

Mali: Road to Reading Program



Our Story: Sangala Village

By appearances, one might consider “school” to be a generous word for the open-air, tarpaulin-and-tree-branch structure in Sangala, a village in Mali’s Serevare region.

The activity taking place among the 25 or so children in the shelter, however, leaves no doubt. Students write and read on individual slates, use millet stalk sticks to do math, and work together to solve problems.

The community established the one-classroom school with support from Road to Reading, a project that helps teachers nationwide learn effective literacy instruction, even in remote places like Sangala that formerly had no schools.

“I have never been to school and I feel the sting of this now,” says Massaran Coulibaly, a native and resident of Sangala. “Today, my daughter’s children are in school and this has brought a lot of joy to my life.”

Like other teachers supported by the program, Sangala’s Enoch Diarra benefits from an array of resources, including training in effective teaching methods, learning materials, and an Interactive Audio Instruction program to guide him as he tries new skills.

Teachers’ knowledge and practices are improving, and those changes appear to be having their desired effect.

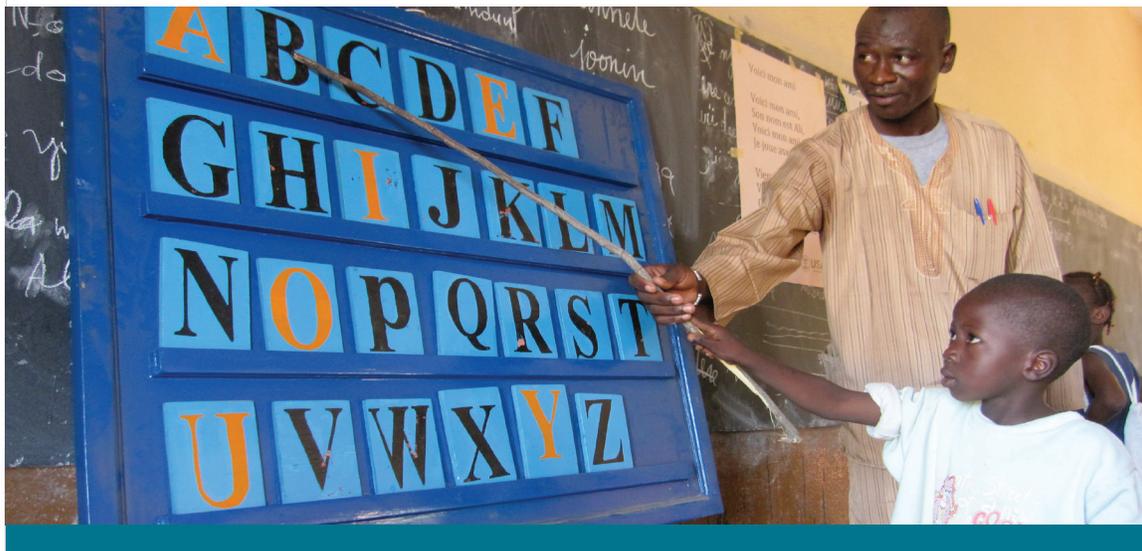
“Before, I didn’t know what school was,” says Sangala first-grader Nono Tanapo. “Now, I can read and write!”

Impact

Road to Reading helps Mali improve the teaching and learning of literacy nationwide, including in hard-to-reach and sparsely populated areas.

- National standards for reading and writing have been adopted.
- Participating teachers better understand how to teach literacy than do non-participants.
- Participating teachers report using significantly more effective teaching practices than do non-participants.
- Student reading impact data will be released in 2011.





With support from Road to Reading, Malian teachers are using more effective teaching practices.

Background

In Mali, around 20 percent of children are not in school, and educational quality is often low for those who are in school. A 2009 study revealed that 83 percent of second graders were unable to read even one word of a simple, grade-appropriate text.

The Road to Reading project is helping the Ministry of Education address these problems. The project works with the Ministry in all eight Malian regions to increase access to basic quality education, focusing on improving reading and writing skills.

The five-year program, sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development, reaches over 12,000 teachers and 600,000 students with a rich reading program that works in resource-lean contexts. Through standards formation, in-person training, and the innovative use of technology such as Interactive Audio Instruction, Road to Reading helps deliver quality learning across Mali, including in non-traditional settings such as medersas, single-classroom, and mobile schools.

Road to Reading is implemented by Education Development Center, Inc. in partnership with RTI International, the Institute for Popular Education, and Aide et Action International.

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Impact

Road to Reading expands and improves education on a national scale.

- Educational access has increased through the introduction of 35 one-classroom schools (eventually to be 44) in rural areas and 8 mobile schools among nomadic communities.
- Over 9,100 teachers and principals have been trained in effective, research-based literacy teaching practices.
- Over 12,800 teachers and principals have been trained in the use of Interactive Audio Instruction.



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