I involved colleagues from other disciplines to 'check' perception and discuss this as part of sense making and efforts to bring objectivity (Bartels-Ellis 2010). I discussed my first analysis with several participants in the study and this led me sometimes to go for new quests of information through new interviews. This whole iterative process is shown in above figure 3.6 adapted from Grady (2010).

Presenting formally and informally emergent themes to UNICEF child protection colleagues, to other senior colleagues, governmental partners, professional consultant, and other Doctorate students was helpful to balance or nuance assumptions I already had from what seemed to be known.

An interactive process of data analysis was in congruence with action oriented research approach and helpful for consensus drawing on the situation analysis on child protection in the Mali perception and professional practices of workers involved and what could contribute to the improvement of these practices. Indeed, as already stated, there were competing views regarding children rights promotion in Mali and it is likely that discussions raised by the study will help reduce the gap among positions while inducing relevant themes from collected data to inform potential theories. This responds to my goal which was to enforce a collaboration and engagement of participants towards the elucidation of identified problems and development of contextual theories and approaches to support the promotion of children`s rights.

In spite of the fact that participants were central drivers of the research, my role as a facilitator required on my part sound reflection and ability to maintain and keep developing the whole process. I used records and necessary communication tools in keeping note and journal of these strategic reflections.

Acting as a script-writer of a 'collective theatre', my role in the whole process ran from data collection with already specified methods to its analysis and final conclusions of the work. This was done through a familiar three 'concurrent flow of activity: (1) Data reduction, (2) Data display, and (3) Conclusion drawing/verification' (Miles and Huberman 1994 p.10) as shown in below figure 3.7 below. This method was helpful to maintain the interactive approach consistent with my social constructivist perspective.
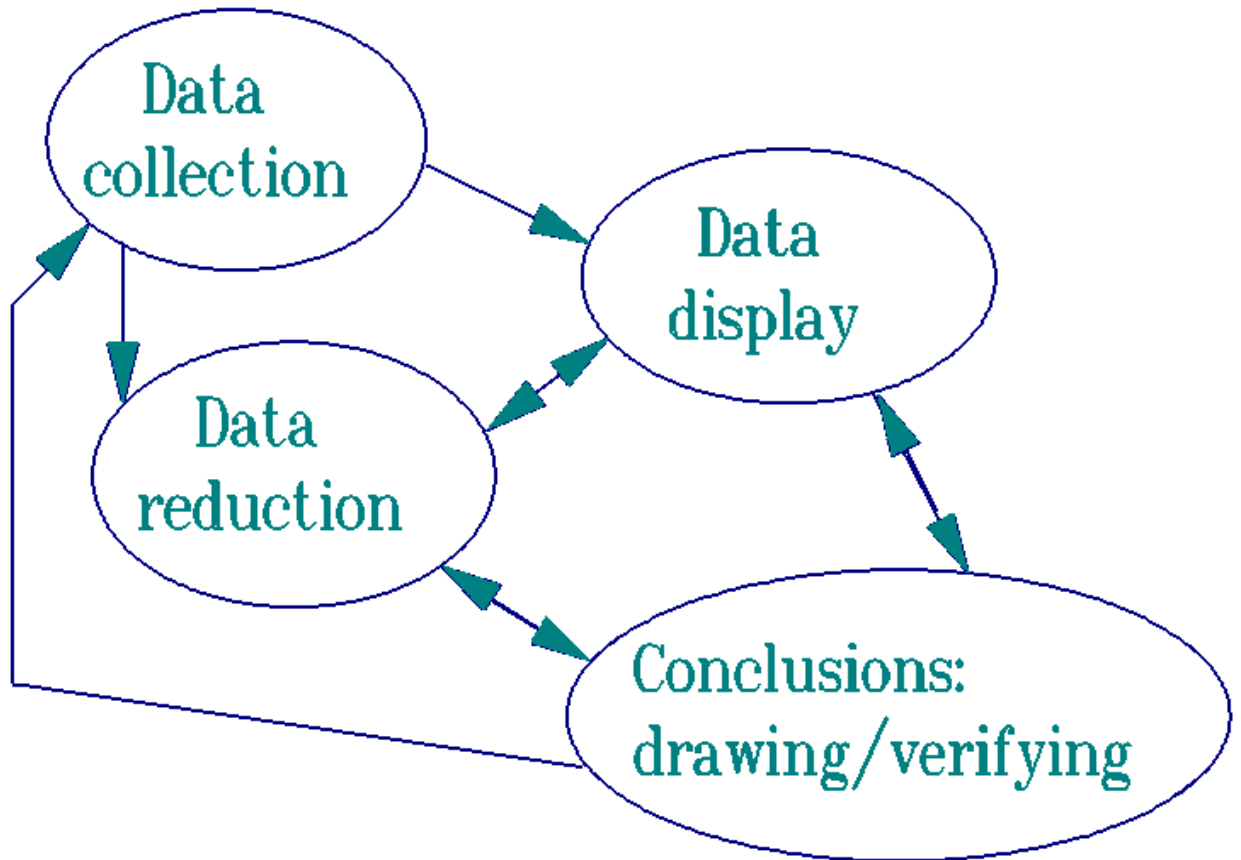
Figure: M&H's Components of Data Analysis

- *Data reduction.* Through means such as selection, summary, paraphrasing… data reduction helped me to sharpen, sort, focus, discard, and organize the data in a way that allowed for "final" conclusions to be drawn and verified.

- *Data display* was the second major activity and it consisted in taking the reduced data and displaying it in an organized, compressed way so that conclusions could be more easily drawn.

- *Conclusion drawing and verification* was the final analytical activity that helped to 'decide what things meant.'   Differences and similarities, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows, and propositions were noted.

3.10 Ethical Issues and My Role as UNICEF Worker/Insider Researcher

Three dimensions at least made this research a sensitive initiative a priori difficult to handle.

- I am an active UN staff under an official oath and professional discretion/confidentiality;
- This research carries important dimensions about human resources performance management, which is a sensitive function;
- It deals with people's cultural beliefs and values that conflict with their job.

Notwithstanding, I have not felt any external negative injunction or influence from any authority, my employer and national counterpart while performing my practitioner research. Rather, while discussing the subject of this research, I received encouragements and congratulations from all of them for what they termed 'an unprecedented individual effort' for collective capacity building in favour of child protection stakeholders in Mali. The research topic indeed is an issue of wide concern across the Malian networking group on child protection and the fact that I have been in contact with the participants since years had contributed to reduce the '*Hawthorne Effect*' on them.

At the same time, I had to carefully balance this insider researcher's opportunity with the obligation on my part to acknowledge any possible conflicts of interest that could result from my dual position. I was indeed Chief Child Protection in charge of Mali/UNICEF cooperation agreement in this domain. I consequently participated in decision-making on programme issues regarding child protection and as part of the whole stakeholders, I was jointly accountable for the results achieved and the management of this programme component in Mali. It follows that keeping myself at a distance and claiming objectivity is not possible. Rather I can acknowledge my position as an 'outsider' (non-Malian) but also an insider (UNICEF) and my role as manager for many of the participants with the potential power dynamic involved. However, focus groups helped mitigate somewhat the power dynamic as the participants out-numbered the researcher hence gained confidence to say 'controversial things'.

My ability to muster self-discipline and maintain my respect for diverse opinions was shaped by two previous and mutually reinforcing circumstance.

Firstly, long years of militancy within human rights associations sensitive to people's participation in matters that concern their lives, academic background in law and communication - including journalism with Union for Radio and Television Networks for Africa (URTNA) where I was trained to show respect for different opinions alongside with the expression of my own perspective - were all helpful for me in mitigating adverse effects of being an insider researcher.

Secondly and perhaps more importantly, at family level, I have been raised and educated to show respect for others by my late father, a renowned griot whose memory I constantly sought to honour throughout the implementation of this research. He taught me how fundamental an obligation is for a griot (but also for every human being) to be humble when narrating peoples' lives, their deeds and actions. In accordance with set objectives, this research was an opportunity for me to raise participants' voices and feelings together with my own perspective. I have made a parallelism between griot and researcher with regard to their obligation to show respect for diverse and sometimes divergent opinions.

With regards to debates on advantage of being an insider researcher, Ryan et al. (2010 p. 52) affirm that "Data generated by a researcher who shares a common identity or experience with the research participants cannot be simply assumed to be richer or deeper based simply on that assumed commonality" and echoing Brownlie (2009) they added: 'In practice we often do not know what it is that makes a difference'.

My experience and observation during this research – corroborated by large feedback from colleagues and partners at all levels on their appraisal of my cooperation with them - is that apart from non-researcher-dependant factors[20], the working style and social behaviour of the researcher counted largely in social relation construction with the research field. This has important impact on the discussion

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[20]Sex, race and ethnicity are emphasized by literature as important factors in "debates about 'matching' participants and researchers" (Ryan et al 2010 p.52)

process as informants modulate the 'profoundness' of their information in accordance with their level of confidence in the researcher. The better they appreciate the researcher's social behaviour, the more they are opened to release important and accurate information as if they are rewarding her/him for her/his good deeds. As the insider researcher offers de facto time and opportunity to be *appraised* by participants, he/she is in a better position to be granted richer data than a new and 'unknown' researcher. If such may not correspond to western realities, my study context whereby collective social control over individual people's behaviour is still high certainly justifies this situation.

I consequently believe that this research has benefitted from the credit of my good five years cooperation with participants. One example of my acceptance as a full insider was the constant use by participants of the familiar "you" ("tu" in French) in opposition to the unfamiliar "you" ("vous" in French) to address me.

However, my general feeling that I had been recognised and accepted as an insider was being challenged by some participants' statements that I interpreted as an attempt to draw a line between them and myself. This was the case (mostly in Kayes region) when participants in FGDs were often used to start their argumentations with "Here in Mali…." By the repetitions of this expression with emphasis, the participants were excluding me from the Mali context, drawing attention to my Benin nationality to underline its relevance to the relationship between them as respondents and me as a researcher. Having met me before on several occasions, they knew my sensitivity about human rights and gender concerns and they were also aware that I am Beninese.

The negotiation for boundary setting among us would have taken a different turn if I were a Malian. My impression was that this was a tactic to relegate the researcher to an outside culture which nevertheless allowed the participants to express themselves better and strengthened their participation.

It is also possible that informants have taken advantage of my position of high level worker for UNICEF to design and adjust some of their responses during interviews and FGDs. Wrongly or rightly indeed, people place lots of hope in the 'reputation' of this organisation to positively change their situation. Some respondents wanted also

to impress me because they were seeking for promotion to particular positions and they believe I could be supportive of their application if I have good opinion about them. Here, it has been helpful to have the maximum of information on some ground dynamics before starting the FGDs and interviews. The fact for example that I was aware of the names of potential people to be nominated as Governmental delegates and focal points in some regions of the country for the protection of children helped me to understand some of their attempts as research participants to manipulate our discussions during FGDs. In the same way and conversely, some respondents became upset as discussions recalled them the way their institutions are behaving in an offhand manner about difficulties workers face to implement their job. Each time some demands were implicitly placed on me for which I could not necessary fulfil, I managed to remind the participants that I am here as a researcher and not the UNICEF Chief Child Protection sent by the organisation for problem solving. These clarifications helped me to establish trust with participants on unequivocal basis.

In other words, during the whole process of data collection, some kind of silent positioning negotiations took place between participants and the researcher. My long observation from the field for 5 years as CPW before the formal conduct of the study certainly influenced the insider researcher in the way I have designed the research instruments, the way I have administered these instruments and my analysis. I have always challenged people who maintain the fact that because African culture[21] is different, some harmful practices on children should be justified and maintained. This led me to some difficulties when I started my research to quickly enter the role of the researcher and to change my stance when engaging with peers and partners, to quieten my passion when some opinions totally contradict what I thought should be the grounds of our profession. Since in my daily job I used to promptly engage on child rights discussions, it took me a while to figure out the right balance between this traditional role and the one to be played by the researcher who should be more nuanced and more reserved while conducting the discussions. To my bewilderment, two close colleagues of mine who participated in my first focus group discussion drew my attention to the fact that I was too talkative and 'too teacher' in my style. I then understood how I ran the risk of skewing the debate because of my unconscious

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[21] If only we can talk about African culture in singular rather than in plural.

hidden agenda to use the debates to convince people rather than to understand them first. Although I felt justified in my role by giving some useful information (giving addresses of care giving centres to take care of children victims of abuses for example), I understood the need to make effort not to totally blur the boundary researcher/participants. Consistent with such effort, my transfer from Mali and the enlargement of my functional area during the analysis phase and before the completion of the study was helpful in re-equilibrating how my own observations in the field and my positioning influenced this piece of work. This enlargement of my competency beyond the role of chief Child Protection to that of Deputy Representative has helped me to experiment the relevance of the stance that the positioning of the researcher within the research process is not fixed. "Rather it should be understood as 'potentially unstable and shifting' relationships" (Song and Parker 1995 in Ryan et al. 2010 p. 52).

My new function was not however only beneficial, it also brought new challenges as my reflection and concentration were often being discontinued by emergencies to manage here and there, which resulted into extension of the previously planned deadline for the total completion of the project.

During the whole study process I was instrumental in creating and maintaining a study environment that did not expose participants and informants. As the research was to a greater extent about programme evaluation to suggest business improvement, it implicitly entailed appreciating colleagues' performance and their readiness to accomplish the job they are paid for. In this context, I took measures to prevent workers being threatened in their profession by the information they released on their personal opinion or behaviour that may not conform to their professional agenda. Seeking to contribute to a more comprehensive situation analysis and strategies to build capacity of colleagues on child protection in Mali should not end with a paradox that complicates their situation and puts their jobs at risk. Ethical dilemmas can arise at any stage of participative and action oriented research. People are in general very open to the 'label' of UNICEF and I precisely felt a need to take this reality into account, not to abuse this label of UNICEF as a researcher.

Participants, lots of whom were my daily co-workers, were fully informed of the fact that this time they are not dealing only with the chief child protection, but also with a researcher. They were consequently aware that some of their reflection would be integrated in the final report and become public knowledge.

Open discussions with them during the pilot phase allowed my respondents for feedback to ensure that they were aware of the important guiding ethical issues like Informed consent, Voluntary participation, No Harm to Participant, Anonymity and Confidentiality.

3.10.1 Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation

In order to reinforce voluntary participation, preliminary meetings combined with emails through the Mali protection networking group informed on the research, its purpose and the totally free character of the participation of people who would be involved. The participants were also largely informed on the intended use of the foreseen outcome of the study. The benefits of the study was explained to all in a way that did not hide the 'moral courage' necessary to carry out the exercise. Also, as some respondents may feel concerned that they have been targeted to participate for particular reasons and may be suspicious about the research, the request for participation was framed in explicit terms allowing them to perceive the difference that a request is not a requirement. They were released of possible false assumptions that taking part in the research could affect services or benefits that they receive - for good or ill. Their freedom to decline from answering particular questions or even withdrawing completely from the research remained one of the ethical principles I constantly reminded them as they were under no obligation to take part if they didn't want to.

Researchers usually put much effort and preparedness to inform respondents on the voluntary and free participation aspects and to address various questions like what is their incentive for involvement?, what is in it for them?, why should they give their time? …. however, during my work I always came across the inverse situation whereby I was 'obliged' to justify that I could not involve everybody. In other words, I had to manage and mitigate potential frustrations as large number of people willing to participate could not all be *formally* interviewed.

As such, though it is justified in a large extent, the prevailing assumption that people are usually reluctant to participate in studies should be carefully managed with required attention to sociocultural considerations alongside with the intensity of interest raised by the subject of the study.

3.10.2 No Harm to Participant - Anonymity and Confidentiality

The large prevalence of harmful practices on children in the Mali context has created a context that has resulted in the minimization of stigmatization and gossip. Several focus groups provided opportunity for some workers to be informed on problems faced and voluntarily raised by specific colleagues. Given that it is difficult to assure confidentiality in a focus group situation and that other participants could possibly indulge in gossip, practical steps were taken to manage situations where a breach of confidentiality could bring about harm to another participant, this included the following. Groups were constituted in a way that reduced 'culture gaps', National staffs were not mixed with International staff (except in two cases), Supervisors were not in same groups with supervisees and I arranged these groups in a way to bring together same level staff. Beyond these measures and preventively, I held an introductory meeting to raise high level managers' attentions on the necessity to ensure that staffs are not put into trouble because of what they may have released on their private practices. No derogation to the rule of anonymity and confidentiality was done during the study and its report though a large majority of participants informed me that they had no problem with having their identity disclosed.

In line with ethical responsibility in the UNICEF-Mali Cooperation agreement, I sought full involvement of national counterparts in the review and adjustment of proposed methodologies, data gathering, findings and report validation before dissemination. The central ethical principle of the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC article 12 and 13) on the participation of children in matters that concern them is respected. Indeed, if children were not regarded as workers (professionals) to be interviewed due to reasons explained in the literature review and section 3.4 of this chapter, they were closely associated with both launching and conclusion workshops on the study to validate the recommendations I made.

Having signed an oath with UNICEF to comply with its interests and diplomatic status, I knew I was committed to take into account the organisation's guiding rules and ethical principles. All these issues were clearly discussed with UNICEF Management team before I started the research which in the last resort was about human rights promotion, benefiting the UNICEF mandate.

Beyond written ethical principles and guidelines, I understood that by engaging in this research, I was entrusted with the responsibility to behave in conformity with higher moral integrity and that considerations regarding ethics would not stop with the full approval of the study by involved institutions but it must be on-going.

3.11   Validity and Reliability

In their intention to show distrust over the validity of qualitative studies, Cho and Trent (2006) remembered how federal attempts in USA to generally discredit qualitative research and its accompanying validity constructs is transparent through the example of *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* which calls for 'scientifically based researches' that the Government defined as that based on 'the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to get reliable and valid knowledge' Cho and Trent (2006 p.319).

When large numbers of authors recognized that qualitative research could and should address validity, others like Reason (2006) believe that talking about the validity of research in social sciences is an oxymoron, for that it establishes strong references back to a positivist approach to science. Cho and Trent (2006 p.319) have noted two different approaches in literature review to the validity: 'transactional' validity and 'transformational' validity.

Transactional validity, they argued, is an interactive process between the researcher, the researched, and the collected data in achieving a relatively higher level of accuracy and consensus by means of revisiting feelings, facts, values or beliefs collected and interpreted. They define *transformational validity* as 'a progressive, emancipatory process leading toward social change' (Ibid).

Transactional validity assumes that the credibility of qualitative research depends on the extent that techniques, methods and strategies used during the conduct of the

inquiry are ensuring that reflection of reality (at least participants' constructions of reality) are accurate. In other words, it is about ensuring misunderstandings are managed appropriately to allow that research participants' realities and perceptions correspond with the interpretations made by the researcher.

I don't view transformational validity and transactional validity as two contradictory realities. Rather they complement each other. A recurrent equilibrium to realize in the research work is to position within debates while avoiding at the same time to be entirely snatched by these debates. I am comfortable with Cho and Trent that the appropriate conception of validity is dependent upon the inquiry paradigms being engaged. In this sense, a first stage in my positioning with regard to debates about whether the question of validity in social sciences is valid or not is to remember that in line with social constructionism perspective, main underlying ontology adopted for this research includes the assumption that as human beings, we 'co-create' our world in the context of our relationships (Reason and Bradbury 2001). This philosophical and epistemological context has led me to design the research as action oriented research with a participatory paradigm as already said.

One important point that shows out in literature that I have adopted in defining the validity of this research is the criterion of 'usefulness' (Lincoln and Guba 2000). According to this criterion, seeking to know if a research is valid equates answering the question about how useful is that research going to be for its stakeholders.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, my aspiration was to offer this research as a source of information on cultural conflicts experienced by workers with respect to personal beliefs/practices and professional agenda related to child protection programmes with the objective of improving human resources' capacity building strategies to assure very effective interventions in favour of children. With regard to this objective, the straight forward answer is that the study was useful for the various links in the chain of child protection stakeholders in Mali. Having understood the grounds on which the research was undertaken, they have also clearly appreciated the participative methods and tools used to collect data, to analyse and validate the data of the report in general and the study recommendations in particular. I strongly believe that encouraging words captured during workshops and FGDs (the roll-out of which was in itself one major outcome of this study) are not words to flatter the

researcher, but expressions of strong feelings authentically experienced by participants. When several respondents make consistent statements like: *"I do not see any other recommendations most relevant to do apart from encouraging frank discussion like the ones presently organized for the first time in Mali thanks to Zakari to discuss the conflict of values which we have experiencing"*, I believe that the usefulness of the study and therefore its validity is obvious. In the same vein, when I was transferred from Mali to Cameroon half way into the research, I received encouragement and tremendous pressure from the participants in all categories (CPWs, Institution Directors and even children's parliament members) via mails, e-mails, skype calls… not to abandon the study. These served as evidences that people are willing to experiment the ideas and recommendations coming from my research. More importantly, it was telling that in this country in war and distress marked by cross fires from the Islamists of AQUIM, ECOWAS and French soldiers who came in rescue, people were still determined and inviting me not to postpone my last travel for the meeting scheduled to discuss with them the way forward with the research findings and recommendations. These actually filled me with happiness and utter hope that Mali could overcome all forms of war, including the pernicious ones related to children's rights.

The usefulness of the study should not be understood only from the perspective of 'them', but also from the perspective of 'me'. In the justification of my application to DProf study with MDX University, I argued that a successful completion of this research will contribute to my better positioning as a credible and qualified UNICEF resource person at the disposal of governmental and national partners. From my expert role on very specific issues like FGM/C, child trafficking, child soldiers or juvenile justice..., it will contribute to propel me towards a global child protection strategy and change designer role. Today, it can be said that I have anticipated the usefulness of the research for myself. I was far from realizing at that time that my prophetic stance would be quickly realized, even before the total completion of the doctorate programme. Positive feedback on my learning from my colleagues at global level from Headquarters in New York, from West and Central African Region Office based in Dakar and from the country office helped me to be more valorised and better considered within our organisation. One result of this has been my appointment as

UNICEF Deputy Representative in Cameroon, a position with main responsibility to act as the organisation's senior holistic programme coordinator, responsible to design the whole organisation's interventions to promote children's agenda.

My preference to emphasize the research validity through the pragmatic lens of usefulness is also derived from the understanding that the main criteria differing DProf from traditional PhD is that professional doctorates are more expected to relate to "real life" issues concerned with professional practice and in particular to develop tangible professional practice in particular by making a contribution to (professional) knowledge within the student's own organisation (The University of Edinburgh 2010).

However, the sole criterion of 'usefulness' is not sufficient to appreciate validity. I share the argument with Morse et al. (2002 p.1) that 'qualitative researchers should also reclaim responsibility for reliability and validity by implementing verification strategies integral and self-correcting during the conduct of inquiry itself.' As already highlighted, I organised a validation by interviewees of their remarks to limit the gap of interpretation between researcher and participants. It is also important that the reader recognises him/herself in the results, and understand how he/she came to these results. This quest for clarification was precisely the object of the preceding sections of my methodology. The research design allows methodological triangulation between data obtained through the literature review, interviews, FGDs and observations.

As a native of Benin, I was educated with influences of traditional culture in a neighboring country that shares to a greater extent similar cultural background with Mali. I however understand that I have acquired a good degree of 'acculturation' that also influences my appreciation of several cultural traditions and ways of living. I also understand that my academic background in law and twenty years career in the field of human rights has impacted on my worldview and beliefs. Acknowledging that all these realities interfere in what I voice as my knowledge on the one hand and negotiating constantly between what I believe to be true and the national cultural representation from Malian's perspective at all stages of the project was a vital necessity to avoid disproportionate interpretations, unfair generalizations and misrepresentations. This is important regarding the context of qualitative research where 'language can act as a proxy for theory and theory development that may belie

the truth, or give a misrepresentation' (Patterson 2009 p.16 citing Archer; Bryman and Burgess 1994). Such awareness and constant dialogue among perspectives and representations supported the accuracy and acceptance of additional learning and findings of the research.

3.12   Research Limitations

In the implementation of this project, the main difficulties faced are related to the war situation in Mali, coupled with the nomadic character of my job position and the data collection methods of interviews and focus groups. I was not lucky to remain in Mali until the end of my study. I was transferred to Cameroon and this posed some operational difficulties though I had taken measures in advance to mitigate any adverse consequences of my departure. The coordination of my remaining field trips was not easy to manage in the new war context whereby several restrictions to travel were placed on UN staff.

With regards to data collection methods of interviews and focus groups, if I was rather lucky in term of cooperation with participants in conducting these interviews and FGDs in a smooth atmosphere of sympathy and 'positive complicity', my ambition to realize these conversations in the residence of participants to reduce the *Hawthorn Effect* was not easy to manage. Apart from the very huge geographic size of Mali, the northern rebellion of Toureg and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) groups launched on 17th of January 2012 with consequent fights for control of cities troubled the serenity of stakeholders involved in this study. Clashes between the "Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azawat" (MNLA) and government forces that ended by transforming Mali into a new international war ground against extremists and terrorists caused thousands of people to flee from their homes. IDPs and refugees included some of my study participants that I had previously contacted and scheduled interviews with. I suddenly lost their contacts and I was obliged to reschedule important parts of my field work agenda to cope with this armed conflict as some of my study population resided in areas which were forbidden to UN staff like me.

Another possible limitation linked to data collection was the working language. Data were collected in French before I translated them into English. No one among the stakeholders in this study (researcher and participants) can refer to French or English

as mother tongue. All the participants were interviewed in French while their mother tongues were Bambara, Sonrhaï, Dogon…. It is sometimes difficult for individuals to fully express how and what they feel in this administrative language inherited from colonization. Some participants struggled with French grammar. If at my level, four decades of learning, thinking and expressing in French allows me in mental activities not to distinguish between this language and my Yoruba mother tongue, I must acknowledge that English is not my first academic tongue. As a result of interaction and translation among several languages and expressing in a second or even third language, some of the richness of people's experience could have been lost.

It should also be noted that at the beginning of focus group and interview exercises with Institution Directors, recognizing cultural mismatches between their employees' cultural beliefs and organization proved daring exercise for some Managers/Directors. Fortunately the trust and confidence built over the years and the anonymous character of the interviews/FGDs encouraged reluctant participants at the beginning of focus groups discussions to finally free their minds and to join the enormous majority of more spontaneous participants.

3.13   Further Reflections on Methodology

After taking the decision to undertake an inquiry into the working institutions including UNICEF for which I worked as chief child protection in Mali, I was very much puzzled about the strategies and approaches that would most likely ensure the outcomes of the study and contribute to efficient capacity building for advancing child protection in Mali. One of the key solutions I found was to design the methodology in a way which did not only gather data from my respondents, but also to identify among them people potentially available to serve with child protection unit of UNICEF as a driven force in ensuring that appropriate follow up is done for effective implementation of the final recommendations. As human beings are designed for learning (Senge in Menealou 2004), the fact that no research before this one was conducted regarding the exploring of relationship between worker's cultural perspective and professional agenda made this work a very exciting exercise for both researcher and participants.

Working inside UNICEF which is part of the targeted network I was researching on helped me in terms of easy access to sources of information and more importantly in

the comprehension of reasons supporting people's perceptions, interpretations and specific patterns of behaviour. Disillusioned from false thinking that "objective knowledge can be pulled from the thicket of subjective experience" Bernard (2006 p. 371), I cannot pretend that findings derived from my methodology are totally free of biases. However during the whole process of this research, I have taken necessary steps to be an instrument of my epistemology, recognizing my perspective, making transparent possible biases to my reader but also in setting aside as much as possible my preconceived notions as a UN worker about human and children rights and the way these should be implemented. In this sense, education received from my family as well as large part of my academic training rooted in the qualitative tradition were helpful for me in designing the research approach. Letting data from the study 'speak' has been the constant shaping motto of my methodological way.

The time limitation is surely one that cannot be ignored given especially that Mali is a very vast country (interviewees live in far and sometimes directionally opposed cities meant I had to sometimes travel long distances). My transfer from Mali to Cameroon before the completion of the work and the most important difficulty faced by this study was the ongoing war situation. However, as already mentioned, the determination showed by people to forward this study in spite of this war context filled me with happiness and hope that its outcome will serve the cause that motivated it: achieving further medium and long term progress and efficiency in childrens' right within the country. The highly participative approach composing of conversation after conversation via formal FGDs, interviews and several informal talks, all rooted in the great oral tradition of Mali set off and maintained this atmosphere.

Beyond formalized methods, continuous brainstorming, peer discussions with colleagues, supervisors and even my family members were helpful to constantly keep alive my research thinking, exploring my own ideas and juxtaposing them with the ideas of others. Consequent discussions were facilitated by the interest raised by the topic in part of the entire networking group on child protection. Such constant discussions were also a strategy for me to avoid being entirely absorbed by workload inherent to UNICEF, my professional environment.

In his research to inform about the value and outcomes of doctoral studies, Pole (2000) focused the discussion on students' perspectives on what is achieved by

pursuing a PhD and the sense of self which successful completion brings. He concluded his findings with the statement that doctorate brings four types of knowledge/skill: substantive knowledge, technical skills, craft knowledge and personal/social skills. He noted that technical skills – that is ''the capacity to deploy detailed experimental techniques that require the use of appropriate apparatus'' or the ability to design and analyse (Ibid 2000 p.7) - in particular, are acquired via the methodology employed in the research. My sentiment effectively is that as my research progressed, my previous theoretical learning has been sharpened along by the ground realities. My ability to analyse, to conduct effective discussions through interviews and FGDs as well my capacity to observe and make sense of people's deeds and facts improved considerably. Meanwhile progress on my capacity in communication and to relate with a wide range of people in my professional environment at national and international levels is already benefitting for my current duty station and new responsibilities.

Part 2

Chapter 4: Recognizing Cultural Mismatches and Harmful Practices as a Challenge in   Programme Management

4.1:   Introduction

The PNLE identified and ranked 16 traditional practices as harmful to be discouraged. Some of these practices have a limited geo-cultural scope with a tendency to disappear. This is the case with tattooing of the lips and gums in Fulani and Sarakolé communities (Figure 4.1 below). On the other hand, we have the case of FGM/C, a typical nationwide category of cultural practice, which is very difficult to eradicate on which I am laying emphasis in this chapter. In addition to harmful traditional practices, I am also exploring the attitudes of workers in relation to other classical rights violations.

Figure 4.1: A woman tattooing a girls' mouth

Mouth and gums tattoo. In Bambara this is called "Da Golo Susu", which literally means "crush the skin of the mouth"

Photo: Diallo/UNICEF 2011

Workers generally feel that their profession is contradicting their perception mainly on harmful traditional practices. Summarizing the opinion of two participants who think that the debate will not change their position, a participant in the focus group declared:

"We should not expect the dog to change its way of sitting just because it is in front of its mother-in-law" CPW N28

Apart from this marginal categorical position, the other participants believe that the debate on the subject is particularly important and helpful to identify and reflect on cultural mismatches. After analyzing the data collected through interviews and FGDs, I was able to highlight the explicit content but also the implicit statements influenced by the impression that the workers had about my position as a researcher and (relatively) expatriate colleague who is serving an international organization as a strategic partner for Mali. I also enjoyed the fact that participants were open, showing their freedom of opinion even though, curiously, they had never used this freedom (before the present study) to discuss the study subject which they however found very relevant among themselves.

4.2: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)

In Mali 89% of girls and women between 14 and 49 are victims of genital mutilation/cutting[22], a dangerous and life-threatening practice that results into unspeakable pain and suffering mainly for the victim (UNICEF 2005), but also for her family. Whatever may be our attachment to traditional cultures, it is expected from us as child protection Workers to recognize that this practice is violating girls and women's basic human rights. Not only because it deprives them of their physical and mental integrity, but also because it constitutes a typical example of violence and discrimination against women. Although the populations belonging to the cultural sphere of the far north (Sonrhaï and Touaregs mainly) do not practice FGM/C, it remains the most harmful cultural and social practices to children, by the severity of its consequences and by the scope of workers who are facing tensions linked to this practice.

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[22] Source: Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) 2010

In comparing FGM/C to other subjects, I found that professional knowledge/expertise has only slightly modified the cultural behaviour of workers, no matter the level of education. We could indeed think a priori that the higher the educational level, the less the worker is likely to accept the practice of female genital cutting. In reality, the change of attitude in favour of the abandonment of this practice by the worker is rather more related to personal life stories than to professional experience. I felt a greater conviction and determination to abandon the practice among workers who have experienced this personally (FGM/C in particular) than with those who said they were convinced only by theoretical sensitizations relating to their job. Apart from these human stories, the position of workers vis-à-vis excision is essentially determined by their family culture. Those who belong to ethnic groups where FGM/C is practiced are generally more favorable to maintaining it. Those who question the practice are rarely radical. Their position is in-between and I was struck by the kind of tacit consensus by which all of them managed in such a way that their comments never entailed retroactive judgment of past behaviour. This reflects both their deep respect for elders and the difficulty they went through before finally accepting the logic of abandonment of the practice. They are ready at their best to qualify the practice as harmful to health.

Other strong legal arguments such as ''human rights to dispose of own body" or "right of women to have sexual pleasure like men" emphasized in other countries by activists are not invoked in Mali. These arguments are perceived to be too western and too audacious. Even those (mostly lawyers) who are convinced by such arguments based on human rights, still think it would be counter-productive in the current social context of the country to base argumentations against genital cutting on such opinion. A participant commented:

"It is better to work with focus on the health approach rather than engage in other intellectualist considerations that nobody is willing to accept. Otherwise, we are not going to have religious dignitaries on our side.'' CPW N54

In line with the above perspective, the health discourse as a strategy in the fight against FGM/C usually reaches its peak with the celebration of February 6 each year. During this international day against FGM/C, the first CPW in the person of the Head

of State always recalls the gruesome statistics and other health ravages caused by FGM/C before calling on his compatriots to abandon such practices.

Indeed, through their daily statistics, health workers have demonstrated that for women who went through the most extreme form of FGM/C, the risk of cesarean section is on average 30% higher compared to women who have not undergone mutilation. Similarly, the risk of postpartum hemorrhage is 70% higher among women most severely mutilated, posing a significant risk to babies and mothers during childbirth. Complications during childbirth in many of such cases has led to the death of the child or the mother, and in worst cases, to both. Based on monitoring, the Bougouni Community health volunteers[23] estimated that deaths of children caused by the practice of FGM/C ranges from 7,000 to 11,000 per year when the total number of births per year for the country is estimated at 728,000. Urinary tract infections, keloids, dyspareunia, vesicovaginal fistulas, frigidity are all consequences of FGM/C (Ledoux 2014).

In view of these multiple adverse health consequences, FGM/C is considered "as a real public health problem in Mali" (Sangare-Bah 2014)[24], and health discourse perceived as a natural means for community mobilization against its practice.

"In general, when a woman has difficulty during childbirth, health workers inform her husband that the cause of this complication is related to FGM/C. The couple is then well sensitized and prepared not to cut their daughters so that tomorrow they do not suffer the same problems as their mother." CPW N 34

The importance of medical discourse as a strategy against FGM/C must not however lead to the belief that health CPWs are immune from cultural conflict. Health workers too face cultural mismatches and this was clearly confirmed during interviews and FGDs. Moreover, the propensity of health workers to endorse the practice of FGM/C, or even to organize it had alimented a lengthy national debate on the medicalization of the practice. Some stakeholders have proposed indeed that FGM/C should be

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[23] A community health volunteer is a person living in the community who accept to spend time to provide services to households without being formally employed. He/she is trained by the programme and can receive some motivations in kind, money and/or in regular training.
[24] Ms Oumou Sangaré-Bah is the Minister of Protection of Family, Women and Children

formally accepted by the government and organized in and by health centers to reduce related health risks.

This tendency to 'medicalize' the practice was fortunately fought with the support of UNICEF and other PNLE[25] partners who relayed the informed voices[26] of 'progressists' physicians, paediatricians and gynaecologists who took the floor among other key actors during advocacy and social mobilization meetings to stigmatize the proposition:

"As physicians, we have not sworn to destroy our patients' organs, but rather to preserve, protect and treat them when they are sick. People should stop doing things in defiance of common sense in this country." CPW 34

This salutary professional resistance provided the government with enough moral and political resource to reject the demands of people arguing for the medicalization of FGM/C in Mali. Moreover, the Minister of Health issued a circular[27] to formally ban the practice in health centers. Converted into large format and multiplied in thousands of copies, the circular of the Department of Health against female FGM/C has become one of the most famous signs that welcome users into the halls of the health centers as shown in pictures 5.2 below of the community health center of Lafiabougou in Kayes region.

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[25] PNLE: National Programme for Fight against the Practice of Excision
[26] Through various conferences, radio programmes and other communication means
[27] Circular issued by the Ministry of Health on January 7th, 1999

Figure 4.2: A Community Health Center Showing the Circular Banning FGM/C Practices

Lafiabougou community health
centre
Photo: Sangare (2014)

The MoH circular banning FGM/C
practice in health premises
Photo: Sangare (2014)
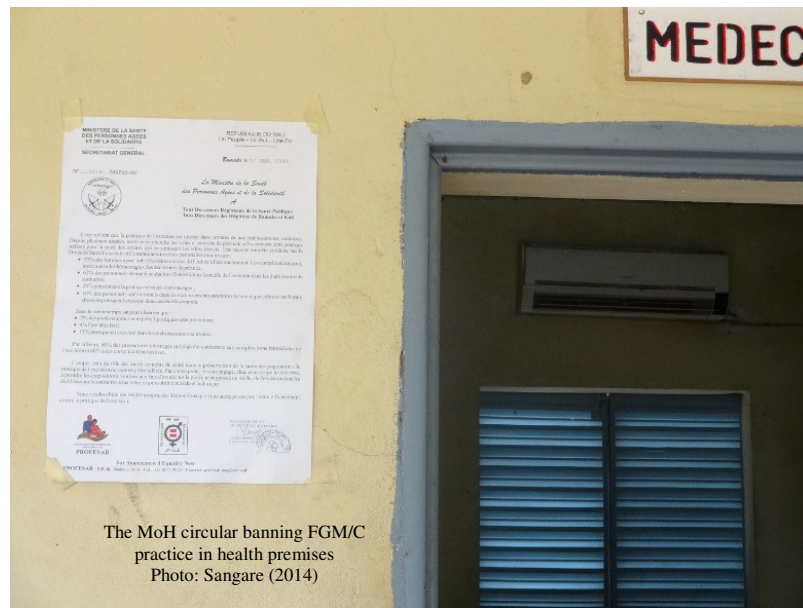
However, compliance with this ministerial decision by the health CPWs is still a challenge on the ground. The health sector is being repeatedly criticized for not doing sufficient at its level to back child protection interventions. I have personally observed several situations where the discourse of health practitioners was not compliant with their medical and public health studies, but were rather largely influenced by traditional beliefs when their own child is involved or when they have to take a position in public discussions. Therefore, although the health discourse affects the perceptions in both the prevention and the management of child protection issues, it

cannot be a standalone solution to CPWs' cultural mismatches as one may be attempted to infer when hearing its proponents.

An important indicator for measuring compliance of CPW with his/her professional requirements is his/her attitude vis-à-vis his/her own children with regard to FGM/C practice. Many workers declared having cut or letting their daughters being cut. The nuance between words is important. Indeed, while some are the initiators of the mutilation of their daughters, others argue that the decision was made by their parents, aunts and other members of the great family. Some said they did not agree but they could not oppose the family decision. Others argued that they were deceived by women in the family who have had their children cut while they turned their backs; secretly. This actually happens. However, when such an act is repeated several times with several girls, it is questionable if the CPW parent is really unwilling. My believe here is that even if they do not want to admit it explicitly, the fact that the family decides for them relieves many workers from making such a difficult choice between the precepts laid down by their culture and those conveyed by the profession.

This said, I was also inversely surprised that some workers who were determined to protect their daughters against genital cutting made sure their decisions were respected. Although it is an extremely rare event to threaten parents in the Malian culture, I encountered two cases during the study. These were both women, who threaten to imprison their mothers in law for having planned to cut their daughters.

"I made it clear to my mother in law before his son, my husband. I told her: 'if you ever dare to touch my daughter, to my knowledge I'll put you in jail. Otherwise I'll kill you.' My husband embarrassed exclaimed: 'Are you crazy?'" CPW N29

As a whole, three types of situations emerge: (1) workers who were already against the practice before being in-charge of the protection programme; (2) those who still believe that FGM/C is normal and should be promoted and (3) the third group of people who were in favour but are currently changing positions like the participant below.

"Personally, when I joined the department [of Family and Children Protection], I was in favour of female genital cutting. I even started to set up an association for the promotion of that practice. That was my position, but now I have changed my mind." IDR N85

Naturally, the workplace is a place of discomfort for the workers in the second group, whereas those in the first and third categories need to struggle at family level. They have to explain the reasons for their resistance to the act and to find strategies to pacify their relationships at home and in the neighbourhood. A participant in FGD declared:

"Following my refusal to allow my family to cut my daughter, I was treated unfairly and described by my people using slangs and unimaginably qualifying adjectives. One of my aunts addressed me in the following terms: "We thought you were only toubab [White man]. but we can now see that you're completely crazy". CPW N28

The word "crazy" summarizes how CPWs who conform to professional requirements which are conflicting with cultural practices are perceived by their society. To say it is indeed only a mad person who can go against social norms. Such a person can put off his/her clothes publicly, eat in trash cans and so on. As the popular expression puts it, the fool is a moving dead person who has not yet had a tomb. These workers no longer really count on their parents and the enlarged families. They are no more listened to in matters of concern for the family[28], since they are seen as *living corpses* from whom no "good" decision can come, one of their relatives (generally mother or aunt) can take their daughter and go to cut her without seeking their opinion. As a consequence, some unwilling workers who are against the practice prefer to run out of the large families and settle in other towns to protect their daughters from going through FGM/C. It takes a great courage to break up the relationship with the large family in the context of Mali and such a decision is felt as a great and difficult shock to bear.

For some people, FGM/C aims at making girls chaste. People involved in the fight against harmful traditional practices are accused of promoting frivolousness. A woman's testimony in the FGD states:

"As I went to greet my aunt in Medina after the celebration of February 6[29], 2008, she followed me into the room and said: 'You involve yourself in stories of brothels, make brothel children because girls who are not cut, are those that you are trying to protect, they will become...' Ah, that day, I cried. I really cried. I was very shocked" CPW N1.

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[28] It is important here to understand the word "family" in its large Malian conception.
[29] Each February 6 is celebrated in African countries as the "day of zero tolerance against FGM/C." Workers like this participant are therefore very busy and shown on TV and other media for their work against the practice.

There is abundant literature on excision in Mali. Although the initial goal of FGM/C remains uncertain, there is unanimity on the fact that it existed before the emergence of the Christian and Muslim religions. Some explanations (Bellas-Cabane 2007) back to the story of Sarah in the Koran and the Bible which revealed that this practice would have been imposed on Hadiara in order to hamper her sexual relationship with Abraham (which was traditionally adopted by the Coptic Christians in Egypt and the Abyssinians of Ethiopia). Other explanations are based on the Malian myths (the Bambara and Dogon) as sources of FGM/C, following the principle that females are in men's foreskin and men in the women's clitoris, impeding mating with the opposite sex. It is therefore necessary to remove from the man this female trait (the foreskin) and from the woman her male side (the clitoris). If this is not done, an evil force would sit in the men's foreskin and women's clitoris and result in disorder in the individual and affect fertility. It is only after the removal of the prepuce and clitoris that the gender differentiation operates.

Beyond the myths, the main meaning given to excision in Mali today is based on aesthetic reasons, the desire to control sexual impulses of women and religious argument.

5.2.1: Aesthetic and Social Reasons

FGM/C is strongly associated with aesthetics and women are much more ready to advance this reason than men. The "*bilakoro*" or uncircumcised girl/woman is supposed to have something impure. For advocates of FGM/C, it is not even normal to call an uncircumcised woman 'woman' since she has not completed the act of purification which is supposed to make her integrate into the group. A responsible parent cannot accept to let his/her daughter in such a dirty and marginalizing state of *bilakoro*.

"You know, it's really hard to leave our girls in this state. It's like boys too. Although we are told that circumcision for boys is different from FGM/C we practice on girls, we cannot really avoid making the parallelism. It is seen as purification." CPW N19

People cannot resist a practice that imparts a sense of pride or feeling of community membership. Not conforming to the practice would stigmatize and isolate girls and their families, resulting in the loss of their social status. Initiation rites are experienced

as a promotion for children and their parents. Under traditional Bambara rites and wherever female circumcision is practiced, the uncircumcised boy and girl do not really have the right to speak and they are subjects of laughter for their peers. Excision and circumcision are rewarding events that bring social transformation and a certain maturity in general opinion.

It is surprising that, although informed that foreign women are not circumcised, that feeling of dirt is not projected on them. Benevolence towards strangers is an important temperamental feature of the West African cultures which can explain this fact, it is nonetheless true that the acceptance of uncircumcised foreigners is also an indication that the rejection of *bilakoro* is more a sanction of violation of social convention than the state of being non-excised itself.

4.2.2: Disciplining Women's Sexuality

For the majority of study participants, especially men, FGM/C is justified by the need to control the sexual sensitivity of women. Among all reasons advanced to maintain FGM/C, the effects of this practice on the sexual behaviour of women are more widely shared. However, the argument that circumcision reduces sexual appetite of women and allows her to control herself is challenged by health professionals (physicians in particular) and enforced by the frivolous sexual behaviour of some girls even though they have been cut. Nevertheless, the majority of workers in favor of FGM/C largely share this opinion and think it is normal that the society "helps" girls to be faithful to their husbands. A participant commented:

"Here in Mali, for most of us, it is crystal clear that cutting allows the woman to resist the temptation of infidelity by getting better control of her body." IDR N35

Of course, in the context of polygamy still widely practiced, no participant showed concerns about the reciprocity of fidelity between wife and husband. Some participants explained the perpetuation of FGM/C by polygamy. Men, unable to satisfy sexually their many wives have an interest in maintaining the different ways that seek to 'decrease their sensitivity.' In Mali, 43% of women are in polygamous marriages: 31% in urban areas against 47% in rural areas (MICS 2010).

4.2.3: The Religious Argument

Misunderstanding about cultural mismatches to be managed at family level is one issue. Another one and perhaps the most important one is the trouble for unaware believers. A large part of the study population associates female genital cutting with Islamic prescriptions. People who are in such position find it more difficult to accept professional discourses inviting them to abandon genital mutilation. Here, we are touching the root motivations and explanations that support the practice in Mali. In addition to crystallizing opposition between professional and traditional logics, the issue intertwines with faith. Once again, researchers are unanimous that FGM/C existed before Islam not only in Africa, but also in other societies, yet many workers justify FGM/C as a religious obligation:

"When I started working with my organisation, I had problems with regards to the fight against FGM/C because I am deeply religious" CPW N78

I therefore sought to understand why the link between Islam and excision is made by some participants. For some people, the recommendations of the Prophet on the purification of the body have been interpreted as the need to also cut girls and circumcise boys to make them "clean" in the hygienic sense[30]. Among Muslims in Mali, circumcision is called *seli ji* (seli: ''prayer'' ji: "water") that means ablution. One can also find the *'bolokoli'* expression meaning hand washing. Similarly, some have argued during the interviews that one hadith reported that the Prophet had declared on the subject: *"if you will do it [cutting], do it slightly"*. Likewise, some fundamentalist workers are not only in favor of the practice, but also use their professional position to sabotage the fight against FGM/C. A participant witnessed:

"One of the reasons for leaving my previous organization for UNICEF was that I could not understand the behaviour of my manager. He was one of those somehow Muslims called fundamentalists. Rather than using the videotapes sent to us by our headquarters on the severe consequences of FGM/C practices to educate populations, he used to destroy them, sabotaging thus our work; a shocking behaviour for me." CPW N42

Of course, this interpretation is disputed by other Islamic scholars who note that the Prophet merely recommended the practice of regular ablutions before prayer; and that tendentious interpretation that diverts the direction of the divine word should be

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[30] Cabane (2007) Fondements Sociaux de l'Excision dans le Mali du XXIème Siècle

avoided. In fact, God recommended that all organs of human body should strictly be kept intact as they were created. Again, it should be stressed that the largest ethnic groups of northern Mali (the Sonrhai and Tuareg) considered as the most fervent Muslims than any other ethnic group in the country do not practice FGM/C. This tangible reality combined with accessible verses of the Koran accredits the theory that people are just using Islam as a pretext to justify their position.

In conclusion, the community of child protection workers in Mali remain divided on FGM/C. The profession has not succeeded in convincing everybody to abandon the practice. When several colleagues admit they are still cutting their daughters, the idea of introducing legislation to ban the practice is viewed by them as more dangerous than beneficial. A ministerial circular that forbids the practice at medical centers is contrary to their idea of promoting the medicalization of FGM/C as a good way of protecting the population against the risks and accidents related to the practice. For them,

"The job you are engaged in should not be destructive of the local culture" CPW N28.

Most CPWs remain silent in their respective positions or rather pretend to accept the fight for the abandonment of FGM/C just to preserve their salaries and professional advantages.

The group of workers who are committed (at varying degrees) to fight for the abandonment of the practice consider FGM/C as a totally retrograded, regressive and harmful practice. They justify their position following the loss of the original meaning and educational values that once founded the ritual. Especially the health ravages like childbirth difficulties, hemorrhages and even deaths ... are put forward as main reasons to abandon the practice. However, they recognize the fact that they suffer from important marginalization, discrimination and incomprehension (because they de facto place themselves out of the social norms) of their communities. This complex situation requires the involvement and support of employing institutions. FGM/C continues to be seen as a tool of identity integration. The practice is linked with the place of the child (and projection of her parents including when they are CPWs) in the social group. Questioning it poses the problem of lack of respect for elders and family cohesion. As such, even the worker who has a real good will to

properly conform to his/her job requirements goes through great social constraints that lead him/her from frustration to frustration.

4.3 Child Marriage and Levirate

Although the subjects are presented separately, in reality they are much more interrelated than my reader would imagine. As such, FGM/C has a direct impact on the "marriageability" of the girls. One reason for parents to support the practice of female genital cutting is that they do not want to jeopardize the chances of their daughters to find good husbands and integrate respectable families. Men indeed prefer to get married to cut women as confirmed below by a woman in FGD:

''My brother said: 'Despite sensitizations, what remains in our memory from our education is that when we were young, we laughed at these uncut girls. We 'used' them a lot because they were easy. But we will never get married to them''' CPW N1.

The traditional conception of marriage as an alliance between two families rather than love story between two individuals continues to dominate the perspective of people, including intellectuals and CPWs. This is precisely the root explanation that justifies in some ethnical groups the widow inheritance or levirate: a practice whereby the wife is automatically married to one relative of the deceased husband (usually his brother). Of course, when advocates of human rights denounce the levirate as an unacceptable transformation of women into inheritable ordinary material like any other object and public health specialists criticize it due to its association with increased HIV infection rates, the keepers of the tradition see in widow inheritance a relevant strategy to protect children and prevent them from becoming orphans after the death of their biological father. Consistently, in most societies that practice the levirate, the term 'orphans' refers only to children who have lost their mother (or both parents), but it does not apply when it is only the father who dies. The levirate however remains limited to few ethnic groups in Mali and I noticed during FGDs that participants who were not familiar with this cultural practice felt horrified and they considered the groups that practice it as 'non-civilized.'

The perception of marriage as a union between families rather than individuals, wife inheritance and early marriages are all based on the perspective that marriage as a

tool cannot be more important than the reason for which it was created. In other words, the reason for creating the tool enables a control of its use, but also how to use it. The man and the woman/girl do not really have the opportunity to choose a spouse. They are instruments of family links. Only families can decide when, why and how to celebrate a marriage. Proudly, a participant declares:

"*It's like that, marriage is such a serious matter; the decision about it as well as its management cannot be left to individuals. It is an affair of family to family, or rather community to community.*" CPW N40

To apprehend marriage from a legal point of view, it is useful to recall the perspective required by Malian law. It is stipulated in article 4 of the Marriage Code of 3 February 1962 that a man and a woman cannot get married respectively before 18 and 15 years of age. According to the same article, the Minister of Justice can authorize the marriage of boys and girls aged less than 18 and 15 if he has "serious reasons" to do so. The article 11 states that "a boy who is less than 21 and a girl who is less than 18 cannot get married without their father and mother's consent". In total, while boys are almost totally protected against early marriage by the law (since unless they are authorized by the Minister of Justice, they cannot get married before reaching the age of 18), girls on the contrary are not protected in the same manner. The consequences of this legally established discrimination (which is also based on a culturally accepted discrimination against girls and women as shown above) are obvious. Indeed, according to the most recent national survey (MICS 2010) [31], 61% of women aged 20 to 49 at the moment of the survey were already married before they reached 18. In some unusual cases, boys are also affected by early marriage. But clearly, the phenomenon affects mainly girls. Besides, previous Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) suggested that the average age of marriage for men is 22.

The consequences of early marriage on the girl who prematurely becomes a mother (hence the concept of child-mother in programmatic approaches) are numerous. The most documented and devastating ones are health-related such as pregnancy complications and psycho-social consequences. The married daughter does not

[31] Multi Indicators Cluster Survey

have the capacity to negotiate balanced relationship with her husband, who de facto has the marital power and also plays a surrogate parental role. The communities are perfectly aware of this inequitable power imbalance since people openly assimilate husband to a substitute father and educator for the newly married girl:

"Traditionally, it is understood that the marital home is a place of education for the newly married girl. Her husband has an important role to play in this sense with support from aunts and other resource persons." CPW N40

All this concludes to a heavy burden for the girl who loses irrevocably her childhood. Faced with the obligation to make decisions and limited choices, she must now take responsibility for the education of the children.

Like the Bible and the Koran are for Christians and Muslims, the main tools for child protection professionals are the United Nation Convention on the Right of Children (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) which set the age of minority to 18. Each worker is expected to understand and accept that any marriage below that age is a child marriage. However, the declarations of some participants during the research and my personal observation while pushing for the adoption of a National Plan and laws more consistent with ratified international conventions to combat early marriage enabled me to understand that when some colleagues are working hard to propose actions aimed at preventing and combating early marriage in Mali, others hold the position that girls' age at marriage should not be raised. It is not that they don't see how increasing the age of marriage ''will provide the necessary protection for young people, especially in context which lack the necessary infrastructure for the effective enforcement of existing laws'' (Jones and Trotman Jemmott 2009 p.7). It is rather that they simply don't believe there is a need of additional protection for girls.

"Malian law is good as it is now. Zakari! Do you sincerely think that moms of 16 or 17 years old are not marriageable? Let's be serious." CPW N40

The perception that people have of children in local setting does not match with that of the modern era. They have an impression that children's ages are too delayed by modern conception. Rather than being an issue of concern for several CPWs, the discrimination actually contained in the national law is what they deem suitable and

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the programme cannot count on them for the implementation of action points contained in the National Action Plan finally adopted on child marriage.

Although invested by their job to popularize the CRC that sets the minority up to 18 years for both the girl and the boy, workers point out that, they do not feel they are violating the law by marrying their daughters below the age of 18 provided they have reached 15 years as stipulated by the Malian law. In actual practice and in a context where some children do not have birth certificates, many workers have told me that they marry their daughters off even before the age of 15. Having attended weddings and visited families during my research, I have directly seen cases of child marriages orchestrated by CPWs involving children. The fact that workers in CP programmes engage in daily discussion on the severe consequences of early marriages has not contributed to change their position. During awareness raising activities with the population, argumentations are developed showing that early marriages entail serious medical and psychological consequences on girls. They are ready to participate in radio debates to show that early marriages by preventing girls from completing their primary or secondary education contributes in widening the gap between educated girls/women and boys/men. They further emphasize that it directly and indirectly undermines the achievement of various areas targeted by Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), mainly those relating to children. All these sounds more like *ready made* official discourse rather than convincing and heartfelt from the part of the workers. Obviously, knowledge is not sufficient for a change in attitude to happen. Cultural mismatch is inherent in all people who received two forms of socialization: primary socialization (through family and birth community ...) and secondary socialization through our professionalization, a participant commented:

"It is very easy for us as long as we are not placed in a situation that questions the meaning or system that allows us to give meaning to events, to always pretend to be a good professional. But in serious situations, there is no guarantee that the professional reasoning and science can supposedly win for people who have 'suffered' a double socialization." CPW N33

Colleagues are held hostage for several reasons which they invoke to justify early marriage. If they align with ordinary families who for reasons of poverty get rid of their

daughters whom they consider an "economic burden" into early marriages, they will be considered as joining the popular opinion. Physiologically, a girl is considered fit for marriage as soon as she reaches the age of puberty which people recognize by signs such as the first periods and the appearance of breasts. Another reason is the concern about girls' "misbehavior" which some parents try to prevent by marrying the girls early enough. Here too, some religious reasons are invoked, it is said that Islam encourages the marriage of girls as soon as they have their first periods. As parents as well as believers, CPWs would not like to be accountable for the "misbehaviour" of their daughters as there is the need to safeguard family honour and the girls' virginity which is still regarded in some families as a precondition for marriage. Unwanted and/or extramarital pregnancies are all issues of concern that CPWs rank priority before professional requirements. For these, they are ready to go through various artifices, including telling lies and 'playing theatre' at office to appear as espousing official slogans.

4.4 Child Labour, Including Begging and Street Children

In Mali, the results of MICS 2010 showed that the percentage of children 5-11 years considered as workers is 40%. This situation affects more children living in the poorest households (41%) than those living in the richest households (21%). Schooling children also combine study with work, and this, to a greater extent in urban areas (65%) than in rural areas (44%). The report also notes that the more advanced is the level of mother's education, the less her child works. Traditionally, children have always contributed directly to the improvement of living standards of their families both in rural areas and cities. A participant appreciated:

"There is nothing improper for children to work with their families as far as this work is aligned to his/her education purpose and not above his/her physical and mental capacities. I did more than that when I had not even reached their age." CPW N1

If agriculture and grazing remain mostly the areas implying children in rural settings, some regions like Sikasso combine this with gold panning that is taking more and more importance. Mali indeed has become the third gold producer in Africa after

South Africa and Ghana[32]. In this context, the country unfortunately experienced in recent years a proliferation of traditional gold mining sites due mainly to rising poverty and the fall in the world market price of cotton, which was one of the main cash crops of the country. In this artisanal mining, children are at the forefront as we can see in figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4.3: A girl busy in gold washing (Sikasso region)

Photo: Misenga/UNICEF 2010

Alongside with these forms of work that double with household work for the children, a dislocation of some Malian families amplifies the phenomenon of street children[33]. The child work that was once framed as part of family education has turned into a serious abuse of children that some analysts rightly call "modern slavery". Internal and external trafficking of children occurs in many forms. One of the most criticized forms remains the children who move along begging on the streets, many of whom are *talibes* or *garibous*[34] at the mercy of shameless marabouts who send them to beg all day long in the midst of vehicles, at the risk of their lives (picture 5.4).

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[32] Gouvernment du Mali (2009) : Rapport d'enquête nationale sur le travail des enfants au Mali

[33] Ibid

[34] Traditionally, the Talibe or Garibou was a Koranic child student.

They are generally on their own and are commonly called street children for they have no social ties with families or social institutions. This population of street child mainly consists of male minors ranging in age from six to eighteen years.

Figure 4.4: Street Children in Bamako

Begging Children
at Bamako
Photo : ADAM (2010)

With commitment, some workers clearly denounce and condemn this irresponsible parenting and they point fingers at the marabouts as the root cause of this problem. Unfortunately, other workers pretend to be more "comprehensive" of the economic situation laying emphasis on the extreme poverty of parents and the need to understand child labor as a means of education. One participant exclaimed:

"We also went through this experience when we were at the Koranic school. We had to eat the remains of meals and begging was necessary to stay humble even if our parents had the financial means to fulfill our needs." CPW N54

As precisely noted by several authors, most of the parents' behaviours with regards to child labour is guided by economic reasons. Placing all children in school tends to expose the family to excess risk from income shocks. As a consequence, some children are assigned the task to seek for immediate means of subsistence for the

whole family or at least to acquire skills that have immediate market value (Levison in Brown et al. 2002). Participants' declarations largely corroborates analysis encountered in the literature. When a family is financially constrained, the youngest children in the family receive greater chances of educational attainment when "By comparison, the oldest children receive their bonus in the form of greater maternal attention as infants" (Brown et al. 2002 p.3). The older children are sacrificed and called to assist parents in their roles of supporting the younger children. This results in more work for them in addition to less chance of education.

The most shocking tendency to reproduce in children the sufferings endured by their parents at childhood is particularly worrying and needs further analysis. Better knowledge of what makes the difference between parents who want to totally inverse the situation as compared to the education they received as children and parents who content to perpetuate transmitted models they received from their own parents would be helpful in addressing capacity building. Previous reflections of researchers to explain this situation led them to focus on 'projection' and 'identification' mechanisms. Because of the sufferings parents experienced, they have difficulty to contain their emotions, and their attempts to mitigate the pain lead them to massive use of projection mechanisms where severe emotions such as persecution, aggression, shame and guilt are split and projected onto their children (Srour and Srour 2005). This is precisely what I call genealogical transmission of suffering. The word 'genealogy' fits more with the type of situation facing children in the context of Mali. I am indeed cognizant of the new perspective introduced by the researchers, suggesting the likelihood that some traumas are transferred genetically. According to that perspective, the trauma is "not solely a learned and/or psychological response to severe life-endangering experiences" (Dekel and Goldblatt 2008 p.284). They found an interaction between genetic (5-HTTLPR variant) and environmental factors in moderating risks linked with posttraumatic stress disorder, child maltreatment-related depression (Kaufman et al. 2006), or other stressful life events (Caspi et al. 2003).

Conversely, it is encouraging that some researchers note that people exposed to traumatic events report positive changes in their self-perceptions, in their perceptions of others, and in the objectives and meaning of their lives (Calhoun and Tedeschi 2006). For example, the literature on children who have been exposed to family violence (including by the way of labour) reports that some of them become more empathic or take on various functions within the family, which they perceive as a source of responsibility, power and development (Dekel and Ilan 2008 p.287; Goldblatt and Eisikovits 2005).

A study of the relationship parent-child with regards to early work should also be enlarged to the community level to ensure that a broader social perspective of the dynamic of the change already highlighted in my literature review chapter is taken into account. It is important to study not only the child and parents' psychological state, but also to explore the contribution of the whole community to intergenerational transmission of behaviours. Building their capacity should mainly be about helping these stakeholders to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the consequences of intergenerational transmission of trauma (Dekel and Ilan 2008). It should consist in promoting strategies that will enable the child to form a separate self, rather than developing symptoms that replicate the disturbances of his/her father or mother (Op den Velde 1998). The literature insists on how important it is to consider both parents and children in this effort since the level of identification depends on the parent-child relationship (Rosenheck 1986). The more the children are closest to their parents, the more they develop similar and severe distress.

CPWs make efforts to emphasize the educational function of child labor without exposing their contradictory positioning. Participants generally remain on the same trend from one subject to another. In other words, the same workers who believe that FGM/C should be maintained are also those who find the virtues of early marriages, violence and child labour as a means of education. There is however a nuance as they do not push their children to beg in the street. Their children can work, but rarely to the total expense of schooling. Obviously, some colleagues who pretend that child labour is not an issue are hypocritical because at the same time they are doing their

best to send their own children to school. Of course this may also be interpreted as a class issue.

The literature indicates that different definitions (influenced themselves by various cultures) of child maltreatment explain part of the conflicting perspectives in the parenting practices of people in general (Gelles and Straus 1988). For that reason, Iverson and Segal (1990) think that child maltreatment should be addressed at both general and operational levels although the legal definition of child maltreatment provides the standard guideline for common definition of the phenomenon. No single CPW today can pretend to ignore the fact that giving a child to a Koranic teacher is an old practice in the Muslim communities. This traditional practice which originally was done for the purpose of religious education has nowadays been diverted by adults - due to their cupidity - into a massive exploitation of children. Studies estimate the number of street children in Bamako between 4000 and 6000, the majority of whom, are boys (Cissé 2009). As a participant justly puts it below, the motivation of many marabouts today in Mali is more driven by making money than by education.

"Today, the cupidity has disorganized everything. It is no longer the marabout who takes care of the education of children, it is rather the children who go out to get what the Marabout will live on such as: money, food, clothes, everything! Their greed knows no limit and they pretend to be men of faith." CPW N29

In the same vein, the majority of participants openly affirmed using the services of "domestic servants" at their homes. Comments from participants who are against that practice highlight how these domestic girls are exploited at will. They are the first to wake up and the last to sleep, and they are often treated as slaves. Whatever their age, they are not spared of any sort of work ranging from washing to cooking, cleaning...

In their attempt to review the existing theoretical, empirical, and historical literature as to why and when children work, Brown and his colleagues realized that "technology and other demand-side factors interact subtly with household dynamics, culture and political failures to determine the labor force participation rate and

educational attainment of children'' (Deardorff 2002 p.3). I have been shocked several times to see many employed children accompany their CPWs mistresses to their institutions to care for their children in spaces transformed into nurseries while their mothers are working. Most institutions never reacted to such misdemeanour since it appears as a normal behaviour to everybody, including the Directors of these CPWs employing institutions. A similar attitude is reported in the wider literature, including in cases of sexual exploitation[35]: "A common response when a fellow educator is suspected of abuse, especially if that person is popular or a long-time employee, is to deny or ignore it. Sometimes the abuser is transferred to another school" (Crosson-Tower 2003 p.27).

In some cities like Bamako, the days and places of arrival of the domestic girls are well known by the employers who come to choose their future domestic servants against a certain amount of money which is paid to the *Aunty* who is their caretaker upon arrival from the regions. At the end of each month, the employers hand over the wages of the domestic servants directly to the Aunty. Outside the scope of pure traditional relationship, this practice opens the door to all forms of abuse including sexual abuse. It really has nothing to do with the traditional form of child and adolescent raising that aims at educating and improving their life skills. The few existing studies on this problem reveal real organized networks around intermediaries acting for profit[36]. These studies have been disseminated and shared with the community of CPWs. Rather than abandoning this abuse on children, some colleagues prefer to develop unconvincing arguments to support the practice. During the interviews some women even said that they perceive their actions as support to these poor children and their families who remained in the village.

"I think we are helping these girls. Do not forget that if they stayed in their villages, they would never have what they are earning here to help their families back home. Moreover, coming to town also enables them to save some money to buy their wedding outfit.'' CPW N39

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[35] Sexual Exploitation is cited as one of the worst forms of child labours by ILO
[36] MPFEF (2009) Rapport du Mali sur les activités de lutte contre la traite des êtres humains

The involvement of colleagues in these practices does not really prevent them from publicly pronouncing the convictions of their respective institutions with regards to such practices. They proceed with their explanations on how Mali has a law that prohibits child labour; pointing out that having ratified ILO Conventions 138 and 182 respectively on the minimum age for admission to employment and the prohibition of the worst forms of child labour, the Ministries must ensure compliance and its effective implementation. Just by hearing them, one would believe that the work of the Ministries is separate from theirs and that the highest authorities can directly reach populations and magically change their behaviours without the active participation of CPWs. During an interview, one participant who employed a domestic servant said:

"I participate in a weekly programme to sensitize against child labour with the radio [name of the radio]. My prayer always before entering the studio is that nobody in my neighborhood should listen to me on the air. We have a child as domestic servant at home and everybody knows that." CPW N28

Some male colleagues blame their wives as being responsible for that situation and claim they are totally powerless not only to stop them from hiring these small girls, but also to prevent them from maltreating the girls since their interventions are often misunderstood by their wives and interpreted as having a relationship with the girls.

"Each time I try to intervene my wife says it is because I am courting the domestic servant" IDR N48

Echoing this opinion, the women actually say it is better to hire small domestic girls to avoid recruiting a woman who will become de facto their co-wife in the house. Unfortunately, not only they violate legal dispositions (by hiring less than 12 year old girls) and their job descriptions, they also fail to adjust their demands or tasks to the ages of these girls. As the girls cannot totally satisfy them, the story usually ends up in violence. These consequences were emphasized by participants themselves, mainly during FGDs.

As a consequence, the implementation of the National Programme against child labor, through various projects to be realized by the Government of Mali in compliance with international commitments to participate in the crusade against this

global scourge is handicapped by the perception and position of people responsible for its implementation on the ground such as the sectoral Ministries (Ministry of Labour, Ministry of social protection and families…), NGOs, UN agencies and decentralized entities. CPWs behave like their ordinary fellow Malians when it comes to issues relating to child labour. They do not effectively play the leading role expected from them.

4.5 Violence and Corporal Punishment as Means for Education

The cultural conflict of violence and corporal punishment as a means for education is not only manifested in the relationship of the worker vis-à-vis his/her ascendants, family and external environment. It is also manifested in his/her relationship with his/her own children. Although informed of negative consequences of violence on children, only one male participant out of a total of 96 indicated that he has never used flogging as a means to educate children. Otherwise, as a participant in FGD puts it, corporal punishment is seen as one of the natural techniques to raise children.

"If you do not want your child to cry, it is he/she who will make you cry" CPW N1.

This brings us back to reflect on the repetition of the model experienced by parents while they were young. People fail to understand that "We should not be repeating the cycles of abuse that have already done legitimate damage to people growing up and have all sorts of potential to continue to harm them" Fincke (2013 p.1). They hit children because they were flogged when they were young. They believe that since their elders did it, then it is certainly normal. A participant declared:

"We naturally look first at the process by which we ourselves were educated. Among us, only few have not been flogged by their parents. Therefore, when we are asked to educate our own children or to supervise children in social centres, it is difficult not to consider flogging as a main instrument of discipline. I hit instinctively; otherwise the child escapes your control." IDR N48

From every moral, psychological and mental point of view, whatever parents think is good, instead of giving the child the freedom to integrate it into his/her behaviour in accordance with his/her age, they dictate it in a rigid manner: do this, do that, do not do this …. Few among the CPWs do recognize that such attitudes make a child to swallow behaviours as dictates, reducing his/her capacity of adaptability. As a participant puts it,

"We unfortunately project ourselves in the child and we dictate things. The child is worried to face the 'master' father and the 'master' mother.'' IDR N48

All this leads to verbal and/or physical abuse when the child fails to reflect on what is desired by the adult.

Although the impact of verbal and/or physical abuse on children may not be apparent at an early stage, its effects are harmful and possibly long-lasting for the victims. Its impact can become more severe as a child grows. As underlined by DePanfilis (2006), this impact can encompass multiple areas, including health and physical development, intellectual and cognitive development, emotional and psychological development and finally social and behavioral development. These four categories of neglect effects on an individual are often related. Children learn from their parents negative behavioral strategies to employ in their interactions with others (Tallman and Bohart in Cherniss and Goleman 2001). Indeed, a prominent argument advanced by authors to explain the link between childhood physical punishment and long-term negative outcomes is a "social learning argument". This perspective says that corporal punishment communicates to children that "aggression is normative, acceptable, and effective" (Gershoff 2002 p.555) and leads to greater acceptance of interpersonal violence. Therefore punishment is associated with greater aggression when children are adults. Cast et al. (2006) affirms that when they grow up, children who were victims of corporal punishment can be expected to have a less rich "cultural toolkit" of strategies for resolving conflict in their relationships, including in their marriages and once they become adults, they will employ more coercive and controlling behaviours rather than verbal persuasion and communication when confronted with problems. This will constitute an important handicap in their lives.

Violence hinders the psychological and psychomotor development of the child. If he/she was given the latitude, he/she could understand things easily, guide him/herself because there are natural predispositions allowing him/her to integrate family values. As they develop, children are capable of using self-regulation[37]. They are capable of managing incoming information, choose appropriate responses that

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[37] This is defined as complex processes that allow children to suitably respond to their environment requirements without assistance (Bronson 2000; Florez 2011).

allow them to actively participate in learning. As Florez puts it, "children and human self-regulation is in many ways like a thermostat. A thermostat senses and measures temperature, and compares its reading to a preset threshold. When the reading passes the threshold, the thermostat turns either a heating or cooling system on or off." (Florez 2011 p.1; Derryberry and Reed 1996). Similarly, children learn to evaluate what is going on in their environment. This capacity to develop self-regulation is then compromised since parents do not accept to just wait for the best time to come for this to happen.

Atance et al. (2010) believe that those individuals who make choices that take into account the desires of others are perceived as more socially adept than those who fail to do so. This assertion is challenged in the specific context of the child-parents relationship. Indeed, whereas we can agree with the author that understanding that others' desires may differ from our own is in general an important aspect of social cognition, my research participants strongly believe that the more they succeed to align their children with their own aspiration, the better it is for the cohesion of the family and the whole society. This often happens because some parents, in the natural exercise of authority inherent to any parent-child relation, lack the requisite knowledge of the reality demonstrated by research: children's capacity to integrate and reason about parents' desires is significantly enhanced when their own desires have been fulfilled or are anticipated to be fulfilled (Atance et al. 2010). Parents rather fear that the children's wishes conflict with the customs.

Furthermore, as indicated earlier, the husband uses violence on his wife with the consent of neighbors. The MICS 2010 survey confirms that very young married girls are more likely to think it is acceptable for a husband to beat his wife, and in that way they are more often exposed to domestic violence. In addition, the same study reporting on domestic violence stated that 87% of women declared that their husband/partner can beat them for any one of the following reasons: if she goes out without telling him - if she neglects the children - if she argues with him - if she refuses to have sex with him - if she burns food.

Newspapers often react to cases of abuse, violence and sexual exploitation that emerge occasionally in a sensational manner. Sexual violence especially is often

treated anecdotally by the media. The trivial attitude linked to such cases is also encouraged by the fact that there are little or no complaints against the perpetrators because of shame and stigma. Such cases are handled by families and are not referred to the appropriate authorities.

This environment of trivialisation and legitimization of violence necessarily affects the CPWs (as front line workers in direct contact with children) who challenge the guiding principles to supervise children in centers as well as their own children at home. A worker commented:

"If programmes do ignore that child protection cornelian principles do not unfortunately transform workers into Cornelius, we are aware that we are not Cornelius but Malians." IDR N48

In the literature review, I commented on my perspective on the debate universality versus relativity in implementing human rights. It is disturbing that some colleagues are instrumental in creating and maintaining confusion between the right (any claim or title that is legally granted as allowable or due to a person) and the manner to implement this right. Violence is a negation of the right, not a manner to implement it. Therefore I don't believe in pleading for violence to be accepted as a variable adjustment in attending to children's right. As parents, like 92% of research participants declared, I can understand that at one time or another, the exercise of parental authority can lead a parent's hand to be quicker than his/her brain, resulting into a small spank on the child. However, neither argument on the contextualization or even the results of MICS referred to above can validly lead to the conclusion that violence is a Malian or African cultural trait. This perspective developed by some participants is most often associated with the dubious theories that it is impossible to educate children in Africa without a stick because the child is said to be too stubborn to listen to adults. These statements were vulgarized especially by teachers during and at the end of the colonial era in the continuation of the colonial relationship with France. It is sad to note that many CPWs used the same arguments today to justify what they call inadequate rules governing the childcare centers and to claim that corporal punishment on children should be authorized. Below a participant's intervention reveals the general spirit among teachers and the belief that abolishing

corporal punishment is a western-centric concept that will result in havoc and lead to moral decay (Alli 2012) is fully echoed by research participants:

"How do you think we can supervise more than fifty children in one classroom without hitting them? To my opinion, discipline and stick go together as far as children's education is concerned. Can hope to rest in the evening, only parents who hit their children in the morning!" CPW N56

Fortunately the literature has firmly established that though education strategies need to be contextualized, its fundamentals remain the same here and elsewhere. It is expected from CPWs to avoid authoring abuses on child rights and to rather report on it as done by their peers elsewhere. Failure to protect learners from all form of violence including physical punishment, emotional humiliation and strategies based upon removal of self-respect, deny to children not only their right but also their ability to fully experience their education (Vally 2011). None of these is effective or appropriate as they cause damage to the child or learner who may become violent, sad, withdrawn, or unable to achieve academic result. He/she can also fall into delinquency. "Additionally, corporal punishment provides children with a poor role model of adult behavior. It teaches them that the use of physical violence against smaller and weaker persons is an appropriate means of dealing with problems" (Sommer 2000 p. 1).

Several CPWs practice corporal punishment because of the belief that children do not grow to be well-mannered adults if they are not beaten when they make mistakes. They simply don't understand the difference between punishments and discipline though the two notions are clearly far from being the same: the discipline is an attitude, a character, responsibility or commitment. It is basically internal ''while the attempt to impose it would be an external process" (Sridhar 2014 p.1). The discipline is not taught, it is learnt. Disciplined behaviour shows respect. Its goal is for the learner to develop self-discipline through his/her own efforts rather than through the efforts of another person by means of threats and force (Vally 2011). Punishment on the contrary is external and does not promote self-discipline to be achieved. Punishment generally only stops the behaviour for the moment rather than having positive long-term outcomes. As this author summaries it, "Punishment is an adult release and about their power. It is also about displaced anger. This is when adults

are angry about something but take their anger out on children while Discipline helps children change" (Vally 2005 p.4).

Among research participants who accepted that corporal punishment has no place in school, many still argue that their cultural and/or religious freedom is being curbed and that their power as educators has been taken away from them because they are being blamed for using corporal punishment. I was struck by the very denigrating opinion that some front line workers have of children placed under their control. Once again, I suspect this perspective to be the remains of unconscious internalization of racist theories promoted by the colonial administration at the time. As victims of internalized oppression when they were pupils some teachers who were still not healed of being mistreated develop a distress pattern, some form of rigid, destructive or ineffective feeling and behavior that is re-stimulated by their now position as teachers (Lipsky 2003). This re-enactment of the original distress experience pushed them through to transform the position of children they are supposed to educate into new victims' role.

Yet corporal punishment is prohibited in legislation, but legitimized by societal norms and educational attitudes of the parents themselves. Students especially girls are exposed to humiliation perpetrated by teachers. Harassment and gender-based violence is sometimes translated into sexual exploitation as evidenced during discussions with education counselors.

4.6 Consequences of Cultural Discrepancies on CPWs and the Attainment of Programme Results

From what we have discussed so far, it is obvious that the job of CPW is a challenge in Mali, particularly for national staff. Also, there is a total unanimity among participants on the fact that mismatches and harmful cultural practices impact negatively on both the programme and workers. Telling people to change their culture is felt like touching their identity.

In Chapter 2, I reviewed the vision of religions in relation to children's rights and practices that impede these children rights. If the Muslim religion that is practiced by the large majority of Malians is not in itself responsible for the violations of children's rights, it implies that the wrong interpretation made of some portions of the Quran by

some people strongly influences the vision of social realities by the CPWs. When in addition, the biased interpretation of the religion is largely in line with other symbols of the culture, it is particularly demanding for the CPW to free him/herself from the general social perception in vogue in the environment. He/she is concerned just like other ordinary citizens, when the imam promises hell for parents of girls who do not keep their virginity until marriage. The same causes leading to the same effects, some CPWs, despite their professional knowledge are in this way capable of precipitating the marriage of their daughters to avoid having to answer to God for their misconduct. It is with the same motivation that they impose FGM/C on them.

Therefore, the religious belief as one of the components of culture is one important explanation to why some CPWs behave as they do, against their professional directives. Although the majority of the participants were Muslim, limiting the possibility on my part to deepen the comparative analysis across religions with regard to their influence, I have however observed throughout the data collected during the study that religious arguments have never been invoked by non-Muslim CPWs in justification of FGM/C and early marriage.

The root causes of FGM/C practice have not been clearly linked to one religion. However, my interactions with social and religious arenas for the past five years coupled with research findings leave me with no doubt that the debates on FGM/C is wrongly associated mainly with Islam and not with other religions.

As a system of symbols which establishes powerful and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and "clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic" (Jordan 2011 p.2), the religion and the culture play a crucial role in shaping social realities. I listened to participants' opinion and their struggle to preserve their culture/identity not only as a researcher, but also as a 'world trotter' worker who faces the dilemma of helping his own children to live the realities of the time they currently belong to while also having Benin culture as part of their identity. Only the eldest among my children understands her mother tongue. The others speak only French and the struggle to learn English as a second language totally relegates the learning of mother tongue into oblivion. I have always endured this reality with an inner sadness. That way, the boundaries became blurred in the

course of discussions creating sometimes a sense of solidarity among the researcher and respondents. With regards to some aspects of their concerns, I could not stand back and totally detach myself from some topics (Ryan 2006) because many of the questions applied to my own person who struggles somehow to find his way among several cultures. Of course, when some practices are harmful, there are also positive traditional values. Between these two categories, it is not always easy to know what can be considered positive and to be kept as good reference. People are really concerned about having an identity, as the world is nowadays going somehow, almost without reliable point of references. When committed workers agree that harmful practices must be discouraged, they fear the risk that some of their points of reference are lost before they understand what is harmful and what is not harmful. A participant questions:

"Who should decide what is good? Who decides what is not good?" IDR N38

Shocks faced by workers are multifaceted. Cultural discrepancies causes lack of job satisfaction, compromise self-esteem and the health of the worker. For a large part of the community, working on several thematics facing child protection is often seen as denial of self-religion/culture and the agent goes through an important battle to be accepted in his/her community. The programme issue becomes a personal challenge of acceptance of the individual worker as a member of his/her community.

We are torn between our families and our profession. As leaders at a certain level, people think it's because we enjoy certain privileges that we push on these agenda." IDR N47

Conditioned by traditional values, workers have a sentiment of being placed between the hammer and the anvil. This explains to a great extent why *"people do not really say what they do and do what they do not tell."* IDR N85

It is difficult for some workers to participate openly in awareness raising activities. In several teams, agents make arrangements not to be involved in activities linked to FGM/C for example. This is done outwardly or through manipulative artifices. To be accepted by both professional partners and family members, the CPWs feel 'obliged' to live in a chronic state of telling lies. As a participant puts it,

"Even if you are willing to do your job consciously, at some point, there is a great social constraint which leads you from frustration to frustration." CPW N6

Other consequences also manifests through work atmosphere in the institution as a whole. Indeed, when people have an internal conflict, it is visible through some attitudes at a professional level. Workers usually react with aggressiveness and lack of professional commitment. This often leads to problematic relationships in the short term and contract termination in the long term. The resultant high turn-over rates lead to lowered institutional performance.

Cultural practices are associated with fidelity to the family. Several participants believe that it is more important to be loyal to the family than to one's job. A participant corroborates this point in the following terms.

"If we die tomorrow, the employer for whom we work will find somebody to replace us only a few hours later. But our families we leave behind will be missing us and will feel the loss for the rest of their lives. Never forget that, the one who deserves your attention most is your family. Not your employing Institution." CPW N61

The great feeling of loyalty to the family goes alongside with maintaining and perpetuation of culture, including by 'accepting' what an individual disapproves deeply within him/herself as declared by a worker below.

"I am the youngest in my family and it is my mother, my older brothers, aunts and others who decide for me. Even if their decisions affect me in relation to my personal beliefs, I can do nothing. I can recall when the family excised my daughter, I was troubled, affected. They had cut her the same day they circumcised her twin brother. According to custom, both twins must be excised/circumcised the same day." CPW N65

From the worker's perspective, the conditions for the effectiveness of the programme are similar to the conditions that push the citizen to comply with the law. The effectiveness of the programme depends on its ability to generate obedience from those who are responsible for implementing it. Among the requirements, there is the personal disposition that drives the agent to respect established common strategies and approaches. This attitude of the staff is not possible if he/she does not perceive the work as a means to meet his/her personal aspirations and that of the social group he/she claims to be part of. Unfortunately this aspect seems to escape the reasoning of IDRs. Some of them prefer to rely on obedience rather than the mere fear of administrative and professional punishment that the agent may incur if he/she does not comply with the institutional guidelines. In other words, instead of the conditions of self-regulation driven by internal determinants by the individual, programmes

prioritize reliance on externally imposed regulations by institutions. However, the vigilance on which entirely depends the success of this type of *police* control depends on colleagues and the hierarchy who, because they are unfortunately also undergoing the same kinds of feelings with the staff can instead opt for solidarity with him/her rather than contributing to the implementation of these regulations.

Although the need to gather key data/information to ensure a better understanding of the impact of the programme implementation calls for additional research, the findings of my study affirm that the cultural conflict experienced by stakeholders is among the bottlenecks that limit the programme to achieve better results, despite important financial investments over several years in child protection. The comparison of Mali with neighbouring countries on the eve of the deadline for the MDGs (2015) confirms such opinion as shown in the table 5.1. The majority of participants have a negative perception about the results achieved. With regards to resources invested and the long years already devoted to the fight, some research participants affirm they are disappointed by limited results achieved so far. They insist that much better results could have been achieved if the community of stakeholders were not faced with challenges of all kinds. A participant said:

"Child protection programmes are not a priority for national authorities in this country. Institutions that are involved in this area achieve very little results. The programmes are always guided from the outside by international institutions involved on aspects they deem important for them and depending on how they see the subject. They claim to support us, but the need to demonstrate success within a very short period of time leads them to precipitation" CPW N82

Insufficient leadership and accountability framework at both national and regional levels is indeed an important issue. Although Mali is implementing a decentralization programme as part of its progress towards democracy, local authorities are still working with a mindset inherited from the era of centralism. Mayors and local elected bodies in municipalities are not properly held accountable for the situation of children in their territories. As child protection organizations work to integrate children into local development plans, it is not easy to convince local authorities and make them child sensitive partners. My experience when setting up the information system on children (Segou initiative narrated in my RAL at level 8) showed that it was not easy for authorities to take advantage of this initiative to develop their interventions on

child protection. Both national and local authorities abandoned their involvement in the hands of low level technicians. More strategic vision on the part of the governmental structures is needed. One issue is to get information through data collection system; another one is to use this information to guide policies and decisions rather than to content oneself in launching the reports that are followed by insignificant effects in terms of change in the situation of children. A participant in FGD doesn't even believe that the few achievements obtained are attributable to stakeholders' work:

"Partners' investments did not really bring the expected results. People who have changed behaviour today vis-a-vis children's rights have not changed because of our actions. They have done so mainly because of external factors such as mixing with other communities and other cultures." IDR N38

Child protection colleagues are not the only ones with a negative assessment about the outcome of their work. Two recent qualitative studies focusing on the perception of the programme by the main beneficiaries that are the children themselves revealed that the programme results were unsatisfactory. In these studies, the children surveyed said they were not sufficiently informed about their rights and that programmes should increase efforts to improve children's situation (UNICEF/MPFEF 2009; Cormont Toure 2010). The paradox between the legal provisions and its concrete implementation on the ground is noteworthy. Existing laws are poorly implemented if not totally ignored. The spectacle offered by begging children (talibes) in the towns is one of the tangible proofs of the country's reticence to implement the laws. Unaware visitors cannot believe that the penal code strictly forbids and punishes child begging in the country in unequivocal words: "In all circumstances, the incitation of people to begging is prohibited […]. If the person incited to begging is a minor, the offender shall be punished for three months to one year of imprisonment" (Penal code of Mali, Article 183).

Weaknesses in the legal framework also manifests in a legal vacuum on some major issues. Significant efforts made to ratify international conventions on children related issues are still in some areas to be reflected in national laws and fully implemented. Examples are the Code of Persons and Family and the law prohibiting Female Genital Mutilation that are adopted and implemented in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Benin, Mauritania, Senegal… but still not accepted in Mali. In its Pan-Africanist effort at the

dawn of the 1960 independence, Mali was the only African country to provide in the constitution its readiness to alienate its sovereignty in favor of the creation of another larger African state. Yet, the country today has trouble in aligning its efforts with those of its neighbours in the particular domain of child protection although these countries share almost the same geo-cultural realities. Indeed, it is paradoxical that people hunted in other countries for practices violating children rights find refuge in Mali. One concrete example witnessed by my team was that of nine Burkinabe girls who were led by their parents to Mopti during the week of the 22nd of August 2010, where they were submitted to FGM/C before returning to Burkina Faso, their home country where this practice is prohibited and punished by law.

The discussion on the recognition of cultural mismatches and its impact on the programme performance will be prolonged in chapter 5 to the interrelation of age, gender and other socio economic determinants with strategies in management of these mismatches by CPWs.

Chapter 5: Interrelation of Gender, Age and Other Socio Economic Determinants With Strategies in the Management of Mismatches by CPWs

5.1 Gender Influence

This thesis has been constantly guided by a concern for contextualization of its language and style. However, the analysis of gender influence would be truncated if it does not consider the global environment and recent developments that interfere in the gender concept. It is indeed important not to restrict the understanding of this study report only to people familiar with the Malian context and to also take into account the views of expatriate participants whose contribution to my investigation was a source of enrichment.

Gender difference in sample is quite high: 29% females vs 71% males. Thus it is hard to compare the two groups. However, narratives from both groups clearly indicate that gender influences both the perception of violation of children's rights and how people respond to these violations. This is mainly due to two factors. Women and girls are victims of specific human rights violations that have a major impact on them. In addition to sharing with men sufferings linked to deficits in access to classic basic social services, they are especially victims of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). These are all violent behaviours (individual or collective) solely based on gender. Although the distinction of GBV as a specific violence has been challenged in its principle by some intellectuals, it remains constant that such behaviours are driven by a social representation that tolerates or encourages aggressions of this type. In Mali, mostly encountered GBVs are early and forced marriages, female battering, forced pregnancy, female genital mutilation, mouth and gums tattoo, domestic violence... The consequences of GBV are fully documented by research and activists' organisations. Women victims arrive with disadvantages in social status and basic human capital resources and they find it difficult to participate as actively in networks as their male counterparts do (Bui and Morash 1999; Erez et al 2009). For several reasons, the man is generally considered to be better in management of cultural conflicts. He is socially perceived to be more credible. A participant explained:

"Our society believes that the testimony of one man is more credible than that of two or more women. A man can call for a meeting of women and talk to them. The

opposite is not always easy because many refuse to respond to the invitation of a woman unless it is imposed by public authorities." CPW N29

However, for some sensitive issues such as FGM/C, the impact of the CPW's message is more important if the audience is composed of people of the same sex with the orator. Belonging to the same age/generation increases the chances of being heard. In general, the child protection programme is confronted with a paradox through which the feminine sex that is in need of more resources and support to promote the rights of children is not taken seriously by the society.

Considering recent developments in western societies, the distinction between 'father' and 'mother' may perhaps appear inappropriate in the opinion of my reader. Indeed, at the request of homosexual movements, some governmental administrations have considered replacing these words by 'Parent 1' and 'Parent 2'. The lively debate of April 23, 2013 held in the French parliament which led to the legalization of same sex marriage is an example of the changing conceptions of maternal and paternal functions. Therefore, for the understanding of my analysis, it is important to constantly make reference to the Malian context in this study. Here, parenting is still a sum of two distinct facets which are maternal and paternal functions. Child education and protection in the Malian culture draws our attention to different roles imposed by the notions of 'father' and 'mother'. In other words, if 'parenting' equally refers to both partners or authors of parental project (Lebrun 2011), it does not mean that 'father' and 'mother' are interchangeable. The distribution of parental roles even goes beyond the two parents to include uncles, aunts and others. According to one participant:

"God did not make a mistake when He decided that life should be given through two distinct sexes. Even in the case of death of one member of the couple, the surviving spouse will never be able to completely replace the other in his/her role." CPW N30, a 38 year old Malian, engaged with the UN.

The political and legal equality between men and women (although such equality is not fully confirmed in the Malian positive law) does not give to both parents the same equality in the relational field to the point where the 'father' and 'mother' can disappear behind the symmetry of "parenting". We are therefore not in the context of 'two-monoparental family' (Lebrun 2011), composed of two *identical* parents, but rather a couple that takes full responsibility of its asymmetry as conferred by their

natural positions of being man and woman and therefore father and mother. A participant said:

''I know that everything that happens in the West often ends up by winning Africa and Mali. But I hope that marriage between people of the same sex will never be adopted and legalized in Mali.'' CPW N61

A brief incursion into the field of psychologists is needed to recall that the father is responsible for helping the child to grow; this implies allowing the child to escape the 'grip' of maternal protection and establishing a link with others. There is a link between the father and the social discourse. Having introduced himself into the child-mother privacy with precisely the complicity of the mother, he can now facilitate and allow the introduction of others. The father teaches the child to speak the 'common language'; that of the community to which he belongs. His mere presence indicates that the child is not the child of a single mother, but of a society. This paternal responsibility, considered by psychoanalysts as a salutary violence (Ibid) in that it allows inverting the natural primacy of the mother to ensure that of the culture was legible in the statements and feelings of my research participants. Likewise, women CPW showed 'mother' position by most commitment to the protection of children while the men participants (fathers) thought essentially as *social agents* who symbolize authority, respect for social norms and living together with others. Male participants showed more concern about the survival of the Malian culture and identity traits than women. A handful of workers even think that the debate on children's rights is a disguised way to impose Western culture in Mali.

A CPW who leads an important regional Direction of Ministry in charge of family and children said during a FGD discussion:

"Our culture should be respected. We are not opposed to children's rights. But the child does not have to claim it. For the parent, it is his/her duty. He/she has to fulfill it. And he does it. You know very well that here in Africa we say 'Elders' rights first'. Before our organisations come with their western culture to impose the slogan 'Children first', we should be capable to anticipate some clashes in perspectives." CPW N82

This finding is not specific to Malian society. It concurs with other studies done in and beyond the context of African countries. Reporting on sexual abuse on children in the Eastern Caribbean, Jones and Trotman Jemmott (2009 p.13) commented that ''society is adult-focused rather than child-focused - in contradiction of the CRC''.

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They observed that in several developing countries, children are not considered as having a special status but they are rather perceived as 'little people'.

The positioning of men with their families in the negotiation is marked by constant care not to break up the membership of the child to the culture that the family perpetuates. Men are more resistant than women to the idea of breaking up ties with the large family to protect the child against unwanted practices. In their objective to ensure that children are educated with large family values, CPW men suffer more of conflict between culture and professional agenda than women. Two men showed this suffering when they could not contain their emotion during an interview. They are torn in their soul because they feel they are custodians of cultural survival through its genealogic transmission, from generation to generation, from parent to child, from father to child. Unlike modern societies where the legitimacy of the father and patriarchy seem to be challenged today because democracy is often confused with 'egalitarianism', the Malian father is still fully legitimate. He is well supported in this legitimacy by the mother and the whole society. A male governmental participant who totalize 27 years of seniority noted during a FGD:

*"Our society understands the role of each member of the family and communities are grateful for each of them: the mother for her primary role in the birth and protection of the child; the father for his leading role to aligning the child to social value*s." CPW N82

However, in spite of this widely shared reality, including in intellectual circles of child protection workers, the roles of father and mother sometimes become confrontational when gender complementarity is not properly negotiated within the couple. Likewise, one of the two cases of divorced women encountered during this study attributes the cause of her divorce to the fact that she could no longer support *'the excessive and abusive power'* of her husband. It may be useful to note that although Malian, she grew up in a western cultural context and she is therefore marked by the European model of marital life. She declared:

"Perhaps people will say that I woke up too late because I was already married before I understood things. Mister [her former husband] and especially his family members did not see me as a real mother. Rather, they perceive me just as their laying hen whose eggs would be used and manipulated by the large family as they want. I divorced. My child is presently with me and my own parents." CPW N52, Malian female.

It is up to her to ensure that her own family members will not rise up against her conviction one day to pursue the same types of harmful projects on the child since a couple may be separated but once there is a child between them, the two families try to understand themselves and come to a compromise. As such what she was trying to avoid from the other family could still be imposed on her child by her own family.

The most universal explanation that women are more concerned about the protection of children than men is of greater importance as seen with the consequences of polygamy in the context of this study. Indeed, if the CPWs are mostly monogamous, many of them are obliged to negotiate their autonomy in the context of a large family characterized by polygamy. Aspects related to such context pushes women to better watch on their children.

In addition to growing up in a polygamous context, boys who witness GBVs are likely to be violent while girls grow into victims (GVRC 2013). Having been raised in a context marked by GBV explains partially some differences noted in approaches between male and female CPWs. GBV inhibits women's capacity to debate public matters and certainly contributes to poor performance at their jobs and deprives society of their full participation in development. Previous research suggests that early sexual victimization for example, leaves women less skilled in protecting themselves, with less assurance about their worth and their personal boundaries, and more apt to accept victimization as part of being female. This increases the chances of the perpetuation of battery, rape, domestic violence… (GVRC 2013).

However, I can hardly invoke the 'syndrome of husband abuse' as developed by authors like Walker (1979) to explain the violent tone expressed by some women during interviews and FGDs when talking about difficulties they face with their parent in-laws to protect their children. The explanation of why some women colleagues who think their children's lives are in danger because of a parent in law's attitude, have dared to recourse to verbal violence and intimidation as the most relevant option to ensure the safety of their children, points more toward previous self-experience before marriage. However, girl's access to schooling and the rise of the feminist movement have contributed to some changes in this big picture. Surely, CPW women as a group, who find themselves among educated elites in the context of Mali (I will come back to education impact), are not at increased risk of being victims of intimate

partner violence. One woman spoke of the effects of schooling on the attitude of her husband:

"Since I have had the chance to go to school and I'm thus on the side of modernism as we say, my husband cannot afford to treat me as he may have done if I were not educated. I definitely think that being educated matters in conjugal relationship" CPW N1.

This is to suggest that education exempts one from GBV.

5.1.1 Women Are More Willing to Get Involved in the Legal Justice System

Recourse to justice or at least its threat, proved worthwhile for some women in the sample. As her mother in law was planning to cut her daughter, a female CPW protested and threatened to take the case to justice (see CPW N29's declaration in section 5.2)

The implicit suggestion in that threat is that women were able to seek legal interventions with justice institutions. Yes indeed. Although Malian women in general are less aware of their rights than men (only 35% say they know their rights according to the ECAPDEF 2008)[38], one would expect CPW, irrespective of their sex to have different attitudes to many ordinary people in Mali and to guarantee better justice and protection to children. Such expectation is mostly confirmed by CPW women. Indeed, their narratives reveal that most of them would like to see more effective judicial institutions, free of financial and 'cultural corruption', a justice that could deal appropriately with violence and abuses of all forms on children and women. Therefore, it is not surprising that they have largely taken the lead of movements that are actually pushing to improve the legislative environment more than men by accepting to take the risk of being targeted by fundamentalist Muslims as we witnessed during the movements of the 22 August 2009. Many women leading feminists associations were forced into hiding for some time or they travelled to get away from the fury of fundamentalist agitators. One of them said:

"I can tell you that we take a lot of risk to defend the rights of children and women in this country. But we have no choice." CPW N1

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[38] ECAPDEF: Survey on Knowledge, Attitude and Practices on Children and Women's Rights reported in UNICEF 2010

As part of women's struggle to have legal reforms that relieve them from some of the legal and economic dependencies imposed by currently implemented laws, women associations supported by UNICEF negotiated the creation of the networking of parliamentary group for child and women protection. It is under this network that they submitted a draft of the proposed new code on persons and the family, voted by parliament before it was contested by the fundamentalists.

The gendered nature of some strategies used by workers has emerged as an interesting pattern to be scrutinized, as a better understanding may certainly contribute in the designing of relevant interventions for building CPWs' capacity to face cultural mismatches. Listening to the most activist women, I felt on their behalf a projected psychological relief and a sense of future empowerment that new legislation against children and women's rights abuse by families could bring to them.

However, one question would be the capacity and the willingness of another professional corporation of CPWs who are mainly justice practitioners themselves to implement laws. I will come back to this issue at the end of this chapter. What I heard from policemen does not militate in favour of optimism even if some women are able to seek for legal protection. Rather than to apply already existing laws or to put forward the *best interest of children* in their judicial processes, some policemen (mostly in rural settings) argue that the practice and sensitivity of their immediate social/community environment takes precedence over the rule of law. A policeman explains how his institution usually responds to complaints related to early marriage for example:

"I cannot hide the truth from you. We often prioritize local culture on national legal provisions with respect to the resolution of such disputes when brought to our level." CPW N51

As such, some CPWs do not prioritize child rights. The straight forward question discussed in echo to this paradoxical situation was why do these people become CPWs? Participants' answers were clear. Without hesitation, several workers argued that it is the pursuit of money through any work that led them to the role of CPW. In other words, they have not embraced this profession by vocation:

"If I'm in this position today, it is not because I love children more than other Malians. This is because I was looking for work. I mean a job that would allow me to meet my

needs and those of my family. I think if any of us says otherwise, he/she is *simply lying.* CPW 51

A child friendly justice system would have been an important opportunity for most of the female CPWs in their fight to protect children. Unfortunately, the pressure to be faced in trying to use the legal justice system is so enormous that the most feasible option for most women is to substitute a real recourse to justice to a simple threat. As funny as it may appear, this strategy gives some satisfaction as it affects both the threatened person as well as the author of the threat: the woman herself, especially when living in a large city like Bamako feels psychologically reassured to know that the fear of harassment related to justice procedures can discourage people and push them to avoid problems with others. In the African context in general and Mali in particular, people continue to perceive the modern justice system as a foreign tool of conflict resolution and recourse to it against a person is almost assimilated to an act of 'declaration of war'. Legal clinics set up by women's organizations to help people in general to defend their rights could play an important role here if their actions were not directed only towards the 'target beneficiaries of the programs'. Again, the mechanical distinction between CPWs and communities limits effectiveness.

Although proportionately compared to men, women in the sample are more in a mental disposition to recourse to modern justice, I do not mean to suggest however that all of the female CPWs women are completely cognizant or willing to choose this route. Seeking help or support from friends and relatives is the most common initial strategy employed by the women, rather than formal sources of help.

6.1.2 Relying on Friends and Relatives

When recourse is made towards relatives, it can bring at least psychological support and contribute to problem solving. However, there are unfortunately several cases where it turns to become an opportunity of advocacy for the supposed helper to try to convince the CPW on the necessity to comply with traditional rules and practices. That was precisely the case of the woman below who was very surprised by the reflection of her cousin as we can see in the rest of her story:

"After I narrated the entire situation to him and complained about my aunt's behaviour, he said: 'But the aunt is right'. Surprised I said: What? With you, all the time, we debate about FGM/C and I thought you understood very well." CPW N1

An estimated 65% of workers reported such attempts on the part of their relatives. In that case, depending on the strategic influence of the person whose support is sought, the CPW is obliged to take as much time as needed to convince him/her so that he/she can play the role of a facilitator with the father, mother, uncle, aunt or any other person in the family considered as leader towards maintaining the unwanted cultural practice. It is also reported that relatives are more judgmental and they tend sometimes to condition their support to prior agreement of another parent/relative. This suggests that they are concerned with the idea of being later accused of complicity by the family. In line with the aforementioned, reports from CPWs fully confirms Bicchieri's (2006) perspective that a change in social norms should be approached as a collective challenge rather than an individual decision. Most workers interviewed for this study seemed to be cumulatively affected by the negative influence of the large family's decisions on their children but also by inadequate responses provided by people who are supposed to help them. It is not that these 'helpers' lack love or are nasty. Simply, they too are under the influence of customary norms which have a greater influence on them than their desire to satisfy the individual whims of their CPW relatives. Moreover, they believe that the real help is to bring their loved ones on the right path: the path shaped over generations by the elders. This is perfectly understood by a participant when she said:

"I think that if I kill someone and I ask my sister to help me prove that I'm not guilty, this would be much easier for her to accept than helping me to ensure that my daughter is not genitally mutilated." CPW N52

Unconditional supports are mostly received from friends as highlighted with satisfaction by a participant:

"*With regards to the story about my daughter's marriage, I came to realize that a sincere friend is much more important than a sister you cannot anticipate the mind*" CPW N52

In many cases, the woman also recourses to her own older children to face the large family`s disputed decision. Various experiences reported in this sense are basically marked by great confidence and complicity between the female CPW and her children. This strategy is used to supplement or substitute the role of the husband depending on if he agrees with his wife, or rather he does not share his wife's opinion and is therefore an accomplice of the family. Some complaints were indeed shared

on a divergence of views among couples on issues and distance to be maintained vis-a-vis the family. Women research participants are more prepared to live far from the large families than men who are accused of the incapacity to say 'no' to their parents. A better readiness on the part of these women for autonomous life in the nuclear family far away is not surprising since by marriage, they leave their biological ones to join the husband's house which always remains the same large family courtyard.

5.1.3 Resorting to Religious Services

Their faith leads many women in the sample to prefer the imam or another religious dignitary to arbitrate the situation, prior to thinking of governmental justice (Wang et al 2009). Unfortunately for some of these women, their spirituality may hinder their abilities to properly discern what to do as false interpretation of religious doctrines and scriptures encourages them to continue harmful traditional practices. In addition, religious leaders are ill equipped to deal with the issue of abuse of children's rights due to a lack of understanding of the realities of the problems and limited training on the services and support needed (Shannon-Lewy and Dull, 2005).

When women resort to religious personalities to better orientate their positioning, some fundamentalists who feel they are invested with a divine mission were found especially among male CPWs. They consciously transformed insider position into what I call mole strategy to thwart the goals and mission of their employing institution. An example was given during a FGD of one programme administrator, responsible for the fight against female genital cutting in his NGO. As he was in reality in favour of the perpetuation of this harmful traditional practice, he used his position to destroy the videotapes produced with a lot of funds by the organization on the severe consequences of this practice to educate the populations. In addition he was also very happy to marry his minor daughter of 14 and he invited his supervisees to align with this mole strategy.

5.1.4 The Use of Confrontation as a Strategy by Women

In communities, the family heads and village chiefs (known in Bambara as *dougoutigui ya, jamanati gui ya*) are men. They have the customary power as well as religious power that are exerted on people. Political and administrative powers related to the modern state also reflect this traditionally established order. Thus, the portal for any complaints is governed by male omnipotence. The exclusion of women from the exercise of customary and religious powers at all levels means that all requests made by women in the context of family and community on various children related rights is analyzed mostly through the 'father' lens, creating an imbalance whereby the 'mother's' sensitivity is smothered in the arbitration process. The involvement of these leaders is crucial to obtain the support of actors in changing or maintaining social norms. Unfortunately, due to the above mentioned reasons, women cannot really rely on local/traditional powers as allies to defend their views.

"There is no point in going to these leaders because I know their position in advance. Associating them would even strengthen those who seek to impose harmful cultural practices on me." CPW N52

By the *threat strategy*, CPWs impose the professional standard by the use or threat of referring to modern public force (the police). Among the violations of children's rights, the practice of FGM/C was repeatedly mentioned as the leading cause for CPWs to use the threat strategy. Indeed, in reaction to the aggressive insistence of parents who asked CPWs to cut their daughters, three participants reported having used the threat of imprisonment and prosecution against their own parents if they cut their daughters against their will. Though this strategy may appear particularly daring in the Malian context, it gives interesting results and the opinion of participants who experienced it is very positive, with proof of its effectiveness.

5.1.5 Additional Consideration with Regard to Gender

Finally, the gender sensitive approach does not mean that patterns of behaviour highlighted are exclusive to women or men. Likewise, the feeling of revenge on FGM/C for example was felt by some men (coupled with the sentiment of culpability). One of the advantages of differentiation using the gender lens approach is that such

exercise can help improve the process of capacity building of staff and even guide the strategy and the balance of recruitment into the CPW function.

Besides the sentiment of revolt against the situation, some workers, like the woman below are also under a kind of *victim to victim solidarity* that is not totally easy to manage.

"My son who just returned from the USA, told me this: 'Mom, I will not marry a genitally mutilated girl.' Spontaneously and though I am well known for my fight against this practice, I answered: 'how can you dare to say you will not marry a cut girl, knowing that your own mother is excised?'" IDR N 47

This reaction can be explained by the fact that the excised CPW is psychologically driven by a sympathy for the girls who are cut like her to the point to interpret the preference of her son to uncut girls as an attempt to collaterally reject her mother too.

When hearing difficulties in collaboration with the large family, many people ask the question "are CPWs obliged to live with their enlarged families or maintain the relationship at the expense of their vision of life?" This is a difficult and very complex question. If lack of economic self-sufficiency cannot likely be invoked since the CPW does not depend on the large family for financial support, there are several other barriers in interrupting or reducing the link with the large family. Such decisions generally require an important level of emotional courage from both the husband and the wife; which people (mainly men) are reluctant to accept. Also, the very wide scope of practices denounced makes it very difficult to understand the worker's position at that particular time and place where people are ready to criticize him/her and to put significant pressure to have him/her to rebuild the link with the large family. The case with single or divorced women is worst. The declaration of a participant below suffices for a good apprehension of the challenges that living alone entails for a woman in the Malian context:

"Can you believe that even in the city of Bamako where people are supposed to be progressive and more modern, it is very difficult for a Malian woman who wants to live without a husband to find a home to rent? Several owners of houses refuse to rent their houses to single women." CPW N22

A key to successfully leaving abusive relationship is the victim's belief that he/she will be better off without the present oppressive context and have the confidence to make

a new life free from abuse (Erez et al 2009). Conversely, the possibility that a future new place will not solve the problem discourages several CPWs to interrupt close relationships with the large family. What all this points to again is the necessity to envisage change in social practices as a community and collective fight rather than individual battle. Inherent in the question of "why don't they just leave (physically or emotionally) the large family?" is the question of "why do they stay?" I think like Erez et al (2009) - whose work is focused on the barriers to leaving an abusive relationship - that such a question places the responsibility of harmful traditional practices on CPWs who are implicitly accused of staying with 'criminal communities', rather than focusing on how the whole community can move from their present position to abandon bad practices. A CPW ironically commented in this regard:

"Unless you are an alien, I do not know where and how to live in this country and not to cooperate with the 85% of Malians who practice FGM/C. If we should be considered for that as punishable accomplices, then unusually large prisons need to be constructed that would accommodate all of us." CPW N20

Among the most educated women, there is a progressive tendency to the 'nuclearisation' of the family and distancing from the large family. This is also due to the influence of the husband, who is always more educated than his spouse. It is rare for an educated woman to get married with a man less educated or younger than her. The contrary is common and several male CPWs are even married to illiterate women. Bearing in mind that the large scale practice of living together in a very large 'African family' is still widely spread in Mali, including at Bamako, CPWs who chose to depart report a feeling of 'social premature death' as they are somehow obliged to break up with their large family.

Once again, female CPWs appear relatively more consistent and stronger as they are committed against the harmful practices than men. During my field work, I came across more cases of men publicly involved in the fight against FGM/C for example while being unfortunately at the same time complicit of the same practice. They showed more remorse than women, given the fact that they are in a more contradictory position than their female colleagues who do not hesitate to be categorical, including by proclaiming threats. Women also know how to be gracious and persistent to convince their spouses to positions in favor of the protection of children:

"My husband did not agree about my fight against FGM/C, and especially the fact that I disclose publicly my activism. He used to be sulky with me and even refuses sometimes to eat my food. But following my persistence, he finally understood and now he eats my dishes with great appetite." CPW N50

The militancy of women, their ability to be more vocal when they are convinced and committed is not limited only to their families. In addition, they are founders and at the forefront of the civil society associations in challenging and establishing social order. Definitely, the proposed new code on the family aimed at rendering women more equal to men was one outcome of their battle. In most cases, women often show more revolutionary ambition and determination to change than their male colleagues. Likewise, 100% of categorical positions in negotiations with the family has been displayed by female CPWs. Some of them have even found in the fight against FGM/C or early marriage, an individual reason and motivation.

"Frankly, my commitment to fighting against FGM/C is not only because of the demand of my profession. For me, it is also a revenge on my own story; a kind of therapy for me against the retrograde custom that has marked me forever." CPW N1

5.2:   The Influence of Age

Respect for elders is an important feature of Malian's culture. The age is consequently an important factor in the positioning of the individuals in social negotiation. On Monday, August 12, 2013, the unsuccessful candidate for presidential elections, Soumaila Cissé, reminded the whole world of this when he, accompanied by his entire family, quickly ran to congratulate his opponent Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, the newly elected President of the Republic at his residence. Addressing him as 'senior brother', he said: 'Calling you on the phone to present my congratulations would not have been consistent with the Malian culture, I had to come myself here with my family to see my senior brother[39]'. In general, elders are respected during interactions to the point that they regularly abuse of such situation to impose their point of views. A participant said:

"It is common to hear an older person, who runs short of arguments in a discussion ask:

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[39] RFI news of Monday, August 12, 2013

'Since when were you born to teach me what is good and what is bad?' Such arguments from the mouth of a senior in front of social workers, puts an end to the negotiation.'' CPW N28

Therefore, if the social worker is in the position of a senior vis-à-vis his/her interlocutors, his/her arguments will gain grounds considerably. The evidence that the social worker puts on the table to demonstrate harmful practices that violate the rights of children and more importantly how he/she talks about these will determine if he/she will be successful in the negotiation. The experience of older workers also enables them to identify some positive cultural practices which they pedagogically refer to. The fact that they present both the positive and then the harmful cultural practices enables them to have a better acceptance of what they usually stigmatized.

The contribution of older people is valued at community and at family levels. Their authority is derived from the fact that they are perceived as agents of knowledge and experience to be transmitted through generations. They are also seen as custodians of secret knowledge that allows them to bless individuals or to 'destroy' their chances for peaceful life. People rarely dare to oppose injunctions from elders, particularly in public. This is why the more the child protection worker is aged, the more he/she is "taken seriously" and listened to. A participant declared:

"The more the protection message to be shared is sensitive, the more it is necessary that the CPW be of certain age or older than members of the group to be addressed, especially in the rural areas" CPW N28

A reference back to the age profile of participants (table 5.1 below) shows that the majority of CPWs are aged 35 to 50 years old (49%).

The average age of study participants is 44.5 years. The youngest being 28 while the oldest is 70 years old. There is no perfect correlation between a worker's age and seniority in the function of child protection. Older workers are not necessarily those with more experience in protection. However, 43% of workers who have professional experience of over 10 years are among people older than 40 years. This seems potentially beneficial for the implementation of the programme. Indeed, when a very young worker addresses adults in a village on a given topic, he/she has very little chance of being heard.

Table 5.1: Age profile of study participants and numbers of years spent in child protection

	Less than 35	35 to 50	More than 50		
Age profile of participants	20 (21%)	47 (49%)	29 (30%)		

	Less than 1	1 to 5	5 to 10	10 to 15	More than 15
Seniority in child protection	3 (3%)	27 (28%)	25 (26%)	20 (21%)	21 (22%)

A concrete example was reported in a FGD with the misadventure of an NGO that sent a young woman in a village to educate women on FGM/C. What was supposed to be an educational session ended in a fiasco because the women misinterpreted the sending of 'a young girl' as an offense to them; a lack of respect and 'infantilisation' of their persons. They immediately walked out of the room and asked the NGO never to set foot in the village again, because they think 'a girl' (according to their words to make it clear that she is too young) of such a tender age is not the right person to talk to them about such a subject.

When referring to age here, it is also important not to reduce this concept only to its first meaning. The age is not only a biological issue. In many cases, the biological age can be contradictory with the 'social age' that has multiple points of reference: the common ancestor, the seniority in the place of residence, autochthony and allochthony, social casts... The majority of these points of reference deal mostly with the individual relationship versus the wider community whereas in this context I am much more interested in the immediate family level of the worker's relation. Consequently, the only criteria of the social age in which I am focusing here is the 'common ancestor'. According to this criterion, the more the individual is close to the common ancestor, the more senior he/she is even though he/she may be biologically younger. A participant explained:

"My young uncle is 23 years old. I am 43. But I can never address him by his first name. I have to respect him because he is socially older than me. When there is a

ceremony or financial contributions to make in the family, he must pay a higher amount than me." IDR N35

Before me, studies had revealed that during the lifetime of some fathers, children had no voices or rather they only had consultative and not decisional voices (MDSSPA/UNICEF 2011). They could in no way participate in deliberations. The contradiction between biological age and social age is not only a source of inequality but also a cause of conflict in having access to resources and power as outlined in the study referred to above. It was however interesting to hear from my study participants that some CPWs have been able to convert this custom into an opportunity for them to advocate for children's rights at a higher level where family decisions are made where they would otherwise never have had access to. This was the case with a young woman, who in her capacity as aunt should necessarily be consulted by her large family at Segou before any female genital mutilation ceremony. She has used this position to systematically oppose genital cutting of girls with her family. She declared:

"The strategy I developed is blackmail. The curse of an aunt is stronger than the curse of the father and the mother. When the aunt says 'If you touch her, she will not win the battle of life' [meaning she will die], it's over. Nobody will touch her. I actually use this to protect girls against Female Genital Mutilation, and for about six years now there has been no excision done in my family." CPW N1

This "blackmail strategy" can inspire a more advanced approach for the systematic search of openings for cultural opportunities that can be positively used to protect children. The above experience of the aunt seems paradoxical with the general perception projected on women. Indeed, communities establish a strong correlation between gender and age. Participants' declarations were consistent to demonstrate that it is more difficult for a woman to be heard in society, because she is considered as the youngest of the man in addition to being considered relatively as a foreign person in her own family since by marriage she will leave for another family.

"The place of the girl/woman in her family of birth is only temporary and this plays heavily on the perception of our parents to give less weight to her opinion as compared to the boy" CPW N40

With the understanding that the girl/woman is destined to join the family of her husband, people think that her place in her parental family is only temporary. Echoing this idea, the MDSSPA/UNICEF (2011) study reported that in villages, people give

more credit to a young boy than to an old woman. For these communities, the older the woman gets, the less she is realistic and rational. On the contrary, there is a strong belief that a man's wisdom is confirmed and definitely improved with his advancement in age. As a popular saying puts it, in Africa, every time an old man dies, it is a library that burns. The man is always consulted and his views are taken into account. In the case where decisions are imposed on him (to marry a girl/woman he does not like for example), there is a fear that he will merely abandon the family to go on an adventure. For women the case is quite different. Many families don't really think it is necessary or useful to associate her in matters of decision making that concerns her. This retrograde view continues although a misunderstanding between girls and their families might sometimes lead to disasters especially in large families where people do not accept 'to lose face' and to 'suffer dishonour' from their rebelled daughters. These assumptions negatively influence the work of the female CPW who necessarily starts her work with a considerable social disadvantage. It is difficult for her to convince both communities and the members of her own family of child protection messages.

5.3:   The Influence of Education

Child protection workers come from very diverse educational backgrounds. In the introduction to the review of the possible influence of educational status on the management of cultural mismatches by individual CPW, a vivid debate among participants helped to summarize their appreciation about the educational diversity profile of CPWs: is it a strength or weakness for programme implementation? Three types of opinions emerged from the perception of the participants relating to their academic background diversity.

Twenty eight per cent (28%) of the research participants believed that the diversity in their profiles is a weakness for work and they strongly denounced this situation, referring sometimes to situations they have personally experienced:

"When I was Director of the National Child Protection Department in the public governmental Administration, I was imposed the recruitment of a chemist as Regional Director for the promotion of the child. I had spent much time trying to familiarize him with children's rights. This was a really negative factor for the performance of my

department as I wanted to have someone who would produce immediate results. Finally this man and some other new recruits spent one to two years without getting adapted and then they went away" CPW N34.

Could we therefore conclude that the diversity profile of workers is a drawback, or an inconvenience? The straight forward answer of the second group (49% of participants) is no. They consider diversity profile as a strength and an opportunity for child protection work. Since the child goes through several phases in life before becoming an adult, each of these phases demands a specific area of expertise that must be managed.

My personal experience and observation (like the 23% other participants) rather calls for a third alternative that actually reconciles the above two positions. While diversity in profiles is necessary for the implementation of the programme, it is important to clarify the conditions that can make this diversity a successful strategy. It is unimaginable that the programme as a whole can be run only by people coming from social workers' school. However, only with the existence of certain conditions can diversity in profiles be a strength and an opportunity for child protection work. As compared to other sectors for example, the multi-sectoral and diverse character of issues to be addressed requires having multiple players for different subcomponents. A lawyer is more suitable for juvenile justice while a sociologist is more appropriate for family reunification, or a psychologist for care giving to children victims of abuse... It is therefore important to know exactly what results are sought and define them according to individual skills. Some positions require more of technical competence when others require more of general knowledge or the ability to negotiate with partners.

Unfortunately this prerequisite work for rigorous competency and profile definition is rarely done before recruiting staff in public administration. In the literature review, I summarily raised the point that child protection is not an evident notion for people in and outside of the profession. One consequence of the confusion maintained around this profession is reflected in the extremely varied and consistently poor profiling of human resources responsible to manage the programme. The dynamics of recruitment seems to align more to subjective considerations which are external to the programme's objectives. In addition to the politician's battle to place their relatives

in state administrations, the authorities charged with appointments to posts of responsibility are limited by the poor mastery of this sector.

An analysis of the profiling of MCWF's staff confirms this situation. Often, defenders of the child protection situation in Mali strive more to highlight the shortcomings of budget allocation to the Department in charge of children. Indeed, the percentage of the national budget allocated to MCWF in 2006 was only 0.3%. "Despite several statements on the importance given to children, the state does not take all required institutional, legal and financial measures to protect children and warranty their rights" (Cormont Toure 2010 p.15). This, they argued, indicates a lack of commitment from the state.

Financial resources indeed are important and closely linked to the ability of men and women responsible for implementing the programme to achieve their objectives. However, it is striking that available literature is silent on the shortcomings in human resources. Priority should be given to the strategic management of personnel. The lack of a clear human resource managerial strategy is echoed by several participants in various forms:

"Personally, when I was appointed in this section, I was very excited because I did not know what I had to do and what was expected of me. Only my participation to multiple workshops, my personal contacts and efforts helped me to like the job." CPW N51

"When you get involved in a working area for the first time, although I believe that that diversity is not an obstacle, there are still problems there; because each domain has its specific language; a special language you need to know and which you must adapt to." CPW N63

On another stance and with regards to the battle for the achievement of MDG 2, the representation of a new educated femininity is increasingly conveyed by the press (radio and television) as a model to follow. This contributes to having a new perception of the social role of women among some CPWs in spite of general resistance to change. These CPWs are more open to the proposition to adopt a new law to increase the age at marriage in relation to their willingness to send girls to school as long as possible. The proportion of workers who are in such favourable mental disposition with regards to the specific legislation on FGM/C is much smaller. The educational level of the CPW plays more role with regard to sending children to

school than with FGM/C. The more social workers are educated, the better they understand harmful consequences of early marriage of girls and the less they marry their daughters prematurely. A participant medical doctor commented:

Nothing can replace education and I do not see how a doctor like me can marry his 10 years old daughter or get her excised. If some colleagues behave that way despite their medical education and knowledge it is just that they are crazy. CPW N32

Though the child protection work also involves support staff such as drivers, guards and babysitters, this study did not involve these people as participants. As already highlighted, the 96 research participants were divided into two groups of instruction levels: secondary (15%) and university (85%). The secondary level was comprised of all employees between the baccalaureate (advanced level) and the General Certification of Secondary Education (GCSE). Apart from the French aligned education, an average of 70% out of the 96 participants had also attended the Koranic school. Thus, CPWs in Mali are mainly recruited from the elites who have had access to secondary and university education. The level of education in general greatly influences how we perceive and approach child protection issues, how the staff adjust his/her own cultural references. Despite a prevailing strong culture of oral tradition in the country, having a good level of education is an asset for the social worker to influence negotiations. He/she is more equipped to share conviction with strong arguments. The educational level of mothers in particular has an influence on the practice of FGM/C. According to the DHS-IV, the decision not to circumcise their daughters significantly increases with the educational level of the mother: 9% among women with no education, 12% of those with a primary level, 21% with a secondary or higher level[40]. When these mothers are social workers, as is precisely the case here, they are more willing to better influence decisions on FGM/C and other child protection related issues. A woman declared:

"I know in any case that among organizational values, there are some that I espoused immediately. Because I am convinced, I know it's good for me and good for my people. So for me, these are not negotiable. It is imperative that people apply these values in my house. And there are some on which I negotiate to convince them." CPW N22

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[40] DHS-IV survey

Education improves the capacity of the CPW to organize a hierarchical sorting strategy. This strategy is usually characterized by the rigidity of CPW on some values that are viewed as non-negotiable after definition and prioritization of subjects by order of sensitivity and the level of foreseen difficulties to address them. Less sensitive questions are addressed immediately when the remaining issues are delayed to the medium or long-term. For example, a number of participants reported that it is easier for them to argue and oppose child marriage than to talk about FGM/C.

The more educated the CPW is, the more critical he/she is of many harmful traditional practices. He/she is more willing to support the education of his/her children and to ensure that girls are not involved into early marriage. Careful analysis of the statements made by participants according to their level of education shows that the highest intellectuals reported a better concern to avoid easy amalgamation between the fight against harmful traditional practices and the 'demonization' of the local culture. Communities adhere consequently more to their opinion. In fact, the highly educated workers generally cumulate several other factors in favor of the abandonment of harmful cultural practices: especially if he/she lives in urban centers with smaller dependent children compared to other families. When he is a man, in most cases he is monogamous. Women CPW intellectuals always get married to intellectual husbands who usually have a higher level of education than they. A hundred per cent of the women surveyed are married to educated men while conversely, many CPW men have uneducated wives. Therefore, the two intellectual spouses agree more easily to protect their children from pressure and various attempts from their extended family.

"Everybody knows that for some illiterate persons, the simple title of 'Kun dje' (the intellectual) implies almost deification of the person with that title by illiterate people. It is natural that when such a person speaks he/she has influence around him/her." CPW N28

The intellectual also proudly called in Bambara 'Kun dje' - literally 'White Head' who has access to science as opposed to 'Kun fin': meaning 'black head' or illiterate - is regarded with envy. Young pupils and students admire him/her and they are often willing to espouse his/her ideas, to relay his/her opinion. This position is potentially favorable to the forming of the intellectuals' view, which is unfortunately not often exploited enough by them to push their community development agenda. As a result

of a new civilization, intellectuals no longer have enough time to devote to their communities and to the young people who lack relevant and objective debates around the real problems of their societies. A man complained:

"In the past, our seniors who were intellectuals who had had a chance to go further in studies, or who simply traveled enough to discover the world, were used to bringing young people together to discuss with them. Nowadays, intellectuals have completely abandoned the ground to false politicians, merchants of illusion" CPW N1.

From their own confession, the CPWs recognized the fact that they don't involve young people enough in the debates for social change that they organize. They focus their advocacy more on the family leaders within the communities.

Indeed, the influence of educated CPWs varies depending on the audience. In rural areas, people need more time and patience to understand. However, an educated person still has influence though he/she can often be confronted with strong resistance, coming especially from religious groups who have a very different culture and perspective which is not often easy to change. The social worker is more listened to when his/her communication strategy is rooted into the cultural experiences of local communities, including some knowledge of the Islamic religion. The key explanation for part of the population to accept the CPW's perspective or not is linked with the idea that real and sustained changes are those generated from within. Well educated CPWs such as this expatriate sociologist participant clearly understood this when she declared below:

"My training tells me that, if a given culture will change, it is from the inside that it changes. It decides to change and how it will change. Some projects are not well elaborated and they do not help people themselves to desire that change." CPW N4

Precisely, the reflection on the cultural sensitivity of child protection programmes as compared to other programmes, justified why UNICEF went through long internal debates at several country office levels on whether or not to recruit expatriate staff as head of this section. The *internationalization* of the position of 'Chief Child Protection' took place many years after similar positions ('Chief Education', 'Chief Survival', 'Wash Specialist'…) had been internationalized. Of course, the main argument of advocates for its internationalisation was that to be able to understand that a cultural practice is harmful, the staff needs to be an outsider. The local staff

cannot lead the proponents of this theory as they are unable to operate the 'value judgment' that the situation requires. In fact declarations made by some participants seemed to corroborate this opinion:

"As a deeply religious person and believer, I had never thought that FGM/C was a bad practice before joining […]." CPW N23, male Malian Governmental staff, aged 38.

This brings us back to the question of human resources management strategy and the necessary balance to ensure that programme participants are not too 'native' or too 'detached' to orchestrate a smooth animation of their programme with required tact and intelligence. Having worked as national child protection officer before becoming International, my personal experience allowed me to affirm that the truth lies midway between the two positions. When the risk of going native is real for the national staff, the temptation of 'cultural colonization' should carefully be monitored on international staff side. Therefore, a good protection team is the one that combines both national and international expertise. The experience of UNICEF in this regard is full of lessons that can inspire other institutions.

To close this section on the influence of education, it should be noted that Education is not necessarily a guarantee of a good relationship with the large family of the husband for a woman. Sometimes, it even contributes to worsen it. In-law-family members generally show little sympathy for wives who are educated as they perceive them as a hindering factor for their closeness with their child. The capacity of the CPWs in their search for support to build positive and strategic understanding is therefore jeopardized. As a consequence of this, to succeed in protecting children vis-a-vis harmful traditional practices, the female CPW largely depends on the willingness and strong complicity of her husband to manage his own parents. Harmony in the couple makes it difficult for the large family and outsiders to exert abusive authority. A participant underlined:

"Nothing can replace mutual agreement and complicity among the parental couple with regards to the protection of the child, including against himself/herself." CPW N28

As a whole, the impact of education is not negligible even if (based on what I have seen in the sub-region and confirmed by several participants themselves who have

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travelled to or studied in these neighbouring countries), the Malian intellectual is reputed to be much more rooted in traditions as compared to his/her colleagues of the neighbouring countries of the sub-region:

"Advantage or disadvantage, I do not know. But we note that the Malian intellectual is much more conservative of tradition than his/her colleagues in neighbouring countries" CPW N4, expatriate female staff of an International NGO

5.4: Marital Status, Children in Charge and the Place of Abode or Residence

Part of the problems that undermine the protection of children in Mali have as a backdrop, polygamy. When almost all workers are married (only 10% are singles), findings reveal that the majority live in a monogamous marriage settlement although polygamy is still widely practiced in the country. Being mostly monogamous contributes to CPWs' resistance to certain socio-cultural inertia. They appear de facto as role models for their children who in turn are more likely to embrace monogamous marriages and escape the suffering associated with polygamy. In addition to serving as a model, monogamous parents pay more attention and are more committed to the protection of their children as they are less dispersed. Monogamy, coupled with a modest number of dependent children put these parents in a better position than their peers from polygamous parents. In other words my findings validate the popular argument that the lesser the number of children parents have, the more they take care of these children. These parents are more predisposed to oppose the decisions of their families to genitally mutilate their girls or to marry them off at early ages for example:

"When I told them that my daughter will never be cut, they moaned but did not bother me too much. Maybe they finally understood like me that having only one child, I can never agree to put her life in danger." CPW N23.

People are generally organized into age groups and social status. Where decisions are made, singles are considered "immature persons" and are not allowed to participate. Marriage and parenthood are valued and have an impact on the problematic of child protection.

"As a social worker, if you're married and you have children you are more accepted. People are willing to listen to you. Inversely, if you're a single person, you are taken less seriously by your interlocutors." CPW N87

The more marriage and parenthood are combined with other factors like age and gender, the more important is the individual status. When the decision to respect the rights of the child ('I will not cut my daughter') is taken through consensus by the couple, the consequence is easier to assume. Marriage ensures the full status of males and adults in the Malian society. The expression *"Cè te kè cè fô a ka muso furu"* properly reflects such social belief. From *"cè"* (meaning 'single' in Mande), the individual accesses the status of *"cèba"* (meaning literally 'complete human') as soon as he/she gets married. The society can therefore entrust him/her with responsibilities. Inversely, when a single person talks to a public audience on topics related to early marriage for example, it is unlikely that he/she makes him/herself heard. He/she will always be told that he/she talks about what he/she does not know. He/she has nothing to teach those who are married and living the reality. One participant said:

"The married worker can talk to married people, but a single can only lie. In rural areas when you're single until late adulthood, you are considered 'a bum''. Whoever you are, rich or intellectual. If you're single, nobody listens to you." CPW N29

In fact, because it is based on marriage and procreation, the Malian society considers that a person who is unable to found a family is not worthy of obtaining a position of social responsibility in the community (being chief, village council member, responsible for young people, member of the group of wise men...). Being single is untrustworthy. Being a parent can provide the social worker with arguments based on examples from his/her own experience and make convincing more easy. Parental disposition is a factor of understanding when the person or persons to be convinced are also parents. However, to be able to influence, one must be an exemplary parent. Being an exemplary parent means that the CPW align his/her every day social practice to his/her professional speech. It also means having respect from one's own children. Failure of children to respect their parent is indeed perceived very negatively in the society. Children, regardless of their age and/or sex must be careful not to disobey their parents. While the society usually puts the responsibility of respecting parents at the charge of children who are generally cursed by everybody for their wrong behaviour in this area, the parents are also weakened when disobeyed. The good parent is one who has a great influence on the decisions and behaviour of his/her children as a parent, but also and especially because of the authority

conferred to him by the social pressure on the children. Also, one retired social worker I interviewed witnessed having easily convinced his children to preserve their own children from FGM/C and other harmful traditional practices.

"I told my children that I have not spent all these years of struggle as a social worker to convince others about the protection of their children, just not to be able to convince my own children to protect my grandsons. I would die of outrage if one of my granddaughters gets to be cut or married prematurely." Retired CPW after 32 year of service.

The social worker because of the parental authority he/she enjoys can influence his/her children with regards to the practices to be adopted in the family. This totally inverse trend, whereby the spokesperson of the large family is the one playing the positive role of child protector and advocate for the younger generation is a very interesting case which demonstrates that the topic we are discussing about should not be narrowed down into a simple conflict of generation. On the other hand, the reality that being married and being a parent are seen as an opportunity for the implementation of child protection work should not be interpreted as an invitation to disqualify singles to child protection programme implementation. As a participant puts it with humour,

"Although singles cannot claim to have given birth to children, they have often seen in their courtyard how the goat takes care of its small ones." CPW N66

The place of abode affects the life and behavior of social workers. In big towns, the social control over individuals is less likely. The difference in marital status for example, plays a lesser part. The cities offer more capacity of concealment. Also, urban workers develop more lies as part of their strategies than those living in villages and secondary cities. A confirmation is provided hereafter by a male participant:

"As I live in town and my parents live in the village, every time they ask me to bring my two daughters so that they cut them, I juggle. And I am obliged to lie to them by saying that I've already cut them." CPW N21 Malian, Governmental staff, 45 years old

The urban life also exposes the social worker to arguments that may allow him/her to better cope with the negotiations on the abandonment of practices that violate the rights of children. By contrast, it is more laborious for the worker who lives in rural areas to impose his/her ideas and to get people to accept change, since in this

environment, the harmful cultural practices are preserved with greater ferocity. In rural areas, the social worker must take greater account of the social dynamics, otherwise he/she will be perceived as a foreigner with external values that cannot apply. To be credible, he/she must pay attention to the lifestyle of the people. The urban environment is much more open and enriched with different experiences including those from the Western World; people are more predisposed to understand and accept the social worker who is recognized as an expert in his/her field. Workers in the city are more critical of some assumptions and 'truths' which were previously not questioned. The proximity of the headquarters of their institutions and the greater influence of media necessarily have a relatively deterrent effect on them.

The fact that Bamako is the first African[41] and the sixth global city in term of speed in demographic growth necessarily impacts on this change. Children and their parents be they CPWs or not appear to be more 'modern' and revolutionary on some particular issues (like early marriage) than rural families. This gradual change is likely to spread and become irreversible as it combines with school attendance that is gaining ground. Optimistic, a participant declared:

"In reality, our contribution is just to serve as accelerators for the change to occur quickly. Otherwise everybody knows that the time will come and no single parent will be capable to decide on behalf of his/her girl." CPW N4

5.5: Economic Status Plays a Role

From various situational analyses on children's rights including this study, poverty has emerged as key impediment to the implementation of children's rights in Mali. It largely determines parental attitudes towards classical rights to schooling, nutrition, health…, but also (though less tangibly), it contributes to parents' positioning regarding harmful traditional practices like FGM/C and early marriage. As parents, CPWs recognize the fact that their capacity to satisfy the basic needs of their own children contributes to improve the children's abilities to express their views on some issues and decision-making affecting their lives. Conversely, poverty in communities creates tension and limits parents' interaction with children. Reduced communication

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[41] TV5 broadcast, 9 of August 2013 at 16H 20 GMT

with children is a method to ensure that children do not demand something leading to expenses their parents cannot afford. A participant commented:

"Why should I ask the children 'what do you want to eat?' when I know that I cannot give them anything else than rice without fish?" CPW N66

Due to poverty, parents are restricted in their ability to make free decisions and to speak freely about these decisions. In this context, the educated member of the family who works in a state administration or in any other institution (the CPW falls into this category) rather than being a farmer is considered as a source of economic revenue. He/she broadly supports the expenses of the family and he/she is respected for that.

In most cases, biological CPW parents like their children, are also under the direct or indirect control of the head of the extended family. Even if some are not physically under the control of the household, it should not be forgotten that family 'control over children does not end with the attainment of adulthood. It is, in fact, a life-long' issue (Twum-Danso 2008 p.236). This was recalled by participants in their own words:

"If you are carrying one family name, it is because you remain a child of that family all your life" CPW N51

"Even if you are 100 years old, you are still a child for your family. Which is a blessing and not enslavement as the modernists tend to believe" CPW N63

Therefore, the CPWs only have a limited ability to make decisions affecting their children's life as well as their own. However, this reality is nowadays confronted by the principle of reciprocity in regulating social relationships, whereby economic inputs by individuals determine in a large extent their ability to influence decisions. A power return against economic investment in large households! A participant captures it well, when she said:

"Today, money has transformed the junior brother into senior brother. If you are poor, you will be told for example 'Hey brother', the next family meeting scheduled will not take place in your house' though you're the eldest of the family here in Bamako. Just because you do not have enough chairs and your courtyard is too narrow to accommodate everyone" CPW N85

Family demands for obedience and respect from individuals as the key element in maintaining cultural practices is more and more proportional to the level of individual poverty. Quite revealing examples of capacity conferred de facto by the good economic status to a social worker who is in the best situation to address social

negotiation have been widely cited by participants. If it may be exaggerated to affirm like a participant that *"money can buy everything"*, it should be recognized that the economic status of social workers exerts an important influence on how he/she is perceived and accepted or not in family negotiations on issues he/she disagrees with. Interestingly, a woman in an informal discussion observed with humour that:

"Even the spirits of ancestors who are said to never be too far away from our lives are money sensitive today. They seem to agree with this evolution since people who buy exceptions with money and refuse to accomplish some cultural practices are no more mysteriously punished as they were supposed to be." CPW N82

Likewise, if knowing one's place in the family continues to be central in the maintenance of social systems (Twum-Danso 2008), boundaries are now being overstepped when interacting with parents and other adults invested with the role to maintain the culture. The idea that a member of a large household cannot rebuke or contest the veracity of family words and inherited practices, even if these are harmful to individuals and children, is seriously challenged by the position conferred by money. As much as the family owns its members, individuals reciprocally own their families as a result of the power of their money as they fulfill large economical responsibilities towards their families. In reality, parties are hereby forced into a strategic analysis that integrates clear understanding that they both have a veto. They understand in essence that through negotiation they can cooperate for mutual gain. Generally, depending on the extent to which the leader of the family is educated or moderate, cooperation on both sides yields the best outcome. More and more, people are overcoming the hazards inherent to strategic analysis in cooperation as parties are confident that they are mutually going to respond positively, since the contradicting incentives to cooperate is being minimized by material needs to be fulfilled. This strategic analysis may sometimes not be straight forward. It may intertwine with a long process of haggling which might be necessary to narrow divergent positions through a series of concessions. To make this dynamics of processes more fluid, the CPW may sometimes identify a facilitator from within or from outside of the family; a respected and known person who will help to move from the starting point of discord to the end point of convergence.

"As I knew my family would reject me because of my refusal to get married with the young girl they predestined to me, I went to see a resource person; a close friend of my father to come and beg for his understanding" CPW N51

By corrupting a number of positive values such as commitment to the honour and dignity, the power of money has also collaterally impacted a number of harmful cultural practices. Thus, the obligation to accomplish these practices is becoming "buyable", directly or indirectly. Some ceremonies once considered mandatory are now partly or wholly "converted", 'delayed', 'modified' at the request upon 'arrangements'. Examples run from marriages to FGM/C. A female Malian participant working for the Government almost 20 years since declared:

"I negotiated with the excisor. I gave her money for her to just graze the clitoris of the girl superficially rather than cutting it deeply." CPW N49

Similarly, in some cases, the long processes by which some ceremonies were done are shortened following financial negotiations. Practices that require the physical presence of the person can now be performed on his/her behalf *"if he/she knows how to arrange things"*. Especially in urban areas, economic status is becoming increasingly important. People are more listened to if their economic status is high as noted by a participant:

"A rich man/woman's pronouncement is more likely to be listened to and followed because of his/her property. As the popular saying puts it: the rich can do what he/she says while the poor only always limits to what he/she says" CPW N30

Wealth is not only material, it is also social. The CPW who comes from a big family is best listened to than the one who comes from a small or a less known family. A participant rightly states it:

"For the communities, the interest to participate in a meeting is related to the topic of the meeting but also to the social status of the person who calls for that meeting." CPW N29

The influence of money must however be nuanced. The Malians are still strongly attached to their culture and the people almost unchangeable with money when it comes to maintaining cultural practices are still numerous and powerful. The number of less 'virtuous' people who do not have the courage or ability to resist the money choose to play. As such some workers face bad faith negotiation with family dignitaries who pretend to understand and to accept their position, but in reality have

no intention of reaching concrete compromise. This paradox is worthy of notice. Due to money, people invested to ensure that traditional principles are respected are now capable of violating another principle that makes same tradition dignifying: acting with good faith. Indeed even if doctrines have traced back the concept of "good faith" to the Romans with the known expression *"pacta sunt servanda"* (meaning nothing else is more suitable to the good of mankind than to observe things that parties have agreed upon (MH/CD Union Voice 2008 p.3)), it should be emphasized that good faith as a cornerstone concept in the traditional and modern legal systems, is not a privilege of only one specific civilization. Fair dealings are a highly valued feature of several traditions in general and Mali in particular. Therefore, it is right that CPWs complain about heads of families for not respecting reasonable expectations that go with negotiation as they promise one thing but do the opposite afterwards. A participant explains this inconsistency in attitudes:

"These misbehaviours are consequences of the recent political multipartist era, the poor understanding of the democracy and election campaigns that are transformed into distribution sessions of money against demagogic promises of votes. These are in my opinion root cause for the ease with which people lie and behave today. Disregarding a promise given is the rule for people today" CPW N29

In reality falsehood also happens (and even more often) in the other direction too. The worker promises his/her family the accomplishment of the cultural practice knowing that he/she has no real intention of doing so.

Besides, the wealth of the worker can sometimes contribute to maintaining and celebrating harmful cultural practices. This is the typical case of workers who are also politicians. As they are willing to keep their electors, they regularly fund cultural and social initiatives in the villages including those indexed in the context of the protection of children's rights. Away from politician's challenges, some workers are sometimes victims of similar complicity due to their economic status. The most revealing example I encountered in this regard during my field investigation was that of the founding Director of an NGO in charge of the fight against female genital mutilation who has been unwillingly obliged under pressure from his parents to contribute money in support of spectacular celebration of FGM/C in his village.

"My father and mother came together to see me here in Bamako. They told me that they know I am against FGM/C before adding: 'You know very well that even if you

do not give this money, the village will still host the ceremony and girls will be cut. You therefore need to give at least 25,000 FCFA if you cannot pay the totality of 50,000F they ask for.' My parents did not stop the pressure on me and I was obliged to give 25,000 FCFA [approximately £ 32] against my will to help organize this ceremony of collective cutting of girls." IDR N35

Money contributes to maintaining high position in the society. Again, it is difficult to be the member of a society without supporting social norms on which it relies. At the same time paradoxically, the biggest advantage of having a good economic status is the capacity money provides to CPWs to decide to rupture with the extended family and to be able to take responsibility for the risk that his/her nuclear family is ostracized. Otherwise, it may be dangerous to remain in the system and to believe that with the injection of money, everything can be 'arranged'. A man advised:

"*Though difficult, it is better and more consistent to take distance and keep away. Otherwise, the risk is that some culturally hot-blooded fundamentalists who are also jealous of your success create you serious problems. Life is so short and I don't think individuals should spend it to reconcile non reconcilable positions*" CPW N42

In this regard, expatriate CPWs are privileged not to suffer their large family's pressure since they are living far from them, in foreign country. This reflects in general the opinion of their Malian colleagues who perceive them as people free of cultural conflicts. However, according to some expatriate CPWs, the reality is more complex than what can be perceived as they too are associated from distance to several decisions in their home countries; which decisions are not always in line with their professional oath.

5.6: Reflections and Observations on the Management of Cultural Mismatches by CPWs

As already said, one of the major strategies of the social worker actually engaged in the fight for the abandonment of harmful practices on children unfortunately translates more and more into his/her isolation from the extended family or community group. This is not in the benefit of either party: neither the individual CPW who lives this situation more like a punishment than independence, nor the employing institution. My deep belief is that the family and the community in which the staff is

living should be the starting point of his/her fight against harmful social practices on children.

Irrespective of the strategy chosen, CPWs who succeed in preventing their children from harmful practices feel proud and legitimated in their professional status and this was clearly shown in their attitude during FGDs, interviews and daily life within offices and during sensitization within the communities. Inversely, when the worker does not succeed, he/she is more likely to internalize his/her feelings including through depression. He/she feels silenced, particularly in discussions with colleagues and he/she tends to blame him/herself. I was particularly moved by one example of self-condemnation when a man during a FGD in Segou said nothing until the end of the group discussion. It was only the next day during another discussion that he came and requested for permission to participate in the discussion. As I earlier guessed he had some concerns, I proposed to have him in a separate individual interview, but he insisted on participating in the FGD. He felt guilty and accused himself for having allowed his parents to organize the genital mutilation of her daughter who now suffers from a severe urinary incontinence. He concluded:

"It is because of my complicity and silence that this happened. I let them do it and I will never forgive myself for that." CPW N79

He had tried for a long time to downplay the consequences of this violent practice on the girl but could no longer continue to ignore it. He saw in the FGD session an opportunity to express the great remorse hidden within him eight years back since her daughter was cut. Of course since that day the programme is medically and psychologically taking care of the daughter and himself. This programme support which is very much appreciated by the community of workers, sent a pedagogical message on the importance of openness and discussions to address all problems encountered by victims during this study, both curatively and preventively. As CPWs will be receiving empathetic institutional and/or peer support in response to their help-seeking efforts, they will likely progress quickly in adjusting to professional standards of behaviour.

5.6.1 The Triangle Model of Child Protection Workers' Positioning

My reflection on the capacity and the willingness of professionals led me to problematize the situation of CPWs around what I call *Positioning triangle of workers.*

This model is comprised of five triangles of which two are confused with a line segments. In each triangle,

The mark ● represents the CPW

The mark ◉ represents the professional values and universal principles

The mark ○ represents the harmful traditional practices

Figure 5.1: Positioning Triangle of CPW

The Worker

Type **A**

Professional values
and universal
principles

Harmful traditional
practices

The Worker

Type **B**

Professional values
and universal
principles

Harmful
traditional
practices

The Worker

Type **C**

Professional values
and universal
principles

Harmful traditional
practices

- The Worker
- Professional
values and
universal
principles

Type **D**

Harmful traditional
practices

- The Worker
- Harmful
traditional
practices

Type **E**

Professional values
and universal
principles

<u>Left Side, Progressive Side</u>   <u>Right Side, Retrogressive Side</u>

Before I come to the explanation of each triangle, the attention of my reader should already capture that in general, workers who are situated in the left side of the figure 5.1 are far from harmful traditional practices, more close to their professional values and international principles guiding child protection. Conversely those who are situated in the right side of the figure are cherishing their local harmful traditional practices. That is how in a first stance reflection that does not yet take into account the complexities surrounding each case, I will roughly consider child protection workers of the left side of the figure as "*progressive" ones* when those placed at the right side of the median line appears as "*regressive" types of workers.*

The identification of the lowest level of *zero professionally shared values* may appear as presenting only theoretical thinking because it is difficult to imagine a staff who in every circumstance totally opposes what he/she is hired for. However, this type must also be considered for the sake of better understanding of my explanations.

By providing a means for understanding and evaluating their current positioning in the triangle, the model can help both human resource managers and CPWs to review how far or close they are to their professional requirements, and to reflect on the way for narrowing/eliminating the gap between both values. The triangle model is a self-awareness raising tool to design a strategy appropriate to particular and individual context.

For better understanding of the dynamics surrounding the five different types of workers, it should be remembered once more that the sociological approach to self-value and identity begins with the assumption that there is a reciprocal relationship between the self and society (Stryker in Stets and Burke 2001). This theory means self influences society through individual actions directed on our living places and groups and, reciprocally, society influences the self through established norms, values and cultures. At the same time that the nature of the self and what self does depends to a large extent on the society within which he/she lives, evolution and change of other selves and the society as a whole too are a consequence of individual actions. Therefore, the more self is capable and aware of his/her capacity to influence other selves, the better he/she can negotiate with actors in situations a *situational approach* favorable for the 'creation' of a society that is close to his/her

professional values. If workers are placed in equal social context and work conditions, those on the left side of the figure are the ones in better predisposition to negotiate among the two sets of values.

Type A CPW: The Balanced and Equilibrating Worker vis-à-vis the Two Types of Values

At the top of the figure is placed an isosceles triangle representing the type A worker. This worker has a long way to go to adjust to professional values which are not in harmony with his/her cultural beliefs. He/she is situated at the middle of the two levels of values to which he/she gives equal importance. He/she finds satisfaction in being balanced and avoiding any idea of prioritizing professional values at the expense of traditional values and vice versa. Once this comfort zone is reached, regardless of whether his/her behavior is consistent with the business purpose or not, he/she is comfortable. Psychologically, the most important thing is achieved since he/she has 'fairly' arbitrated between cultural values and professional requirements in an 'equitable' way. To survive professionally, he/she essentially uses *a double directional lie*. He/she deceives his/her colleagues in the workplace with the same dexterity as the members of his/her family and community. He/she can also occasionally use the strategy of confrontation and threat towards the realization of this equilibrium. The type A worker usually adjust his/her decision in accordance with the present place where he/she finds him/herself. This type worker can easily shift to type B or C depending on circumstances.

The type A comes at the third position of professional preference. The below participant falls into type A category:

"My strategy to get away of this trouble [conflicting values] is simple: at home, I use the cultural values of the home and at work I adjust my behaviour to their slogan. I do believe that the person who said that life is a theatre is right." CPW N86

Type B Worker

This worker is closer to professional values and it should not be complicated to accompany him/her to achieve the remaining distance and to totally adjust to organizational values like D type. When the type A is probably the most common type

among national staff in Mali, the B type represents the most common type I have seen in my professional experience across countries: mainly Benin, DRC and Cameroon. It was therefore not surprising for me to note that the majority of international staff working in Mali who participated in the research fall into B category although some of them struggle to be perceived in public as to belonging to D type.

When asked to comment on cultural discrepancies, the B type worker answers as follows:

I understand that we can end up in an institution that we didn't fully master the rules, the prohibitions and practices. The most important thing in my view is the effort that the staff agrees to make towards professional adjustment once he/she is recruited. CPW N89, a male UN National staff.

The type B worker comes at the second position of professional preference and he/she could be agreed upon as the average tolerable level below which employing institutions should not descend when recruiting a new staff. This supposes that measures are put in place to ensure that typology check of applicants is carried out in advance before the recruitment is finalized.

Type C Worker

In the opposite position to B type, the CPW C is more close to his/her harmful traditional practices and more distant to professional requirements. He/she lies more at the work place to survive than he/she does at home and life in the office is more difficult to support for him/her than for the B worker. Like the senior governmental worker below, C workers rarely accept argumentations on child protection without wondering the extent to which western interest is hidden behind.

We all agree to promote the rights of children. But we also understand that these values promoted as universal values belong primarily to those who rule the world. And they have many reasons to be more sensitive to these values than a poor African like me! CPW N82

Type C comes in fourth order just before the last position on the ladder of professional preference. He/she is reluctant to change and any proposition to build his/her capacity should not be anticipated as an easy task. However, despite the lackluster indicators about him/her, the type C worker is not irrevocably 'lost'

for a professional project. In the specific context of Mali, the worker of this type is not uncommon. In my analysis of the participants, I have the strong belief that there are as many C type workers as B ones in Mali.

Type D Worker

The type D worker is in perfect symbiosis with professional values and totally distant from harmful local cultural values. He/she is perfect for the employing institution but socially, he/she suffers in his/her private life within the community where he/she is seen as an outlaw because he/she continuously braves social norms established by the community. For this reason, he/she is often champion in the strategy of threat and confrontation vis-à-vis the proponents of harmful practices including people beyond his immediate family sphere. The main difference between the worker B type and the D type lies in the fact that the distance that separates the D worker from his/her professional values equals zero. This is the reason why rather than a triangle the figure is de facto a line segment. Zero distance from professional value means the perfect situation whereby no additional effort can be requested from this worker type in contrast to B worker who still has significant distance from professional practice to cover. The declaration below of an expatriate worker during an interview ranks him among type D workers.

I work for […] because I like the organizational mandate and I find it in perfect harmony with the values that I hold. When you talk about cultural differences, how long do you think we shall hide behind such expressions to condone unacceptable behaviours? How can a person agree to work for an institution when he/she consciously knows that he/she is not in line with the values promoted by that institution? This is immoral! IDR N38 expatriate manager.

The type D is at the first place of professional preference. However, when this worker type is identified as in first place for professional preference because s/he is in perfect symbiosis with organisational values he/she have the most distance to travel in reaching the people who need to be inculcated with the values he or she holds.

He/she lack tools and opportunities to convince families about children's rights as he/she has none of the strategies that come with being in an ambiguous or conflicting position.

Type E Worker

Exactly the opposite of D type, the type E is the worst type possible of CPW an Institution can hire. He/she puts much effort to conform with pleasure (in contrast to types A, B and C who conform mostly because of fear of social disapproval or rejection) to social normative beliefs that he/she has totally assimilated and adopted as his/her personal normative beliefs (moral norms). His/her associative positive types of emotions push him/her to seek for social recognition, esteem and total acceptance of community guidance. He/she is ready and prompt to sacrifice professional imperative to attainment of these social objectives. The acceptance of the type E worker within the organization is simply not acceptable.

Peoples developing attitudes like the one narrated by the CPW N42 in chapter 4, section 4.2.3, with a staff who was used to destroy the videotapes are typical of type E worker. The difference between E and C type worker is that zero distance separates him/her from harmful traditional values meaning that a lot is still to be done before this worker adheres to professional values while the type C has already covered some distance towards compliance. Here like the opposite case of type D, the zero distance from a given value (harmful traditional values) has resulted to transforming the triangle into a simple line segment figure. In normal situation, E type should not be hired by child protection Institution since he/she is the worst possible CPW that can exist. Even when hired, it is unbelievable that such person remains in an Institution. If for some reason he/she is found recruited, IDRs should not waste their time and organization resources on his/her capacity development since he/she has no willingness to improve. Rather, the organizational effort should focus on getting him/her out of the Institution. I didn't encountered the type E Worker in the course of this research.

In total, if the triangle model of positioning has an advantage of showing various situations of CPWs, it raises more questions than I can pretend to answer. This

question raising is precisely a useful starter for the reflection towards workable solutions. Some of these questions and probably the most important ones for this study are: What can explain the differences in workers' positioning? How can these differences be narrowed, including in advance by avoiding to recruit bad types of profiles like the E type in whom no capacity building is susceptible to impact positively? The answers to these questions can help guide policies and programmes and make them favorable to the creation of a protective environment, generating individual CPWs who are sensitive to children's rights and more close to their organizational values.

The triangle model should not be reduced to a simple photography of the present positioning of workers. It should provide a barometer for guiding remaining progress to be done by stakeholders to achieve the ideal situation where the worker no longer feels torn between contradicting orders of values. It surfaces the necessity of the development of individuals who, within the context of their communities and through active struggle can obtain the expertise and willingness necessary to mobilize their communities for favorable social change in child protection (Gramsci 1971). The triangle model is a layout and affirmation that all individuals have the intellectual and rational capacity to become effective child protection stakeholders irrespective of their official position, employees or not. Being a good child protection worker is not a myth. It is not only something that workers absolutely possess or not, but also something that is dynamic and negotiable within the context. The possibility to reduce one side of the triangle (that separates the worker from professional culture) while extending inversely the other side (that separates the worker from harmful practices) is proof that as Duncombe (2002 p.2) puts it, "The politics of culture is not pre-determined. Culture is pliable; it is how it is used that matters". If workers are equipped, they can shift their emphasis from 'This is the way we behave in Mali' to 'What is wrong in the way we behave and what are the implications for children?' As Gramsci's notion of the development of individuals (in Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010 p.25) also known as 'organic intellectual' reminds us, ''There is not a human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded: Homo faber (man the maker) cannot be separated from Homo sapiens (man the thinker).'' Thus, the

position of the staff in the triangle is a social construction that is in tight relationship with the context surrounding the worker.

Affirming that workers are capable of making progress to adjust to the requirements of their job is one dimension. Identifying the route and process for such change is another issue. A real challenge in a programming context made of contradicting expectations non openly recognized by parties that directly influence workers' psychology. When some stakeholders (political leaders, religious leaders, Communities and some 'Intellectuals') expect programmes to be "national culture maintaining", others (mainly partners and International Cooperation Organisations) expect it to be "culture transforming". In the concept of a world transformed into a global village where Western civilization with more powerful capabilities diffuse more easily and impose its culture, several national policymakers think that it is in their responsibility to engage in policy formation without being held captive by dominant ideas of the times. They are very reserved with regards to externally driven slogans and ideas that also stigmatize numerous traditional practices without ever seeing positive values in the local cultrure. A participant summarizes this opinion as following:

"For Western audience, African tradition is always regarded as harmful traditional practices and one should have this in mind while dealing with partners. Unfortunately, because they are ready to accept any slightest form of financing, our authorities are not ready to affirm clear lines and clear limits to the partners in the negotiations." CPW N28

Workers' agenda is always defined in term of Job Description and roles assigned by the employer. It is however imperative to create sincere programme environment that involves open sharing of ideas and negotiation of the means. It should be recognized that before being recruited, workers may have slightly different criteria for what is meant by child protection and the way to achieve it. Institutions may be unwilling to discuss the content of child protection. However, workers don't see how success can be achieved out of their full participation in the definition of at least the "How?" question. A participant commented:

"More than imposing their programme priorities, Institution also dictates "How" communities should protect their children without taking the time to observe what is going on within the communities and how these communities can rather inspire institutions. Our strategies are different. It is like hen and duck. To protect her chicks,

the mother hen takes the lead ahead of the march leaving her young ones behind. It is for this same protection purpose that mother duck prefers to walk rather behind, placing her young before. For these two 'mothers' to engage a fruitful conversation on the way to improve the protection of their young, they must first agree if the protection is a shared objective, there is however no rigid universal perspective to achieve such a goal, but rather flexible strategies depending on individual realities and contexts." CPW N28

The debate on the capacity and the willingness of professionals summarizes the core problem any institution will have to face before designing a response to the cultural mismatches, and this is valid for all categories of professionals including the managers. The worker's capacity cannot be strengthened outside his/her willingness to change. In this regard, it is important to think about possible solutions in accordance with the willingness levels. In addition to the triangle model proposed above, a simple analytic tool likely to help in the development of differentiated responses to specific groups/types of CPWs could be the double entry table 5.2 below that correlates the willingness and the capacity.

Table 5.2: Correlation willingness and capacity: analytic tool

I find at least three interests to this tool. It (i) allows prioritization of interventions and categories of CPWs to start with; (ii) avoids watering CPWs with package of strategies not appropriate to their level of readiness and (iii) could finally be extended to the assessment of agencies and institutions' capacity or willingness too, provided

that the criteria of vulnerability and capacity are adjusted. The reflection to correlate the willingness and the capacity/capability guides in large extent my final chapter but also the recommandations I have made so far through my analysis; with a clear view that the willingness always takes precedence over the capacity. The willingness is a pre-condition to be met before thinking of fulfilling any gap of capabilities/capacities. Unfortunately, working on willingness is not easy matter and this explains that when there are plethoric claims of programmes and institutions to strengthen the capabilities of their workers, I have conversely rarely encountered claims from these institutions to strengthen individual willingness of their personnel.

This will be revisited once more in the next chapter as I will review current responses provided to mismatches before my additional recommendations and lessons learnt from the research close this report.

Chapter 6: Responses to Mismatches and Way Forward

6.1: Introduction

Guided by the objective to understand possible difficulties and convergence among stakeholders and to suggest measures to improve collaboration, this chapter presents the perception of IDRs and highlights differences and similarities in that perception with ordinary CPWs. It also identifies responses provided by institutions so far to manage cultural mismatches. The rarity of responses to cultural conflict management is largely explained by the fact that prior to this study, the subject had never been discussed and openly acknowledged by stakeholders in Mali as a problem. It should be remembered first that beyond their position as managers, institution heads too are also child protection workers. Likewise and as already reported in the previous chapters, most of them face challenges similar to ordinary workers. A comment by an expatriate Deputy Director of a well-known Organization was revealing in this regard:

"When you arrive in the organization for the first time, you feel lost. You face problems during your integration to cope with the organizational context. There are many things to learn, but in terms of adopting new attitudes, there is a very long way to go which is not easy." IDR N36, expatriate

Another Director corroborated this during a FGD among Managers:

"I remember that the Minister in a very embarrassed state, refused to return to Geneva for the UN Committee meeting on children's rights. She said: "I cannot go back, because last time I promised that by the following review of Mali's report, we would have adopted the code of the family and persons." It's a pity that our societal values delay action and results." IDR N 47

IDRs affirm that this issue is too complex to address in current institutional capacities. The declaration of an expatriate IDR below is indicative of the relative powerlessness in their part to cope with cultural conflicts and achieve short-term results:

"My Institution knows what to do. It is like a tree, you can easily cut its branches and you may perhaps succeed to cut its trunk, but to uproot the large roots of the great tree, you will need more time. You have to dig around in order to find out where the roots are and cut them so that it can be dislodged. We did not fail to try, but things are just difficult." IDR N38, male expatriate manager.

6.2   Institutional Responses to Mismatches

As daunting as it may seem given the magnitude of the situation presented in the preceding chapters, some answers do exist on how to deal with cultural conflicts. Overall, four main activities are undertaken by IDRs to respond to discrepancies of employees. They concern (1) Awareness raising, (2) Recruitment process, (3) Psychological support to CPWs and (4) Sanction as a dissuasive weapon against cultural mismatches. It should be noted that apart from awareness raising which is widely implemented by most institutions, the other interventions are mainly conducted by international organizations and NGOs. No government official has indicated having witnessed other three interventions.

6.2.1   Situation Analysis and Awareness Raising Activities

"In our programmes, we usually conduct situational analysis before implementation, to see what the socio cultural beliefs are in order to develop strategies for the programme interventions" IDR N36, male expatriate participant.

As per the declaration of the above expatriate participant, it is the practice of big organizations like UNICEF to conduct a Situation Analysis (SitAn) at the beginning of each new programme cycle. The SitAn of children is a planning tool that allows UNICEF to identify problems that affect children, bring out their root causes and gaps in the responses provided. Using the equity based approach, the SitAn prioritizes the determinants of the challenges facing children in immediate causes, underlying causes and structural causes. Prepared at least one time during a complete cycle of the cooperation[42], the SitAn is the basis for reflection and strategic advocacy of UNICEF. It is a key driver for its commitment to the policy debate on children's issues. The SitAn is one of important contributions of UNICEF to enhance national capacity to produce knowledge about the situation of children. This effort feeds into the Common Country Assessment (CCA) with other UN agencies to allow upstream engagement in the work on legislation, policies and budgets and to guide advocacy and partnerships for children. It is a source of baseline data for monitoring and evaluation. In addition to identifying inequities related to both service delivery and its demand, SitAn is supposed to explain the main socio-cultural, political and

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[42] Each cooperation agreement cycle lasts 5 years.

institutional barriers that impede supply, demand and use of quality services by children. It also examines the strategies implemented by groups, households, communities and all duty bearers to deal with the situation.

One of the questions raised indeed by this study is how it is possible that the cultural conflict had never been identified as a priority issue despite the regular conduction of these SitAn. On this issue in particular, considering that several international organisations are led by expatriate IDRs, I explored their opinion to see if their views are different from the Malian participants. Although some of them took care not to be too prolix in FGDs involving them together with Malians - as if they were trying to prevent hurting their national colleagues - most of their answers focused on the complexity of the question and insufficient activism on the part of CPWs to learn directives. As Institution's Directors or managers, their views were coloured by a concern to demonstrate that they have done their job to ensure compliance of staff with institution's directives.

Awareness raising activities are referred to as the heart of interventions in the management of cultural conflicts by IDRs. An expatriate participant's declaration given below is indicative of the efforts made by institutions to ensure that workers are informed about the necessity to comply with organisational values:

"The organization has taken steps to ensure that each person who works with us really understands what the difference is between his/her personal interests and those of the organization. Our culture, our family education, our origins, our religions are one thing and the other thing is what the organization expects from us." IDR N38, male expatriate manager.

Again, several expatriate managers of big institutions mainly from the UN family made it clear that what can be taught actively to the CPW is just an iceberg. The main responsibility to improve their awareness about detailed expectations of their employing institutions belongs to each single worker. This, they argue, should be done by going to the websites or paper based documentation indicated to the staff at his/her recruitment.

As we saw from literature review, the CPW is expected to understand that his/her profession has at its core some very deeply held values that serve as the foundation for the ethical basis for practice, which in turn is the justification for the very existence

of the profession and our interventions (Simmons 2003). The interest of the child should guide everything. The staff should make personal efforts to deepen his/her knowledge. On each occasion, he/she should remember to question the values and principles of the organization before positioning him/herself. An expatriate IDR of one UN Institution affirms that when joining the institution, people know that they will not be able to use as a pretext any culture based ideas/excuses or other difficulties for not adapting to what the organization expects from them.

*"We apply the zero tolerance rule. 'No excuses'. Within the organization, in the public and in the global society, we must always demonstrate by our behaviour and practices that we are workers of an international institution.***"** IDR N38, male expatriate manager.

Annual retreats and various staff meetings like general assemblies chaired by the IDRs were cited as communication routes to improve staff capacity through messages whereby each individual is invited to adjust culturally:

"Whenever possible, we come back and emphasize on the organisation's values because we know we usually receive new staff members and repetition is an important part of pedagogy." IDR N38

IDRs consequently think that if people resist, it is not because they are not informed but rather that the change called for touches deeply rooted beliefs and practices. As IDRs underlined, the importance of information to improve on the situation is capital. My feeling is that programme stakeholders regard sensitization as some magical power that can produce an instant change. In fact, these so-called awareness raising sessions are not subject to prior and systematic preparedness and institutions' leaders are under the illusion that it is enough to evoke positive institutional norms for these to be accepted and respected. Sensitization cannot be an effective remedy unless it is prepared and conducted more rigorously: good preparation of sessions, sustained engagement with participants and post sessions' monitoring. Unfortunately, institutions don't seem to understand that our environment determines what we learn, how we learn it, and the rules for living with the communities (Community Tool Box 2014). Child protection institutions in Mali need to become more "culturally competent" in the sense stated by the University of Kansas (KU) in 2013 and to develop their capacity to bring together knowledge about different groups

of people composing their human resources in general and their locally recruited personnel.

Literature identifies four levels before an organisation becomes culturally competent (Community Tool Box 2014). The first level of the concept is the *"Cultural knowledge"*, which means that organisations know about some cultural characteristics, history, values, beliefs and behaviours of the environment in which they operates. Then comes the *"Cultural awareness"*: the stage of understanding their environment and opening to the idea of changing/adjusting their own cultural attitudes. The third stage is *"Cultural sensitivity"*, knowing that differences exist between cultures, but not assigning values to the differences (better or worse, right or wrong). Clearly this is a difficult stage for organisations like UNICEF, since it implies acceptance of a certain dose of relativism in human rights approach when we have clearly understood that UN organisations are basically driven by a universalist approach. Clashes on this point are frequent and difficult to manage, but they can be made easier to manage if everyone is mindful of the organizational goals. It is only when the organisation has succeeded in bringing together the above mentioned three steps that it can claim to be a *Cultural competent* organisation, and to add to its operational effectiveness. A culturally competent organization has the capacity to bring into its own system many different behaviors, attitudes, and work effectively in cross-cultural settings to produce better outcomes (Brownlee and Lee 2013). As KU precisely puts it, "Cultural competence is non-threatening because it acknowledges and validates who people are. By focusing on the organization's culture, it removes the need to place blame and assume guilt" (KU 2013 p.1).

"Since becoming culturally competent focuses on the "how-to" of aligning policies and practices with goals, everyone is involved in the process" (Community Tool Box 2014 p.2). This "inside-out" effort relieves people from the responsibility of doing all the adapting effort. A culturally competent organisation values diversity and conducts cultural self-assessment to understand the dynamics of difference. It institutionalizes cultural knowledge and adapts to diversity. To improve their awareness strategy, organisations in Mali need to better understand that culture is a strong part of people's lives capable of influencing their views, their humour, their hopes, their

values, their worries and fears and more importantly their loyalties for employing institutions (Ibid).

6.2.2 Using Recruitment Process to Identify Appropriate Staff

Participants' declarations indicate the existence of some organizational efforts to ensure that human resources to be recruited meet the requirements and vision of the organization. An expatriate participant in FGD among managers insists on these efforts when she asserted:

"Our recruitments are based on three fundamental values: diversity, integrity and commitment. We recruit people on these criteria on the basis of their statements during interviews. The organization has a mission and guiding principles. When each employee arrives, we familiarize him with these principles." IDR N36, expatriate staff.

In UN organisations, new staff members are even invited to sign an oath (figure 6.1) to ensure that they acknowledge and measure what they are committed to as international civil servants, even if they occupy local posts within their own countries.

Figure 6.1: UN oath, signed by each new staff at the entrance in function

OATH

I solemnly declare and promise to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions entrusted to me as an international civil servant of the United Nations, to discharge these functions and regulate my conduct with the interests of the United Nations only in view, and not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other source external to the Organization.

I also solemnly declare and promise to respect the obligations incumbent upon me as set out in the Staff Regulations and Rules.

Staff signature

United Nations

UNICEF's Guiding Principles complementing the UN report on Standards of conduct in the International Civil Service is attached in appendix 7 for reference.

To discharge professional functions and regulate one's conduct with the interests of the United Nations only in view means also to avoid harmful practices on children. It is expected from each person who signs this oath to strictly comply with it. Reading the above statement, one may think that this professional practice is in place only in large International Organizations like the UN agencies. However, the opinion from national NGOs and local institutions' directors too is not really different. The "take it or leave it agreement" nature of the employment contract is everywhere as emphasized below by a national NGO Director who bases his argument on self-experience before becoming a Manager:

"Having learned the lesson from my own example that a large gap may exist between the function of the staff and his/her private practice/attitude at home, I took the time to strengthen the administrative management of my staff. Before, the only legal paper that our employees were invited to sign at their entrance into service was their contract. Today, in addition to the contract, I have developed a commitment paper that they must read carefully before returning back three days after signing their contract." IDR N35, Malian, National NGO Director.

During the recruitment process of each agent, the above cited NGO's vision and commitment are clearly explained to the applicant who in turn must clearly indicate his/her adherence before the finalisation of his/her recruitment. The three days given are precisely the period of reflection during which the applicant is asked to go and discuss the terms and conditions of his/her commitment with his/her family before coming back to sign the acceptance of the job offer. By so doing, the NGO hopes to ensure that the commitment of the staff member is backed by his/her spouse and the enlarged family. Again, apart from questions that might need eventual clarifications, the applicant is not expected to discuss the terms and conditions of the contract since this is a "take it or leave it agreement". He/she has to accept the agreement as it is. In a very precarious job market, it cannot be conceivable for the job seeker to dare question the background situation of the job since this would present him/her as a non-motivated applicant who is reluctant to accept the offered position when many other candidates are ready to accept eyes closed.

Beyond what is already in practice in institutions, participants could not avoid projecting their wishes also. One IDR suggested the idea of introducing in public administration the principle of reference checks before assignments. Since recruitments in governmental administration are done based only on general exams without producing CV (unlike the practice in the UN or other private sectors) and therefore without a thorough knowledge of the applicant, this idea of reference checks before appointing people could help to detect and anticipate some weaknesses.

"*The reference check can involve up to three persons including one from the previous working environment of the agent and another one from the community where he/she lives. It is necessary that public administration engages also in making reference checks like UN and NGOs.*" IDR N 47

Likewise, people should not be appointed for example in child care centres without preliminary information on their sexual behaviour and capacity to live healthily and securely in contact with children.

6.2.3 Psychological Support

Although very marginal, some institutions make efforts to engage psychologists to support their staff according to the individual needs identified. This is particularly the case with the Red Cross. In each region where this organisation has worked, the team is assisted by a psychologist whose role is twofold: to provide medical care to the victims of severe harmful traditional practices like FGM/C, but also to serve as interface between the staff and the programme by speaking with individual workers about their concerns and to report back to the supervisor and the Institution on the difficulties they are facing. Beyond interviews with the staff, the psychologist also advocates for solutions to strengthen personal capacity. After each semester, all these reports are condensed, studied and utilized to determine the training needs in a particular area for staff members. It was however reported that no specific training on cultural conflict had ever been organized to date.

6.2.4 Sanction as a Dissuasive Weapon Against Cultural Mismatches

The prevailing ethical norms of professionals are generally codified in their codes of professional ethics and conduct. These standards are collectively defined by

institutions. An individual CPW may have his/her own personal beliefs and values derived from his/her culture, religion and community. However, these are personal beliefs, as opposed to professional standards. If personal beliefs may have a place in professional decision-making, the question is what place, if any, an individual's personal moral and religious beliefs should have (Swartz 2006). In any case, my findings confirm that "professional identity generally constrains individual expression in a way that personal identity does not" (Miller and Brody 1995). The use of sanction as a dissuasive weapon is reported in this study to be a shared practice. A participant described:

"Although we are not behind our staff with police officers, we know how to follow up on their compliance in private with their professional commitment. You know, the Malian community works as one big family; especially in rural areas where we operate. It is difficult to do something without it being known by neighbours and we are among the neighbours" IDR N35

One comparative advantages put forward in their favour by national NGOs is the possibility to see and hear information more than the bigger international NGOs that *"are well funded but usually blind and ignorant of local dynamics" (*IDR N35). However, institutional heads from international NGOs have equally reported having taken punitive actions against their staff involved in harmful practices against children.

"Last year, we terminated the contract of one of our nurses who had her daughter cut on the grounds that her husband insisted on her daughter to undergo genital mutilation. When this was reported to us, we questioned her and she confessed and she was consequently dismissed. We put an end to her contract and she was separated from our organisation." IDR N35, Malian, National NGO Director.

Cases brought to discipline by some international organizations are even published at global level for preventive and deterrent effect on staff. These organizations have also put in place systems to encourage people to report if they come across cases of misconduct.

"Thanks to the denunciation system we put in place at global level, when we realize that people's values and attitudes were not in line with the values of the organization we terminate their contract." IDR N36, male expatriate manager.

Findings revealed important differences in perspective among institutional heads and ordinary CPW on the one hand and among Governmental IDRs and UN/NGO IDRs

on the other hand. Indeed, contrary to the majority of leaders of NGOs and international institutions, the quasi totality of Directors from State Administration think their institutions are not showing sufficient awareness about this problem. When for example some NGOs confirmed having terminated workers' contracts who did not conform to their job objectives, no single participant from government side reported having resorted to sanctions. Participants explained the lack of proactive measures from the Government side by the fact that ministerial departments are not sufficiently aware that employees are caught in between the hammer and the anvil. It is difficult to understand that high authorities create institutions to promote the rights of children and later, some of them question the relevance of some activities aiming precisely at positioning children for better access to these rights.

In several countries, it is mostly the governmental institutions that take the lead to clarify and set the limits when personal beliefs contradict with professional responsibilities. Swartz (2006) narrates how the enacted Wisconsin statutes allow health care professionals to opt out of performing abortions and sterilizations. As discussions went on to extend those refusal rights beyond participating in procedures that involve embryonic stem cells, Governor Jim Doyle vetoed the proposed law and refused to permit such an expansion of health care professionals' rights of refusal. In justifying his veto, he argued that "the law would put a doctor's political views ahead of the best interests of patients" Swartz (2006 p.4). He went as far as affirming that rather than to calling it a 'Conscience Clauses', this law disposition should be called "unconscionable clause".

After reviewing current legislation and judicial opinions concerning the right of health care professionals to refuse to participate in health care treatments to which they object on the basis of their personal moral or religious beliefs, Swartz insists that it is the patient's best interest, and not that of the health care professional that should govern the professional interventions. "Conscientious objections should be permissible based on prevailing medical ethics; however, to the extent that they are based on the personal morals of the health care professional, they should be actively discouraged." Swartz (2006 p.83)

This highlights the important role that should be played by state institutions (legislation, courts and Governments) to arbitrate for definitive positions in profession-personal opinion related conflicts. Mali governmental institutions (the ministry of Justice, the ministry of public administration and the line ministries of social affairs, children and women as well as that of public function) in partnership with professionals' associations should take the lead and set the direction.

6.3 The beliefs of CPWs with Regards to IDRs and Cultural Mismatches

CPWs commented on how the above interventions referred to the above work and how relevant they are. 95% of them affirm that institutions' Managements do not show concern about the cultural mismatches they face. They believe that IDRs are more concerned in having the work done irrespective of the feeling or problems faced by workers. Some of them like the 34 years old participant below have all reasons to be particularly angry against IDRs:

"I had a conversation with my supervisor during which I informed him that I was not particularly motivated to do this work. Surprisingly, he replied: "It is not the motivation that counts, we do not ask you to believe in what you do, you are just asked to do it." That's why I'm doing this work without any real conviction to achieving results." CPW N7, male, in post only since 3 years.

In their quest for explanations to the IDR's attitudes, CPWs found two possible reasons. Their first explanation was that senior managers and leaders are not even aware of cultural mismatches faced by workers:

"In all projects to be implemented, the objectives are always oriented towards the target groups. There have never been upstream elements of reflection with regard to action, activities and behaviour of people responsible for programme implementation to see what skills they need especially in terms of cultural conflict." CPW N78

IDRs focus mainly on technical skills and expertise in various areas of management but never are the cultural aspects addressed in order to help the worker to reconsider his/her behaviour. Both absence of debates and comprehensive policy to support workers is interpreted by them as proof of lack of interest from superiors.

"I have to insist that the institutions do not take into account the management of cultural conflicts because they don't care about our sufferings. Which I don't know if they are even aware of." CPW N79

The second interpretation by workers is that managements are aware of the existence of cultural mismatches faced by CPW, but they too are victims of their conflicts and they are part of the "casualness game". A participant summarizes the explanation in support of this second opinion as follows:

"Our institutions are aware of the conflict that is tearing us apart. From the onset of project elaboration, these elements are there and it is impossible not to know about them. Keeping silent about the situation does not mean ignoring things." CPW N 77

CPWs however believe that they themselves are also responsible for the non-action on the part of their institutions about this problem since they recognize the fact that they don't inform their managers on the problems they are facing:

"We've never made a case out of these issues. We have been silent for too long. But I think the time has come to put everything on the table so that we can get the attention of our institutions on these problems." CPW N28

Some participants recognize efforts already in place carried out by rare institutions to support their staff in managing cultural mismatches. In this sense relatively 'old' UNICEF colleagues together with myself remember that in the early years of the 2000 decade, our organization invested in a project to promote what was called Personal and Professional Development (P2D) comprising of two modules which were supposed to help people to explore their personal values and to compare them with those of UNICEF. Unfortunately, P2D was not always introduced in a way that people could be really sincere in the results that were given and it was not presented as a tool to reduce intrapersonal conflict. Therefore the first level of intervention for UNICEF would be to build on this effort for personal development with a more focused orientation that propels the staff on analysis of values and intrapersonal conflict reduction with regard to the organizational mission. This was emphasized particularly by one participant:

"This research frankly seems essential. It can act as a wake up call for our various organisations. I am not saying that the institutions are knowingly favouring the culture of silence, but I think that UNICEF in particular has a leading role to play here. That's why I am looking forward to the results of this study to re-launch the debate on the P2D project." CPW N33

Study participants believe that there is a need to address cultural mismatches as a national issue for collective and individual solutions.

6.4 The Supervisors-Supervisees' Relationships with Regards to the Management of Mismatches

In the same line with IDRs, the impression that the relationship between the supervisors and supervisees is not favourable for the management of mismatches has been raised by both groups in various terms. An expatriate sociologist participant commented:

"Most expatriate actors believe that since their culture does not practice these things, others' cultures should not do same. I think this also creates a distance between technical and financial actors on the one hand and the local workers and expatriate supervisors on the other hand. This is not helpful for good cooperation and open dialogue. As an expatriate, I think we must also try to understand things even if we do not accept such norms." CPW N4, female expatriate manager and 45 years old.

The discrepancy between CPW's culture and organizational vision is exacerbated by the multiculturalism that he/she also faces in his/her workplace. Participants argued that when the supervisor in particular is from a western culture, he/she finds it difficult to understand mismatches and this reduces the space for discussion. A participant complained:

"Since we're in a multicultural environment, our perspectives and our socio-cultural perceptions are not the same. Often, being respectful vis-a-vis a supervisor is being misunderstood thus creating an attitude of supremacy of the second over the first. This really makes the supervisee a vulnerable person within the organization and it impacts on performance and even social behaviour." CPW N25, Malian, male, 33 years old UN National staff since 4 years.

This reflection on the collaboration between the expatriate-supervisor and national-worker (local staff) could lead one into thinking that the supervisory relationship between Malian staff and supervisors would be more appropriate for solving the cultural conflict. However, such was not confirmed by findings. Indeed, the supervisory relationship involving expatriates is encountered only in the environment of United Nations agencies and some large international NGOs. When staff in the public sector (government administration) and CBOs are not supervised by expatriate Managers, their opinions do not bring to the surface better cooperation experience. Rather than being an opportunity, the community of culture among supervisor and supervisee often leads to collusion in which the overwhelming majority of supervisors condone the discrepancies or explicitly invite their supervisees not to worry about the

discrepancies. The comment from a newly recruited staff as we saw in previous section who was looking for an initial orientation edifies on this attitude. The same complaint was made by another female CPW who pointed out her supervisor's attitude as the main reason why she abandoned her previous post.

"I feel ashamed because of the attitude of my programme director who gave me no support, no necessary preparation to confront and convince the public. We need to be supported psychologically to face insults and all forms of offenses that we are subject to. You know it takes a lot of courage, determination and conviction to continue on this path of sensitizing people on children's rights. Unfortunately, this is not my chief's concern and I had to abandon." CPW N84

I reviewed the institutions' interventions and I noted the need to be realistic and to be context rooted in managerial strategies although child protection is universally guided. A true multiculturalist perspective can help advance in the resolution of the situation. What I call true multiculturalism (in opposition to frequently encountered situations whereby the imposition of one dominant cultural perspective is painted as a multicultural environment), is a context whereby the manager, rather than thinking that his/her culture is the superior one has the disposition and ability to study and understand diverse perspectives and appropriately interact with members of other cultures in a variety of situations. Clearly, cultural issues have been underestimated in the management of child protection in Mali.

Given that most education/training institutions are unaware of cultural differences in behaviour (McIntyre 1992; Yates 1988), CPWs and their supervisors have not necessarily studied these realities during their academic courses and they are in need of in-service training on cultural differences. It is the higher management's responsibility to ensure that information regarding cultural diversity is passed on to frontline personnel in general and to child protection supervisors in particular (CCBD 1989; McIntyre 1993; McIntyre 1996). This is important to ensure that supervisees are treated in a fair manner (McIntyre 1996) so as to have a better chance to achieve desired results. Unfortunately, pre-service trainings and in-service trainings in Mali are failing to make this a priority in their agenda. Before the university faculties and child protection institutions can impart information regarding cultural characteristics to practitioners, they must first educate

themselves in this area (CCBD 1989). Light and Martin (1985 p.42) rightly affirmed that "acceptable behaviour or bothersome behaviour is in the eye of the beholder." If this opinion cannot be put forward in defence of deviant CPWs, it remains a concern that only few managers realize that CPWs under their supervision view modern child protection norms as alienating and reject professional recommendations on the motive that these reflect the western world view (Gollnick and Chinn 1990; Lee 1995; Lee and Richardson 1991). Creating an atmosphere of both cultural self-pride and the acceptance of others' inheritance is best accomplished by proactively adapting one's management style to the culturally based characteristics of one's supervisees (Grossman 1990; Light and Martin 1985). In order to better match the culturally-based behavioural styles of CPWs, managers must become skilled in modifying traditional procedures that often penalize culturally different perspectives (McIntyre 1992a; McIntyre 1992b; McIntyre 1993; McIntyre 1996). As such, self-esteem and motivation can be built. The same view is echoed by Colombo (2005) who thinks that if managers are to provide appropriate services to culturally diverse workers "with emotional and/or behavioural disorders'', they should challenge some important biases and misconceptions which I have adapted as follows.

Misconception 1: Everyone is the same

In the same way a teacher in the classroom should avoid thinking that "Children are children", so should a manager not think that CPWs are the same irrespective of the setting in which they operate. Workers from other cultures often have patterns of communication, interaction, and participation that may be different from those previously known and valued by the supervisor. Rather than ignoring cultural differences and creating "a deficit model" that only seeks to align culturally diverse workers (Colombo 2005), what I have seen and experienced during this research is that any attempt to create main-stream peers practices in child protection in Mali cannot happen without prior recognition of the unique cultural backgrounds of workers. Acknowledging cultural differences is the first step towards ensuring the usage of workers' cultures as strengths for the implementation of the programme.

Misconception 2: The worker can be managed in isolation from his/her community

It should be understood that the majority of CPWs and their entire communities' experiences can diverge from those reflected in the expectations of child protection programmes. As Delpit (1995) puts it, asking people to do "what the Romans do" entails empowering them first to know what it is that the Romans do. CPWs believe they should not be 'separated' from their whole communities with regard to debates and positioning on child protection. During the conduct of interviews and FGDs, I have realized that despite my insistence that the study is designed for CPWs, participants could not resist systematically reporting on their experiences with communities and the populations targeted by their work. Though the pilot was useful for me to refine questions in a way to avoid confusion and help participants to have a clear understanding of the research questions, it was only with indepth discussions that I understood that their propensity to comment on communities' perceptions instead of theirs was not that they didn't understand my questions. It is because they believe that as an integral parts of their community, everything they are saying about it is equivalent to what they would say of themselves as individuals, despite being CPWs. A participant in an interview corroborated this when he declared:

"I do not separate the worker that I am from the farmer in my village of N. Indeed, in addition to being CPW, I am also a representative of my village of N. And believe me Zakari, this is valid for all Malian workers. Each worker sees him/herself as the representative of his/her village in the big town, regardless of whether he/she lives in the regional capital, in Bamako or even outside Mali. It is for this reason that I believe that the more the programmes conduct sensitization in our villages of origin, the better it will be helpful for our capability building and ability to run the programmes more effectively." CPW N42

A strong belief that in awareness raising strategies, the workers must be approached together with the wide audience targeted by the programme interventions was emphasized by several other participants during FDGs:

"Since I am asked to bring the organisation values at home, the organisation in return should find the way to do sensitization sessions with my people with regard to our conflicting values. Thus, my family will understand that I have not signed my job contract to only bring money back home. The organisation can organize periodical discussion days with our loved ones to have a better understanding of who I am" CPW N22

Understanding that CPWs see themselves as part of the population they serve is important in several aspects. The first reflection derived from this is the urgency to change current "separatist approaches" in building the capacity of CPWs and communities (figure 6.2) to an "integrative approach" represented in figure 7.3 whereby the essential package to approach capacity building is integrative of the worker in his/her family and community.

Figure 6.2: Empowering Communities - Empowering CPW (Current Approach)
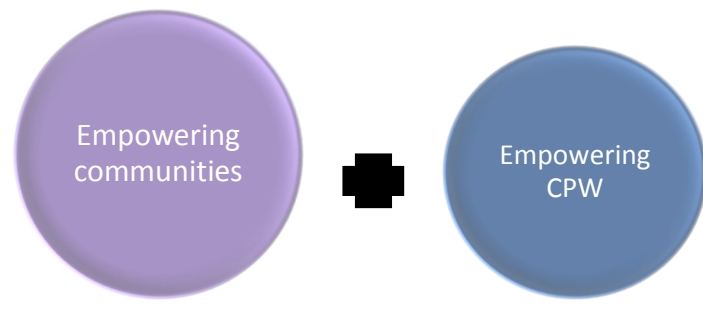
Figure 6.3: Empowering CPW Together with his/her Communities (Approach to Promote)

The involvement of the communities together with CPWs is key to sustainable management of cultural discrepancies. Of course, it is certainly not wrong to fear some practical difficulties in methodological approach at the beginning of such unusual exercise. Institutions would need to be equipped for intervention at family level and to ensure that their skills are enhanced, as staff support at family level will not be successful without sound family and community management techniques and relationship/friendship skills (Berry 1997; Rickard 1998). Equipping institutions also

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means recourse to external human resources as necessary to ensure tailored interventions like psychosocial support to CPWs who are in need. This includes holding periodical human resource clinics to better understand and envisage possible interventions to support the relationship Community-CPWs'.

Working at family and community levels in the dynamics of change management also needs appropriate time and more sustained efforts than in office counselling sessions (Berry 1997). Unfortunately, programme managers have developed a sad culture whereby time is not sufficiently considered as a serious resource to be managed with appropriate realism. Instead of taking the necessary time to deeply implement reasonable amount of activities, I observed that institutions and programme managers are put (or they put themselves) in a position of rather running a multitude of activities together, with clear limits to due reflection. This attitude is detrimental to sustained achievements but it is surprisingly common in programme implementation.

Communities in which CPWs live should be considered as unavoidable partners in the capacity building in several ways. As programme partners, they can:
- provide useful information - that could not be collected otherwise - on CPWs' needs for improvement;
- acquire new knowledge on laws and policies for improved protection of their children and be sincerely supportive for programme implementation on the field;
- mobilize themselves as entry point for new development initiatives;
- inspire institutions for improved contextualization and realism in design and management of programmes;
- put in place networks for the promotion of good practices to protection of children.

The necessity to correct the very mechanical distinction made by institutions between the CPW and his/her community, between private life versus public (professional) life confirms the theory of social change discussed in the literature review. Peoples' expectations are linked in a way that for 'I' to change, people in my relevant network should also be opened for change. Bicchieri's work (2006-2012) provided good

insight on how individual's perspective interrelates with his/her community members' as illustrated in Figure 6.4 below.

Figure 6.4 Understanding Social Norms for the purpose of change management

Social norm

is a
• pattern of societal behavior

such that
• individuals prefer to conform to it

on condition that
they believe that
• Most people in their relevant network conform to it [**empirical expectations**]
• Most people in their relevant network believe they ought to conform to it [**normative expectations**]
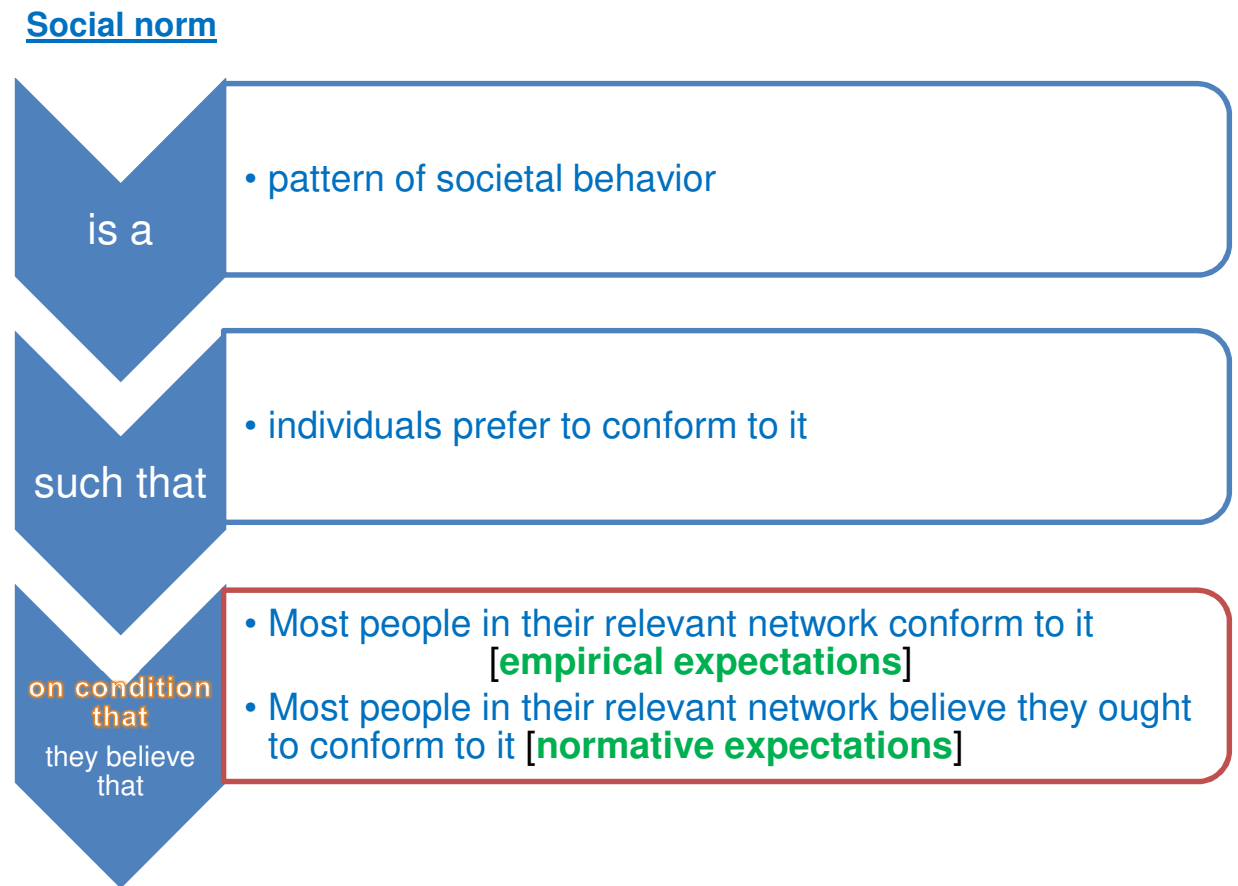
The question is How to Change or Induce these Social Expectations   **?**

The answer to this question is beyond the scope of this research. It challenges the capacity of other programme components, mainly the Communication for Behavior Change (CBC) or Communication for Development (C4D following UNICEF terminology) to build and lead change initiatives in the interest of all programme components. In all cases, it is important to avoid the risk of considering the communication component as a last minute invitee that is called upon by sectoral programmes only when they have finished setting their objectives, defining their time frames and geography and agreed on their truncated and always identical lists of

partners to implement interventions. I have already discussed in Chapter 2 the role of Communication in the challenge of improving change for child protection. Again, producing intentional change is not possible in the absence of intentional communication that brings together all stakeholders. The communities and families of CPW should from now emerge in Institution's agenda as full partners of programme intervention leading to capability building of workers.

The C4D function needs to be repositioned in the heart of the work of child protection. Both programmes have to work together in a mutually supportive, streamlined and strategic manner. Roles and responsibilities need to be clarified[43].

6.5   Additional Recommendations

The previous chapters and sections already gave an indication of the recommendations from the findings. It is important to consider these aforementioned recommendations together with some important prerequisites and dispositions without which these recommendations cannot be effectively implemented.

6.5.1   Attitude and Actions Expected from IDRs

As stated earlier, a few years before the total completion of this work, I was appointed as Deputy Representative for UNICEF in Cameroon which is another sub-Saharan African country. This position entails being the second highest staff of UNICEF in charge of the coordination of the whole programme and the responsibility to manage important human resources. Tapping from my work experience in this position, my background as a researcher, and the experience of conducting this research, the most important message I would like to share with expatriate IDRs and CPWs colleagues is that people may forget what we said, they can also forget what we did, but they will never forget how we made them feel (Angelou 2014). But you can hardly make people feel something if you yourself feel nothing. Therefore, the challenge before IDRs in building people's capacity to fulfill their job is primarily about their own capacity to recognize and integrate the reality on the ground in their strategies. As Drucker (1996) puts it, we cannot manage other people unless we manage ourselves first. Accepting to be critical of self will be one of the most important conditions in

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[43] See also UNICEF (2007) the CBSC Concept Note, prepared for the Organisation Review 2007 and broadly ratified at the Global Consultation on CBSC, 2007.

taking further steps with regards to cultural mismatches experienced by CPWs. Of course, it takes a lot of courage and determination to face self when one also has to initiate change within an organization without having control over the time and the agenda. Schon made a good point that "Reflection in action is both a consequence and cause of surprise. When a member of a bureaucracy embarks on a course of reflective practice, allowing himself to experience confusion and uncertainty, subjecting his frames and theories to conscious criticism and change, s/he may increase his capacity to contribute to significant organizational learning, but s/he also becomes, by the same token, a danger to the stable system of rules and procedures within which s/he is expected to deliver his technical expertise" (Schon in Chapman 2006 p.219). Consequently, ordinary bureaucracies usually tend to resist innovations and reflective practice. Yes indeed, we need to ensure that measures taken to build workers' capacities do not violate established rules of the organization. Therefore rules and principles should be aimed at achieving the programme's objectives. They should not be interpreted as hindering useful innovations. Nothing will improve the actual capacity of CPWs if stakeholders are not strongly committed to challenge themselves. For this to happen, they need to work on "reductive distinctions between public and private discourses that often limit our understanding of communication" (Couture 2003 p.12) and local culture dynamics in capacity building. Confusion over the notion of the personal and the private sphere of individuals' life seems to prevent us from more productive engagement with communities and CPWs. A decisive paradigm shift is required in programme and human resource management to connect the needs of communities to those of CPWs. Strategies need to be focused on both individuals and environments (institutional environment, national environment but also immediate living environment of the worker). In this regard, the following additional actions should be conducted under leadership of IDRs:

- Develop and administer trainings on supervisory skills that include management of cultural discrepancies to all staff in a managerial position;

- Develop coaching and organize psychological support to staff according to individual needs identified;

- Encourage the creation of national association of child protection workers in Mali;

- Elaborate, disseminate and implement a code of professional ethics and conduct for CPW in Mali;

- Hold periodical peer talks on programme implementation and cultural conflicts management at both the national and regional levels;

- Introduce reference checks and revive the practice of investigation on morality in recruitment processes before the placement of CPWs in public administration.

In view of its special position among institutions, UNICEF could take advantage of its Country Programme Development (CPD)'s agenda for 2015-2019 cycle to review and revise child protection programme priorities to reflect the current capacity and readiness level of CPWs. From this review of the capacity needs of CPWs, a comprehensive plan to proactively manage cultural mismatches could be developed. I have started discussions with the new UNICEF Management in Mali in that sense since 2012 (See appendix 8)

6.6   Conclusion and Reflection

As indicated in the opening chapter of this report, this study is aimed at investigating conflicts experienced by CPWs related to their personal beliefs/practices and professional agenda to protect children against abuses of all sorts including those caused by harmful traditional practices in Mali. Specific Objectives were to explore personal beliefs and practices of workers regarding main protection issues; to investigate existing contradictions between personal beliefs/practices of workers and their professional agenda; to examine if and how contradicting values impact on workers and their capacity to deliver for child protection; to identify best practices developed in response to cultural conflict in child protection and to provide workers and the whole protection networking group in Mali with an opportunity to self-reflection about the management of the programme.

The findings indicate that workers' behaviours and beliefs are influenced by normative expectations in place whereby people's actions reflect concerns about what others will think of them and may do to them if they don't conform to local harmful practices. All categories of participants recognized that cultural mismatches

and harmful practices constitute a real challenge in child protection programme management in Mali. Debates on various issues like child marriage, levirate marriage, child labour including begging and street children, violence and corporal punishment and particularly FGM/C demonstrated that the perception of CPWs on these issues often contradicts their organizations' view. The consequences of these cultural discrepancies on CPWs and programmatic outcomes manifest in a number of ways. For CPWs, cultural discrepancies cause lack of job satisfaction, compromise their self-esteem and their health. They are perceived by their communities as people who sabotage their own religion and culture. The findings also shows that the cultural conflict experienced by stakeholders is among the bottlenecks that limit Mali from achieving better results as compared to neighbouring countries. Interrelation was found among age, gender, education and other socio economic determinants with strategies in management of mismatches by CPWs. Though the gender difference in sample was quite high, making it hard to compare the two groups, narratives from both groups indicate that gender influences both the perception of violation of children's rights and how people respond to these violations. The findings indicate like several authors reviewed in the literature that producing intentional change is not possible in the absence of intentional communication. The C4D function should consequently be repositioned in the heart of child protection's interventions. The research reveals little about best practices in the current work of institutions to improve the capacity of workers. However, the discussions were rich in terms of strategies and way forward.

Specifically, the analysis of the behaviours of CPWs led me to problematize the situation of CPWs around the "*Positioning triangle of workers*" comprised of five figures. I suggest the type B worker be agreed upon as threshold below which employing institutions in Mali and West and Central Africa should not descend when recruiting a new staff. Measures should consequently be put in place to carry out the typology check of applicants before the recruitment is finalized. Furthermore, the triangle model is designed to help active staff to review how far or close they are to their professional requirements, and to reflect on the way for narrowing/eliminating the gap between both values. Important additional recommendations coming out of the report invite to:

- Ensure that the supervisors-supervisees' relationships are more favourable to management of mismatches;
- Provide individual psychological support as needed to CPWs;
- Sanction CPWs who commit harmful practices and reaffirm the organizational value as a non-changeable standard of life expected from workers;
- Break the silence around the subject by discussing it among peers and at national level under the leadership of the MCFW;
- Create a platform for CPWs and programme implementers to share updates on major developments on the subject;
- In line with the above, disseminate the findings of this study;
- Formulate strategic orientations and elaborate a national action plan to manage cultural discrepancies in child protection programme.

To implement above interventions, institutions need to first be equipped properly. This starts with the willingness on the part of IDRs to challenge their own leadership.

I believe that attempting to uncover the questions around workers' daily struggle among conflicting perspectives in accomplishment of their job and their impact on the performance of Mali protection programme has been useful and represents a specific inquiry appreciated by stakeholders. One strong conviction shared by both participants and the researcher during this inquiry was that to be successful, the management of identified problems cannot follow traditional approaches of capacity building usually made of talks inside closed gates and windows of institutions. To foster genuine and relevant capacity building, institutions will need to go one step beyond 'ordinary' and readymade strategies and experiment more contextualized initiatives in which workers recognize themselves while bearing in mind international standards in the content of the rights to be promoted. This recognition of inherent power in workers and communities should be seen as part of any theory of capacity building itself based on the framework of social constructionism. The great power dynamic that goes with workers' capacity to deconstruct and reconstruct within the local settings is likely to help them make progress within the triangle and to gravitate more quickly towards professional point.

Despite the great enthusiasm shown by partners during this work, I am conscious that the next steps toward implementation of its recommendations will be challenging. Indeed, the recommended actions are mostly unfamiliar to stakeholders and they call for courage on the part of IDRs. An important meeting to plan actions induced by the research is already planned in a few months in Bamako with the facilitation of the researcher. That meeting will be organized by UNICEF Mali office through the child protection section with effective participation of all stakeholders: child protection institutions' from UN agencies, from Government at national and regional levels, Mayors, National and International NGOs' members, Individual CPWs including study participants, UNICEF's staff and leaders. The commitment of UNICEF in general and its senior management in particular is certainly a critical part of the equation.

The thesis has contributed to my personal leadership development and career in a number of ways. Firstly, my interactions with all categories of participants has reinforced my self-confidence as well as expanded my informal network. By discussing the highly relevant issues of cultural discrepancies with participants, they see in me a committed leader who is willing to effectively contribute to problem-solving. As my understanding of work-based learning at DProf level has improved immeasurably, I am already taking advantage of this to systematize some reflections on other areas of UNICEF's work. Secondly, the whole advocacy and follow up steps for the implementation of recommended actions is increasing my strategic position as useful expert who supports reflections across offices beyond Mali. This opens new interesting frontiers as this work allowed me to explore an increasingly important opportunity for UNICEF to improve the working atmosphere. Having been secretly informed of some sensitive conflicts and issues, I worked to resolve these conflicts and to defuse uncomfortable situations among people.

Finally, taking cumulative account of participants' opinions during FGDs and interviews, I have learnt some important lessons which will enable me to strengthen my leadership skills and to evaluate my own effectiveness by measuring how much time I dedicate to supervising the large number of staff members under my guidance as I move from country to country. This leads me to reflect on some of my own supervisory practices and how to improve them. The research topic has broadened

my perspective while improving my work relation with all categories of staff within the office and the Local Staff associations (LSA) in particular. This is crucial for my current leadership role as UNICEF Deputy Representative.

6.6.1 Final reflection

Having improved my skills in data analysis and in evaluation, this research has by the same occasion increased my confidence in my current post with responsibility to coordinate various UNICEF programmes among which child protection represents only one aspect. Building capacity for advancing children's rights means, in my day-to-day work, continuous attention to programme colleagues within and outside UNICEF to ensure that conflicts of perspectives are expressed and discussed openly. It also entails, for my part accepting to support them in challenging stereotype views that colonize our work environment. Now that I am in the second and last phase of my professional life with UNICEF, I believe such sagacity is essential on my part. I have acquired the conviction that things are not necessarily carried out in the 'right' way just because several institutions, managers and IDRs are doing it that way. The ground for helpful innovation and improvement is immense.

The experience of conducting this research has impacted my mindset, biases, assumptions, and how I approach programme management. It has also caused me to become a more informed, sensitive, and culturally aware manager and advisor to UNICEF country offices in the west and central African region.

Undertaking this study awakened memories of my experience 17 years ago when joining UNICEF. Indeed, before joining UNICEF, I was a coordinator of the rights and civic education programme in Afrika Obota Center, a pan-Africanist NGO focused on civic education across western African countries. I was an activist of civil society, specialized in civic education through drama and comedy[44]; an observer and critic of the actions of politicians, governmental authorities and various administrative managers charged to manage public affairs. I was a well-

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[44] This programme has been evaluated and was ranked by viewers in 1996 as the most preferred and watched show among other national TV programmes

known comedian and star (the word is not exaggerated) through the national television ORTB[45].

At the time of negotiating my contract with UNICEF, I was told that once I signed, in respect of my discretion obligations as a UN staff, I would not be authorized to continue showing publicly my activism and positioning. I was disappointed. I found these requirements to be an alienation of my fundamental freedom and I was seriously concerned with the idea that I was going to "sell my soul". I then took three days to think about the situation. Finally, I made my decision and I signed the contract, with the understanding that from this point forward, my activism on rights at national level would rather find an expanding field at the international level through the work with UNICEF. That seemed worthwhile.

The reminiscences of this episode of my own professional life in 1999 made me more curious to understand if participants in my study had balanced the benefits and losses related to the acceptance of the jobs offered to them before signing with their respective institutions.

From participants' own admission, socio economic conditions and poverty have today seriously eroded professional vocation. Comments heard during the conduct of this study improved my understanding on the human capacity to do the opposite of what is in accordance with his/her inner conviction and vision of the world, just because he/she wants to earn some money to survive. Improvement of the socio-economic situation of countries should then be seen as a contributing factor to capacity building of a potential workforce in the sense that it will help job seekers to turn towards professions they are sincerely willing to embrace rather than clutching at the first opportunity. Such evolution would help reduce frustration and disappointment, lack of job satisfaction and dishonourable behaviour into which some CPWs currently feel 'forced'.

Changes induced in the socio political context by the war have been a worrying fact in term of reception of this study by stakeholders in Mali and their commitment to implement the recommendations. Some partners who occupied strategic positions and were very committed to be drivers of change have been transferred from their

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[45] ORTB: Office de Radio et Télévision Nationale du Bénin

functions. Moreover, others died in the meantime. The most touching loss was the death of my manager Marcel Rudasingwa[46], former UNICEF representative in Mali who signed the formal agreement of that organization to be an official partner of this research. Although there is no doubt in the willingness of the new UNICEF managerial team in Mali to continue this effort and to use the research findings in support of UNICEF's work in the country, the death of Marcel is a damaging loss. His contribution would have been helpful for my effort to disseminate the report beyond the frontiers of Mali and across UNICEF's network.

All this points to the vulnerability of organizations and their dependence vis-à-vis the people who run them. Admitted or not, the cardinal principle of 'continuity of administration' necessarily has its limitations. Particularly in weak administrative settings of young countries like Mali. Nowadays, institutions suffer from fast changing priorities by which the new leaders do not always feel fully liable for the commitments taken by their predecessors.

To overcome all these apprehensions, I worked harder at the informal level to ensure that the vision carried by this study is shared by new stakeholders across public administrations and various institutions. This has meant an extra work load for me. But the outcome is encouraging as already indicated, with the meeting already agreed on to elaborate the action plan and monitoring strategies for cultural management in Mali.

Like any research, this one too raises questions for which the answers were only partially or not at all addressed by this study. In that sense, areas of research worthy of future exploration are multi-fold. These include at least two domains.

Firstly, one of the key questions that emerged in the research was what should be the meaning, implication and management for programmes of the notion of 'multi-culturalism' regularly invoked by UN agencies? Research participants constantly emphasized the fact that while organizations (UN agencies in particular) regularly call for respect of multiculturalism, they are paradoxically reluctant to integrate local realities as part of multiculturalism in programme management. Some participants even go as far as to affirm that big international organisations are working to impose

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[46] More than a manager and leader, Marcel was also a friend.

a unique view of the world. This led me to realize the need to explore and discuss ''multiculturalism'' in collaborative management of programmes.

Secondly, one of the strategies that this study found relevant to ensuring that good staff is recruited requires action before the recruitment: an investigation to identify his/her positioning vis-à-vis the professional value. This idea seems relevant in the sense that it can prevent the recruitment of CPWs who are too distant from professional/organizational values such as the type C or E workers painted in my models. Investigation would not only be beneficial to programme management, but also to human resource management. Each of us is aware of the legal, human, time and financial costs that involve contract termination for a staff who is already a member of an organisation. However, although this proposition of investigation seems relevant, its practical implementation will pose some challenges. For example it will certainly require a partnership with the living environment (community) of applicants. Therefore strategies for its operationalization need to be thought of carefully. Further studies could determine actions that will render operational the investigation of job applicants' cultural attitudes and practices as part of the recruitment process.

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Appendices related to research

Appendix 1: My Job description as Chief Child Protection, UNICEF Mali

GENERIC JOB DESCRIPTION
PROFESSIONAL POST

IMIS POST NUMBER: CASE NUMBER: 14323 POST TITLE: Chief Child Protection	Generic JD Code: **1PRJ4** IMIS JD Number: ICSC CCOG Code: UNICEF Code:
POST LEVEL: **Level 4**	CLASSIFIED LEVEL: DATE CLASSIFIED:

SECTION/DIVISION: Programme   DUTY STATION: Bamako

_____   _____

SIGNATURES

This is to certify that the contents are correct and complete and that the duties and responsibilities described are required in the organizational unit for the proper accomplishment of the functions.

Isselmou Ould Boukhary
Supervisor, Name and Title
(Signature)

Isselmou Ould Boukhary_____
Head of Section, Name and Title
(Signature)

Marcel Rudasingwa
Head of Office, Name and Title
(Signature)

1.   ORGANIZATIONAL SETTING

a)   **REPORTS TO:** Deputy Representative P-5 IMIS No. _4302

b) **RESPONSIBILITY FOR WORK OF OTHERS**

Title	**Level**	**Number**
Child Protection Specialist	NOC,	IMIS # 14325
Child Protection Specialist	NOC,	IMIS # 16160
Child Protection Specialist	NOC	IMIS # 20562
Programme Officer	L2	IMIS # 22628
Programme Assistant	GS-5	IMIS # 14328
Child Protection Specialist	NOC,	(to be determined)

2. **PURPOSE OF THE POST** *(Statement of overall post accountability.)*

   (1)   Under the general guidance of the Deputy Representative, responsible for the development, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Child protection programme within the country programme.(in the absence of a Chief, Sectoral Section.)

3. **MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** *(Describe in order of importance <u>what</u> incumbent does and <u>how</u>. Do not exceed more than 10-12 major duties. Indicate the percentage of time devoted to each duty or responsibility. Do not include duties of less than 5%.)*

Percentage

5%	**1.** Ensures the preparation of the Situation Analysis and its periodic update. Prepares sectoral input to the Country Programme Recommendation (CPR) and all related documents, (e.g., Plan of Operations, Project Plans of Action, Country Programme Summary Sheet (CPSS), Programme Summary Sheet (PSS)), for assigned programmes/projects.
5%	**2.** Participates in the formulation and development of programme goals, strategies and approaches for the UNICEF plan of cooperation. Plans, implements and monitors assigned activities.
10%	**3.** Participates with UNICEF/government/and other partners in the development of strategies, methodologies and identification of new approaches for improving protection programme delivery, with emphasis on advocacy, community participation and social mobilization.
5%	**4.** Reviews and evaluates the technical, institutional and financial feasibility and constraints of programmes/projects in coordination and collaboration with government and other partners.
15%	**5.** Provides technical support to government and non-government organizations at the national, regional and provincial levels in the planning, development and implementation stages of the protection programme. Plans, organizes and conducts training

	and orientation activities for government personnel and beneficiaries, for the purpose of capacity building at the central and regional levels, and expansion of coverage of services.
10%	**6.** Undertakes field visits, and surveys in order to monitor and evaluate project implementation. Identifies problems and proposes remedial action. Identifies alternative courses of action, to accelerate/improve protection programme delivery.
20%	**7.** Develops the workplan for the sector and monitors compliance to ensure objectives and targets are met and achieved. Guides and supervises professional and support staff. Ensures their training needs are met, and provides on-the-job training.

3.   MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES *(continued)*

Percentage

10%	**8.** **9.** Coordinates with Operations/Supply staff on supply and non-supply assistance activities. Approves disbursement of funds ensuring proper utilization and accountability, and that activities are within established plans of action, and the programme budget allotments. **10.**
10%	**11.** **12.** Coordinates activities and exchanges information/ideas with other programmes, to contribute to achievement of overall country programme objectives. Participates in establishing effective monitoring, information and reporting systems, and in the development of communication materials and strategies to support advocacy and community participation. **13.**
10%	**14.** **15.** Participates in the preparation of all programme reports for management, Board, donors, budget reviews, programme analysis, annual reports, etc. **16.**

4.   WORKING CONDITIONS *(Do the duties of this post involve frequent travelling or unusual conditions, or is it an office-based post?)*

Post is office-based, with frequent travel within the country and occasionally outside.

5.   IMPACT AND CONSEQUENCE OF ERROR

(a)   Describe the type of _decisions_ regularly made and the impact of those decisions.

Makes technical decisions on programme/project implementation and delivery, which would include financial and supply resource allocation and monitoring. This would affect the overall efficiency and effectiveness of programme delivery.

(b)   Describe the type of _recommendations_ regularly made and why they are important.

Makes recommendations on programme/project activities, feasibility and implementation; linkages with other sectors of UNICEF intervention; re-programming and re-scheduling of activities; external technical assistance, and resource requirements.

(c)   Describe the most damaging _error(s)_ that could be made in the performance of the job and their consequences.

Incorrect programming strategies and approaches would lead to inappropriate thrusts, impeding the achievement of goals and objectives, and the misuse of financial resources.

Ineffective interaction with the government and other partners will negatively affect the implementation and acceptability of UNICEF intervention.

6.   INDEPENDENCE _(Describe the degree of direction or management guidance the incumbent receives from the immediate supervisor, (e.g., incumbent exercises judgement, takes initiative, etc., under minimal supervision.)_

As the post is highly technical, supervision is limited to guidance on the overall programme achievements and organizational policies. Incumbent is expected to perform independently and to consult with the supervisor when major decisions and actions must be undertaken.

7.   GUIDELINES
(a)   Indicate which guidelines are required for performing the duties of the post _(rules, regulations, policies, procedures, practices, precedents, manuals, instructions, etc.)_

UNICEF programme manuals and policy guidelines
UNICEF Board Policy Paper, PRO's and Executive Directive
UNICEF Country Programme Plans
UNICEF personnel, financial, supply and administrative rules, regulations and manuals
Government development plans and policies
Office Workplan
Technical literature or related programmes
Cooperating Agencies guidelines and manuals

(b)   Describe the degrees to which interpretation of, and deviation from, existing guidelines are permitted, and the authority to propose or establish new guidelines.

The post is technical. The incumbent not only interprets guidelines, but contributes to the development of guidelines as the programme evolves. Incumbent is required to assess the most appropriate modes of action to accomplish the programme objectives.

8.   WORK RELATIONSHIPS

Indicate both the purpose and level of contacts within and outside UNICEF in order

to perform the work effectively.

	CONTACT		PURPOSE & FREQUENCY
a)	**Internal**		
	Representative/Sr.Programme	(F)	Policy direction/
	Officer		guidance and provision of
	technical advice;		
	Section/Programme Chiefs	(F)	Exchange of ideas and
	intersectoral cooperation;		
	Programme staff	(F)	
	Coordination/consultation on		
			programme/technical
	issues;		
	Information/Prog.Comm. staff	(F)	Strategies for
	information and social mobilization;		
	Operations/Supply Staff	(F)	Financial and supply
	management and monitoring;		
	Other Country Office staff	(F)	Coordination and
	information exchange;		
	Regional Advisers	(O)	Overall coordination/
	HQ Officers		consultation and
	exchange of		
			information.
b)	**External**		
	Government officials of relevant	(F)	Intersectoral
	cooperation,		
	Ministries, and regional/sectoral		advocacy, technical
	support		
	and provincial government		and programme/project
	counterparts		implementation
	UN and other international	(F)	Coordination of
	activities,		
	and bilateral agencies, NGO's		advocacy and exchange
	of		
			information.

9.   **QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES required to perform the duties of the post:**

(a)   **EDUCATION** *(Indicate the level of formal education and precise field and/or training and field of specialization required.)*

 Advanced university degree in Social Sciences with
 specialized focus in the human rights and/or child
 protection fields.

(b)   **WORK EXPERIENCE** *(Indicate the length and type of practical expericence required at the national and international levels.)*

  Eight years progressively responsible professional work experience
  at the national and international levels in programme planning,
  management, monitoring, and evaluation, in a related field.

(c) LANGUAGES *(Indicate the language requirements.)*

Fluency in French and English required.
Knowledge of the local working language of the duty station is an asset.

(d) COMPETENCIES *(Indicate what key competencies are required, such as computer knowledge, management, communication, negotiating or training skills, etc.)*
- Current knowledge of the latest developments and technology, in the field.
- Proven ability to conceptualize, develop, plan and manage programmes, as well as to impart knowledge and teach skills.
- Leadership and teamwork abilities.
- Good analytical, negotiating, communication and advocacy skills.
- Demonstrated ability to work in a multi-cultural environment and establish harmonious and effective working relationships both within and outside the organization.
- Computer skills, including internet navigation and various office applications.

Appendix 2: Guiding documents used for Individual Interviews and FGDs with Research

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE
(Child Protection Workers)

Confidentiality
Information collected during this survey is strictly confidential in accordance with the law Nº 05 - 026 of 06 June 2005 on National Statistic System and it cannot be used for judicial or fiscal purpose or for any other repression reason.

Participant N° |__|__|
|__| Governmental official:
|__| UN staff (Specify agency):
|__| NGO staff:
|__|Other staff (Specify):

Date: |__|__| |__|__| |__|__| *Start time* |__||__| |__|__| *End time* |__|__| |__|__|

Participant socio-demographic information

Region |__|
Age |__|__| *Sex* |__|
Matrimonial status |__| *Number of children in charge* |__||__|
Mother tongue |__|
Domain of initial training |__| *Jurist/Magistrate* |__| *Social worker*
                                    |__| *teacher/schoolmaster* |__| *sociologist*
                                    |__| *Medical attendant* |__| *other (specify)*

Education level |__|
Religion |__|

Professional information
Place of assignment……………………………… ……………...
Living place …………………………………………………………………………………
Occupation (Functional title)   …………………………………………………………...
Number of year(s) in Child Protection Programme |__||__|
Functional area:
   • *Policy making* |__|
   • *Care giving (direct front line workers in contact with children)* |__|
   • *Technical & fund supply* |__|

Note :
Mother tongue:
1 = Bambara   2 = Peulh 3 = Soninké   4= Sonraï   5 = Dogon 6 = Autre
Matrimonial status
1 = Single   2 = Married   3 = Divorced person   4 = Widow

Education level:
0 = No school attendance   1 = Primary
2 = Secondary   3 = University 4 = koranic school
Region:
0 = Bamako District 1 = Kayes 2 = Koulikoro 3 = Sikasso
4 = Ségou 5 = Mopti 6 = Tombouctou 7 = Gao 8 = Kidal
Religion :
1 = Muslim 2 = Catholic 3 = Protestant 4 = African Religion 5 = Other

Guiding questions for individual interviews with Child Protection Workers

Question 1: In general, what are your appreciations on the output of the work achieved to date with child protection programmes in Mali? What are your mobiles of satisfaction?

Question 2: What are the on-going challenges?

NB: If the participant identifies cultural practices and values as a key challenge, continue with question 3 and following. Otherwise, jump to question 4.

Question 3: How are potential mismatches between cultural practices/ values and children's rights managed?

Question 4: What do you think about on-going debates on children's right violations (Female Genital Cutting, Early Marriage, Street and begging children…) and the cultural values of the workers in relation to these child protection issues?

NB: If the participant identifies cultural practices and values as a key challenge, continue with question 5 and following. Otherwise, jump to question 8.

Question 5: In which extent do you think that mismatches and cultural practices impact on workers' performance and the achievement of the objectives targeted by employing Institution?

To what extent the poor results of the child protection programme in Mali could be attributable to mismatches experienced by workers between cultural practices/ values and children's rights?

Question 7: 'how do you manage any potential mismatch between cultural practices/ values and children's human rights'?

Question 8: Does your Institution show awareness or concern about any potential mismatches faced by employees?

Question 9: What suggestions could you make at personal and institutional levels to improve workers' capacity to deliver for child protection?

Thank you for your kind cooperation
Should you have further need of discussion don't hesitate to contact me on zadam@unicef.org
Phone 0023779523052 – Skype: zakari.adam3

INTERVIEW GUIDE

(Institutions' Directors, Representatives, Human Resource Officers and Programme Coordinators)

Confidentiality
Information collected during this survey is strictly confidential in accordance with the law N° 05 - 026 of 06 June 2005 on National Statistic System and it cannot be used for judicial or fiscal purpose or for any other repression reason.

Participant N° |__|__|
|__| Governmental official:
|__| UN staff (Specify agency):
|__| NGO staff:
|__| Other staff (Specify):

Date: |__|__| |__|__| |__|__| Start time |__||__| |__|__| End time |__|__| |__|__|

Participant socio-demographic information

Region	|__| *Age* |__|__|
Sex	|__| *Matrimonial status* |__|
Number of children in charge	|__||__|
Mother tongue	|__|
Domain of initial training	|__| *Jurist/Magistrate* |__| *Social worker*
	|__| *teacher/schoolmaster* |__| *sociologist*
	|__| *Medical attendant* |__| *other (specify)*
Education level	|__|
Religion	|__|

Professional information

Place of assignment……………………………… …………….….............................
Living place …………………………………………………………………………….
Occupation (Functional title)   …………………………….……………………………...
Number of year(s) in Institution's managerial position |__|
Functional area of Institution:

- *Policy making* |__|
- *Care giving (direct front line workers in contact with children)* |__|
- *Technical & fund supply* |__|

Note:
Mother tongue:
1 = Bambara   2 = Peulh 3 = Soninké 4= Sonrhaï 5 = Dogon 6 = Autre
Matrimonial status:
1 = Single   2 = Married   3 = Divorced person   4 = Widow
Education level:
0 = No school attendance   1 = Primary
2 = Secondary   3 = University 4 = koranic school
Region:
0 = Bamako District 1 = Kayes 2 = Koulikoro 3 = Sikasso
4 = Ségou 5 = Mopti 6 = Tombouctou 7 = Gao 8 = Kidal
Religion :
1 = Muslim 2 = Catholic 3 = Protestant 4 = African Religion 5 = Other

Guiding questions for individual interviews with Senior Managers of Employing Institutions (Directors, Representatives, HRO, Programmes Coordinators)

Question 1: Apart from well-known lack of funds, what other factors does your Institution perceive as main obstacles to results' attainment in child protection?

Question 2: Contrary to what happens in Health, Agricultural and other specific sectors, workers in child protection come from very wide educational and academic domains. How do you view this diversity of educational and academic background for work accomplishment in child protection?

Question 3: What do you think about on-going debates on children's right violations (Female Genital Cutting, Early Marriage, Street and begging children…) and the cultural values of your

staff in relation to these child protection issues? What is the nature of the correlation (conflictual, correspondence) between these values and the professional agenda of the workers?

Question 4: Within your institution and outside the working environment do you perceive discrepancies between your personnel's cultural values and your organizational agenda? How does it manifest?

Question 5: In which extent do you think that these discrepancies and cultural practices of workers impact on the performance and the achievement of objectives targeted by your Institution? To what extent?

No Evidence	Moderate cause	Important cause	Root cause

Question 6: How do your human resource policies and development system take into account mismatches management between culture and professional agenda?

Question 7: What are your rules, policies, strategies and practices to ensure correspondence between your organisation's values/objectives in child protection and that of your staff and how successful do you think they are?

Question 8: Is there any best practice in response to cultural mismatches management in your organization you would like to share with others?

Question 9: What other suggestions could be made to reduce the negative effects of cultural mismatches on workers' attitudes professional practices: in terms of training, recruitment and induction (orientation) process, working environment, etc.?

Question 10: What do you think should be the role of each main stakeholder (Staff & Management) in reducing cultural mismatches in the management of Child Protection Programme in Mali?

Thank you for your kind cooperation
Should you have further need of discussion don't hesitate to contact me on zadam@unicef.org
Phone 0023779523052 – Skype: zakari.adam3

Focus Groups with workers - Guide

Confidentiality
Information collected during this survey is strictly confidential in accordance with the law Nº 05 - 026 of 06 June 2005 on National Statistic System and it cannot be used for judicial or fiscal purpose or for any other repression reason.

General Information and socio-demographic characteristics of participants

- *Women   (25 years old and more)*   *Nber* |__|
- *Men (25 and more)*   *Nber* |__|
- *Young women (15-24)*   *Nber* |__|
- *Young men (15-24)*   *Nber* |__|

Date |__|__| |__|__| |__|__| *Region* |__|

Start time |__|__| |__|__| *End time* |__|__| |__|__|

Commune: ……………………..   *Place:* …………………………………………

Participant N°	*Sex*	*Age*	*Matrimonial status*	*Mother tongue*	*Education level*	*Number of children in charge*	*Professional activities (Function)*
1		|__|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
2		|__|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
3		|__|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
4		|__|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
5		|__|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
6		|__|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
7		|__|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	

Mother tongue
1 = Bambara   2 = Peulh 3 = Soninké   4= Sonrhaï   5 = Dogon 6 = Autre
Matrimonial status
1 = Single   2 = Married   3 = Divorced person   4 = Widow

Education level:
0 = No school attendance   1 = Primary
2 = Secondary   3 = University 4 = koranic school
Region:
0 = Bamako District 1 = Kayes 2 = Koulikoro 3 = Sikasso
4 = Ségou 5 = Mopti 6 = Tombouctou 7 = Gao 8 = Kidal

Guiding questions for focus groups with Child Protection Workers

Question 1: Contrary to what happens in Health, Agricultural and other specific sectors, workers in Child Protection come from very wide educational and academic domains. How do you view this diversity of educational and academic background for work accomplishment in child protection?

Question 2: In general are traditional values and practices very important to the people you work with?

Question 3: Is there a feeling that these value and practices are being misunderstood by 'outsiders'? But is it important that a country like Mali maintains its traditional practices? If so why?

Question 4: How can a balance be struck between traditional practices and children rights?

Question 5: In which extent do you think that effort done by workers to maintain balance between traditional practices and children rights impact on the outcome of your work?

Question 6: Do employing institutions show sufficient awareness (concern) about effort done by workers to maintain this balance? If yes, how?

Question 7: What suggestions could you make at personal and institutional levels to improve workers' capacity to deliver for child protection?

Thank you for your kind cooperation
Should you have further need of discussion don't hesitate to contact me on zadam@unicef.org
Phone 0023779523052 – Skype: zakari.adam3

Focus Groups with Institutions' Directors, Representatives, Human Resource Officers and Programme Coordinators

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Confidentiality
Information collected during this survey is strictly confidential in accordance with the law Nº 05 - 026 of 06 June 2005 on National Statistic System and it cannot be used for judicial or fiscal purpose or for any other repression reason.

General Information and socio-demographic characteristics of participants

- *Women   (25 years old and more)   Nber |__|*
- *Men (25 and more)   Nber |__|*
- *Young women (15-24)   Nber |__|*
- *Young men (15-24)   Nber |__|*

Date |__|__| |__|__| |__|__| Region |__|

Start time |__|__| |__|__| End time |__|__| |__|__|

Commune: ……………………..   Place: ……………………………………

Participant N°	Sex	Age	Matrimonial status	Mother tongue	Education level	Number of children in charge	Professional activities (Function)
1		|__|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	

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2		|__|__| |__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
3		|__|__| |__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
4		|__|__| |__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
5		|__|__| |__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
6		|__|__| |__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
7		|__|__| |__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	

Mother tongue
1 = Bambara   2 = Peulh 3 = Soninké   4= Sonrhaï   5 = Dogon   6 = Autre
Matrimonial status
1 = Single   2 = Married   3 = Divorced person   4 = Widow

Education level:
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2 = Secondary   3 = University 4 = koranic school
Region:
0 = Bamako District 1 = Kayes 2 = Koulikoro 3 = Sikasso
4 = Ségou 5 = Mopti 6 = Tombouctou 7 = Gao 8 = Kidal

Guiding questions for focus groups with Institutions' Directors, Representatives, Human Resource Officers and Programme Coordinators

Question 1: Apart from well-known lack of funds, what other factors do you, as Institution's managers perceive as main obstacles to results' attainment in child protection in Mali?

Question 2: In regard with children's right violations and your Organizations' agenda, what do you think are the cultural values of child protection staff?

Question 3: Within your institution and outside the working environment do you perceive mismatches between your personnel's cultural values and your organizational agenda?

Question 4: In which extent do you think that these mismatches and cultural practices of workers impact on the performance and the achievement of objectives targeted by your institutions?

Question 5: How do you traditionally address this issue of cultural mismatches?
(Your rules, policies, strategies and practices to ensure correspondence between your organisation's values/objectives in child protection and that of your staff)
What lessons can be learned from these experiences?

Question 6: What other suggestions could you make at personal and institutional levels to improve workers' capacity to deliver for child protection in Mali context?

Appendix 3: Example of Individual Interview with CPW

Confidentiality
Information collected during this survey is strictly confidential in accordance with the law Nº 05 - 026 of 06 June 2005 on National Statistic System and it cannot be used for judicial or fiscal purpose or for any other repression reason.

Participant identification

Participant   : N° |_0_|1_|
                                                 NGO staff: This staff is at the same time direct worker & NGO Manager
Region   : |_0_| Bamako District
Age   : |_4_|_8_|
Sex   : |_M_|
Matrimonial status   : |_2_| (Married)
Number of children in charge   : |_5_|
Mother tongue   : |_1_| (Bambara)
Domain of initial training   : |_X_| (other). This participant has a study background in Accounting
Education level   : |_3_| (University study)
Religion   : |_1_| (Muslim)

Professional information

Place of assignment   : Bamako with intervention at national level
Living place   : Bamako
Occupation (Functional title)   : NGO Manager
Number of year(s) in Child Protection Programme : 12
Functional area   : Care giving (direct front line workers in contact with children)

Zakari (Introductory remarks)

I know you participated in my half day workshop where I presented my research project on 'Building Capacity for Advancing Child Protection in Mali'. I believe that improving understanding of our work, its results as well as challenges surrounding it can be helpful for us and for our employing institutions. You've already kindly provided some information that helped me to fill above heading of my paper and I am now following this up with semi structured interview with you. I will repeat the same exercise with other colleagues to better understand experiences and perspectives to ultimately inform and help shaping our organisations' management of Human Resources. As indicated, I will be recording the interview and I would like to thank you for agreeing to this and more globally for agreeing to be part of the brainstorming. I hope to end the whole work and to restitute the anonymised findings at the conference that I plan to hold with all of you by October in Bamako. I have a priori structured the interview through a handful of questions but please feel free to talk as fully and frankly as you wish to. Nothing you say will be attributed to you as an individual.

Now **my first question**: In general, what are your appreciations on the work achieved to date in child protection programmes in Mali? What are your mobiles of satisfaction?

Programme Manager NGO xxxxx (on fight against Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting)

I think my own story is a condensed answer to your question. First, I came into the field of child protection through the fight against female circumcision because in my life story, I went through specific experience that was heavy for me to carry. Before being in the NGO, I had a super market store in which one partner always came and invited me to display posters on the campaign against excision. However, my own mother was a renowned circumciser. She was even the queen of the perpetuators of this practice. She was born and raised into a family of blacksmiths. Although sometimes she did not materially intervene to cut girls, it was she who set the date of collective excision at our community in the region of Koulikoro.

One day, I witnessed a collective excision that involved thirty one (31) girls. One died on the scene following a hemorrhage that villagers could not stop. Back at home, I asked my mother why this happened. She told me that the girl died because people did not complied with the timing of the ceremony and therefore a curse had infiltrated the ceremony. Also, (she added) with excision of large groups like this one, one or two girls should always die as a sacrifice for the ceremony.

Excision is therefore a philosophical fact that I had in mind. But when I was sufficiently aware of the issue through films, readings and sensitization of my partner, I approached my mother and I informed her that I no more agree with everything she had said about the practice.

Likewise, you can understand that my first mobile of satisfaction in this work is that I could henceforth understand that circumcision is an evil manifestation and I am transformed into another man. If self-transformation cannot be a legitimate and greatest satisfaction mobile, I don't know what else can delight a human being. Don't you think so Zakari?

Then after, I still with my NGO succeeded in bringing hundreds of families to change their perception about female circumcision. If you add our work to that of other stakeholders, NGOs and Government institutions, you'll understand that we can have reasons to be satisfied even if the battle is far from won.

Zakari Question 2:

When you say the battle is far from won, to which challenges do you specifically refer to?

Programme Manager NGO xxxxx:

Again, I will answer you by continuing my story with my parents. You know, after showing her my disagreement with girls' genital cutting, I kept sensitizing my mother on permanent basis until she abandoned excision. But it was not all. Because though she abandoned excision, the community did not give up. Much still remains to be done.

I motivated also my mother to talk with other circumcisers and get them to abandon the practice. I have changed my business area, abandoning the accounting in my store to become a facilitator of child protection against the practice of female mutilation. I created an association and then transformed it into an NGO specialized in the fight against Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C). But the practice continues to date.

One day, although now widely known as a great promoter of the fight against female circumcision with my NGO, my village still had recourse to me to give money to support the organization of a collective ceremony of circumcision that they were preparing to celebrate. Such great ceremonies generate costs indeed. Naturally, I replied that I could not give them money to go for a practice

against which I fight. They pressured my father and mother who came together to see me here in Bamako. They told me that they know I am against circumcision before adding: 'You know very well that even if you do not give this money, the village will still host the ceremony and girls will be cut. You therefore need to give at least 25,000 FCFA if you cannot pay the totality of 50,000F they ask for.' My parents did not stop the pressure on me and I was obliged to give 25,000 FCFA (approximately £ 32) against my will to help organize this ceremony of collective circumcision in Koulikoro.

As you can see, despite the fact that my family no longer cut our girls, the practice continues with our indirect involvement although we have left the village to settle in Bamako and in spite of the fact that I am activist of fight against FGM/C. Just seeing that you have a social position a little better, the whole village comes to you to charge you with their problems and to get money for various needs, including excision which for them is an ordinary need that must be met. Although I fight against the phenomenon, I am still part of my community and that is the problem. My position does not matter for them. What interests them is that I have a little more money and I have to help the village. This financial support I brought really shocked me and I sulked for a long time my parents for making me complicit of the practice.

Zakari Question 3:

How do you then manage these contradicting challenges? With your employees and colleagues who certainly look at you, with your financial partners including UNICEF, and more importantly perhaps with yourself personally?

Programme Manager NGO xxxxx:

I decided to turn this embarrassment into an opportunity. I increased effort in partnership mobilization, deciding them to support me on a larger scale to reduce the practice because I realized that it is not sufficient that S… (This is his first name) change opinion on the phenomenon. The sustainability of my own position is tribute of global evolution of my community and I must create a critical number of people who share my opinion. I installed one antenna of my NGO directly in Koulikoro, the region and community where I was born to conduct outreach activities: films on the consequences of female cutting every night, animations and various lectures, discussions, meetings ... and now, there have been changes. In my community of 25 villages, we collected over 3000 signatures and commitments to abandon female cutting. The change begins.

However, having learned the lesson from my own example that a large gap may exist between the function of the staff and his private practice/attitude at home, I took the opportunity to strengthen the administrative management of my staff. Before, the only legal paper that our employees were invited to sign at their entrance into service was their contract. Today, in addition to the contract, I have developed a commitment that they must read carefully before coming three days after to sign the contract. During the recruitment of each agent, the vision and commitment of **xxxxx** are clearly explained to the applicant who must show his adherence before being recruited. The three days are for the period of reflection, as I ask him/her to go even discuss the terms and conditions of his/her commitment with their family before coming to sign. Doing so, I hope to ensure that the commitment of the staff member is supported behind by his spouse and the whole family in its large Malian conception.

Zakari Question 4:

Could I have a copy of this commitment paper? How do you monitor it and do you believe that it has changed something?

Programme Manager NGO xxxxx:

Of course! Although we are not behind our staff with police officers, we have tips on how to follow if they comply or not with their professional commitment in their private sphere. You know, the Malian community works as one big family. Especially in rural areas where we operate, it is difficult to do something without it being known by neighbors. And we are among neighbors (laugh). You understand! This is one of great advantages of being a national NGO. We can see and we can hear in difference of big International NGOs that are well funded but sometimes blind and ignorant of local dynamics. Thus we have terminated the contract of one of our nurses last year. She had circumcised her daughter on the grounds that her husband asked insistently for this excision. When this was reported to us, we had questioned her and she confessed.

I will make photocopies of our commitment that I will give you. Ah! You should have it already since UNICEF is one of our partners. We have been producing this commitment with the latest donor report and fund justification that we submitted to your institution.

Zakari Question 5:

You know, we receive so many papers ... If possible, I would like at the end of our discussion that you give me a copy. But let us continue our discussion for the moment. While your NGO is focused specifically on female circumcision, what are your thoughts on other violations of children's rights (Early Marriage, Street and begging children, child trafficking…) and the debate related to the cultural values of the workers in relation with these child protection issues?

Programme Manager NGO xxxxx:

You know, it's the same thing. It is failing to embrace everything that we focus only on excision. I will not insult you by pretending to teach you something new by remembering that the National Programme for Fight against the Practice of Excision (PNLE) has identified a total of 16 harmful traditional practices including female genital mutilation. Our NGO works in tight solidarity with other organisations against all these practices. We are in the network of NGOs that fight all forms of violation of children's rights even if the commitment we oblige our colleagues to sign for the time is only on excision.

Zakari Question 6:

In which extent do you think that mismatches and cultural practices impact on workers' performance and the achievement of the objectives targeted by employing Institution?

Programme Manager NGO xxxxx:

It's simple Zakari. You will agree with me that our excised former colleague's daughter will be henceforth counted amongst circumcised children, thus reducing the number of children saved from this practice. Like this, our NGO sees itself delayed in achieving its objectives. Is it not so? How can you convince someone else when you yourself are not convinced, and most importantly your interlocutor knows that you are not convinced? Don't forget that there is no place for a worker where to hide his behaviour in these rural communities. For me there is no doubt that our achievement and our capacity to deliver are strongly tribute of the level of our individual and sincere commitment to challenge several 'truths' that we received from our parents and cultures. Thirty five years and even more now that civil society and governmental institutions are working (or are pretending to work) on this issue and you can judge by yourself the result achieved at

national level. According to the last national Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), more than 85% of girls and women are still victims of female genital mutilation. In some regions like Kayes, this figure even raises to 98% though child protection workers from all intervening agencies are posted everywhere. What do you think is the explanation of such poor result if not that people are not doing what for they are recruited, basically because they don't believe excision is a problem.

Zakari Question 7:

What can then be done at both personal and institutional levels to improve workers' capacity to deliver for child protection in regard with mismatches you are precisely pointing out?

Programme Manager NGO xxxxx:

My lesson and recommendations are that

- The worker must ensure that he is truly committed. He must make visible his commitment as a child protection worker. Around him, everyone must realize that. He must convey a sense of commitment to his audience, removing any complex and agreeing to show his position in public. Unfortunately many people pretend to work in the fight against female circumcision while they refuse to disapprove the practice in public place or to display their opinion. Our institutions have unfortunately not a strong commitment to follow up with their workers' behaviours once they are outside of the Institution.

- The institutions should follow their personnel to see the level of implementation of their commitment in their daily lives and practices. I already gave the example of one of our nurses that we had fired because she had cut her daughter.

- As institutions' Managers (because I have fortunately also this position at the same time that I am a direct ground worker), we must also encourage and support psychologically our staff, provide them with training to enable them to understand that the meaning of their work goes beyond monthly pay.

- The vision and objectives of the employing institutions must be clearly explained to the staff during his/her recruitment. In our case, it is about the fight against female genital mutilation and other forms of violence against children and women. We hired a partner who is currently working on our constitutional policies to help us to simplify these documents and convert them into a 'Code of conduct' for staff. But in the meantime, once the staff comes into our NGO, the first question we ask him is: what is your vision on excision? Do your people at home excise their girls? If yes, what have you done against that practice? You do not come in our NGO to just work with us. You come in this NGO because you have a conviction to share against female cutting. If such conviction does not guide you, it means that your place is not with us.

- But the responsibility to deal with this situation is not only the duty of the workers. It also requires that institutions stand up behind their staff. I interpret this study as a proof that UNICEF henceforth aware of this important problem is committed to help for collective awareness raising. This is an important step in the good direction against our misfortune. Otherwise, even if the agent is individually engaged to forward his organization's objectives, he may not have the fortitude to face his family and the community if he is alone. It's only together that we can be strong. There are examples of well-known and great personalities who were rejected by their Muslim community because of their fight against female genital mutilation and their commitment for gender promotion. The case of our current ambassador in Canada is a telling example in this regard. That woman was banished by her family and community and she faced several difficulties while intervening with her NGO to promote children's right. But in face of her misfortune, no

governmental department, no institution or group had provided any kind of support for her. Even in my case too, when facing the pressure of my community and my parents to give FCFA 25,000 in support of collective excision ceremony, I would have been fortunate to benefit from any kind of peer psychological support or orientation maybe I would not have given that money. I don't know in which form this can be done, but my conviction is that support must be provided for staff facing trouble in their living place.

Zakari Question 8:

Many thanks for taking time to talk with me about your role in child protection. Is there anything we haven't covered that you think important to share, remembering that our focus is on 'Building Capacity for Advancing Child Protection in Mali'?

Programme Manager NGO xxxxxxxxxx:

No. I think I have said what I deem important in relation with your research subject that I find very interesting. I don't know why national authorities are simulating to ignore this reality when their discourse at international tribunes tend to prove that they are doing effort to advance children's and women's right. My strong wish is that you and UNICEF use this initiative to push our authorities toward clear recognition of cultural difficulties experienced by all workers (including themselves at political level) to design more relevant strategies and interventions to support us.

Zakari (ending remarks):

We will certainly discuss the following steps of this study during the restitution conference on my findings. Meanwhile, should you have further needs of discussion don't hesitate to contact me on zadam@unicef.org or by phone at 0023779523052 or by Skype: zakari.adam3

Thank you again for your cooperation.

Appendix 4: Example of a FGD with CPWs

Confidentiality
Information collected during this survey is strictly confidential in accordance with the law N° 05 - 026 of 06 June 2005 on National Statistic System and it cannot be used for judicial or fiscal purpose or for any other repression reason.

General Information and socio-demographic characteristics of participants

- *Women (25 years old and more)   Nber |__|*
- *Men (25 and more)   Nber |__|*
- *Young women (15-24)   Nber |__|*
- *Young men (15-24)   Nber |__|*

Date |__|__| |__|__| |__|__| Region |_0_| Bamako

Start time |__|__| |__|__| *End time |__|__| |__|__|*

*Commune: **Bamako**   Place: Badalabougou*

Partici pant N°	*Sex*	*Age*	*Matrimo nial stat us*	*Mother tongue*	*Educatio n level*	*Number of children in charge*	*Professional activities (Function)*
1		|__|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
2		|__|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
3		|__|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
4		|__|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
5		|__|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
6		|__|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	
7		|__|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|	|__|__|	

Mother tongue
1 = Bambara   2 = Peulh 3 = Soninké 4= Sonrhaï 5 = Dogon 6 = Autre
Matrimonial status
1 = Single   2 = Married   3 = Divorced person   4 = Widow

Education level:
0 = No school attendance   1 = Primary
2 = Secondary   3 = University 4 = koranic school
Region:
0 = Bamako District 1 = Kayes 2 = Koulikoro 3 = Sikasso
4 = Ségou 5 = Mopti 6 = Tombouctou 7 = Gao 8 = Kidal

Introduction: Zakari: I know some of you participated in my half day workshop where I presented my research project on 'Building Capacity for Advancing Child Protection in Mali'. I believe that improving understanding of our work, its results as well as challenges surrounding it can be helpful for us and for our employing institutions. You've already kindly provided some information that helped me to fill above heading of my paper and I am now following this up with semi structured interview with you. I will repeat the same exercise with other colleagues to better understand experiences and perspectives to ultimately inform and help shaping our organisations' management of Human Resources. As indicated, I will be recording the interview and I would like to thank you for agreeing to this and more globally for agreeing to be part of the brainstorming. I hope to end the whole work and to restitute the anonymised findings at the conference that I plan to hold with all of you by October in Bamako. I have a priori structured the

interview through a handful of questions but please feel free to talk as fully and frankly as you wish to. Nothing you say will be attributed to you as an individual.

Now my first question: In general, what are your appreciations on the profile of child protection workers? Contrary to what happens in Health, Agricultural and other specific sectors, workers in child protection come from very wide educational and academic domains. How do you view this diversity of educational and academic background for work accomplishment in child protection?

Participant 1 (Woman): This kind of work must take multidimensional aspects. Some aspects will affect health. Protection touches the health of the child, it is about social relationships, parent-child relationships etc. So a sociologist might perhaps be well at this level. I think that a multidisciplinary team is really good if really efforts and synergies can be combined to face situations that are challenging for the protection of the child.

Participant 2 (Man): What I wanted to say about it, heu multidisciplinary is probably enriching I agree. But considering that in Mali, working in team is unfortunately very difficult to realize, I mean it is very difficult to work with others, the 'multidisciplinary' leads us always in what I call ''Everydoer'' [''toutologue.''].

Zakari : Everywhat ??? What does it mean?

Participant 2 (Man): No. Everydoer' This means I am a pharmacist for example, =

Zakari: = Ahannn ''Everydoer'', that is to say a person who does everything?

Participant 2 (Man): Correct! Do everything. Heeéééé it is true that over time we may have acquired sensitivities in different areas, but the requirement to work as a team with other skills must always be taken into account and we should try to do it as much as possible.

Zakari: Ok.

Participant 3 (Woman): I think that talking about child protection is also talking about advocacy. What we are doing will strengthen our policies and laws. It can also contribute to the international level with regard to everything we stand for.

Zakari: Ok other comment? Yes.

Participant 4 (Woman): It depends on the position. If you have a higher position of responsibility with a high level of advocacy, it is perhaps better that you have certain types of profiles. If you have a job in the field, dealing with children, maybe you need specialists such as psychologists etc, I think it depends on the type of position you hold. Some jobs require more technical and others require more general knowledge or ability to negotiate with governments or other good. It depends in my opinion on all these parameters.

Participant 1 (Woman): All in all, as the saying goes: *[he then shifts in Bambara for the following sentence:]* we have to act together. And this long time is so that even if we must have heuu

Participant 5 (Man): I think the ideas are really concordant that we should give chance to the convergence in programme. It is clear. But perhaps where there may be a problem is the process. Sure. As Julie said, I think it also depends on which side you are. If you want the work to be synergistic thank God, it will be welcome. But if everyone would pull the blanket on his side by

saying children issue is the business of the psychologist or the business of the doctor etc, this will end on a compartmentalization that would complicate the work . Otherwise, I think that this idea of working in synergy, in complementarity, I think we could not find better idea.

Participant 2 (Man): It's true. I am formerly a pharmacist, and I had during my fifteen years a pharmacy in a small village on an island in the Mediterranean, and my cultural conflict was that I spent more time advising my clients not to use drugs rather than selling those drugs to them. So as a pharmacist, I lived on the sale of drugs, but my personal beliefs of naturalist led me to convince them that all these drugs are not always useful. *[Laughs]*

Zakari: *[Laughs]* I can see.

Participant 2 (Man): At the end, I changed job.

Zakari: Ah! At the end, you changed job.

Participant 2 (Man): Yes. But for a while, I first developed shelf with medicinal plants to treat people with natural herbs. That helped me to combine my personal conviction with work, with my profession.

Zakari: Ok. In which extent do you think that effort done by workers to maintain balance between traditional practices and children rights impact on the outcome of your work?

Participant 3 (Woman): The cultural aspect has many many negative impacts on child protection. Heuu, I visited a community in the month of May. And we were in a small group with women, with religious leaders, with communal leaders and all, and we were talking about practices that are against the good protection of children in the community. They started talking about education and hard work that children have to face at the community level. They talked about early marriage, and when we asked what solutions they would recommend, they said they have no solutions because they are poor, they need help etc. That was the response of men, but the women said that a child of 8 years, 9 years already is able to alternate his parents on work in the fields to lead cows, to cultivate, etc. since fathers think that with 2 or 3 children, they must now rest and it is the children who must do everything. So this is a problem for us. Girls who also went to school now dropped out since parents think they should quickly bring them in marriage to the new families-in-law to contribute to their expenses etc. So there is a whole mix of situations that actually exists in communities. These cultural considerations undermine children situation in the community.

Participant 5 (Man): I do not know if what I'm going to outline fits with your question. In Mali since 1962, we believe that corporal punishment is prohibited in schools. I have a son who is 6 years. And I managed to find a good school for him to study. While we were discussing one day Madam, the boy and me, I said heuu - the child is the namesake of my father. So I call him 'my dad' according to our cultural practices - So I said 'Ah my dad, you're losing weight a little. What happens?' He replied, 'Oh, it's Mrs' whip that makes me lose weight.' I said 'Aahan? Mrs' whip?' He was actually talking of his teacher. I was surprised and angry to hear that the teacher use to flog my child at school and to my wife I said: 'Let me take my car immediately. I'll go to see this teacher. How can this be?' Then, began a contradictory discussion and argumentation between my wife and me; she said no, for a child to be well educated, he should be flogged from time to time by his teacher. I then felt alone. Now schools have almost closed. But every time I say good ..., when heuuu when Heuu. It seems to me that heuu, it seems he [the child] knows my position eventually. Then when I told him "my father! What the teacher did with you today? 'She did not

hit me, but she pulled me by the ear.' he answered. However, I think he is a child heuu, in his school marks report, he is always ranked 1st. I know he works well. Maybe he has some behaviour in the classroom that his teacher does not understand at all. And it is heuu, it is… I finally found myself between heuu, through my every day professional activities I say that children should not be victim of violence at school, and now it turns out that it is my own child who is flogged at school. And if I have to go to complain, it is my wife who says 'No, it is normal for children to be whipped." Can you see this contradiction?

Zakari: I can see.

Participant 5 (Man): *[Laughs]*. That is what I wanted share.

Participant 1 (Woman): I have two small examples that really marked me. The first is related to the education of my son, my second boy. When he started to reach the age of 18, he was 17 years old; he started to show undesirable behaviors. And he was member of their heuu how they call that thing? Heuu parliament *[another participant in the group helped her to find her words]* 'Children's Parliament', yes Children's Parliament. He was parliament member at a given level. He integrated their notions and things so that finally, personally, I was totally lost with the behavior of my child. However I was trying to understand, because I am, I have had the chance to go to school. I'm thus on the side of modernism as we say. He went to a private school and everything. And one day he exaggerated. And when he exaggerated and as we women use to do it, I started telling him of for this, scolding him and so on. And there were people in my family that day. My cousins, brothers and sisters were there. And suddenly he reacted by saying: 'Oh really you, you mom, you become unpleasant. You do not know that it is your duty? Everything you've done, you're telling me you did this, you did that. You have done your duty ; your duty of mom. Don't you know? Huh!' For me to answer: ''But what is your duty vis-à-vis me? He said that actually perhaps I do not really understand things. For this reason, he will bring me some books and documents on the rights of children for me to read and have better understand of my role as mother; as if I was not working in the field of children *[Laughs]*.

Now the biggest problem I had was the reaction of other family members: 'That's it! That's what we told you. You have made your child a white man child, a small *toubab*. Now you see his reaction? We kept telling you every day he must be corrected. When you do not want your child to cry, it is he who will make you cry. And that day, you'll regret it. And the lesson to be learned according to my cousin is precisely that I should make the child cry to avoid him making me cry. You know, I worked with COMADE, the Malian Coalition on the Rights of the Child. We were with UNICEF the funders of this Children's Parliament project and everything. So I was really disappointed that day.

The second example I can also remember was a terrible shock for me. We had an event, you know February 6, 2008 or 2007 *[Each 6 February, African countries celebrate the fight against FGM and this day is known through the slogan of 'Zero tolerance for FGM]*. After the party, instead of going home I said hey, I have my aunt in Medina, I'll go to say hello to her. As the celebration was live on TV, the family had already seen me on TV and everyone was prepared to attack me. So, I go into the family and I greeted my aunt that I love very well. She did not speak. I went to her house, in her room. She followed me into the room and then she said: ''A Muslim like you, a dignified girl, of noble birth like you. You go to put yourself ... in such stories, knowing that your husband has died and people.., how they will perceive you? Hein? Because you're a free woman now; you go to put yourself in stories of brothels, to make brothels child, because girls who will not be cut, these girls that you are trying to protect, they will become...' Ah, that day, I cried. I really cried. I was shocked badly. She raised the point that my husband died and I realized that perhaps for the rest of the community, since I am no longer united in wedlock so I'm perceived as

being in these stories of ... of libertinism. That, that was a great shock. I was very uncomfortable. I have my cousins who attended very prestigious schools and have made high Education in the family. Seeking for consolation, I went to one of these cousins there. As I sat down, he said 'what wrong with you?' and I started to cry. I told him the problem and he said, 'But the aunt is right'. Surprised I said ... Every time I come here in family, I do not know how to broach the subject with you. Because for me, given how our society is, they are people with whom we cannot discuss these issues. It's very difficult. I have no capacity for this. I do not know how to engage the discussion. But with you, all the time, we debate about that and I thought you understood very well. He replied 'Yes, we understood. But what remains in our memory is that when we were young, these uncut girls, we laughed at them. And these uncut girls, we 'used' them lot because they were weak. So you, you can still stay with your ideas there. As far as our girls are concerned, we will cut them whether you like it or not.' As such, I left the place with remorse because as a woman, as aunt, I have to be consulted in relation to female genital cutting to give my opinion whenever girls in family are concerned. This is how things are normally done in our culture. It is a rule and I have a right to be consulted prior to any FGM. And since then, I have not heard of female genital cutting in my family though the practice is still ongoing. They do no more inform me. They do no more seek for my clearance as required by custom. This is why that law against FGM, the day it will come, the day they will vote it, ah nooooo. Maybe I would no more have a family ooo *[Laughs]*. I may also be put in jail déééé *[Laughs]*.

Zakari: Is there a feeling that these value and practices are being misunderstood by 'outsiders'? But is it important that a country like Mali maintains its traditional practices? If so why?

Participant 6 (Man): I had an experience with the protection program when I was in Ségou. We received funding from UNICEF to conduct a study on the issue of children talibé in Segou. So we did that study. And we had heuuu, UNICEF also recommended to us to undertake its restitution to the marabouts. So during this workshop restitution, I had a very clear position with regard to the abuse inflicted to talibé children by marabouts. At some point, they started heuuu. The question they asked me was to know if I am really a Muslim? The way I was questioning their practice…. So heuu but I stood firm on my position on the fact that it is also the whole society that is accomplice of this right violation, encouraging… and I even add that some parents who send their children to the marabouts are irresponsible. It is a form of irresponsibility. My speech has sparked an outcry. During the coffee break, people, heuu some people approached me to invite me not to talk this way in front of old people, that is not worthy of me especially since I'm Cissé. I told them that my father is a great marabout. He is a marabout, but he is an intellectual. I said heuu my beliefs are mine and with my father I heuu discuss. So I am also capable to discuss and show you that the treatment that you who are educators inflict upon children is not acceptable; because a marabout should be an educator. But this discussion attracted on me an aversion of marabouts for a long time. The programme was funded by UNICEF and we started a series of training of these heuu marabouts on the CRC. And before the training began, heeu, for me, heu I had to do heuu, I was obliged to go door to door to these marabouts to make them understand the merits and sense of my interventions, I told them that it is not because I am against marabouts, it's just that there is a situation here and I am trying to uncover it. So even if you have a real good and coordinated will, at some point, there is a great social constraint there, which leads us from frustration to frustration. Thank you.

Participant 2 (Man): I do not have a witness statement of course, but it is true that there are conflicts between the cultural situation and the professional life. I do not think that what we say and what we do are really matching. Because I think we always say it, but it is still very difficult to do heuu, to make a communication and strategies that takes into account the socio-cultural aspects. We always talk about it but we concretely act very rarely. Example: when I see heuu, I'm

Sicilian, I'm white European, but Sicily as you know is in the south of Europe. When I see children's parliament on TV, children who dress up and go to the Prime Minister, they think they are at the same level with the Minister or the President of the Republic. They put tricolor stuff like Mali flag as do the Parliament President. It's symbolic, but these are very difficult to manage at home. I was heuu, when … Let me finish with a testimony. When I was in elementary school in Sicily, I had a teacher who was sadistic. He struck the children dramatically. Fortunately I was never flogged because my mom had been his teacher. So he knew he could not hit me. However I am convinced that if I spank my son when I am not very angry, it will not hurt him. I always tell my friends, do not wait to be too angry to punish a child. You must do it symbolically. It is much more useful than waiting until you lose self-control to start hitting anyhow. It means we need measure in everything.

Participant 4 (Femme): We're in the framework of institutions that provide financial and technical support and heu I want to talk about income generating activities. I am part of this framework of technical and financial support but as expatriate person, someone from another culture. We are, heeu I say 'we' in the plural, but I could also say 'I'. As you can certainly imagine, we are also facing a cultural conflict because we are in face of another culture, confronted to different practices that are not known in our culture. So it is difficult to understand, to imagine ourselves in place of peoples... I think we cannot even get into their situation. Heuuu the difficulty I find when you're on the ground, heuuu particularly for people like me who have a sociological sensitivity heuuu we have this tendency of trying to understand why in a given society practices continue. I think we are more open. Other interveners do not have this training background and they are not open at all. For them for example, FGM is NEVER good. NEVER! I've attended conferences with Whites *[It should be noted that participant 4 is White European too]*, toubab who say aha, FGM, never! I think as far as I am concerned, I cannot react like that because I try to understand, my training helps me to understand why this society do this practice and another does not? Where from it comes? How does it evolve? Etc. What changes are internal, external, etc? I have a background that predisposes me to it. But all expatriate actors have not always this training. And this is a problem. We are in a strong cultural conflict because they believe that since their culture does not practice these things, the culture of others should not do. That's not good. I think this also creates a distance between technical and financial actors on the one hand and the local workers on the other hand. This does not help to good cooperation and understanding and it does not help to a frank and open dialogue. I am aware of this because my experience heuu, when I talk to friends who work with me in the same thematic they say 'if tomorrow I have someone within my project, a local staff who tells me that he practices female genital cutting I will ahaaa'. I usually answer 'Yes, but we must also try to understand.' I mean we live and work in this environment that is very heuuu it is complicated because we too in our side we also have conflicts. Even me, despite my training etc., I can see that there are some projects heuu, even me I do not personally agree with. But what can I do? Since I am inside. There are some behaviour and way to do things in part of some Western donors, let's say European, Western, American etc that are not good. I myself do not agree at all. But hey, I'm inside! My training tells me that this is not possible. A culture, if it will change, it is from inside that it changes. It is itself that decides to change and how it will change etc. So some projects are not well elaborated. They do not held people themselves to desire change. In these cases, I myself am also in a real conflict, but I hope things will change *[Laughs]*.

Participant 1 (Woman): In connection with the institutional anchoring, especially in the fight against female genital cutting that is a matter of protection; Malian employees are often factor of blocking to initiatives, in relation with the achievement of the objectives set by the program. For example, we, when we started the program, we made sure we could go in a dual approach. One approach would be to work in transversal because the issue of FGM is a matter that affects all

categories with which perhaps all programs work. So it was agreed that FGM is part of cultural background for which each programme must be able to find space to talk and sensitize, and why not do specific actions. That's how we started. But the hindering factor with regard to this transversal approach was that there are employees among us who are hèèèèè against stopping excision. Can I say that? I mean they do not agree because for them, FGM as practice still has its place in our society. It is fully justified for them. And imagine yourself eeeh, some of these people are doctors, people who have great degrees, people listen to them, they have voice and they are leaders. You know, we are all from villages and we know that at this level of study, when you speak in the village people listen to you. You are a great great leader. So there are many people who are behind them and they totally rely on them. People like that; totally against the work they are paid for. It requires a strong institutional commitment to really be able to change these things. At that time, we had a Director (a woman) who was very, very committed. We did collective reflections in order to bring a little some colleagues down, to the reality of the situation.

And she (the director) said, well, we will not begin the work until at the institutional level everybody adheres to the programme, but not by force. So I think it was with that approach that began with awareness, information, debates, consultations that more than the majority has adhered to the project and we even saw people who have taken the decision to no longer practice excision at their home. So this too is a shock; being on a program where you are not supported and people you work with do not even see the relevance of the work you do. It is as if you sweat in the rain and nobody sees it. You, you fight, you think you follow an ideal that everyone should embrace and unfortunately there are people who should support some great values that are there and they are not willing... You talk and colleagues laugh at you and it is finally only in your ability to overcome obstacles that you count to impose yourself. On the issue of expatriates, this too is also a very strong concern; very important, especially at the community level. I don't want to go further into this aspect. Otherwise, it would be better to reduce the involvement of expatriates on the field of excision to the minimum possible, particularly at the local level. This strategy helps a lot. Ousss We did this experience because we brought once an expatriate in a village where we wanted to organize a village talk on the FGM, hmm *[laughs]*. People came up to the place heinn!!! They were all excited, very enthusiastic and there were drums and everything to welcome us. But once we started to have our seats (chairs), because we were with the White expatriate, well, the village chief called on his people to tell them that this entire story on the fight against female genital cutting is Whites' story. He demobilizes everybody .., and the crowd of people left the place one by one.

Participant 2 (Man): I know some expatriates, high intellectuals who accept female genital cutting. There is a great Italian psychiatrist...

Participant 4 (Woman): This happened with us also, I too, I often wonder if I should go to field visit or not etc. Well, finally, it was decided that heuu, it is true that my partner makes no limitation to my involvement, because I thought this is a joint decision, as my partner tells me nothing, good.. However, in attitude, yes it happened to me, there are villages where I can clearly feel that I am not welcome and this, I feel it very quickly. There are other villages where ... I tried it during the focus groups that we conducted with villagers, when I was given the floor, I tried immediately to say we're not here to tell you if you should stop genital cutting or not. And in general the community attitude is 'ah'. And we can see that they are surprised because they say no, she is lying to us, it is not true. And then I say no it is true. We are not here to tell you what you should do with regard to female genital cutting. And then we start on a more … a more frank debate. Our approach is rather focused on health. This is where we try to say good health is important etc. But it is true that I always start my first words by saying we are not here to stop FGM. We are not here to tell you this is good, that is not good. We are here for other reasons. Ok? Okay so I do not say that, maybe if I say that some will believe me. It's possible. The contrary too is possible. There

are also very strong prejudges too that are difficult to break. It is true that this is a problem for our work because if you make a financial and technical support and you cannot go on the field, it is difficult to make your work in a professional way.

Zakari: Ok, the next question is =

Participant 1 (Woman): = I have one experience that is very important for me. At that time, I was responsible of the communication in my organisation *[Laughing]*. I was Communication Manager at xxxx and one of our programmes has appealed to my skills to go, heuu to go to the ground to manage a problem. What was this problem? It is a programme that promotes the culture of organic cotton; you know, this agriculture without chemical fertilizer, pesticide etc. On this programme the big problem we then had... It was the pressure of donors, because we had to produce. We had committed to deliver on a very high quantity of production; with a large number of women producers. But what we had not seen is that for organic production certification, because after culture, specialists should come to the ground to ascertain whether it is really organic or not. And we did not know that the use of children could be a blockage for the certification. This bio production requires a lot of employees because you do not use the chemical fertilizer. Instead, you then have to produce manure. And you need to carry this manure there, which requires a number of persons to be able to do the job. This makes children to work more. And my dear heuu, this is precisely the story that has not been easy dè. Nooo, because this project was our 'dairy cow.' This is a problem with international organizations ooo. It was the dairy cow. With this programme we had lots and lots of funding. And suddenly we had this problem. A Swiss journalist came, he went to the field and just because he saw a child with something on his head haaaah finished! When he left us, he went to spoil everything, publishing that we are forcing children to work. I was then called on the ground to rescue and that story gave me the opportunity to understand that it is not often easy to make the difference between child socializing work and abusive work of a child. There was nothing improper and abusive in what these children where doing. It was not during school period, nothing. And the work that the children were doing with their age, maybe I did even more when I had not even reached their age. And it did not stop my studies. So there is still this conflict again, the perception of Europe to be imposed on peoples with regard to the function of the work as we understand it in our settings: a mean for education and socialization heuu heuu work, a socializing work of the child. Here indeed, the child should participate. He has to contribute to the minimum and this is not abusing him heuu

Participant 2 (Man): It's part of education. Me, my father was a doctor, but I went to work during each winter.

Participant 5 (Man): The situation often leads me to ask myself the same question. Are we working to please institutions and partners or are we working to change things in the benefit heuuu of children and their families? I ask this question in relation to what my sister had just said. Do we not often come to work because we just want to make money at *Save the Children* or at *xxxxx*? Without being seriously convinced of what we are going to do or to implement concretely on the ground? Often, this happens to us. That's why there are agents, we should first ensure they join the cause, I mean the fight against excision of children before sending them to convince others. You see? I would like to note that there is a difference between the officer on the ground and the agent who works in the institution headquarter finally; and that, we need to look into it. Maybe to give another example, heuu I am a neighbor of family. My door faces their window. A lady with her own child, the child she gave birth to. The child stole 200F CFA. And the lady, she usually leaves in the morning and comes back at night. Same thing with his man. And the child remains with a lady who is supposed to be a servant. When she came back in the evening, she took the child while everybody was asleep at about 1 am in the morning and she put hot embers in the

hands of the child. This, to punish him and tell him he must never steal. And she put an iron in the fire, when it became red she scared the cheeks of the child with it *[The whole group exclaimed indignation]*. I have a picture of the child's face with me; her own child. I have the picture that I could make available. At this time, I travelled and I was absent. When I came back, heuu you know, the child is used to come to see my child as they are friends. When I returned from my trip, I asked heee: 'I do not see your friend' and they told me he's sick. My wife, my son and me, as good neighbours should act, we went to see the sick child. When we arrived at the gate, we were told no, no, he is sleeping. It was his mother who came ... As such, after having committed her infamy she locked up the child at home without care. So now, as a child protection worker, I went to complain at the brigade for child protection *[this is the police unit specialized in crimes involving children]*. They called the woman. Yes. The lady should be, how do you say? She should be transferred to Bollé *[Bamako detention center for women and children]*. And now it is the community, the neighborhood that rises against me for having denounced the woman. They stood against me as if I had done something wrong. Can you imagine that? Anyway, I took care of the child; my Institution supported the prescriptions of the child up to 150,000 FCFA *[Others participants were surprised to hear this. Some exclaimed: ahh!!! And he continued, encouraged]* Walai! He was treated. So now it is my family that was now in danger because the lady wanted revenge against me and my family. Do you see? Should I, as a child protection worker, when I leave my office close my door and leave behind the good practices we proclaim at Save the Children? Should I inter the community and act as required by the community? Can you see? This violation story is available at *L' Essort [This is one of the most read newspapers in Mali]* heuuh. It has been described in *L'Essort*.

Zakari: Thank you. I see. But can you also tell us if your organization has also done something with regard to the threats that you have been victim from that woman. Is there any organizational action to support staff like you who are confronted to hostile environment? How can a balance be struck between such environmental practices and children rights?

Participant 1 (Woman): Personally, I can see no magic solution. Hmmm, one of the things on which we must rely first is to avoid amateurism. When you get into something like this, particularly on the issue of FGM, I, that is, it is a personal commitment. I am not forced, I have not seen the post and go to apply like this. It is a personal commitment; I can even say that I have almost created this programme based on the values that the institution stands for. Because the institution has strategic orientations that I espouse and I expect other colleagues too to espouse same orientations. When you're in an institution, you defend your belonging to the institution, so you must share it values *[At this moment a new participant entered the room [Greetings in Bamabara]. Then the arriving participant sat down while the participant 1 continues her words:].* So it is with clear conviction that you get into this work, into these things. And I think it's really fighting that are worthy heuuu very noble. Now concerning strategies to be developed for self-maintaining because you're between the anvil and the hammer, I will first distinguish two levels. Because one thing is to remain in the organization and the other is to gain acceptance in the community where you live. At the community level, therefore, strategies are easier to develop.

Participant 5: We are talking of the personal level

Participant 1 (Woman): Yes, no, you intervene at the community level. Making people at the community level to accept you is also a personal challenge hein! Do we understand a little what I am saying? Your family, your environment that's something separated. Once you leave for the field, your intervention area, your work area, apart from organizational strategies that are there, you also need to develop your personal strategies in order to be accepted by the communities where you work; because this level also becomes also a living environment for you. So, for me, I

personally find it hard to have a strategy that can work everywhere. It is tribute of the context of the situation, your personal experience, your experience, your past etc because when you're not deeply inspired, when you do not have much experience, there are things that will always block you. But you can use your previous experience to get out of a case or another. You have also to look for allies. Allies heuu, in terms of allies, you will find that at the community level or at the level of the organization you can have them. For example I said that at the level of the organization, my colleagues were somewhat hostile to the programme. I looked for people who are a bit more favorable to partner with. But alliance does not mean only people who support me like that. But it's also people who help me with advice to handle certain situations. So I think it is important whenever one is in situations like that to see some people who are a little more favorable to you and make alliances with these people. But it is also to be very, very attentive to once environment. You must be really impregnated; you must understand the ins and outs of some speeches, some ways of being; even dressing huh. Heee ... the good thing also is to find some doors, or when you feel that there is some possibility, see how you can slip through the group without shocks? But it requires knowledge of the group. This means that strategy, strategy, Zakari is a bit complicated issue oo. We need to know deeply the community, to be accepted at this level. All this is supported by the conviction to fight against female genital mutilation. Another strategy I developed is the blackmail. Knowing my culture, I know that when an aunt says 'if you touch that child, curse on you.' I scare moms with it. Do you understand? Some of my brothers and sisters became my allies because they fear my curses; as a child's aunt's curse is dangerous *[she then added few words in Bambara]*.

Zakari: I do not understand. Can you translate what you said in Bambara to me?

Participant 1 (Woman): It is a bit difficult. It means the curse of an aunt is stronger than the curse of the father and the mother. So when children should be excised, the family first informs the aunt. It is the aunt who gives permission. And when she, when she says 'If you touch her, she will not win the battle of life' *[meaning she will die]*, it's over. Nobody will touch her. So at Ségou, it is this blackmail strategy that I actually use as aunt to protect girls against Female Genital Mutilation, and there is at least about six years now that no excision has been done in my family at Segou. The other side is Bamako here huuh. These are my cousins. It is the little sister of my mother who is in that family I mentioned in my first example. But on the other side is my own family. You see. So I try to do that. This is also a lie huh, that blackmail I mean. Anything I can do to save the children is good. At institutional level, I know that .. We can say that we are not adequately protected, given the pressures to produce results that we have. They expect you at any cost to do what you put in your rigid logic frame and plan. Donors do not have to procrastinate with the results. Institutions do not unfortunately provide the necessary support to staff for him to be comfortable to cope with the situation. Institutions should also be engaged and they should not hesitate to tell donors that this is a long term struggle on the ground. There are values that only the agent and his collaborator on the ground cannot move forward. There are several issues together that prevent the truth to be claimed openly; management fees should also go to institutions and they do not want to lose it. There is everything.

Zakari: I precisely wanted to ask if employing institutions show awareness and concern about effort done by workers to maintain this balance. If yes, how?

Participant 5 (Man): This is a very good question. We must recognize that at our level, namely in Save the Children, there are no mechanisms that can really hold up as mechanism to protect an agent who is in a situation like that. Heuuu it follows that the agent will fight in one man show when he's really in trouble of this kind. There is no mechanism. I do not really see any document, or a procedure I could show to say that when I am in this situation this is the resources that I could

use to face the situation, to get out of this mess. Really, there is nothing. It is true that when I brought the child at the institution, my intention was also to make the institution witness what was going on. And it is the institution that has treated the child. Now, if heu heu that bad mother, that hooligan – excuse me to talk like that – if she took the stick to go and fight with me, the institution Save the Children has no system to protect me against her. I would have had to face alone the situation in my neighborhood there.

Zakari: The police would have attended you. Not?

Participant 5 (Man): Maybe. Even if so, I would have been an ordinary citizen. It is someone else who who would have call the police and say 'one man is being attacked in his home.' Otherwise, the institution has no particular disposition in that sense to the best of my knowledge. Maybe we can ask whether we too, we seek for our institutions involvement for that purpose?

Zakari: Good question.

Participant 1 (Woman): I, on the institutional level, what I can say is that we must not hide the truth. Institutions, I mean international organizations tend to become really company. The proof is that the issue of female genital mutilation, I do not know the case with other institutions, it is not like with UNICEF, elsewhere, if you look the distribution of the funds that we mobilize for development activities, the questions of female cutting are poor parents of these repartition. They do not put a lot of money there. And there is this issue of accountability towards donor countries. Issues that bring more money are more prioritized by organizations, I say company to provoke you, as our organisations are more and more profits oriented. Pure human and social considerations tend to disappear. Seriously, this is what I really feel with these organizations. Now, when you're on a subject like that eeh, is it really to please the donors or are we really in the logic of humanitarian NGOs or is it simply because the question is fashionable? I do not even know what to say. I have a lot of difficulties to make sense of this. This means that for a project like this you cannot have warranty or protection from your Institution. When it does not work, they are able to say 'hee, that history causes us too many problems while bringing nothing to the Institution.' They are even able to close the project. It is true o. They are able to withdraw the project.

Participant 3 (Woman): When Sanogo said that we keep silent, I think he's right. We've never made a case of these issues. Maybe we have been too silent for too long and that the time has now come to put everything on the table so that a concrete analysis can be conducted at our various institutions and see how we can get attention of these institutions on our problems. Perhaps the organization has not seen this as a problem. But as we have now realized, heuu, we feel that this is a problem and we need support, we should call upon them to help us to make the transformation favorable to everyone. So we should make this a clear case today and we will find a solution together with Institutions.

Participant 5 (Man): This research seems essential, frankly. Because it is actually heuuu, I mean this study is essential; it can wake these agencies up, these various structures up. We're not saying that the structures are knowingly favoring culture of silence. It is not that. Perhaps the structures do not know and some believe these are isolated cases that cannot make a priority. Hein! But if this study heuuu...; really that's why I said I was looking forward to the results of this study.

Participant 1 (Woman): Bylaws exist within our organizations, and these regulations are may be reviewed heuu, I mean periodically. Perhaps every five years, it depends on organizations, in line with the changing context. I think this is ... and also, there is some heuu how we call it, these

kinds of trade unions of employees who are often in talks with leaders of organizations to find solutions to the problems that can face the organization and to reduce conflicts between employees and employer. Well, I think these are instruments that we have that can perhaps help us move forward. I also think that people who have these problems can contribute to its documentation. Because for the experience to tell, things must be documented and agents who are in these situations must be able to bring them to the trade unions that can help in ensuring that regulations and documents and the instruments for the management of personal integrate these aspects. I think that's important. It is on these things that we should dwell. What I wanted also to say, I told Elizabeth that when it comes to add money and finance these things, you will never find the solution. What is heuu.., ourselves, organizations will say that by signing the terms of reference we agree to work with these terms of reference. And in general for people who work on these issues, it is always asked that they should be able to develop strategies, they should know the community and this and that. Like this, the organization rather counts on us for its own protection. You know, it can happen that people come to burn the organization because one of its representatives says something that the communities don't like. This can happen and organizations in general rely on us for their protection against...

Participant 4 (Woman): Finally, I want to say that yes, it's complicated. One has the impression that it is a snake biting its own tail. Since I don't know how institutions can be aware of the plight of workers if agents develop a strategy of what I call 'appearing like' in commas. Perhaps pushing further, when you develop the strategy of 'appearing like', you are in the 'look like' every day; because we are in the office every day. It is not that we are here once a month or once in passing through. To push the reflection further, I think it can even create a psychology of heuu I don't know how to call it, a psychology of a personality who heuu, a personality double who even believe on his own lies. We agree that the human being is very dramatic and in our social life we have several 'appearing like', but not to a point of being in a perpetual lie. So, I mean, we are in front of a problem with a difficult heeuu, I don't want to be pessimistic about the study, but it is a situation that has a difficult solution. Euuh, it's the snake biting its own tail. Since if there is only 'appearing like' around instead of genuine behaviour, how can institutions have confidence on the depth of what you say? Now, there is something. Maybe we should look at this problem not only at the individual level, but at the social level. That is to say that if in a given society you have part of the population that work in development as well as in other areas that heuuuu, that are dependent heuu, remember that Mali is dependent on external aid for half of its budget. That means 45% of the budget of Mali comes from foreign aid. It means that many people in their professional activities, whether in the Government or out of the Government depend on this external aid. So Mali depends on foreign aid since half of its budget comes from outside. That means that if you transfer it socially, if we extrapolate this, there may be 45% of the active population of Mali who in his work depends on external funding. This is not an internal funding. So, we can extrapolate that and think that this strategy of 'appearing like' is quite common at social level. Do you get me? It's almost logic. *[Other participants nod and she continues:]*

Good! In my opinion that, that has a consequence in relation with a certain loss of identity; because when we are all time in this 'appearing like', I mean in a continuous lie, I do not know if we are not already lost. And at social level, we have a crisis of identity, a social crisis. I don't know if it is not what is presently happening in Mali. Look, we can see that there is at the social level, there is something that escapes to our understanding; because these people who are in a 'look like' strategy, may be heuuu, it is like prostitution. Meaning that I do not agree with my ideas, but I do it for other reasons. I see it as prostitution. Pushing the debate further on this identity crisis, I have the impression that these agents, those who choose the strategy of confrontation in their own community, maybe they will be accused of acting like toubab and they will no longer have their place in their communities, or they choose the strategy of 'appearing like'. In that case, at

individual and even collective level, it's a loss of identity for me. Because you are in a perpetual lie and 'looking like', I think that at social and individual level, it can have serious consequences for the well-being of the person involved in such behaviour. Heinh!

Participant 7 (Man): I can see. I also have this advantage of being external and internal; including culturally. And what I observed in this region of West Africa is that precisely one of the strongest countries in cultural identity remains Mali. I am impressed by the vivacity and consequently the force of peoples' identity in Mali. And the conclusion of my analysis is in exact opposite to what you have concluded with regard to this cultures and practices. I was just thinking that it is this capacity, this ability to 'appearing like' for external consumption that has helped Mali to keep internally its deep identity. =

Participant 4 (Woman): = When you're in the 'appearing like' strategy, you are dependent on. It's like a couple in which a husband lies to his wife. Why will he lie to his wife? It is simply because somewhere, he does not want the relationship stops; because he believes ''if I tell her the truth, she will leave. But I do not want her to leave because I depend on her. So I will try my best to appear like… for her. '' As such independence does not fit into his strategy. Independence is not part of his thinking.

Participant 7 (Man): I totally agree. But in this case what you should acknowledge is that the identity, the identity that is at stake and in danger of disappearing has to do with the woman's perception. But the internal identity of the husband remains intact and complete. And this is what I see around here. The husband (to remain into your example) does not lose his identity. It is his wife who has a problem because she can't access the truth. Her man makes her think he is someone he is not in reality, since he remains deeply himself inside. And this is what I observed here.

Participant 1 (Woman): Except that it is in the Malian identity not to deceive, not to act with this 'appearing like' as you put it. We are all born with this value of honesty and dignity. Parents keep repeating it to all of us. That is why we the intellectuals are angry over the behavior of our leaders who negotiate things they cannot implement. They could have said no and we would support them for saying NO. But once you betray, you're not in the Malian identity.

Participant 7 (Man): Yes, but when you're in the negotiation, you take away some elements of your identity to succeed in that negotiation. That is to say you do compromise on certain elements. And these moral values, at the political level, I mean the very high level people do not embarrass themselves too much with these values. It is positioning the country; what counts more importantly for them is being able to capture funds.

Participant 1 (Woman): But these negotiations at the highest level, if before going to the tables of negotiations most Malians were involved, if only the situations were presented to them as they are and that people have accepted or not accepted and it is with such adherence or non-adherence of all Malians that they go to negotiate, we could agree. It is the politicians with their politically approach and intention to maintain their chairs and power who go and negotiate things they pertinently know are difficult to implement in the field. And then come back with their strategy of 'appearing like'.

Participant 7 (Man): Many factors come into play: elements related to governance, elements related to the interest of politicians, not necessarily those of those peoples for whom they are governing. Today, few are countries able to be themselves and to project genuine self image as they are in reality in international arena. One of the most widely ratified texts in the world is the Convention on the Rights of the Child. There are no other texts that have been ratified so quickly

and so massively. But when you look at the two countries that have not ratified it, you count Somalia and the United States. In Somalia, we know that the explanation lies in the fact that this state is almost shredded and almost nonexistent. So it is really the United States that has so far not ratified that Convention on the Rights of Children. But what African country could have the ability to always be in the international arena without ratifying it until now? Which African country? This is the reality and beyond bad governance that I am not intended to cover, there is this dynamic, I would say this ability that our countries have not always to say what they think and to act the way they like. *[Laughs]*

Participant 1 (Woman): African countries could get together, put more content in their African Union to be able to position on things with their values.

Participant 7 (Man): Talking like that, one may give the feeling that the values defended in relation to the promotion of children's rights are not Malian values and that we want to force the country towards unwilling direction. In reality, I have never thought that these values defended by organizations are not also Malian and African values. That is to say, promoting the rights of children, I intrinsically and culturally find my interest in it. When I say culturally, I'm not talking about so-called universal culture. I am talking of my African culture. I fully agree with this battle and that's why I espoused the values of my organization. It is how to implement things that puzzles me.

Participant 1 (Woman): What you say, I agree with you only in part. The governance issue here, we will not hide it. We will not set it aside. Heuuu, it is true that we are imposed, we think we are imposed values, rights to defend in favour of children. But we had had sufficient time to appreciate the contents of these conventions before reacting. And I know that countries have not necessarily to say I am part or I am not part of the convention. There are reservations. They can choose reservations if they know they could not implement some aspects. Beyond that, the question is how do they involve the communities? How those rights are disseminated? It is not popularized. It is a question of interpretation. Even if there is nothing there that affects my identity, even if nothing threaten it, even if the convention guarantees my values, as far as I do not understand what it means since it is not clearly explained to me, there are questions of interpretation.

Zakari: To be fully in the subject of the study, since it is the workers' situation that interests me I will put my question otherwise. Assuming for example that Mali had reservations about a number of values, what implications these reservations could have had on the agent? Does it mean for exemple that during your recruitment at xxxx, you could get yourself benefiting from the Malian reservation to say for example: 'You are hiring me, but let it be clear I'm going to cut my daughters? Or when UNICEF is recruiting me could I take the advantage of this reservation of the country to say: 'look you guys, you've recruited me, but be informed that heuuuu I don't share your opinion on street children. Is it that the consequence of reservation on workers? Could this be possible? What other suggestions could you make at personal and institutional levels to improve workers' capacity to deliver for child protection?

Participant 5 (Man): There are privileges for the agent on the social level. But it is at the level of supporting agents with respect to their application of the values of the organization in society that there is very little organizational efforts. I think we need to go in that direction. All organizations have a social responsibility in relation to their agents. This is known. For example, there privileges like: registering workers for example at INPS *[this is National Institute for Social Protection]* etc. All this exist. It is known. What need to be look at are these problems of accompanying the agent with respect to the effective implementation of organizational values in the community.

Participant 5 (Man): The case of the Red Cross can be interesting. There, a psychologist is charged by the organization to take charge of the newly hired worker as well as old ones. He conducts interviews to accompany the worker with regard to his needs in relation to cultural values. After consultations, he produce a monthly summary reports on the difficulties faced by workers and their psychological state. This report is addressed to the management of the project with respect of anonymity and confidentiality.

Zakari: Any other idea?

[As there was no other volunteer to speak, I concluded] Thank you for your kind cooperation. Should you have further need of discussion don't hesitate to contact me on zadam@unicef.org. Phone 0023779523052 – Skype: zakari.adam3

Appendix 5: Email inviting the members of Child Protection Networking Group in Mali to the presentation of the research project

From: Zakari Adam/MLI/WCAR/UNICEF
Date: 07/02/2011 18:39
Subject: Réunion du secteur "Protection des enfants" du Jeudi 17 février 2011

To: [Protected]

Mesdames/Messieurs, chers collègues du réseau protection des enfants au Mali

Recevez avant tout mes salutations pour la nouvelle année professionnelle que je vous souhaite pleine de succès.

Vous êtes invités à participer à notre première réunion informelle 2011 qui se tiendra **le Jeudi 17 février 2011 de 15 à 18 heures dans les locaux de l'UNICEF.**

A l'ordre du jour figurent les points ci-après :
  1) **Présentation du Projet de Recherche Action participative pour le renforcement de la protection des enfants au Mali : Conflits culturels personnels et agenda professionnel tels que vécus par les acteurs dans leur travail au quotidien.**
  2) **Débat sur le thème.**
  3) Divers.

Merci de votre ponctuelle participation.
az.

Zakari ADAM, Chief Child Protection,
UNICEF Bamako, Rep of Mali. Box : 96, Fax: +223 220 41 24.
Phone: +223 220 13 83. Mobile: +223 7 506 92 05 Email: zadam@unicef.org

Appendix 6: Evolution of birth registration by regions and districts (MACEC 2011)

REGION	CERCLE	2007	2008	2009	2010
KAYES	BAFOULABE	51,18%	69,72%	66,20%	58,30%
	KAYES	68,87%	82,57%	94,99%	92,66%
	DIEMA	71,13%	80,51%	80,60%	81,64%
	KENIEBA	79,99%	55,66%	63,02%	35,07%
	KITA	47,03%	61,36%	56,46%	78,44%
	NIORO	80,00%	81,97%	69,06%	75,35%
	YELIMANE	64,93%	69,84%	42,63%	59,72%
	TOTAL	**64,49%**	**72,04%**	**70,33%**	**73,09%**
KOULIKORO	KOULIKORO	65,48%	65,48%	65,53%	51,65%
	BANAMBA	64,35%	63,99%	73,68%	69,85%
	DIOILA	79,12%	90,08%	104,07%	100,25%
	KANGABA	74,09%	76,32%	79,23%	73,76%
	KATI	69,56%	73,50%	94,98%	94,48%
	KOLOKANI	62,17%	62,17%	63,84%	69,17%
	NARA	43,84%	43,84%	50,91%	58,70%
	TOTAL	**67,81%**	**75,97%**	**82,99%**	**81,50%**
SIKASSO	SIKASSO	82,85%	90,17%	46,15%	85,76%
	BOUGOUNI	65,72%	71,80%	88,29%	90,40%
	KADIOLO	73,67%	90,19%	112,25%	102,08%
	KOLONDIEBA	66,31%	84,61%	116,44%	97,88%
	KOUTIALA	104,87%	112,83%	113,84%	96,69%
	YANFOLILA	59,31%	66,67%	77,60%	69,94%
	YOROSSO	59,10%	71,33%	84,78%	79,44%
	TOTAL	**79,37%**	**87,20%**	**84,34%**	**89,12%**
SEGOU	SEGOU	73,65%	59,97%	67,95%	69,78%
	BAROUELI	69,72%	75,67%	80,02%	76,68%
	BLA	84,36%	90,20%	103,43%	95,07%
	MACINA	43,00%	49,52%	62,85%	57,45%
	NIONO	32,25%	62,99%	95,96%	86,84%
	SAN	72,36%	86,85%	89,93%	87,26%
	TOMINIAN	55,41%	54,13%	77,24%	73,48%
	TOTAL	**60,28%**	**68%**	**80,88%**	**77,54%**
MOPTI	MOPTI	59,75%	59,03%	44,60%	51,65%
	BANDIAGARA	46,80%	53,06%	56,11%	68,14%
	BANKASS	40,01%	43,31%	53,09%	61,29%
	DJENNE	48,29%	39,35%	51,48%	64,34%
	DOUENTZA	35,68%	47,52%	33,29%	39,84%
	KORO	49,92%	45,83%	50,24%	49,26%
	TENENKOUN	21,92%	20,84%	21,56%	26,31%
	YOUWAROU	15,12%	35,58%	18,26%	25,53%
	TOTAL	**42,78%**	**45,67%**	**44,54%**	**51,43%**
TOMBOUCTOU	TOMBOUCTOU	98,71%	103,61%	57,30%	66,00%
	DIRE	52,73%	52,73%	37,09%	33,74%
	GOUNDAM	18,32%	18,43%	16,03%	20,59%
	GOURMA - RHAROUSS	16,84%	16,48%	19,57%	23,28%
	NIAFUNKE	12,25%	14,79%	20,45%	18,90%

	TOTAL	**47,98%**	**32,58%**	**27,56%**	**29,64%**
GAO	GAO	48,20%	54,07%	54,82%	48,10%
	ANSONGO	24,34%	23,30%	36,15%	35,64%
	BOUREM	27,86%	35,90%	18,24%	29,30%
	MENAKA	12,10%	13,67%	14,65%	15,72%
	TOTAL	**33,02%**	**37,09%**	**37,44%**	**36,97%**
KIDAL	KIDAL	26,97%	26,45%	25,32%	35,63%
	ABEIBARA	8,73%	5,50%	2,95%	8,24%
	TESSALIT	14,30%	11,85%	3,55%	14,45%
	TIN – ESSAKO	22,28%	13,27%	17,44%	103,00%
	TOTAL	**19,19%**	**16,76%**	**13,57%**	**28,36%**
DISTRICT	COMMUNE I	108,51%	98,90%	110,86%	142,16%
	COMMUNE II	106,31%	136,98%	98,58%	95,47%
	COMMUNE III	107,76%	123,99%	92,98%	85,35%
	COMMUNE IV	87,44%	85,62%	112,09%	97,71%
	COMMUNE V	110,28%	106,81%	125,19%	112,17%
	COMMUNE VI	63,57%	60,90%	140,69%	136,52%
	TOTAL	**91,11%**	**90,79%**	**116,71%**	**115,87%**
TAUX NATIONAL		**63,59%**	**69,84%**	**73,97%**	**75,52%**

Appendix 7: UNICEF Guiding Principles complementing the UN report on Standards of conduct in the International Civil Service 1954 (COORD/CIVIL SERVICES/5, 1986 Edition) - which UNICEF affirms as the foundation for the conduct of its staff members

Inspired by the ideals enshrined in the United Nations charter, the Universal Declaration
of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination
against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we, the staff of the
United Nations Children's Fund, commit ourselves to the following fundamental principles
and professional standards, and agree to be individually and collectively accountable for
applying them in our everyday work and actions.

➤ Our first commitment is to act in the best interests of children.

➤ We believe we must demonstrate integrity, truthfulness and honesty in all our actions.
We pledge to make responsible use of UNICEF resources, knowing we are entrusted as
custodians to safeguard them and use them wisely.

➤ We respect the dignity and worth of every individual and with our utmost to promote and
practice understanding and tolerance to foster respect for diversity, be it of gender, religion, culture, creed, or race.

➤ We will foster a climate of impartiality, fairness and objectivity and assure the equitable

application of UNICEF regulations, rules and policies. We will create a world
environment that is sensitive to the needs of all staff.
➤ Those of us privilege to hold positions of authority have a grater obligation to set
the
highest professional standards and to uphold them by personal example. At every
level
we aspire to optimal achievement, and value the contribution of every staff member.
➤ We acknowledge the importance of sound judgment, initiative and leadership and
will
pursue and recognize excellence an productivity.
➤ We are willing to listen to different opinions and willing to learn and grow to
contribute
our individual best to UNICEF.
➤ We facilitate participation and promote teamwork within UNICEF and extend that
same
spirit of collaboration to all our external partners., realizing that only through effective
communication and cooperation can we best fulfil our mission.
➤ We affirm our loyalty to the United Nations Organization and promise to place the
interests of the International Organization above our own. As international civil
servants,
we are proud to share the broad vision of the Organization and will work indefatigably
for
the realization of its goals.

Appendix 8: Letter explaining the project to the new UNICEF Mali Management

A
Frederic Sizaret
Deputy Representative
UNICEF Mali

Cher Frederic

Je voudrais avant tout te souhaiter, à toi et à toute l'équipe du Mali mes meilleurs
vœux de nouvel an 2012.

Dans le double cadre du plan d'action glissant 2011-2012 et de mon plan de
développement professionnel, j'avais obtenu l'accord de l'UNICEF Mali et du
Ministère de la Promotion Femme Enfant et Famille pour engager une étude
intitulée comme ci-dessus. Cette recherche est conduite dans une vision de
chercheur interne avec la guidance académique d'une université anglaise. Je
rappelle dans l'encadré ci-dessous le but et les objectifs de cette recherche qui
est conduite dans une démarche participative. Au regard de son intérêt pour le
programme protection, l'étude a été intégrée dans le plan d'action protection
2011-2012. Après l'accord définitif de l'Université en 2011, j'avais réussi à

organiser l'essentiel de ma phase de collecte de données avant mon départ du Mali. Je procède en ce moment à l'analyse des données collectées et j'aurai à effectuer au moins un voyage sur Bamako pour un atelier de présentation et de validation des conclusions aux partenaires en tête desquels l'UNICEF.
Je sais que mes collègues de la protection restent toujours très enthousiasmés et mobilisés pour l'aboutissement de ce travail. Cependant, j'écris ce mail pour te briefer et aussi requérir officiellement ton soutien pour l'aboutissement de ce travail.

Cordiales salutations.

Zakari ADAM
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