

**Title:** Coming out of the Dark: Malian Adults Learn to Read using Innovative Technology

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- ◆ **Department:** education
- ◆ **Description:** The Kinkajou projector was invented to help adults taking night time literacy classes in places without electricity. Powered by human energy, or solar panels, the projector displays large, bright images and text at very low cost.
- ◆ **Geographic areas:** Mali
- ◆ **Keywords:** adult literacy; technology; innovation; public-private partnerships; GDA (Global Development Alliance)
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- ◆ **Pictures:** **photo one: Adult literacy class in Bamako, Mali; photo two: the Kinkajou (source: Design that Matters for both photos)**

Partners: USAID and Design that Matters, an American non-profit association

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For years World Education has been convinced that one of the best ways to demonstrate to parents the benefits of schooling their children is to teach parents to read. Parents come together usually at night, after a long day in the field and doing domestic work. They meet in classrooms that don't have electricity and must try to decipher letters huddled together around a candle or a lantern in order to see the book—not the ideal way of learning to read.

In 2004 World Education created a public-private partnership with Design that Matters (an American non-profit association), Malian businesses, Malian and American universities and USAID to find a better way to teach literacy at night. World Education and its partners created the Kinkajou projector.

The Kinkajou is used to project literacy lessons—letters, words and images—on the wall of the classroom enabling all learners to see clearly and follow the lesson being taught without crouching around a book. The projector is powered by solar batteries or through human energy, using a pedal attachment to generate power. It also takes advantage of high tech, low-cost materials to give a greater amount of light while using less energy. The projection approach facilitates learning and increases the efficiency of the trainer, who no longer needs to go from one person to another to present letters, words and images. Most importantly it resolves difficulties related to reading text in pitch black classrooms.

The “Kinkajou” relies on local production—another advantage of the project. World Education, Design that Matters and its Malian partners are researching the availability of manufacturing materials and technical skills necessary to support local production. The main objective is to reduce the price of the equipment and support local producers that strive to produce new technologies. The Kinkajou is currently being piloted in adult literacy classrooms throughout Mali.



