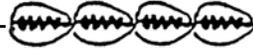




FRIENDS OF BURKINA FASO

ANNUAL FUND-RAISING CAMPAIGN



Dear Friends of Burkina,

November 1, 2012

Esther Duflo, an economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology whom *Time* magazine recently identified as one of the 100 most influential persons in the world today, provides empirical evidence that the absence of hope plays a large role in keeping people trapped in poverty. Her field research shows that externally-financed development projects, even if relatively small in scale, often go well beyond the direct impact of the resources they supply. She finds that such aid provides poor people with “the mental space” to think about more than just scraping by. Those who benefit from outside assistance not only find more work in existing activities, like agricultural labor, but they also start exploring new lines of work. The take-home message of Duflo’s research is that well-designed small projects can make a big difference in the lives of the very poor by infusing hope. Optimism is a powerful motivator. It makes it possible for people with meager resources to envision a better life, engage in constructive activities, and alter behavior that leads them out of poverty.

The Friends of Burkina Faso’s small-grant program provides not only financial support but also hope to project participants. As a philanthropic venture capitalist, FBF is willing to take risks, but only after careful assessments of written proposals. We support individuals and local organizations who have innovative ideas about ways to incentivize the local population, galvanize available resources, and circumvent obstacles.

The FBF Projects Committee believes that the modest investments made in 2012 will generate handsome returns to your donation dollars. This year FBF supported three initiatives: the computer expansion project at the *Lycée Provincial à Koudougou* (LPK), the Pabré nursery/forestry project for youth developed by an Ashoka fellow, and NEEED’s education program focused on young girls in Yatenga.

The LPK Computer Expansion Project

We know that access to computers enables students to acquire needed skills to function in today’s electronic age, exposes them to new and innovative ideas, and inspires them to establish contact and explore the outside world. Given such payoffs, FBF responded favorably to a request from the *Lycée Provincial à Koudougou* to equip its lab, and sent 20 computers to the high school this summer. PCV Emma Hunter writes of the impact that such equipment has on students: “I have seen the end-of-the-school-year projects of students who have taken computer science and those who haven’t, and those students who have, invariably have more and better information, as well as better presentation materials. I have seen students create flyers for group meetings, for family members’ businesses, wedding invitations, etc., using the skills they learned in my computer classes. In addition, the students who have a real interest in computers have asked for information that surpasses my own knowledge, and I have been able to help them find other Burkinabé who have the expertise they need. One of my former students told me he is going to university for computer science as a result of taking and succeeding in my course.”

The Nursery/Forestry Initiative

The Ashoka forestry/nursery project designed by René Christophe Ouedraogo mobilized youth employment during this year's agricultural growing season, and taught young farmers how to develop a nursery, plant trees, and earn income. Thanks to Christophe's initiative and FBF financial support, 150 youth planted tens of thousands of trees within the Bendatoege zone. Kaitlyn Brown, FBF Project manager, says that "there is no question that Christophe is doing great work with the youth," and that "FBF's grant was used wisely and provided the critical resources to make it all happen."

NEEED's education program

As some of you know, FBF has forged a productive relationship with GlobalGiving, a non-profit organization that connects donors with grassroots projects around the world to make a high impact. Interestingly, FBF is ranked by GlobalGiving as one of its "superstar" organizations. This ranking is due to our success promoting girls' education in Burkina Faso which, in turn, is due to our collaborative relationship with the local Burkinabé organization, *Association Nimbus, Enfance, Environnement, Education et Développement* (NEEED). NEEED has been hugely successful in educating village parents about the importance of schooling for girls, inspiring parents in over 160 villages to enroll their young daughters in primary school. Working collectively, the FBF/NEEED/village-family partnerships have enabled approximately 2,700 young girls to enter primary school (with a self-help funding strategy which supports 13 years of education) and have provided scholarships to 33 girls for post-secondary education. We hope to be able to support NEEED in extending educational opportunities to other girls residing in the approximately 100 villages in the Yatenga region that have requested participation but which have not yet been reached.

If you are looking for a big bang for your philanthropic buck, FBF Projects is the place for you. Your contributions will generate hope and change in Burkina Faso by ensuring that FBF will be able to continue to support community-initiated development projects in 2013!

Many thanks, in advance, for your generous support!

Cordially,



Tom Vollarth
Chair, FBF Projects Committee

To make a direct gift to FBF Projects, use either the attached contribution form or our PayPal facility by going to <http://fbf.tamu.edu/donations.html> and clicking one of the "donate" buttons. Project contributions made directly to FBF via our website or through the mail are spent on projects. Your \$15 annual membership fee covers FBF's operating costs. Thank you, members, for keeping your membership fees up to date.

