



November 1, 2010

Dear Friends,

Many members in our community have provided assistance to development projects in Burkina Faso since returning home from their tour of service. The Friends of Burkina Faso has, for instance, used donations earmarked for its Projects Fund as venture capital investments. We have supported numerous development projects over the past decade, initiatives that were proposed by Burkinabé and approved by our selection committee. FBF can be proud of the many accomplishments achieved to date, especially in the promotion of girls' education through our partnership with NEEDED in Ouahigouya. There is, however, much more that FBF can accomplish if friends, family members, and acquaintances join our collective effort in support of FBF's outreach program.

Let me describe two shea butter proposal/projects to illustrate some challenges and possibilities. You may recall that back in 2003, our organization helped a women's cooperative in the village of Babora-Pegora purchase a hydraulic oil press to process karité nuts into shea butter. FBF channeled funds through ASUDEC, a Burkinabé non-governmental organization (NGO), that had submitted the shea butter proposal on behalf of these women. FBF's project selection committee was impressed with ASUDEC and its notion of "passing-on-of-the-gift," the guiding principal underlying this group's approach to sustainable development. One objective of the project was that a proportion of the proceeds from the sale of the butter would go into a revolving trust fund, enabling ASUDEC to purchase an oil press for a cooperative in an adjacent village. The Babora-Pegora cooperative has proven to be a success. It mobilized local resources, empowered women to assume greater responsibilities over their lives, and improved the standard of household living in Babora-Pegora. But low prices in the local market prevented the goal of "passing-on-of-the-gift" from being realized.

Last year, Nowon (another Burkinabé NGO) sent FBF a shea butter proposal on behalf of a women's cooperative in Tiogo. FBF's selection committee views this proposal very positively. It is well written and the project clearly has "buy-in" support from the local institutional infrastructure. However, given the shortage of resources in the FBF projects account, we had to inform Nowon that we would place their request to underwrite the purchase of a hydraulic press for the Tiogo cooperative on hold until after the 2010 Fall Fundraising campaign and our projects account had been replenished.

In early October, in what promises to be a serendipitous development, Taylor Clay, a scholar at Pepperdine University, contacted me after searching the web and finding out about FBF Projects. Taylor is applying for a Fulbright grant to study the supply-chain in the shea butter industry in Burkina Faso. She hopes to gain an understanding of constraints and prospects as seen through the eyes of the women collecting the nuts, intermediaries transforming the nuts into final products, and actors selling the butter in the domestic and international markets. She is absolutely thrilled about the prospect of assisting FBF evaluate and monitor our projects involving shea butter. Perhaps we can find out the production/market viability of indigenous shea butter projects!

The Nowon proposal is but one of four propositions that the FBF selection committee views favorably and that remain in our in-box. The shea butter proposal focuses, of course, on agriculture. The other three highly-ranked proposals address needs related to health care, micro-credit, and computers. The dollars requested for the four initiatives amounts to \$25,000. Might it be possible for FBF to support one or more of these initiatives?

Please remember that 100% of project contributions made directly to FBF via our website or through the mail are sent overseas, thanks to our members who keep their \$15 annual membership fees up-to-date. FBF does not levy a tax on incoming funds to cover the organization's overhead expenditures or to pay salaries. To make a direct gift to FBF Projects use either the attached contribution form or our new PayPal facility by clicking one of the "donate" buttons after going to <http://fbf.tamu.edu/donations.html>

We thank you for your generous support in recent years. Your donations in 2011 will ensure that we continue to support development projects in Burkina Faso

Cordially

Tom Vollrath
Chair, FBF Projects Committee