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# OUR CHILDREN LEARN TO READ

## BALANCED LITERACY

The Government of Mali has adopted and incorporated into its competency-based bilingual education curriculum the “balanced literacy approach” to improve literacy instruction in the early grades in order to increase learners’ reading outcomes. Although teachers receive in-service teacher training – often through cascade workshops requiring refresher courses – the challenge, in a resource-lean environment, is how to provide on-going support to teachers as they strive to implement the “balanced literacy approach” in their classrooms to enable learners to master basic reading competencies. All Children Reading: A Grand Challenge for Development is a partnership between USAID, World Vision, Inc., and the Australian government, to support game-changing innovations with the potential to dramatically improve reading skills and low literacy rates among primary grade children.

## MOTHER TONGUE TECHNOLOGY

“Our Children Learn to Read” is a pilot project that supports the Ministry of Education’s plan to ensure effective in-service training of all teachers at reasonable costs to improve reading instruction and provide a quality education to all its children. The project is testing the use of mobile technology to improve reading instruction for grade 1-2 classes in bilingual curriculum schools in Mali using the local language – Bambara – of the Bougouni region. The project provides training for teachers, school directors, and educative authorities in the school district of Bougouni in order to improve the implementation of the mother tongue balanced literacy approach. Eighteen, Grade 1 teachers and their school directors in a treatment group and ten, Grade 1 teachers and their school directors in a comparison group will be trained in the “balanced literacy approach” and receive the full package of accompanying instructional materials in Bambara. Using the stepping stone application, teachers in the treatment group will receive modestly-priced Android tablets pre-loaded with videos of teachers in typical Malian classrooms successfully using the balanced literacy strategies as well as other supporting materials. This will provide teachers with the opportunity to review the strategies daily and visualize how they are applied in the classroom. The project aims to use cost-effective, technology-based models to improve teachers’ skills in teaching reading, resulting in increased reading scores for 1-2 grade learners.

### OUR CHILDREN LEARN TO READ INTERVENTION AREAS

**BUDGET:** \$330,000

**TARGET AREAS:** Bougouni Region

**PROJECT CYCLE:** 2015-2017

**IMPLEMENTING PARTNER:**  
RARE

The 2-year project objectives are:

- Production of videos of teachers using strategies of balanced literacy;
- Conditioning of tablets with balanced literacy audio modules and other contents;
- Training of grade 1 and 2 teachers, school directors, and pedagogical counsellors;
- Monitoring and support of grade 1 teachers and school directors.