



Sahel Institute  
DEMOCRACY & GOVERNANCE



# SAHEL INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE



**MALI**



**BURKINA FASO**



**NIGER**



**BENIN**



Promoting and Consolidating Democracy and Governance in Mali and Sahel region. Creative and Innovative solutions for Peace and Security. Combatting disinformation.

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# I.CONTEXT

Sahel Institute for Democracy and Governance is working alongside the community of researchers, academics and building a dynamic of active citizens, responsible leaders, community and religious leaders across the country and the entire Sahel region through our country offices in Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Benin. We catalyze and support initiatives for the promotion and consolidation of democracy and good practices in the local communities. We reinforce and enhance our Peace and Security Champions, the Youth change-makers to develop ideas for peace, stabilization, cohesion and governance, the very first condition for a solid democracy, in the communities we serve. By enabling active and engaged active citizens to use information and knowledge, we create an open context where the social, cultural and economic change is possible in positive ways.





## II. MISSION STATEMENT



Sahel Institute for Democracy and Governance's mission is to build peace, stability and social cohesion in order to establish a solid democracy and to promote good practices that have been undermined by years of conflict, through dialogue and direct contact with key actors and different stakeholders on the ground.

We catalyze socio-political and cultural initiatives for the promotion and consolidation of peace building initiatives, social cohesion and governance. We strengthen the capacities of young change-makers to develop new and creative ideas for stabilization and social cohesion, a sine-qua-non condition for a solid, active and participatory democracy.



We do this through targeted thematic surveys, field research through our community-based volunteers, and the implementation of creative and innovative projects designed to solve problems. We work actively to promote Digital Inclusion and Digital Literacy.





## III. BACKGROUND

For several decades, the Sahel countries have been facing a deficit in institutional, territorial and financial governance adding a tremendous lack of social justice, rule of law. Citizens in the early 2000s started demanding more justice and public institutions in line with their needs through different channels including political and religious insurrection and violence.

The Installation of terrorist groups (Algerian GSPC) in the north of Mali, Niger and Mauritania in the early 2000s: kidnapping of westerners, ransom and various trafficking became a lucrative business for these groups as source of funding but also to some corrupt officials in the government in the Sahel countries, particularly in Mali. People felt themselves abandoned by the systems and governments of these countries and exposed to themselves in terms of security, employment and other expectations.

They also want to participate more in the democratic life of their country. Due to administrative slowness, corruption and poor redistribution of resources (Mali is the 3rd Gold producer and 2021, 1st Cotton producer in Africa), citizens have little confidence in their government.

This inequality and unfair situation led to corruption, poverty and injustice. We've worked on these issues for years with hundreds of thousands of citizens across Mali and in certain Sahel countries. Our experience, and that of others, indicates clearly that when people work together to strengthen human centered designed and communities' solutions this can lead to real, positive changes in their lives. At the same time, we've also realized that it is very difficult for citizens to build and rely on a democratic system when this can't bring solutions to their daily struggles and anticipate on bigger challenges, they are facing including a peaceful and stable life. It requires creative approaches to entrenched political, social and economic dynamics.



# IV. SAHEL INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE-MALI



Alongside with key partners across the country and our own team members from all around the country- is uniquely placed to play a leading role in changing these dynamics through youth focused, creative and innovative actions learnt and developed from many years' experiences from the field. We do this in four Creative ways:



## 1. Awareness and Engagement Campaigns

Creative online and media campaigns can change beliefs about what behaviors are acceptable in society and support emerging norms. We are shifting conversations around the values of the common and shared goals through people needs in communities and lessons learnt from negative and traumatizing experiences to constructive actions. For example, “Peace and Democracy Forums” which are locally organized into different cities and communities across the country (Bamako Peace Forum, Gao Peace Forum etc.).

In addition of identifying and highlighting local “Peace Initiatives”, influential local speakers will join and Ideas Festivals for Democracy and Governance will be organized so local Peace and democracy Champions are identified and celebrated publicly so their experience could serve to others.

We are now expanding our powerful, inclusive and divers network of these amazing people to build and spread designed and innovative solutions across the country and in the rest of the Sahel countries.



# V.COMBATING MISINFORMATION, DISINFORMATION, MALINFORMATION AND FAKE NEWS (AUTO DEFENSE INTELLECTUELLE)

Composed of the Greek “autos”oneself, and the Latin “defensa”, defense, protection, derived from to defend, to protect, to move away, to push away, to keep away. Auto defense (or self-defense) is the defense or reaction of an individual or a group carried out by its own means in the face of an aggression or a danger, without using the usual means (police, army, security services, etc.) Examples: self-defense techniques, self-defense weapons. Synonyms: self-defense, self-protection.

The concept of disinformation refers to false, inaccurate or misleading information designed, presented and promoted intentionally to cause public harm or make a profit. Mali as many other Sahel countries have been exposed to disinformation in order to control people thinking (hating one side and supporting the other one) and it is spreading and becoming a more complex phenomenon based on emerging techniques.

The term intellectual self-defense refers to a critical attitude towards any statement or information to protect oneself against what might be an assault on intellectual integrity. These assaults can take many forms: tongue-in-cheek, disinformation, false rumors, hoax, manipulation, propaganda, indoctrination (sectarian, ideological, etc.) conspiracism, confusionism, pseudo-sciences, irrational beliefs, monopolization of thought (video, advertising, etc.) sophisms, etc.

Disinformation undermines human rights and many elements of good quality of democracy.

We will bring between 10 and 20 active “Influential civil society, political, religious and community profiles” of the best young Malian change-makers through 6 months to 1-year incubator process, to help them build ideas for transparency and open government initiatives. We provide hands-on training, mentorship, networks, communication support to combat disinformation and spread the word on the very constructive values of democracy, governance and their consolidation in the country. This helps them build creative tools with real impact-using the arts, film, media and culture.



## 2. Eco-system Building

We collaborate already with many other organizations and individual in Mali and broadly in Sahel countries around innovative and creative ideas to promote and consolidate Democracy and Governance.

Also, Open Government Partnership (OGP), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) by developing sharing role models and operational practices. We will do this through leading key reform processes with government around Democracy and Governance in Mali and in the Sahel region.

## 3. Setting New Standards/ Sahel Unheard Voices



We also work hard to “walk our talk” by getting the right persons, the victims of the lack of security, of democracy and good practices be in the center of our creative approach. We conduct and communicate more through our different platforms on social media and our monthly open-call initiatives around our projects from different regions in Mali and in the Sahel so the public can hear about the progress we’re making and the lessons we are learning in the field and we integrate Adaptive Leadership into everything we do - so we can constantly learn and improve as the situation is very changing and moving in the context in Mali and in the Sahel region. Through this, we hope to set an example for other organizations in Mali and beyond.



# Moussa Kondo

## Directeur Exécutif Sahel Institute

Moussa Kondo, Former Special Advisor to the President of the Republic of Mali in charge of governance, democracy and rule of law, Moussa has worked extensively also on international relations at the Presidency of Mali before he resigns for personal reasons.

Moussa is a journalist and civil society actor in Mali with close to 20 years of experience in various areas of community development, particularly in youth engagement and civic participation.

Founder of the weekly newspaper L'Express de Bamako, Moussa also founded and directed the chapter Accountability Lab in #Mali and #Niger until his appointment to the Presidency of Mali.

He contributes to sustainable development by educating youth in leadership, promoting accountability, governance, honesty and integrity in public service. Some of the participants in his program have obtained key positions in various organizations such as the World Bank, UNDP, IOM etc.

After his master's degree from the University of Bamako and his community service experiences, Moussa was selected as one of the Young African leaders in 2015 for the Mandela Washington Fellowship of the U.S. Government's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) in Business and Entrepreneurship at Dartmouth College, an Ivy League institution based in New Hampshire, USA.

Selected as a 2018 Obama Fellow out of more than 24,000 applications, Moussa was also selected as one of the Draper Hills Fellows, to study Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law at Stanford University in California, USA.

Beyond his country, Moussa is a fixture on the continent through his role as Chair of the APRM Youth Network, an African Union institution based in Johannesburg and the President of the Progressive African Network initiated by former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria.



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