

# THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF MALI: KEY PLAYERS AGAINST COVID-19



The world is shaken by an unprecedented health crisis. Its multiple ravages are echoing all over the world and the media seem to revel in it as information concerning the situation becomes vital. Needless to say, Covid-19 made its appearance at the end of 2019 in Wuhan, the capital of the province of Hubei in China, and at the start of 2020, continued to spread in an overpowering and dominant way, not only characterized by its speed but also in its capacity of adaptation across all continents of the world. China has been overwhelmed. In France, there are no longer yellow vest protests. Italy no longer sings and the art world present in the country has closed its doors. It would seem that America, in tears, suddenly forgot its superpower.



The virus rapidly spread also in Latin America, with more than 11 thousand cases in 24 hours in Brazil. All of this to show the very serious impact that Covid-19 has provoked on daily life around the world. In fact, on March 11, it qualified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), exceeding the number of 100 infected countries to all areas of the globe.

Africa is no longer spared despite all the theories put forward, that have proven to be false, including the idea that the continent would be immune. On May 26, the African continent had 3,589 confirmed deaths and 46,418 healed of 119,391 cases registered, according to the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention of the African Union (Africa CDC).

Mali, a West African country known since January 2012 for having suffered from terrorist and extremist acts, is one of the countries most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.



The pandemic adds on top of multiple fractures and tensions present in this country due to poor governance. Overwhelmed by so many problems, the government has seemed to improvise a response strategy against Covid-19, resulting in serious consequences for the Malian society and economy, but with a priority: preserving the health of the population.

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Currently with more than 508 confirmed cases according to health services, the issue regarding feelings of uncertainty is increasing between the decision-makers and the people. As everything darkens, confidence now comes from elsewhere, from another side, that of Malian youth who fight daily to enforce barrier measures, save lives and bring food to people with disabilities and above all to restore a wind of hope across the whole extent of Malian territory. In the capital of Bamako as well as in the surrounding regions, the many initiatives and actions of young people have shown to be beneficial. Youth have decided not to be by-standers but rather actors. Beyond raising awareness, they carry out concrete actions with a strong impact on the ground. Humanitarian organizations such as Albarka Aide, led by the young Daraja Haidara, educate approximately one hundred people about the use of wearing masks, barrier measures to preventing Covid-19 and on distributing food to families in need. Associations like Riposte against Covid-19 offer masks, soaps and handwashing materials to hospitals in Bamako. The young people of Timbuktu are on all sides of the streets to raise awareness. Young people of Mali find innovative ways to create new means in supporting the population. The young people trained by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and the Centre for Counter-terrorism (ICCT) in Mali as part of the MERIT project are not strangers to all these efforts; they permeate social networks in order to raise awareness among young people and are on the ground in the different localities. These are just some examples among many that portray the involvement of young people in Mali as dedicated actors against the Covid-19 pandemic.

The whole of Mali is standing up and placing its hopes on the conscious youth who is working ceaselessly to protect the country from the pandemic.

The Author

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