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Mali: 2,800 lives saved!

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According to official calculations, a five-year USAID-funded Child Survival project implemented by Plan in Mali has saved over 2,800 children's lives.

In 2001, Plan began implementation of a Child Survival project in the Kita District of the Kayes region of Mali. Our goal was to improve the health and well-being of children in the district by addressing the six most common causes of child death in Mali: malaria, pneumonia, HIV/AIDS, diarrhea, measles and neonatal causes.

In the last year of the project alone, estimates suggest that the project saved 514 lives from malaria, 304 lives from pneumonia, 205 lives from diarrhea, 93 lives from neonatal causes, and 34 lives from measles for a total of 1,150 lives.



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A five-year Child Survival project implemented by Plan in Mali with the support of the American public has helped save over 2,800 lives.

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Working with Mali's Ministry of Health and local municipalities, Plan began helping strengthen the existing health care system in the region as well as increasing the support and interest of community members, especially mothers. The efforts paid off: mothers, health personnel and other interested parties in the Kita District began to show an increased interest in attending health-related educational and awareness-raising classes and technical trainings.

Pre- and post project baseline results submitted by Plan to USAID show just how effective the Child Survival project was in increasing the health awareness of mothers in Mali:

Children 0-23 months sleeping under an insecticide-treated bed net to protect them from malaria-carrying mosquitoes increased from an extremely low 3.9% to 98.1%. (Thanks to the contribution of free bed nets by UNICEF)

The percentage of children 12-23 months completely vaccinated by their first birthday increased from 51% to 77.2% The percentage of children 12-23 months who received the measles vaccine jumped from 51% to 83.5%

The percentage of children 0-5 months being solely breastfed increased from 11.6% to 62.4% In order to reduce cases of pneumonia, the percentage of children taken to the hospital for difficult or fast breathing went from 20% to 60% These numbers are just a sampling of the real impact of the Child Survival program in Mali.

[ Any views expressed in this article are those of the writer and not of Reuters. ]

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Rescue workers search for bodies in the waters of river Periyar in the southern Indian state of Kerala February 21, 2007. The bodies of five more children were pulled from a river in southern India on Wednesday, bringing to 18 the number of dead from a school picnic that turned into tragedy. Police said more than 50

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students and teachers -- none wearing life jackets -- were packed on a boat designed to carry no more than 35 people when it tipped them into the Periyar river in Kerala state.

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