

Best Practice Options: Mali

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ABSTRACT

Mali, a poor country that embraced democracy in 1991, is considered a democratic role model for francophone Africa. It is grappling with several migration issues, including well-established networks that move thousands of Malians abroad, often with false documents, for \$2,000 to \$3,000; the dependence of the Kayes region, with 1.5 million residents, on emigration, particularly the remittances sent by its workers abroad; and the migration of Mali and Burkina Faso children to work on cocoa and coffee plantations in Côte d'Ivoire and other neighbouring countries.

Mali is generally considered among the poorest five countries around the world, but is also considered one of the most promising democracies in West Africa (Helderman, 2002). The site visit revealed that the Kayes region of Mali is extraordinarily dependent on remittances, which have improved the lives of residents, and added schools and clinics, but do not seem to have led to the establishment of large numbers of businesses that promise stay-at-home development; that the Mali government seems open to co-development, cooperates with assisted return programmes for unauthorized Malians in France, and works with international organizations to attract educated Malians back to Mali; and that Mali is open to donor suggestions for economic development so that most residents will not have to depend agriculture and cattle raising in a water-scarce region. However, there was little evidence that Mali and its donors have found the country's comparative advantage for sustained economic growth.

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MALI: DEMOCRATIC HOPE

Mali is a large country (the size of California and Texas combined) in central western Africa whose name comes from the Mali empire of the upper and middle Niger River.¹ Because the Niger River makes an arc through Mali from south-west to north to south-east, it has long been a crossroads between northern and Western Africa² (Economic Intelligence Unit, 2001).

Mali became a French colony in the 1890s and gained its independence of French colonial rule in 1960. The country immediately adopted a socialist economic model, with rural cooperatives organized to produce cotton and groundnuts (peanuts) for export. Military leader Moussa Traore became President after a 1968 coup and enacted a new Constitution in 1974. The democratic uprising led by students on 22 March 1991 resulted in the election of Alpha Oumar Konaré, the candidate of the Association for Democracy in Mali (ADEMA), and a new Constitution in 1992. Konaré was re-elected in 1997 and new elections are scheduled in 2002. Konaré will not run, marking Mali's first democratic power transition.³ Mali has a free press and a vibrant multi-party system of governance. During our visit, respondents overwhelmingly affirmed their belief that the presidential transition will be peaceful.

Bamako is Mali's major city, with about 1 million residents, followed by Ségou, Mopti, and Sikasso, with approximately 100,000 each. Mali is divided into eight regions: Kayes, Koulikoro, Sikasso, Ségou, Mopti, Gao, Timbuktu, and Bamako. Since September 1999, there has been a decentralization of power, with governing authority shared by elected mayors in the 701 communes (including the 19 cities) and appointed officials (*commissaires du gouvernement*) who are the representatives of the central government in the regions and the cercles (districts roughly equivalent to counties).

Mali's 11 million residents are among the poorest in the world. The World Bank put per capita income at \$240 in 2000; GDP was \$2.3 billion in 2000, which is equivalent to about two hours of US GDP.⁴ Mali has a human development index score of 0.38 and a per capita GDP at PPP of \$740. Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal have HDI's of 0.42 and per capita GDP-PPPs of \$1,300 and \$1,600, that is, more than twice as much buying power per person.

Mali's population, 4 million at independence in 1960, is growing rapidly, up 3.1 per cent or 300,000 per year, which means that 45 per cent of residents are under age 15. Mali has a projected population of 21 million in 2025. Women average six to seven children, and half have their first child before age 20. About 60 per cent of those 15 and older are illiterate, and life expectancy is about 50 years. The richest 10 per cent of residents have about 56 per cent of income and wealth.

Although Mali is mostly an emigration country, it has seen small in-flows of refugees. According to both UNHCR and government estimates, there were approximately 11,000 Mauritanian refugees, mostly Fulani herders, living in the Kayes region of western Mali in 1999, and another 1,900 refugees, 80 per cent from Sierra Leone, in Bamako.

About 75 per cent of Malians live in rural areas, and 75 per cent of Mali's 4 million economically active workers are subsistence farmers, many located along the Niger River between Bamako and Mopti. Most farmers live in villages that have 150 to 600 residents, and most grow rice, wheat, and corn (maize), as well as potatoes, yams, and cassava for their own consumption. The Office du Niger irrigates about 60,000 hectares of land for rice and sugarcane production.

Mali's major exports are gold and cotton. A massive mine in the Kayes area is the new hope for export earnings, and gold surpassed cotton as the major export in 2001. Gold production more than doubled between 2000 and 2001 as new mines opened, but cotton production in 2000-2001 was only half 1999-2000 and expected 2001-2002 levels. The new gold mine is operated by a South African-Canadian consortium.

One reason for smaller cotton harvests is that the Compagnie malienne pour le développement des textiles (CMDT), a legacy of socialism, controls all aspects of cotton production. It is the only supplier of seed and fertilizer and the only buyer, ginner, and exporter of cotton. The CMDT is going to be privatized, but its unions are resisting plans to reduce current employment of 2,400 by up to half.⁵ Despite offering lower-than-world prices to farmers, only CFA 107 or \$0.15 per kg in 2000/2001, versus CFA 200 or \$0.28 per kg in 2000/2001, CMDT loses money. Chinese firms participate in the textile industry and in large-scale construction projects, including building a bridge across the Niger, a conference centre, an expressway in Bamako, and some of the new stadiums.

Mali also produces millet, sorghum, and rice (in the inland Niger delta), and exports livestock. The quality of most Mali farm products is low, limiting export markets. Some 40 to 60 per cent of Mali's imports are food, and Mali pays more for imported food than other developing countries because, as a landlocked country, imports must travel through other countries to reach Mali. Extremely poor road infrastructure within Mali further limits the capacity of producers to reach either internal or external markets.

Mali's economic and democratic reforms have been rewarded with foreign aid – an average \$33 per resident in 2000. France, the US, UK, and the Netherlands are prominent among donors. In September 2000, donors agreed to provide Mali with US\$870 million in debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, a sum equivalent to almost half of Mali's GDP. In the late 1990s, the Government spent \$100 million over five years on five

stadiums around the country in order to host the African soccer cup 19 January to 10 February 2002.

Increasing access to education, resulting in a reduction of illiteracy, is a major goal of the Government. Progress has been seen in recent years to reverse the traditionally very low levels of primary school attendance. An estimated 60 per cent of age-eligible Malian children are enrolled in primary schools, 18-20 per cent in secondary, and 1.5-2 per cent in universities. At present, the enrolment of girls lags behind that of boys.

Mali's education system needs major reforms, including reducing the CFA 26,000 (\$37) a month stipends or salaries paid to university students and increasing the spending and training for K-12 education—the university does not do teacher training. However, with students receiving a stipend that is more than the minimum wage, there is little incentive to finish studies quickly. Disruptions in 2000-2001 meant that there were no university exams, and this may have contributed to more Malian students applying to study abroad – 800 received visas to study in France in 2001.

CO-DEVELOPMENT AND CO-MANAGEMENT OF MIGRATION

Mali is one of several countries that are targets of “co-development” (other countries are Morocco, Senegal, and Comoros). The French policy of co-development aims to link migration and development policies.

Mali and France have established the Mali-France Consultation on Migration, an annual bi-national consultation on migration between the two countries. In an official agreement signed on 21 December 2000, the representatives of the two countries agreed to meet at least once a year at the ministerial level to deal with three issues: the integration of Malians who want to remain in France; co-management of migration flows; and cooperative development. Malian minister Soumaila Cisse defined “cooperative development” as a policy in which industrial nations allow migrants to circulate between their home countries and abroad. The principal focus of our visit was co-management of migration and cooperative development.

Co-management has focused on a number of issues regarding both unauthorized and legal movements. The return of unauthorized Malians from France has long been an irritant in relations between the two countries. Malians figured prominently in mid-1990s protests in France in which migrants trying to avoid deportation occupied churches.⁶ When France sent a charter plane with deported Malians to Bamako on 25 August 1996, President Alpha Omar Konaré complained that “Some people have been expelled with absolutely

nothing...[but added] We can't encourage our citizens to breach the laws of their host country." As discussed below, encouraging voluntary assisted returns – rather than relying on mandatory deportation – would better meet the interests of both countries.

Access to legal admissions has been a further area of concern. Traditionally, visa policies seriously restricted family reunification and visits as well as business travel and study abroad. Since 1997, a new visa policy was implemented that includes the obligation for the French consulates to justify some denials of visas (to parents of French citizens, students, etc). France issued about 25,000 visas to Malians in 2001 compared to 7,000 in 1997. The US issues about 5,000 a year, representing about half of the 10,000 Malian applications.

In exchange for facilitating free circulation of bona fide travellers, French authorities urged Malian authorities to cooperate in reducing corruption. In October 2001, a former minister (of sports) was indicted and sent to jail for trafficking in visas.

ASSISTED RETURNS

It is said that 1.5 to 2 million Malians live abroad, usually in nearby African countries such as Côte d'Ivoire (1 million) or other West African countries, including Gabon. Several hundred thousand Malians live in the industrial democracies, including 60,000 to 80,000 in France (Findley, 1988).

Can some of the Malians abroad be persuaded to return and contribute to Mali's development? We looked at two types of return programmes: a French-funded programme of voluntary assisted return, generally of Malians living illegally in France; and an United Nations programme that assists temporary return of university professors.

France's assisted return programme is part of its co-development strategy. About 500 unauthorized Malians in France agreed to return voluntarily in exchange for CFA 2.5 million (\$3,600), and open businesses, most related to agriculture, but including hairdressing, importing used auto parts, sewing traditional dresses, and sand dredging.⁷

They receive weekly visits for one year from the programme's offices in Mali, and it was reported that 80 per cent of those who participate are still in business after two years. This French model clearly helps to re-integrate migrants who "failed" in France, but its potential for expansion may be limited. Many of the small businesses begun by returnees had difficulty obtaining bank loans for expansion, in part because they did not have Malian track records and guarantees.

Assisted return is not a new concept to Mali. An early example is a multi-function agricultural cooperative in the Kayes region established in the 1980s. Migrants from four West African countries requested help from the French Government and non-governmental organizations to obtain land in the Senegal River basin for a farming enterprise. Prior to return, they received training from French agricultural experts and explored innovative farming techniques used in countries such as Israel. Mali responded positively to their request for land. The cooperative has experimented with various different crops, finding that bananas offer a particularly good investment. They sell their produce to traders throughout the Kayes region, often to women who walk for miles to buy the fruit and vegetables. Poor roads, particularly in the rainy season, also hinder the ability to expand.

Regardless of its economic contribution, assisted return programmes provide public affairs value to both the French and Malian Governments. French officials noted that the cost of deportation is about \$3,500 per return because an immigration official accompanies each deportee. The same funds not only encourage voluntary return, which is more humane, but they provide a livelihood for the returnee.

The French programme generally focuses on unskilled migrants. Mali also suffers from a brain drain because of the departure of its educated population. For most of the past 40 years, the Mali Government provided scholarships for study abroad, and guaranteed government jobs to all university graduates. Some of those who graduated remained abroad, while others returned and swelled Government payrolls.

REMITTANCES AND DEVELOPMENT

Remittances are a major source of income in Mali. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) yearbook shows that global remittances reached \$95 billion in 1998, including \$61 billion from workers remittances and \$33 billion in compensation of employees.⁸ IMF data likely underestimate remittances, since many are transferred outside the banking system. One indicator of the importance of remittances is that France provides about \$50 million per year in aid to Mali, and France-Mali remittances are estimated to be at least \$50 million.

Most Malian migrants in France come from the Kayes region that borders Senegal. As elsewhere in Mali, people live near the river – in this case the Senegal River. The Kayes region has about 1.5 million people, including 80,000 in the city of Kayes, and about 150,000 Kayes residents are believed to have emigrated. Migrants left the Kayes region during droughts in the early 1970s, and the region now has a migrant-remittance based economy, with an estimated 80-90 per cent of remittances spent on current consumption.

The overall impression of rural Mali is extreme poverty. Cattle and sheep are the mainstays of the economy, with millet, peanuts, and other crops planted and harvested for subsistence. Some cash is earned from the sale of animals, but it appears that most cash must come from outside the village.

The high levels of emigration have produced important financial ties between migrants and their home communities. A typical community, Marena, has 16,000 residents, many who have been in France. Marena migrants in France have an association, and they contribute to the village's budget. Some of the migrants stay in France, but others return with their savings to Marena. Many of the returned migrants complained about the delinquency of Malian children brought up in France and the changing family and gender relationships brought on by life in western society. It appeared that we were hearing from relatively conservative returned migrants who accumulated savings in France, but who preferred to live in Mali – at least one man returned without his wife and family, who preferred to stay in France.

Marena and similar villages are very isolated. Although only 50 km from Kayes, the trip can take one to two hours over dirt roads that are not passable in the rainy season, from July to October. The local economy is based on corn, millet, and peanuts, and sheep (worth CFA 15,000 to 25,000) and cows (worth CFA 100,000 to 150,000). There seemed to be little evidence of stores or other types of businesses that could be expanded with remittances.

Migrant remittances help to pay for schools and teachers in the Marena area. There were also several Islamic schools. Most people in one village did not have electricity, and for example, three families shared a compound fenced with sticks. The mud-brick houses had pantries with meal and sleeping quarters, but there were no windows or lights. The three families shared a round kitchen, which seemed to have a fire going all day. Water was brought from a well near the clinic. During the dry season, dust permeates the houses. Yet, migrants helped to establish a health clinic, and were going to send money to cover the cost of medical emergencies. The clinic was built, but coverage is provided under an insurance-type programme to 53 families paid by families in France. This insurance type programme can be an example of best practice that can be expanded to many villages of Mali and in other countries.

Kayes, like most of Mali, is wracked by desertification, deforestation, and soil degradation. There has long been significant internal migration within Mali, as farmers left their homes after the harvest for nearby cities, where they worked in a variety of jobs before returning to their villages to plant. A mid-1990s study of migrants emphasized that circular internal migration has a long history, and that some migrants stay away as long as five to seven years (Rain, 1999). However, some of the migrants who were interviewed had been away from "home" 40-plus years. Even if they refused to call their moves

“permanent”. Growing cities mean some circular migrants do not return to their villages of origin.

MOBILIZATION OF MALIANS ABROAD FOR DEVELOPMENT

Within the new Franco-Malian co-development framework, in 2002-2004 a fund of Euro 2.6 million will finance the mobilization of Malians abroad for the service of the Malian education system, economy, and small business development. The skills of Malians in France will be systematically registered and the information co-managed by a Franco-Malian committee. The fund will supplement financing by the Malian diaspora of local projects. Also a contract will be signed with a Malian bank to guarantee loans to small businesses that require additional funding for expansion of their activities.

At present, the Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) project aims to persuade Malians established abroad to return at least temporarily and contribute to Mali’s development by, for example, teaching at Mali’s 25,000-student university, which was established in 1996 and expanded rapidly. The UN Development Programme has paid for 133 Malians to return as consultants to help teach and do research.

EMIGRATION AND DEMOCRATIZATION/ RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Throughout the site visit, the solid movement of Mali toward greater democratization and respect for human rights proved to be a positive counterpoint to the country’s economic problems. A number of respondents observed that international migration has helped spur the democratic reforms. Malians living in Europe and North America have brought back some of the lessons learned in western democracies. At a village meeting in Marena, a number of return migrants observed that they expected to participate in community meetings and decision making.

Even those who expressed concerns about what they considered to be decadent western social values supported the increased democratization in Mali. Often, the reference to western values focused on the greater freedom given to women and children. In fact, the role of women and children remains an area of substantial difference between Mali and the receiving countries in Europe and North America. One European official noted that Malian officials often express concern that two traditional practices in Mali, polygamy and female genital mutilation, are illegal in the receiving state. Questions about North American rejection of these practices also arose at a public conference in which members of the Cooperative Efforts to Manage Emigration (CEME) group spoke. Some

of the return migrants appeared particularly reluctant to expose Malian women and girls to western values if it meant the undermining of cultural traditions, observing vehemently that they would never allow their wives or daughters to migrate with them to Europe or North America. In some cases, the return migrants appear to have become more socially and religiously conservative as a result of their own migration experience.

MALIAN MIGRATION TO CÔTE D'IVOIRE

An estimated 1 million Malians live in Côte d'Ivoire, which accounts for 40 per cent of total GDP produced in the Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine (UEMOA). Côte d'Ivoire, a country of 15 million, with a GDP per capita of \$670, is half urban and experienced unprecedented instability and uncertainty in the 1990s. Felix Houphouet-Boigny was the president of Côte d'Ivoire from 1960 to 1993, and the country became one of Africa's few stable and economically successful countries, exporting cocoa, coffee, timber, and tropical fruits. Houphouet-Boigny provided stability, but also borrowed heavily in the late 1970s, in part to build a capital at Yamoussoukro, in the central part of the country. It includes the basilica of Notre Dame de la paix, one of the largest churches in the world.

Agriculture accounts for 25 per cent of GDP and employs 80 per cent of the labour force. Malian immigrants, along with immigrants from Burkina Faso, Guinea, and other neighbouring countries are seasonal workers on cocoa and coffee plantations, and some settled in Abidjan, population 2.5 million. An estimated one-third of Côte d'Ivoire's population are immigrants. Relative harmony between immigrants and local ethnic groups ended after the 1993 death of Houphouet-Boigny, who had encouraged immigration. Houphouet-Boigny's successor, Henri Konan Bedie, adopted the philosophy of "bvorite or ivoirite". That is, preferential rights for "pure" Ivorians, which aroused opposition to immigrants.

Commodity prices fell and political unrest increased in the late 1980s and 1990s. Alassane Dramane Ouattara, a Muslim from the northern part of the country who was Prime Minister when Houphouet-Boigny died, was accused of having forged national identity papers, and blocked from running for president in 1999. Côte d'Ivoire, previously known as the "West African Miracle", has been in a political crisis since the country's first military coup toppled the Government of President Henri Konan in December 1999. The subsequent military dictator, General Robert Guei, was himself overthrown by a popular revolt just ten months later, after attempting to rig presidential elections. The winner of the disputed elections, long-time opposition party leader Laurent Gbagbo, was declared President.

Gbagbo's supporters clashed with a rival opposition party called the Rally of Republicans, whose leader, Alaisaïne Ouattara, was prevented from running on the grounds that he may be a foreigner. Ouattara says he is an Ivorian, but admitted using a Burkina Faso passport in some of his travels. A 1994 change in law requires Presidential candidates to be born in the Côte d'Ivoire to parents both born there as well.

However, Côte d'Ivoire remains a major source of remittances to Burkina Faso and Mali. According to the IMF, Mali was receiving about \$100 million per year in remittances in the mid-1990s, although remittances were trending downward in both Mali and Burkina Faso (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

WORKERS REMITTANCES IN SELECTED COUNTRIES:
CREDITS (MILLIONS)

	1995	1996	1997
Burkina Faso*	128	117	80
Mali	112	107	90
Senegal	86	82	92
Ivory Coast (Debits)	457	510	517

Note: Burkina Faso data are also for 1992-1994.

Migration from Mali (and Burkina Faso) to Côte d'Ivoire involves adults and children migrating to work on coffee and cocoa plantations. The problem area is children – an estimated 15,000 Malian children between the ages of 12 and 18 have been “sold into forced labour” on the cotton, coffee, and cocoa plantations of northern Côte d'Ivoire over the past few years; an even greater number have been pressed into domestic service. The migrants have contracts, most of which offer 95,000 to 125,000 CFA (\$135 to \$189) for a year’s work; some reports discuss annual wages of \$200 to \$300.

Most reports emphasize that migrants go voluntarily, but they often do not know that hard work and low pay awaits them since the middlemen recruiters who visit Malian villages exaggerate the pay and underestimate the work. The recruiters pay parents \$30 to \$40, and then take the children away for “work and training”. In Côte d'Ivoire, work conditions are variable. The worst employers make migrants work for ten to 12 hours every day.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the best defence against the sale of child migrants is to have local NGOs educate villagers about what really happens to their children, and to step up enforcement of laws that make recruiting and enslaving children a crime. The ILO defines a slave as

someone “forced to work under physical or mental threat, and where the owner or employer controls the person completely – where a person is bought or sold”.

The 15-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo, called on member countries in October 2001 “to adopt laws criminalizing trafficking in human beings and to build the necessary administrative structures”.

CONCLUSION

Mali is a traditional country of emigration, with a growing number of its migrants heading to Europe and North America. Migration occurs for work, family reunification, and education. Remittances from migrants abroad are essential to subsistence in many of the emigration communities. They also support infrastructure development and social services, including health clinics, schools, and roads. As long as too few economic opportunities exist in Mali, migration will continue to follow the long-entrenched networks that help Malians go abroad.

The French programme of co-development may help pave the way toward reducing emigration pressures. Targeted aid in high emigration regions could help build infrastructure, establish more viable markets, stimulate job creation, and support education and health care. Remittances will likely continue to be an important support for individual families and communities, and local efforts to channel remittances toward infrastructure development and income generation should be encouraged. Assisted return programmes have less far-reaching economic impact, but in helping some migrants return voluntarily and become self-supporting, they provide incentives for further cooperation in managing migration to the benefit of both countries. In our opinion, transportation and education should be the two top priorities for the development of Mali.

NOTES

1. The empire of Mali in the 1300s stretched from present-day Senegal to Nigeria, with Timbuktu as its centre of commerce and Islamic culture. Mali means “hippopotamus”; Bamako means “crocodile pond”.
2. The Niger River begins in the south-west of Guinea and makes an arc through Mali before flowing into Niger and Nigeria – near Mohti, Mali, the Niger River creates an inland delta, which is an important source of fish.
3. Konaré has won praise for promoting women to senior public positions, speaking on national television about the HIV/AIDS crisis and the need to use condoms, and pressing for laws that would grant women equal inheritance rights with men, who are strongly favoured under current law.

4. US GDP is \$10 trillion, or about \$27 billion a day.
5. About 90 per cent of manufacturing is accounted for by state enterprises, and most state enterprise workers belong to unions. The national minimum wage rate, set in 1994, is approximately \$40 (26,000 CFA francs – 700 CFA = \$1) a month; the normal legal work week is 40 hours (45 hours for agricultural employees).
6. There were an estimated 10,000 sub-Saharan Blacks in France in the 1960s, 80,000 in 1975, and 320,000 in 1992.
7. The hairdressing shop was the second business tried, and employed five people to give haircuts for CFA 1,000 (\$1.45). The car parts importer buys old cars in Europe for \$200 each, sends workers from Mali to remove engines and other components, and ships them parts in containers to Mali at a cost of about \$400; he employs 12 people. The dressmaker employs 14-20 employees to stamp imported cloth with traditional designs and make dresses for Malians, especially abroad. The sand dredging involves dugouts moving sand 20-25 km and then sifting it for sale. The returned migrant had ten boats, and 20-30 workers, but needed a truck to expand operations.
8. Total remittances should include both categories. For example, Mexico reported most of its \$6.5 billion in 1998 under worker remittances, while the Philippines, which had a total \$5.1 billion, reported most of its remittances under compensation of employees. Between 1992 and 1998, remittances rose by 76 per cent in Mexico, and by 102 per cent in the Philippines.
9. Trends in seasonal emigration from Africa's Senegal River valley, comprising Mali, Senegal, and Mauritania, are analysed, with a focus on reasons why some individuals migrate to France and some to other African destinations. "The underlying premise of this study is that the migrants who end up in France are members of households and communities which differ significantly from those who have members who have migrated to African destinations....In particular, we expect that the household's demographic structure, ethnicity, prior migration experience, diversity, and level of economic activities affect...migration choice."
10. Rain emphasizes that the Sahel (shore in Arabic) has always offered a precarious existence, which made migration common. However, Rain objects to migration, moving from one place to another, because the Sahel favours circular migration, as exemplified by the stories obtained from 133 migrants in November-December 1995 in Maradi, Niger (near the Nigerian border) – people return to their homes, after periods away that range from three months to 5-7 years. Rain challenges the notion that desertification is prompting urbanization in Western Africa. Instead, he argues that there has long been circular migration, and that much of the movement into West African cities is seasonal and circular. However, his stories of migrants suggest otherwise. Even if a migrant who has been in the city for 40-plus years refuses to call his move "permanent", he would be defined as a migrant under virtually all statistical systems. Even Rain would acknowledge that growing cities mean some circular migrants do not return to their villages of origin.

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OPTIONS EXISTANTES AU NIVEAU DES « MEILLEURES PRATIQUES »: MALI

Le Mali, un pays pauvre connaissant un régime démocratique depuis 1991, est considéré de ce fait comme un modèle pour l'Afrique francophone. Il est au prise avec plusieurs problèmes migratoires, parmi lesquels la présence de réseaux solidement établis qui exportent à l'étranger des milliers de Maliens, souvent munis de faux papiers, ce qui leur rapporte entre 2000 et 3000 dollars par tête. A cela s'ajoutent d'une part la situation de dépendance de la région de Kayes et de ses 1,5 million d'habitants tributaires des rapatriements de fonds des travailleurs émigrés, et d'autre part celle des enfants du Mali et du Burkina Faso qui partent travailler en Côte d'Ivoire et dans les autres pays voisins où on les emploie dans les plantations de cacao et de café.

Le Mali est généralement considéré comme l'un des cinq pays les plus pauvres de la planète, mais aussi comme l'une des démocraties les plus prometteuses de l'Afrique de l'Ouest. La visite effectuée sur place a révélé que la région de Kayes était extrêmement dépendante des rapatriements de fonds, qui ont amélioré la qualité de vie des résidents et ont permis la création d'écoles et de cliniques, sans avoir toutefois permis l'implantation d'un grand nombre d'entreprises susceptibles d'assurer le développement local. Elle a également montré que le Gouvernement malien semble ouvert au co-développement, qu'il coopère avec les programmes d'aide au retour de Maliens en situation irrégulière en France, et avec les organisations internationales, avec lesquelles il s'efforce de convaincre les Maliens éduqués de rentrer au pays. Pour finir, cette visite a également permis de constater que le Mali est ouvert aux suggestions des bailleurs de fonds en matière de développement économique, ce qui permet d'espérer pour la majorité des habitants du pays d'autres options que celles de l'agriculture et de l'élevage dans une région où l'eau est une denrée rare. Toutefois, il ne semble guère y avoir de signe que le Mali et ses bailleurs de fonds aient réussi à trouver un avantage comparatif propre à assurer une croissance économique soutenue.

MEJORES OPCIONES PRÁCTICAS: MALÍ

Malí, un país pobre que es democrático desde 1991, es considerado como un modelo democrático para el África de habla francesa. Este país tiene que hacer frente a varias cuestiones migratorias, incluidas las redes bien establecidas que conducen a miles de sus ciudadanos al extranjero, a menudo con documentos falsificados, por 2000 ó 3000 dólares; la dependencia de la región de Kayes (Malí), que cuenta con 1'500'000 residentes, en la emigración, para recibir las remesas que envían los trabajadores en el extranjero; y la migración de niños de

Malí y Burkina Faso para que trabajen en las plantaciones de chocolate y café en la Costa de Marfil y otros países vecinos.

Por lo general, se considera que Malí es uno de los cinco países más pobres del mundo, pero también es una de las democracias más prometedoras de África occidental. La visita realizada a la región de Kayes reveló que depende enormemente de las remesas que han permitido mejorar la vida de sus residentes y añadido escuelas y clínicas, pero que no han conducido al establecimiento de bastantes negocios que permitan un desarrollo propio a la región; el Gobierno de Malí sigue abierto al co-desarrollo y por ello, coopera con programas de retorno asistido para sus nacionales que se encuentran ilegalmente en Francia y trabaja con organizaciones internacionales para atraer a los malienses instruidos para que retornen a su país; además Malí está abierto a las sugerencias de los donantes para fomentar el desarrollo económico a fin de que la mayoría de los residentes no dependa de la agricultura ni de la cría de ganado en una región donde escasea el agua. Sin embargo, hay pocos indicios que dejan entrever que Malí y los países donantes hayan encontrado la ventaja comparativa de este país para un crecimiento económico sostenido.

