



Female Adult Literacy Program:

For centuries, Timbuktu was a place of historically significant scholarship, highlighted by UNESCO World Heritage sites like many ancient libraries, a university, and an important collection of ancient manuscripts. Despite this, more than half of the 900 villages in the Timbuktu region, including over 150 “scale” villages, are currently without schools. Each “scale” village has more than 100 school-age children. Caravan to Class seeks to reverse the injustice of literacy in villages around Timbuktu and help return this fabled area to its rightful place as a beacon of education for Sub-Saharan Africa. We do this by building schools and supporting them in carefully selected villages, where we also work to raise awareness of the importance of education within families and communities.

While our long-term goal has always been to bring literacy to the villages where we operate, our focus, since we started in 2010, has been to make “going to school a routine part of life”. We measure ourselves by the percentage of children from a given village attending school. Our current target is 70%; however our long-term objective is 100%, consistent with our underlying vision: “Every child, no matter where she or he may live, has the fundamental right to education.” CTC recognizes that successful literacy programs engage the support of communities and families. In the conflict-affected zone of Timbuktu, community support for literacy programs can be more difficult to achieve when these displaced families and communities are focusing on trying to fulfill their basic survival needs. An OCHA/UNHCR study documented that 2.7 million in Mali have moderate food insecurity, with .4 million, mostly in the Northern Mali, having severe food insecurity. While we provide food, uniforms, and community gatherings in an effort to alleviate these broader issues, we cannot truly reach our long-term goal unless the mothers of the children that attend our schools, prioritize the importance of going to school. Given the matriarchal and matrilineal nature of their cultures in these villages, parental, and especially maternal, literacy has a significant impact on the literacy acquisition of children.

Within the context of this crisis-affected population of a previously nomadic background, **the problem is that women in these communities have no formal schooling, with literacy rates close to zero and a culture that does not prioritize education.** The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) conducted by the OECD listed the four main barriers to attending school for girls as follows: A) shortage of facilities, B) schooling costs, C) burden of household labor, D) cultural and social practices. Caravan to Class (and our NGO network partners), in the villages where we work have removed the first two, are working on the third (through various programs developed by partners. **By launching the Female Adult Literacy program, we can elevate the importance of literacy and work on removing this important fourth barrier.**

The project’s main goal is to advance the education of women in villages where CTC has built schools through teaching literacy and use of literacy to provide tools to empower women to improve their

Education in Villages in Timbuktu and Across the Southern Sahara



hard daily lives and create a generational change in their families, particularly with respect to girls, of the need to prioritize education.

Specific Project Objectives:

- Teach 25 women to read, write and calculate in two important ethnic languages to the area: a) Tamashek, b) Sonrai
- Teach 25 women in post literacy areas of maternal and child health, hygiene/sanitation, and management of business affairs of family life

Phase 1: Literacy Center

The focus is to teach women to read, write and calculate in their native languages, Tamashek and Sonrai. This part of the course, basic literacy instruction, will be 180 days. Following this, there will be an evaluation (through testing) and further refinement of focused literacy areas for the remaining 90 days.

Phase 2: Post-Literacy Follow-up

The women who have been most committed to Phase 1, as determined by the group of women, will be admitted to the post-literacy follow-up. Post literacy will focus on using skills gained from literacy course which can be used in the daily lives of the women in areas like health, animal husbandry, gardening, and general management of business affairs. The duration of this practical course is 90 days to be followed up self-guided women's community cooperative to convene weekly.

Please note that the important Phase 2 part of the program will be lead by women chosen in each village who have best demonstrated enthusiasm, leadership qualities and skill in the Phase 1 part of the program. These female leaders, for each village, will be chosen only by the women in the courses.

Caravan to Class' focus is to ensure access to education for all children, ages 6 – 12 years, in carefully selected villages around Timbuktu. However, we are very conscious of the fact that we need to pay special attention to the issue of ensuring access for girls. We take this very seriously because a) the data shows (please see the "Why We Do What We Do" section of our enclosed 2014-15 Impact Report) the tragically low percentages of girls attending schools in villages around Timbuktu, b) that getting and keeping young girls in school saves lives, as the longer they are in school the less likely they are to marry young and give birth to children before their reproductive systems are ready. We are proud of the fact that our attendance numbers show a greater than 50% ratio of girls to boys in the schools that we have built and support. However, with our attendance rates just above 70%, we are focused, for the 2015-16 school year, on launching the Female Adult Literacy and Empowerment program detailed above.

With this program, as an additional support to education in the villages where we work, we can create a generational change in the women who take part in the program and their attitudes towards education.

Education in Villages in Timbuktu and Across the Southern Sahara



This is what we are striving for. The other important goal of this program is to help these women gain important literacy skills that can also advance the quality of their own lives through empowerment. In this way, through building a school in a village, supporting the operations of the school, getting the community involved in the school in a holistic way, and finally providing specific literacy skills to the mothers, we can create a sustainable long-term change in the prioritization of education in the villages where Caravan to Class works. In the measurement of our success with this project, as detailed below, we do expect to see attendance rates increased which will be the primary success factor of the project, in addition to other important success criteria.

In terms of evaluating and measuring the success of the Female Adult Literacy Program, please see below the major expected outputs:

- Increase in attendance for children ages 6-12 years in schools we have constructed by 10% (ie. from mid-70% to mid-80%)
- Achievement of basic literacy in two local languages for 25 women.
- Training of 25 women in use of literacy for use in their daily lives and increases their involvement in village and family management/decision-making.

The planned Female Adult Literacy Program will be a significant and important tool in helping CTC achieve our mission of “bringing literacy to villages around Timbuktu.” CTC and our supporters share a transformational vision of the world and for our respective organizations, to play our own important roles in this transformation. We are both passionate about the important belief that education is the answer to many of the global challenges we face, particularly in underserved places like Timbuktu, Mali. We envision a world where equal access to education for all will lead to a more just and safe world.

Education in Villages in Timbuktu and Across the Southern Sahara

Caravan to Class » 1001 Bridgeway #730 » Sausalito, CA 94965
415-331-0567 » barry@caravantoclass.org » www.caravantoclass.org