



## PHOTO & CAPTION

### Rural Areas Bridge the Digital Divide



Photo: USAID/Dennis Bilodeau

***Community learning and information centers — “CLICs” — give rural areas access to new information technologies.***

Access to information in rural Mali is notoriously difficult. Few libraries exist, computers are generally for the use of private institutions and Internet access outside of the capital city was virtually non-existent. To bridge this gap, USAID helped establish community learning and information centers — “CLICs” — in 13 rural communities across Mali.

CLICs have given rural Malians access to high-tech tools — the Web, email, DVDs, CD-ROMs — as well as more traditional information devices, like radio, video and television. Much more than just cybercafés, CLICs offer users access to specially trained staff, who help users find

information on topics directly related to development. Additional information materials are also being produced that will make even more knowledge available at the CLICs. USAID has encouraged other donors to create similar community telecenters, so they could form an association that would facilitate the exchange of information among members.