



BURKINA CONNECTION

A NEWSLETTER BY AND FOR THE MEMBERS OF FRIENDS OF BURKINA FASO



2021 Vol. 1

IN THIS ISSUE

GIRLS' EDUCATION
TESTIMONIALS
p. 3

SABABOU EDUCATION
FUND
p. 5

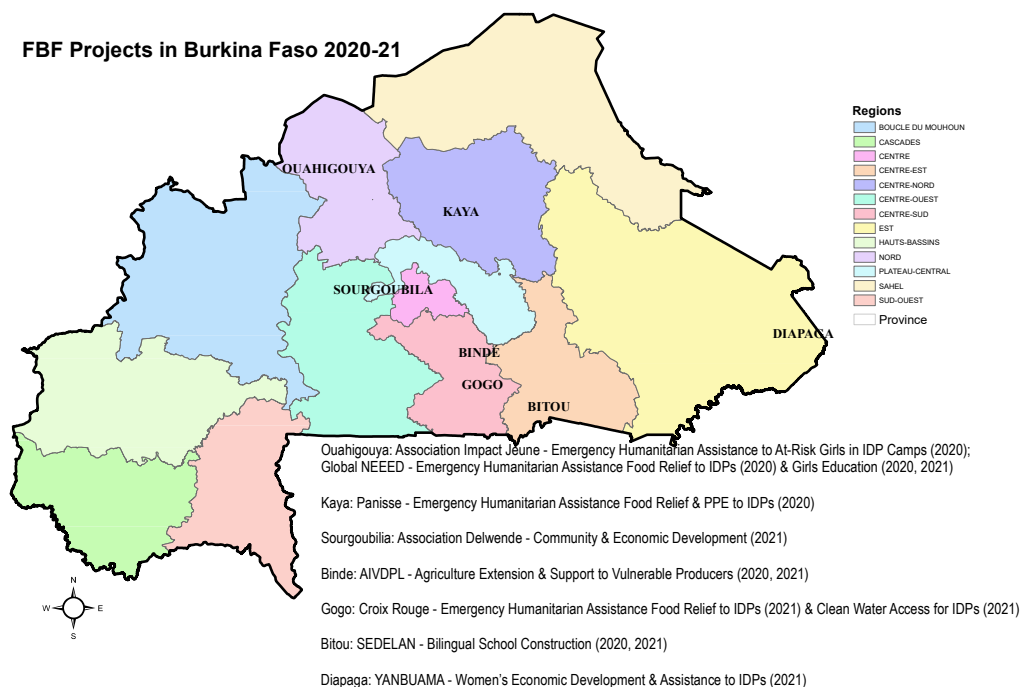
STAY INFORMED
ABOUT BURKINA
p. 6

SINOCHIN BILINGUAL
SCHOOL UPDATE
p. 8

FBF FUNDS SIX PROJECTS WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT

By Caroline Chambre Hammock, Projects Officer, RPCV 02-04

FBF Projects in Burkina Faso 2020-21



FBF members and friends continue to respond generously to our annual fundraising appeal to support grassroots projects in Burkina Faso. Thanks to these donations, the Projects Committee was able to recommend six projects to the FBF Board of Directors for partnership and financial support. The six projects were selected out of 12 proposals that were received in response to the "Call for Proposals" issued in fall 2020. The Projects Committee was very pleased with the volume of proposals received, particularly since Peace Corps no longer has a presence in Burkina, and PCVs/RPCVs have traditionally served as the main connector to grassroots organizations doing great work. The breadth and depth of the proposals addressing a wide range of sectors was also impressive.

After careful consideration and vetting, proposals from the following organizations were selected for 2021 funding:

Agricultural Extension and Support to Vulnerable Producers (AIVPDL)

Located in Zoundweogo in the Centre-Sud region, AIVPDL has been a project partner since 2017. They

Continued on p.2



RENEW YOUR DUES TODAY

CLICK HERE



To check membership status or update contact information,

check your inbox for an FBF email dated May 16.

Email treasurer@friendsofburkinafaso.org with membership questions.

SIX PROJECTS

Continued from p.1

have had great success and impact in increasing agricultural production and combatting food insecurity by strengthening the capacity of vulnerable producers. In 2021, they will train 225 producers, 60% of whom are women, in 9 new villages. AIVPDL received a grant of \$10,400.

Association Délwendé pour le Développement Communautaire

Located in Kourwéogo Province in the Plateau/Central region, Association Délwendé is a new partner this year. They seek to complete their vocational training center and to improve the organization's institutional capacity to serve the community in Sourgoubila. FBF grant funding will support the construction of the atelier de coupe-couture et de tissage de pagnes traditionnels, providing job training and economic empowerment for local women. Association Délwendé received a grant of \$20,000.

Croix Rouge

Located in Zoundweogo, Centre-Sud Region, the Croix Rouge was a recipient of 2020 Emergency Humanitarian Assistance funding. They seek to build a borehole/well in the Binde/Gogo commune to provide essential clean water to internally displaced people as well as provide opportunities for these IDPs to raise livestock, contributing to their economic empowerment. Croix Rouge received a grant of \$8,500.

Global NEEDED

Located in Ouahigouya, Global NEEDED is a long-time partner of FBF involved in both education and humanitarian assistance work. They seek to provide

emergency food assistance to internally displaced persons in Ouahigouya, which has a very large IDP population. Global NEEDED received a grant of \$10,000.

SEDELAN (Service d'Édition en Langues Nationales) and ABADAS (Association Bretonne d'Aide Directe à l'Afrique Subsaharienne)

Located in the East region, SEDELAN/ABADAS have been a project partner since 2017. They have been establishing a Fulfulde/French bilingual primary school in Singoghin (Bittou), both to improve educational access and to facilitate social integration of the Fulani in the region. They requested funds to support the construction of the second building needed to serve additional grade levels. SEDELAN/ABADAS received a grant of \$10,000.

La Société Coopérative Simplifiée YANBUAMA

Located in Province de Tapoa in the East region, YANBUAMA is a new partner this year. Female-led and managed, they seek to provide emergency assistance to internally displaced families in Diapaga, as well as train 100 internally displaced women in processing/transforming shea kernels as a form of economic empowerment. YANBUAMA received a grant of \$20,000.

For updates on these projects and more,



Réseau des Étudiants Burkinabè Burkinabe Student Network

Did you know there is a Burkinabe Students Network here in the U.S.? This student-led organization aims to bring together Burkinabe students living in the US and to promote excellence through Burkinabe values and culture in the U.S.

If you'd like to learn more about this organization, visit their website (<https://reburkina.org>).



**Order your OFFICIAL
Friends of Burkina Faso
T-shirt today!**

ORDER NOW



CROIX ROUGE COMPLETES WELL PROJECT

The Croix Rouge completed the construction of a new well benefiting displaced communities in Binde/Gogo. Pending receipt of a final report, FBF received photos of construction progress and the inauguration of the well.



WHY WE SUPPORT GIRLS' EDUCATION

By Suzanne Plopper, RPCV 67-69

I am proud to share the stories of three of the young women whose educations have been made possible by our generous donors who are committed to giving young rural women of Burkina Faso the opportunity to further their educations and to contribute to their communities and to their nation. The three young women are Haoua, Melicatou and Mariam.

Haoua



I have completed my Masters in Law and in November 2020 was sworn in to the position of Secrétaire de greffe in the Tribunal de Grandes Instances de Ouaga 1. I am responsible for court records and information services for the court. I plan to pursue further training and become a judge.

I do not know how to thank Global NEEED Burkina and its partners (Friends of Burkina Faso and especially the Milton and Beatrice Wind Foundation) without whose scholarship support I would not be where I am. I had an unwanted pregnancy at age 15 and my parents forced me to leave home. Global NEEED Burkina learned of my situation and intervened, enrolling me in the Lycee Moderne de l'Amitie. Once I received my BAC (secondary school diploma), I applied for and received a scholarship for university studies from Global

NEEED Burkina.

My sincere thank you for all that you do for the welfare of children and especially for young vulnerable girls. A thousand times, Thank you!

Melicatou



I am 23 years old and the mother of one child. I lost my mother when I was very young and soon after my father left for Ivory Coast, leaving my younger brother and me with his brother. My uncle forced me to marry one of his friends, becoming the second wife of this man who was the age of my father and a farmer. He beat me often. Each of us wives had to provide for our own children. Finally, my maternal uncle intervened and encouraged my husband to let me pursue my studies.

After receiving my secondary school diploma, I applied for a scholarship from Global NEEED Burkina to receive primary school teacher training and was accepted. I want to express my profound gratitude for this scholarship. I don't know what I would have become without this chance to receive teacher training. I so encourage you to continue your support for other young women who are in similar situations as I was. I look forward to becoming a teacher, to helping my extended

Continued on p.4



GIRLS' EDUCATION

Continued from p.3

family, and to taking better care of my child. Your scholarship funds contribute enormously to the reduction of poverty and misery in all of its forms.

Best regards to all of your respective families. Long live Global NEEED Burkina, GlobalGiving and Friends of Burkina Faso.

Mariam



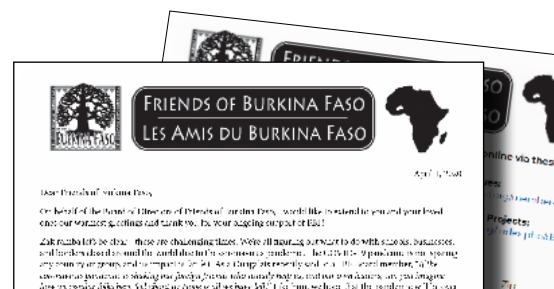
I am 22 years old. I received a scholarship in 2020 from Global NEEED Burkina and Friends of Burkina Faso through GlobalGiving. I am in my first year of training at the National Training School for Primary School Teachers in Ouahigouya. I have one sister and three brothers. My father died some years ago. My mother

collects sand at the edge of the road and sells it in order to pay for my education (from primary through secondary school).

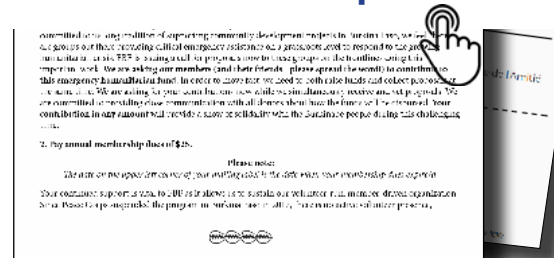
I look forward to completing my training and working as teacher so that I can take care of my family and my mother can rest.

I appreciate very much all that you all are doing for me and the other girls in my situation. Most sincerely, without my scholarship, I don't know what I would have become. I ask for your continuing support for the many other girls who need assistance so that they can make something of themselves and teach the next generation of children in our country.

Thank you, thank you and thank you again. God will reward your generosity and kindness one hundred times over.

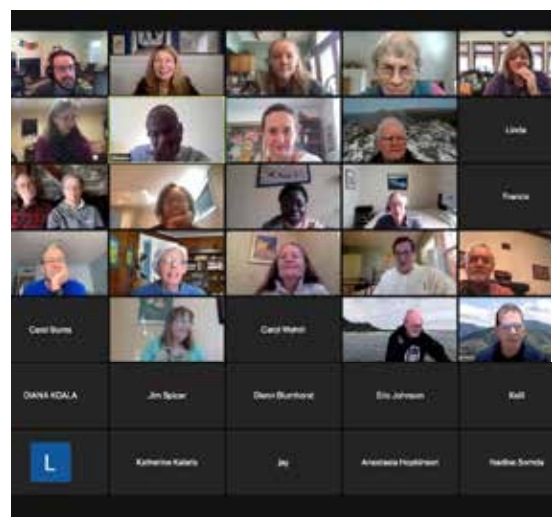


CLICK HERE for a copy of your 2021 Membership Letter



VIRTUAL MEMBER MEETING A SUCCESS

A huge shout-out to all those that were able to join us for our virtual member meeting on January 30, 2021. The Board was joined by over 45 members and partners.



Academic Year 2020-2021 and COVID-19

All scholarship recipients are enrolled in their respective education/training programs which are progressing normally.

- University students began the normal academic year in October
- First-year midwifery students and teacher trainees began their academic year in January due to COVID concerns
- The Lycee Moderne de l'Amité began the school year in October as usual, with vigilance: the education of students about COVID; an increase in hand-washing capacity on campus; required wearing of masks; required hand washing before entering classrooms; use of alcohol gel cleaners in the classroom; and everyone advised against handshaking.



KONÉ FAMILY LAUNCHES SABABOU EDUCATION FUND

By Ellie Koné, RPCV 16-17

After being turned away from school as a child due to his family's inability to pay tuition, Abou Koné felt hurt. His family's financial standing meant he could no longer join his peers in class and continue his education. Abou didn't want any other child in Burkina Faso to experience this feeling of rejection and exclusion from the classroom. In 2019, Abou and Ellie Koné founded [The Sababou Education Fund \(SEF\)](#). SEF is a 501(c)(3) certified non-profit with the goal of providing students in Karfiguéla, Burkina Faso, with equal access to Education. Tuition, school supplies and transportation are three areas the organization has set as priorities.

The organization is led by the Koné family and many Returned Peace Corps Volunteers who served in West Africa. SEF recently held its first annual 5k, Courir for a Cause. This virtual 5k saw runners participate in several states across the US and even as far as Paris, France. The event raised almost \$2,000 which will be able to cover tuition costs for 100 elementary school students in Karfiguéla. SEF has set a fundraising goal of \$9,000 for 2021.

Recently, risks of early pregnancy has been identified by community leaders as a problem in Karfiguéla. This has led to the need for Sex Education and increased dialogue surrounding reproductive health and family planning. SEF would like to address this barrier to education which disproportionately affects female students who are forced to give up their educational dreams. SEF has partnered with regional medical directors in Burkina Faso to lead Sex Education courses focused on reproductive health and family planning. These courses will occur bi-monthly for 6th and 7th grade students, as well as monthly for parents of students.

Ellie Koné served in the Peace Corps as a Health Volunteer in Karfiguéla, Burkina Faso ('16-'17). After Peace Corps Volunteers were evacuated from Burkina Faso in 2017, Ellie continued living in the country with her husband, Abou. In 2018, Ellie and Abou officially returned to live in the US. The Koné family currently lives in Wisconsin but regularly visits family in Burkina Faso.

FBF BOARD MEETS WITH US EMBASSY

Board Members participated in a virtual meet and greet with staff from the U.S. Embassy in Ouagadougou in mid-April. The Board provided an overview of our current projects in Burkina, as well as our vision to diversify our projects' geographic footprint while working with new grassroots organizations.

We look forward to increased collaboration with the Embassy in the future.



We are always looking for blog and newsletter content. Send your submissions to newsletter@friendsofburkinafaso.org.



AIVDPL AG PROJECT HOLDS TRAININGS

Launching the 2021 agricultural season, the AIVDPL Ag Project in Manga held training sessions with participants.



Looking for up-to-date news about Burkina?
Here are some resources to help you stay informed!

Click the logo to visit the resource. 

Use keywords to set up [Google Alerts](#) emailed to your inbox at a frequency of your choice. Some alert tags you could use include: Burkina Faso, Sahel, names of specific regions, cities or villages.



University of Florida's [Sahel Research Group](#) has a weekly news update which provides links to current news sources for the region. Their [website](#) also offers an endless list of blogs and sources under the resources tab.

These online news sources offer Burkina's daily news:



Hyperlinks to Recent Headlines

- [U.S. rice investments in Burkina Faso to strengthen food security \(Born2Invest\)](#)
- [Burkina Faso attacks displace thousands in 10 days: UN \(Al Jazeera\)](#)
- [Growth in Burkina Faso gold mining fuels human trafficking \(AP\)](#)
- [Now there's a chance of justice for Thomas Sankara, it's useful to review what got him killed \(The Conversation\)](#)
- [Two Spanish journalists and an Irish citizen killed in Burkina Faso \(CNN\)](#)



Watch Burkinabe national news nightly via YouTube.

If you'd rather listen to current hits than the latest news, apps like TuneIn allow you to do just that. Live streams can often be accessed through radio stations' websites and/or Facebook pages as well.

TIMELY ARRIVAL "AMIS ECOLE SINGOGHIN"

By Tom Vollrath, RPCV 67-70



L-R (1) Dr. Diallo and Father Oudet with other conference participants in April (2) A view of the school building by night with installed electrical lighting (3) A student practices a math lesson in a classroom (4) Zakariyao Réogo, School Director (6) Demonstration of digital teaching modules

The life styles and cultural mores of pastoralists in Burkina Faso have undergone dramatic change within the last half century due to climate change, dramatic growth in the population, and increased competition for land use. According to Madame Diaby, Director of the mini-dairy in Bittou, Fulani herdsman in Burkina Faso began moving their families to Nouhao, a pastoral zone in the southeast, established by the government in 1986. Over time, many of the migrating Fulani families adopted a quasi-sedentary way of life and settled in a commune within the Nouhao zone, known as Singoghin.

As was previously reported in the [Burkina Connection \(2018, No. 1\)](#), the women of Singoghin approached Father Maurice Oudet expressing a desire to have a primary school built for their children in the commune. Father Maurice and his organization SEDELAN developed a relationship with ABADAS, a philanthropic organization in France. Together they marshalled resources and joined hands with the Burkinabe government with the result being that not only has a primary school been built but education has become highly valued among the residents of Singoghin.

Extraordinary challenges confront Burkina Faso and its people these days. While the threats of jihadist-induced terrorism continue, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the disruption. To stem the spread of the disease, the government closed schools throughout the country and imposed travel restrictions for many months.

Given these troubled times, it is encouraging to know that there are determined efforts to improve the quality of life in Burkina while strengthening the overall well-being in society. Below is a noteworthy example of recent progress being achieved to promote education among the Fulani within the Singoghin commune.

Field trip to Singoghin/Bittou

In February 2021, Dr. Issa Diallo took a field trip to the Boulgou province to evaluate the status and monitor progress being achieved at the bilingual school in Singoghin. The first stop on his journey was to meet with regional officials in Bittou. Information was exchanged about continued government financial support for the school and its personnel--a topic of considerable importance given budgetary constraints due to unforeseen government costs

protecting the local population against the dual threats of terrorism and the pandemic. Good news followed, shortly upon his return to Ouaga. The government granted authority enabling a third teacher to be assigned to the school. Subsequently, an instructor, fluent in Fulfulde and French, was tendered an offer to be hired. And it was accepted!

Following the visit to Bittou, Diallo traveled to the adjacent Fulani commune in Singoghin to dialogue with students and teachers at the bilingual school. He found the students to be "very motivated to learn" as was demonstrated when the children assembled under trees and resumed their studies after returning to school following lunch. Their response enabled Diallo and the teachers to continue with their discussions. A particularly novel idea that emerged from this conversation was the possibility of augmenting the core student curriculum to incorporate practical lessons focused on farming and animal husbandry.

Construction of school building completed

In March, the contractor finished construction of the second building that he had promised to complete.

Continued on p.8

Having two buildings will enable the school to accommodate a stream of students with 5 classes in the years to come.

Planning conference in Ouagadougou

On April 7th, a working conference was held in Ouagadougou at which interested parties in the Singoghin school attended, including 13 in-person and 4 virtually. The conference opened with the announcement of the formation of the new association, called DELAN (Développement, Education, Lait, Langues Nationales). DELAN was created to replace SEDELAN, the NGO that has played a pivotal role overseeing the Singoghin/Bittou project, thanks to the leadership of Father Maurice Oudet who is retiring. ABADAS (SEDELAN's partner organization) and DELAN will now assume joint leadership of the Singoghin/Bittou educational initiative. Dr. Issa Diallo, the President of DELAN, is in the throes of seeking NGO status for the new organization, a lengthy process that typically takes about a year to obtain.

The conference in Ouaga opened with presentations focused on educational modules developed by MENAPLN (Ministère de l'Education Nationale, de l'Alphabétisation et de la Promotion des Langues Nationales) that the ministry shall be sharing with the Singoghin/Bittou project. These modules, when connected to the intranet via an inexpensive Raspberry Pi server, can function as teaching devices for both the students attending the primary school and the adult dairy farmers. The plan is to launch a pilot project for the "digital school" in July. DARGATECH, the company that installed the lighting system at the primary school, will be mounting the server and providing user training. It is envisioned that one of the teachers at the primary school and a member of the APE (Association des Parents d'Elèves) will be trained to oversee and supervise use of the system. If all goes well, the "digital school" will become operational by the beginning of the next school year.

A wide range of issues were discussed at the meeting, including the development of practical lessons focused on farming and raising animals. Beginning in October, each class will be responsible to care for and provide hay to feed to a Goudali cow. Note: recent research in Senegal and Niger has found that Goudali cows generate considerably more milk, up to 12 liters per day, and are better acclimated to the savanna region than their Azawak counterparts (which are typically found in Burkina). For this reason, the herdsman in Singoghin have been encouraged by SEDELAN to replace their Azawak cattle with Goudali ones.

Future plans also call for the primary school to establish a garden on school grounds, contingent upon the availability of water. Students are to be taught how to cultivate and farm employing "agroecological" technology. No chemical fertilizer is to be deployed in the garden; rather, animal waste shall be used to enrich the soil. This, in turn, promises to improve both the quality and quantity of the food produced. The vegetables harvested will be used to improve the nutritional value of noon-day meals served at the school canteen. Surplus produce will be distributed to student families.

The meeting, held in the Ouagadougou cathedral, ended with the unanimous consensus to christen the Singoghin/Bittou project as "Amis Ecole Singoghin" (AES) and to announce the structure of its Board of Directors. Board members are to include a President; a Secretary; the school director; the pastoral zone technician; and Madame Diaby, manager of the mini-dairy in Bittou.



Dr. Issa Diallo is a professor at the University of Ouagadougou where he chairs the Linguistics Department and serves as the Regional Director for Scientific Research and Innovation. Professor Diallo is also a Board member of Tabital Pulaaku, the International Fulani Association, and is in charge of pastoralism and conflict management.

ABOUT US

Friends of Burkina Faso is a 501(c)3 nonprofit affiliated with the National Peace Corps Association. We maintain a **network** of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) and friends of Burkina Faso. We provide funding and assistance to **support projects** in Burkina Faso. We strive to **improve social interaction**, communication and information exchange. We **educate** others about the country and culture of Burkina Faso.

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FOREIGN POLICY BY INVITATION

By Scottie Dalsimer

Background

Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) achieved its independence from France in December 1960. Its first President was Maurice Yameogo. I was assigned there as the Assistant Public Affairs Officer in spring 1961.

The following story is 100% true. Early last year I heard on NPR that several West African countries had "just" recognized Communist China for the first time. Up until that time, they had recognized only Nationalist China, NPR didn't know why this was, but I do.



President Maurice Yaméogo was the first President of the Republic of Upper Volta from 1960-1966. President Yaméogo ended his presidency on January 3, 1966 when he resigned after a popular uprising. Power then passed to a military leader Lieutenant Colonel Lamizana.

In the fall of 1961 the Chief of Protocol, Mr. Konate, came to visit me. He was rather stressed out. "Scottie," he said, "President Yameogo wants me to invite the head of state of every country in the world to the first anniversary of our independence. Scottie...I don't even know the name of all the countries in the world!"

"Me either," I commiserated.

But then I had a brilliant thought and went running off to our library stacks. "Look, Look!" I said. "I have the Statemen's Yearbook. It has the name and address of every head of state of every country in the world!"

Mr. Konate was thrilled and went running off to get invitations made up. Then one evening, he and I sat and wrote out invitations to the head of state of every country in the world. Two weeks later, a representative from Nationalist China arrived. We will call him Mr. Joy.

In 1961, the U.S. did not recognize Communist China, and members of the Conseil de l'Entente, including Upper Volta, recognized neither China. But having received the invitation, Mr. Joy proceeded to present his credentials to the Foreign Ministry every day and, every day, Mr. Joy was denied entrance. The only embassy speaking to the representative were the Americans. Nonetheless, Mr. Joy stayed on and remained very cheerful.

Early in 1962, the U.S. Ambassador to Burkina asked me to speak to the Foreign Minister, telling them we would be inviting Mr. Joy to our Independence Day celebration. Mr. Joy would not be allowed to sit on the dais of honor with the other ambassadors and ministers. Around noon on July 4, Upper Volta recognized Nationalist China. Upon taking this action, the other members of the Conseil de l'Entente followed suit. Mr. Konate and I each blamed the other for writing the invitation.

I left Ouagadougou in 1963, but returned on a consulting assignment in 1977. I had dinner with the Chief of Protocol and his wife. I asked after Mr. Joy. Mr. Joy was still in Burkina, but away visiting other countries of the Conseil.

"And, Scottie," said Mr. Konate, "YOU addressed that envelope."

I replied, "No, YOU addressed that envelope."

Mr. Konate's wife smiled warmly and replied, "Ah, and now I see how foreign policy is made."

Well, that foreign policy lasted 58 years, and I still think Mr. Konate addressed the envelope.

