



Mali - The Accelerated Schooling Strategy - Passerelle (SSAP)



Responds to the following criteria

- ▶ Responsiveness
- ▶ Relevance
- ▶ Sustainability
- ▶ Replicability
- ▶ Effectiveness



Main stakeholders

Ministry of National Education; local non-governmental organizations (NGOs); community centres; Japanese Embassy in Mali; local school management and monitoring committees.

▶ Description

The Mali National Ministry of Education has been implementing the **Accelerated Schooling Strategy – Passerelle (SSAP)** officially since 2009. The main aim was to give children who have never attended school, or who have dropped out due to child labour, a second chance to re-enter the formal education system. This is a **transitional and accelerated schooling programme** for children between 8 and 12 years. The idea was originally initiated and piloted by the Strømme Foundation in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education of Mali from 2004-2009.

Since the end of the successful pilot phase in 2009, Mali has been committed to continuing to use this methodology to effectively boost access to education for out-of-school children. In 2011, the NGOs GRAADECOCOM and CAEB, accredited by the Ministry of Education, opened 100 education centres linked to this strategy, in the circles of Kati, Kolokani and Banamba in the region of Koulikoro, and Bougouni in the region of Sikasso. These two NGOs were also working with the Strømme Foundation earlier on and had therefore developed good knowledge of the SSAP.

Partners of ACCEL Africa saw in this initiative an opportunity to better respond to the issue of child labour in cotton fields and artisanal gold mining sites. Thus, the ACCEL Africa project supported the efforts of the Ministry of Education in the implementation of the SSAP.

The programme is currently being carried out in special community centres developed by the communities themselves. The initiative is supervised by the Ministry of Education, which accredits certain NGOs in different regions for the implementation of the SSAP on the ground. Similarly, training programmes are drawn up by the Ministry

of Education, which also provides initial training and pedagogical follow-up for SSAP centre facilitators.

These appear as good transitional solutions for school dropouts and have the possibility to transfer children to formal education or appropriate apprenticeship programmes and then potentially decent work opportunities. The presence of education centres directly in the communities, close to the children's homes and families, encourages boys and girls to re-enrol in education, even if they are working (for example, part-time and in non-hazardous conditions).¹

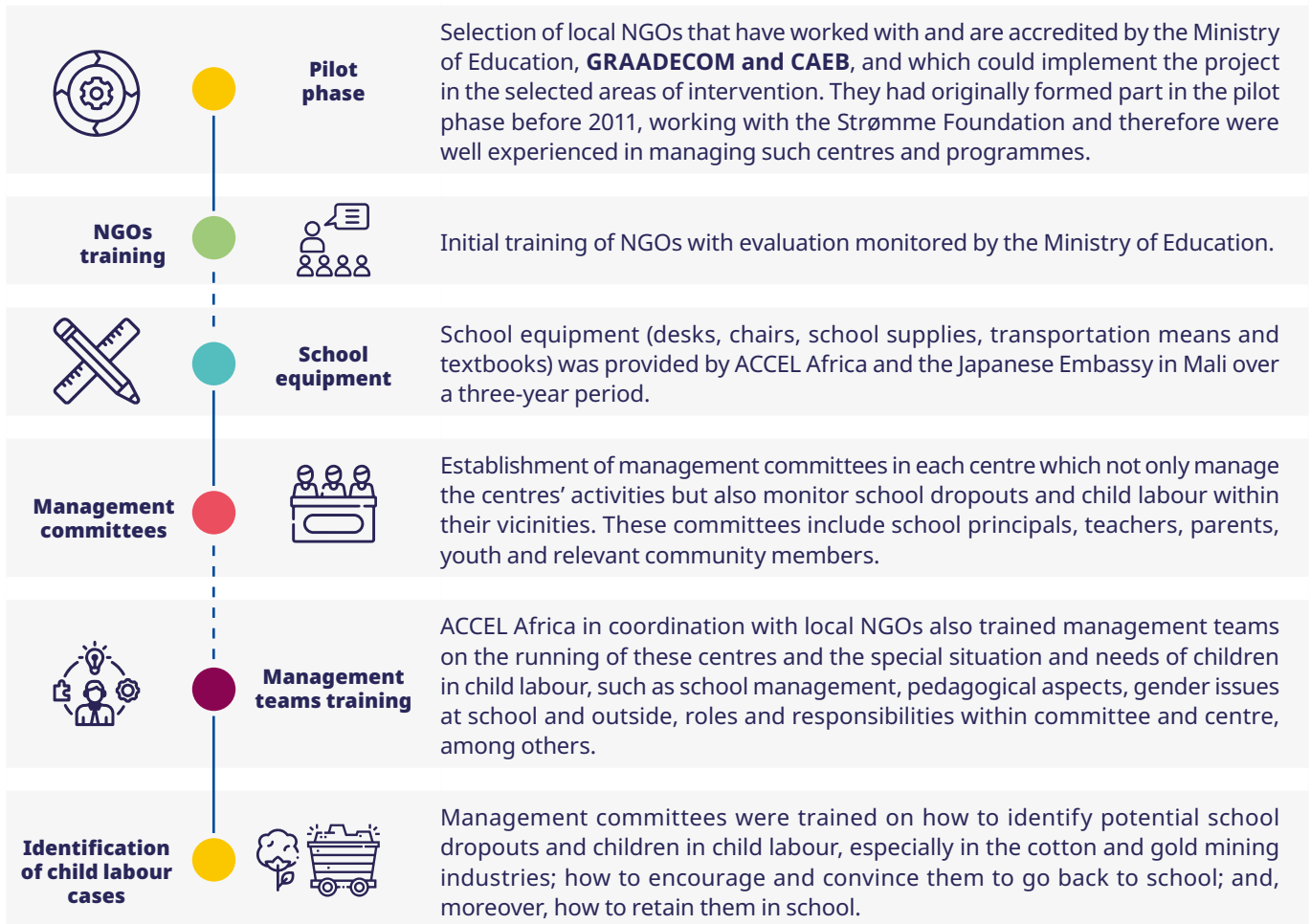
The certificates provided through this programme are accredited by the Ministry of Education, which gives these children a better opportunity to continue in any form of formal education programmes. The ACCEL Africa project supported the establishment of 72 new accelerated schooling centres near gold mining areas where children or their parents worked.

The actual centres and some of their logistics are usually provided by the communities themselves. The communities are involved in the whole process of the development of the centre and its operations, and also in ensuring the transfer of children to the formal school at the end of the school year. For each SSAP centre, there is a centre management committee composed of members from the community in addition to the school principal, village chief or his/her representative, and representatives of teachers, parents and youth. The management committee of the centre is responsible for its proper functioning and the regularity of the children, and raises awareness among the surrounding communities about school attendance.

1 Where they are also above of minimum legal working age.

► **Process**

The ACCEL Africa project supported the efforts of the Ministry of Education by opening new centres in the selected intervention areas of cotton and gold mining. Moreover, ACCEL Africa in coordination with other partners such as the **Japanese Embassy in Mali** have supported the Ministry in equipping and running these new centres. This took place through a process that included the following:

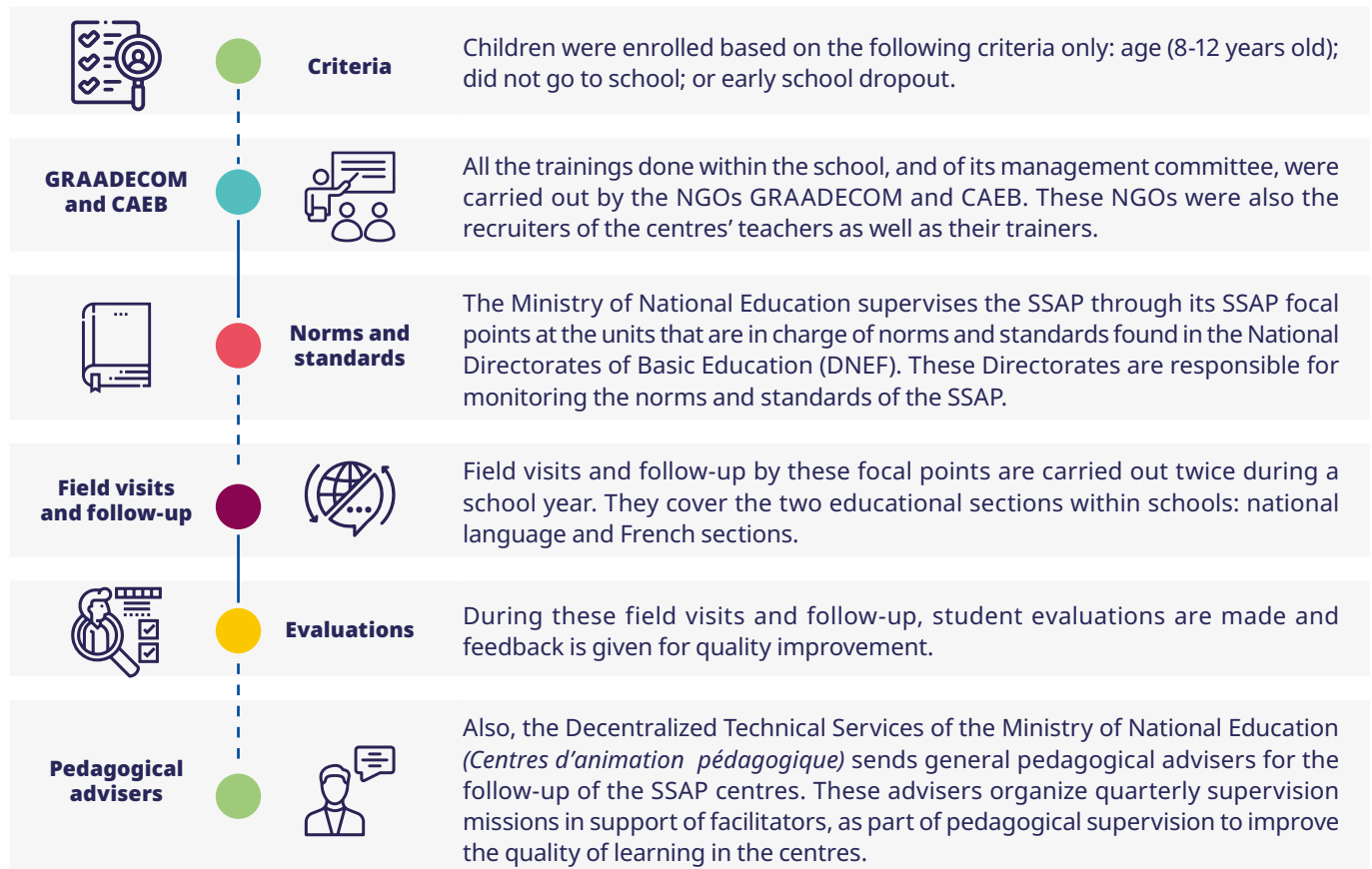


► **Figure 1. An accelerated schooling centre**



An accelerated schooling centre near the gold mining areas in Mali, Kouale.

It was found important that parents know about the impact of such schools in other communities; that the schools are also free of charge; and that all facilities and school needs are secured. It was found that parents usually prefer to have their children at school, especially when there are no extra costs and when schools are close to their homes and/or workplaces. It was found that the decision to go to these schools lies mainly with the parents; therefore, the parents have to be convinced first.



The local management and monitoring committee of the centre.

► Enabling factors

- 1 The Ministry of National Education realizes the need for such an accelerated educational system, geographically as close as possible to local districts and vulnerable communities. This encourages parents to take their children back to education, as it is closer, affordable, accessible and relevant to their situation.
 - 2 The Ministry of National Education has a specific budget for the programme. There is also a well-established structure that accredits and supervises this accelerated way of learning as a transitional phase for school dropouts and children in child labour, as explained above.
 - 3 The Ministry also has a well-established system for the supervision of these centres at both Directorate and community centre levels through the monitors that visit bi-annually as well as quarterly. These monitors include well-trained pedagogical advisers who are staff of the Ministry
 - 4 There is a relatively high sense of community engagement and ownership in such schooling systems that providing location and other needs when feasible.
 - 5 Community engagement has facilitated the establishment of the newly introduced management and child labour monitoring committees and their respective roles.
 - 6 Having well-established NGOs that are accredited and trusted by the Ministry of Education to carry out all needed trainings within the centres and respective communities makes the relationship easier with the Ministry as well as with the communities.
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In brief

The accelerated schooling programme in Mali provides boys and girls found in remote areas (such as in agricultural or mining areas), and who are school dropouts or who have no access to schools, a second chance to enrol or re-enrol in education. It provides equal chances and accessibility for both boys and girls.

Crucially, these centres are supervised and accredited by the Ministry of Education, yet they involve local communities whether in their management or in monitoring child labour and school dropouts within their vicinities. There is thus direct monitoring as well as management of child labour cases. Moreover, **children enrolled in these schools, as well as their parents, are sensitized against the re-engagement in child labour in general and in selected sectors** such as gold mining and cotton in particular. This example therefore portrays a comprehensive local, low-cost, community-based approach to child labour and education for children, their parents and the community at large.