

Children of Mali Initiative Closeout Report

December 10, 2025

Farewell!

Sadly, our initiative will close this year. Children of Mali became part of ICO in 2011 and has provided tutoring support ever since, for a dance troupe based in Bamako, Mali's capital. The project was started by Paul Chandler: he created Instruments4africa, an American NGO working with children from a very poor neighbourhood of Bamako to be trained in the traditional dance and music of West Africa. Claire Ebendinger and I came aboard a few years later to develop a tutoring program for those children. Most of them were struggling at school and the extra support allowed them to improve their chance of success.

We joined ICO – Innovative Communities.Org after we returned from our first trip to Mali. At first, we retained the same name as our American counterparts but eventually changed it to Children of Mali.

For me, being involved with the initiative has been a life transforming experience. I have learned so much about human resilience and courage! I feel sadness and ambivalence about bringing the initiative to a close, but the time has come for me to retire.

I am happy to know that our initiative has made a difference in the lives of those children. Many of them, particularly the girls, would not have been able to go to school beyond grade 4 without support. The tutoring we have provided for them has allowed them to do much better at school and has opened new doors for them.

I am also very pleased to know that even if the initiative is ending, it is not the end of the project: Paul is still in Bamako with his team on the field running Instruments4africa. The dance troupe is well and alive, and they will always remain part of my life. The pictures included here show the tutoring in action in 2024.

In closing, I want to give thanks to all the wonderful ICO volunteers who worked in the background and to all my colleagues who selflessly run the other initiatives. I am also so grateful to all our donors: without them, the tutoring would have never seen the light...a big thank you to you all!

Farewell!

Yves Parizeau



Children of Mali Dance Troupe



Children of Mali tutoring classroom



Children of Mali Tutoring



Children of Mali Tutoring