

Mali: A Statistical Yearbook, in Time

BAMAKO, Mali—Population health statistics derived from high-quality data in a national health information system (HIS) can reliably track health service coverage or gaps in services and the success or shortcomings of government efforts to improve health for its citizens. Use of this information can inform smart decisions about health policies, suggest programs to curtail or scale up, and guide allocation of scarce resources.

In Mali, however, the power of its HIS had not been fully realized. Statistical yearbooks that could have provided compiled data from the prior year were typically only validated in the last quarter of the year following—a full nine months after the fact. This meant the yearbook was less relevant for timely decision making and developing operational plans. In fact, the 2017 statistical yearbook was not even developed—because financial resources weren't available.

That changed in 2019. For the first time, Mali successfully produced validated records of the prior year's health data before April 30—thanks to a cooperative effort mounted by the Mali Ministry of Health (MOH) with support from MEASURE Evaluation, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). MEASURE Evaluation helped mobilize financial resources, including help from PSI, for a national validation workshop to aid in developing the yearbooks.

Building on Mali's successful national deployment of DHIS 2 (in only 16 months) as the national health data platform for all health levels, MEASURE Evaluation was able to: (1) support regional activities to compile data, (2) harmonize data from the regions and other multiple sources, and (3) support the national level to help avoid delays that had hampered this work in the past.

The two most notable achievements were: (1) the statistical yearbook was produced in timely fashion, developed with all stakeholders, taking into account data from the local health information system (SLIS), the epidemiological surveillance



Speech by the MOH technical advisor for public health at an April 2019 meeting in Bamako to validate the county's statistical yearbook.

system, and the hospital information system (SIH); and (2) when the data is disseminated, it will provide feedback to field managers and make it possible to measure progress and identify areas for improvement.

Challenges

A huge challenge was the task of getting the books ready on time, by April 30. This year's success in timely production of the 2018 statistical yearbook will allow health structures, policy makers, and all implementing partners and stakeholders to use reliable data for decision making—in time for development of regional operational plans. It also enables them to produce accurate activity reports for 2018.

The success this year also overcame additional challenges:

- Securing needed financial resources
- Harmonizing data from multiple health structures
- Developing three yearbooks: for the SLIS, the SIH, and the national statistical yearbook

An additional challenge is that many groups are involved in producing data for the statistical yearbooks, including the MOH Planning and Statistics Unit, the Directorate General of Health and Public Hygiene, and technical and financial partners. The three national statistical yearbooks and one for each region are intended to meet the monitoring needs of development programs and policies, in particular the Socio-Health Development Program called PRODESS, the Strategic Plan for Poverty Reduction, and the World Health Organization's sustainable development goals.

The successful stepwise process followed by Mali

Several steps were required for this year's success:

1. The MOH Planning and Statistics Unit (CPS) locked the database February 15, 2019 to restrict the data used for the statistical record.
2. Hypertext links were established in DHIS 2 to facilitate data extraction from multiple sources and existing DHIS 2 charts and tables and new maps and graphics were used to further describe the data, identify data outliers, and analyze indicators.
3. Links were shared with all regions to standardize the method of producing regional yearbooks.
4. Development workshops were organized for producing regional yearbooks.
5. Technical support (TA) from the MOH and MEASURE Evaluation was provided to Bamako, Kayes, Koulikoro, Sikasso, Segou, and Mopti (Timbuktu and Gao had remote TA provided).
6. Draft statistical yearbooks were produced for the SLIS, SIH, and SNIS (the national health information system), with compilation of all data from SLIS, SHI, epidemiological surveillance, and from other data producers—plus indicator analysis conducted by level and explanation of performance by health fields.
7. Final validation of the statistical yearbooks.
8. Printing and dissemination of the SLIS, SIH, and SNIS statistical yearbooks.



Opening ceremony with the director of CPS, the MOH technical advisor, MEASURE Evaluation Mali chief of party, and the PSI representative.



Closing ceremony in Bamako.



Meeting participants validated the statistical yearbook at the April 2019 workshop.

Results

The aim is that this new approach will persist in following years—that health information-producing entities will work together to compile, review, interpret, and exchange data every year in time for planning.

The yearbooks were disseminated this year in print and on the MOH website, and regional books were made available to Bamako, Kayes, Koulikoro, Sikasso, Segou, Mopti, and Gao regions before those groups drew up their 2020 annual operational plans. The data from these regions also were used to develop 2018 activity reports.

The data included a wealth of consolidated data from multiple sources and stakeholders, including: the local HIS, the epidemiological alert system, the hospital information system, the National Center for Disease Control Support (Centre National d'Appui à la Lutte contre la Maladie), the Center for Research and Control of Sickle Cell Disease (Centre de recherche et de lutte contre la drépanocytose), the National Center for Blood Transfusion (Centre National de Transfusion Sanguine), the

National Institute for Public Health Research (Institut National de Recherche en Santé Publique), the National Laboratory Department of Health (Laboratoire Nationale la Santé), the Charles Mérieux Center for Infectious Disease, and all national health programs in HIV, tuberculosis, neglected tropical diseases, and noncommunicable diseases.