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Daouda Michel Sawadogo, international UN Volunteer Youth Specialist, works with UNDP and Mali's regional authorities on the implementation of resilience activities for youth.

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## Offering opportunities to the youth of Mali

A country's greatest wealth is undoubtedly its youth. In Mali, as in most of the countries in Africa, young people represent more than 60 per cent of the population. Half of them live in precarious conditions, lacking opportunities to ensure their socio-economic integration. This situation is exacerbated by the political crisis that the country has been going through since 2012, which is making young people the prey of extremist groups in search of new recruits.

In 2018, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) launched a job creation programme for 3,000 young people in Mali. Daouda Michel Sawadogo (Burkina Faso) is based in Mopti and served under this programme as an international UN Volunteer Youth Specialist.

“ Idleness makes young people easy prey for armed groups who can then easily recruit them. The challenge is to help them find an occupation that meets their aspirations. --Daouda Michel Sawadogo, international UN Volunteer Youth Specialist

With more than eight years of experience in youth issues, Daouda Michel has accompanied Mali's regional authorities in the implementation of resilience activities. He has ensured the planning, monitoring, and implementation of several projects for the empowerment of young people in Gao, Mopti, Kayes, Segou and Bamako.

“ We trained 800 young people in entrepreneurship and equipped 60 youth groups with solar production technology. We also provided 189 young people with funds for the creation and strengthening of microenterprises. And to provide a framework for development, we equipped 6 youth houses with computer equipment. --Daouda Michel Sawadogo, UN Volunteer Youth Specialist

Active participation of youth in the economic, political and social construction could change the situation in Mali. Daouda Michel mobilizes young people to influence public policies that concern them.

“ Thanks to the support and awareness of volunteers like Daouda Michel, the young people of Djenné are connected to the rest of the world and will no longer be computer illiterate in the 21st century. -- Yeya Sarro, President of the local youth council of Djenné, receiving computer equipment

Through training courses on conflict prevention and management, citizenship and human rights, he has helped to raise the awareness of 1,500 young Malians about good governance and social cohesion. Daouda thus promotes young people through capacity building.

At a time when the 21st International Youth Day is being celebrated, the actions of Daouda and his peer UN Volunteers promote the capacities and potential of young people in Mali as positive agents of change.

“ I got involved in volunteering because I see myself as a solution for others. My daily goal is to increase the participation of young people in socio-economic and political governance in Mali. And being young helps me to better understand their aspirations so that I can offer

“them appropriate solutions. --Daouda Michel Sawadogo

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West and Central Africa

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Sustainable Development Goal: **SDG 1: No poverty** **SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth** **SDG 10: Reduced inequalities**