



eReaders for Mali ?

In Mali, despite war and instability, everyone agrees on a deep weakness that prevents development from happening: **ineffectiveness of the educational system**.

On a surface twice as large as France with only one fourth of its population, the Education System, abandoned 20 years ago barely produces results. Corruption, ridiculous wages, rural exodus, teacher's lack of skills (trained within the same system), disengaging parents, etc. Reasons to fail abound. To the point that even neighboring countries, yet not richer than Mali, hardly recognize it's High School Diploma.



Classroom from a Private School in Bamako

School don't have libraries. Public libraries, tied to the University are very rare and poor. There is actually only two universities in the whole country and the second one hasn't yet produced graduates.

Learning about this situation, we asked Jokkolabs, a social-entrepreneurship think-tank with roots in Senegal, Mali, France and Burkina Faso to **find concrete solutions**, directly beneficial to students with limited access to Education and Culture.

A brainstorming with blogger organisations, members of the Ministry of Education, entrepreneurs and other NGOs **lead to a solution: read... with an eReader.**

Why eReaders?

Most Master's graduate in Mali never owned a single book. At best, they tied together copies from their university teacher.

Reading a novel is a luxury that brings surprising opportunities to the rare who has access to it : better writing skills, better vocabulary, mind-opening, better general knowledge, better thinking, self-evaluation, increased job opportunities, etc.

Reading is a personal development booster.

Why an eReader so ? Why not improving the situation in a classic way: with books ?

eReaders has several interesting advantages:

- It's lightweight (about 0.45lb). It thus is a lot easier to carry (both in terms of logistics and cost) than a few books.
- It has a huge storage capacity: between 2,000 and 4,000 books.
- It is robust. In a environment where everything is lent and re-lent, an eReader would have a way longer life span than a book.
- While it requires power, it's consumption is minimal. The eReader has a month-long autonomy, which is enormous.

Project

Our Project consist in providing eReaders to young malians, so that they can instantly and directly benefit from them.

It is a *field project* though. It inclues an on-site user training which will allow us to make sure the equipments arrive and are distributed as expected.

Also, this Project is a pilot which we hope will provide enough information on the necessity and the impact of eReaders. This is a real-life test of a model that might be scaled-up.

The Project is broke down in four stages:

1. Procurement of the eReaders.
2. Preparation of a library of contents and Setup of the readers.
3. Shipment to Bamako.
4. Local partners training.
 1. Identification of beneficiaries.
 2. Usage Strategy Design.
 3. Monitory & Evaluation canvas design.

As described, **this is not a logistic project** but a complete educational mission from its design to the distribution, the training, it's usage and the reporting.

Elaborating the **content list is a crucial step**, Jokkolabs tells us:

“Many projects failed in time because they were focalizing on hardware issues: computers, Internet, etc. What makes a difference is **the content**. It must be **large**, but it must also be **varied**: french classics, comptenporary Sci-Fi, african writers, etc.”

This is why we envision **three types of content**:

- All the free or public domain books in french.
- All of Wikipedia.
- A Selection of novels and short stories from amateur (unpublished) writers who would be willing to include their work on the readers.

Distribution is also very important as we need to pick locations with the **highest possible impact**. We are working ont this topic with our partners in Mali. However, in order to properly collect an analyze the results, we plan on sending **only a few dozens of readers** in selected places.

Technically, trainers will be trained in Bamako on using the device but also on its maintenance and content management. They will also be trained on how to create new content for the reader from their original documents (Ministry of Education wants to try some curriculum this way). Then, these people will train the direct users of the readers, in their own rural locations and will be the one handing the devices to them, as well as a mini solar charger.

Partners

Human'ESDES is the project owner. A french non-profit (Association Loi de 1901) created for the project. We ambition to use this pilot as a step stone to periodic high-impact social actions.

Jokkolabs, coworking space and think-tank created in Senegal then expanded in several african countries and in France. Recognized and awarded for its actions in favor of entrepreneurship.

Jokkolabs is the local partner in charge of liaison with beneficiaries and other field partners.

CBM, Mali Blogger Community, in charge of distributing the readers, training the beneficiaries and day-to-day monitoring.

Malik Benaouda et Leo SkwireL, motion and graphic design.

Union des associations de l'ESDES (UAE) provides financial support and a team of students to help with communication matters (pamphlet, flyer, logo, etc).

ESDES Business School supervizes the project team. They vouch for the project.

Kiwix a free multi-platform software for reading offline contents (mainly Wikipedia).

Roughman created the project logo.



Needs

While being just a pilot, the project has ambitious standards in that it aims at providing a scale-up strategy.

However, thanks to the numerous partners involved, our **financial needs are limited to Hardware procurements only**.

Item	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total
eReaders	30	\$110	\$4,587
MicroSD Card (32G)	30	\$17	\$500
Mini Solar Chargers (1,200 mAh)	30	\$26	\$792
TOTAL			\$5,879

Non-financial needs summary:

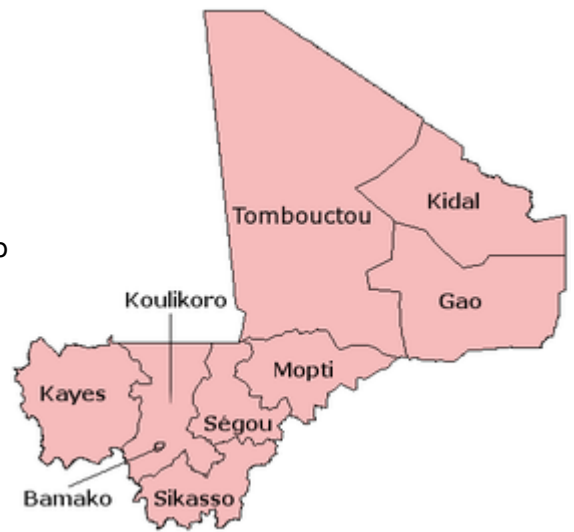
- Adapting Kiwix (Offline Wikipedia) for use on eReader: **Kiwix Team**.
- Technical assistance in installing Kiwix on the readers: **eReader manufacturer**.
- Identifying, downloading, extracting and preparation of the free eBooks: **Kiwix Team, Jokkolabs, Human'ESDES**.
- Partnerships with individual writers and editors (France) for additional contents: **Human'ESDES**.
- Crowdfunding campaign: **Human'ESDES**.
- Animated short film describing the project: **Malik Benaouda & Leo SkwireL, Human'ESDES**.
- Partnerships with writers, authorities and editors (Mali) for additionnal contents: **CBM**.
- Distribution & Evaludation strategy design: **CBM, Jokkolabs**.
- Organizing the training: **Human'ESDES, Jokkolabs**.
- Identifying, training and actual eReader distribution to schools/beneficiaries: **CBM**.
- Periodical monitoring and data collection: **CBM**.
- Tools & Equipments Maintenance: **Jokkolabs**.
- Evaluation & Impact Report: **Human'ESDES**.
- Communication: **Human'ESDES, CBM**.

Choosing beneficiaries

eReaders will be spread over three groups:

1. **10 readers** will be distributed in the Ségou Region, all within one High School with a dedicated teacher and a pool of interested students.
2. **10 readers** will be distributed in the Timbuktu Region, directly to young people within one community. Essay contests will help us identify beneficiaries and involvement of local radio stations will ensure the community supports them.
3. **10 readers** will be distributed to students in Bamako.

In Bamako, 10 University students from various levels and faculties will be selected and trained directly. We will use the numerous clubs and organisations (like the Francophone Digital Campus) to find the most promising and needing ones. **We expect them to share the reader with their relatives.**



Those **three different approaches** will help us understand what makes the most sense in this context.

- Is it relevant to work with Schools ?
- Does the community-involvement help in using the devices ?
- What age-group are the devices most beneficial to ?

We won't provide any reading programme. Readers will be filled with easy-to-access content and beneficiaries trained on using them. **We just want them to come to loving reading.**

Trainers' training

A training will take place at Jokkolabs with:

- Human'ESDES and Jokkolabs Teams.
- Delegates from the CBM.
- Ten selected students from Bamako.

Training Programme:

- Actual usage and maintenance of the device.
- Usage and maintenance of the solar charger.
- Browsing the (very large) library of content.
- Reader Features.
- Using Wikipedia on the device.
- Updating the device's content ; modifying the library.
- Creating content for the reader (file format conversion).
- Reader Usage & sharing policy.
- Monitoring & Evaluation Indicators to collect and tools (discussion, enhancements).
- Equipments and monitoring tools hand-over.

This training will also allow participants to discuss about how the project will be run, its objectives and possible evolutions. Participants will be the ones responsible for the evaluation of the project and they are the ones collecting indicators.

Field training

CBM delegates will both execute a **training and distribution mission** in their respective regions: Ségou and Timbuktu.

They will **iteratively go to each designated school** and will re-run the training they attended themselves. Participants will be the School head and the teachers.

It is important to note that **all schools will be geographically close to each others** in order to **create a synergy** and better **observe the impact** on people.

Project Evaluation

Evaluation takes place at three different levels:

- Financial Evaluation: Report on actual costs and an extrapolation on them for scale-up.
- Information and indicators collection about the usage of the readers ; from the teachers and students.
- Monitoring of the beneficiaries by CBM and analysis of indicators in order to produce statistics and a usage/cost ratio report.

Usage Monitoring

It is very important for the project to **know if the readers are being used and how**. In short, is it relevant to provide readers to those people ?

To do so, teachers will be given forms:

- who use them?
- when?
- what usage is made of the library?
- how easy is it to access eBooks?
- which eBooks are abandoned?
- which ones are read?
- et caetera.

Those documents will be published online once received.

CBM delegates will be responsible for **keeping a regular contact** with the users-evaluators in order to **prevent any avoidable problem to disrupt the project**. However, if the readers are not used by a **lack of interest**, this is an indicator to us.

Results Compilation

After an **initial 6 months period**, potentially followed by adjustments and a **second identical period**, we will collect and prepare all the data in order to produce every possible indicators. We will **share them online**, including raw data.

These data will be used in our **detailed report on usage, relevance, impact and economical value of distributing eReaders**.

Contact

Any question or concern about the project, its progress, objectives or partnerships? Please contact **Louis Gaudin** at human.esdes@gmail.com or on (33) 6 61 89 47 71.

Up to date informations are on the www.MALeBOOKS.ml web site.

Follow the Project's Progress on social networks: Twitter @eBooksML or facebook Malebooks.