

BURKINA CONNECTION



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 Ambassador Mushingi, Seydou Traore, and Kathleen McDonald

US AMBASSADOR TO BURKINA FASO

by Kathleen McDonald, RPCV '71 – '73

President Barack Obama chose well when he appointed Tulinabo S. Mushingi, PhD as Ambassador Extraordinaire and Plenipotentiary of the U.S. to Burkina Faso on July 25, 2013. A number of news articles have Ambassador Mushingi looking a lot like President Obama, which is a compliment to both. Ambassador Mushingi has many ties to the U.S. Peace Corps, where he began his career as a French language instructor and cultural trainer in Zaire. He later worked for the Peace Corps in Papua New Guinea, DR Congo, Niger, and the Central African Republic.

This former volunteer and two Burkinabe colleagues had the privilege to meet Ambassador Mushingi in January in Ouagadougou. We were introduced to him via our common connection with RPCV (Zaire) Melanie Smeallie Mbuyi who serves on our Community Building Group board of directors. Melanie learned French from Ambassador Mushingi during her volunteer training in Bukavu, Zaire. Meeting Ambassador Mushingi gave us the opportunity to discuss the development and building of village rainwater catchment basins in Burkina Faso. He was very supportive

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To contact a member of the leadership team, please visit fbf.tamu.edu.



PRESIDENT'S YIRI

Last year Kati McDonald joined the FBF Board of Directors as Vice-President, and what a great addition she has been! We needed a rejuvenation of ideas—she has answered that call. We needed rejuvenation of our website—she has answered that call. And we needed a rejuvenation of our membership—she answered that call.

On May 15, 2014, there was a successful recruiting event in D.C. where many new members joined, see the photo on page 9. Thank you Kati McDonald and all the new members for your great rejuvenation!



US AMBASSADOR TO BURKINA FASO, CONTINUED

and encouraged us in our efforts. His many suggestions, introductions, and ideas exemplify his great interest in the country of Burkina Faso as well as his understanding of the fundamental ingredients required for growth and prosperity for the country.

Born in Zaire, Ambassador Mushingi is the first naturalized citizen from the

continent of Africa to be appointed U.S. Ambassador. He is a career member in the U.S. Senior Foreign Service; served most recently as Deputy Executive Secretary in the Executive Secretariat of the State Department; and has had many prestigious assignments and awards during his career. It is delightful and strengthening to know Ambassador Mushingi is representing the U.S. in Burkina Faso.



LET'S STAY CONNECTED!

'LIKE' US ON FACEBOOK

Check out our Facebook page for updates on FBF activities, projects, and events. "Like" us and join in on conversation, information and photo sharing, and keep up-to-date on Burkina news. <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Burkina-Faso/244815659456>



NEWSLETTER EDITOR NEEDED

In you are familiar with Adobe InDesign and would like to contribute your talents to Burkina Connection twice a year, please contact Kevin Sweeney at kevinsweeney23@gmail.com. Software is provided. Friends of Burkina Faso needs you!



CATCHING RAINWATER

A SOLUTION TO WATER SCARCITY IN RURAL BURKINA FASO

by Kathleen McDonald, RPCV '71 – '73

Give Water Give Life is so very thankful to each of you who have contributed to the building of rainwater catchment basins (RCBs). In the past, we have great success in the Centre West of Burkina Faso, i.e. in Sisene village where a RCB prototype was built by the village in 2008. The Sisene RCB has generated a reliable source of water throughout the year, enabled farmers to irrigate gardens, created markets for produce (which has attracted wholesalers from neighboring Koudougou), increased employment, curtailed out-migration of the male labor force, and increased villagers' income—a model worth replicating.



Basin Sis 2 school girls

In October 2013, Friends of Burkina Faso approved funding our *Give Water Give Life* project using the Global Giving website. The rainwater catchment initiative is directed by the Burkinabé, Seydou Traore, PhD and Estelle Kaboré. RPCV McDonald ('71-'73) is supporting their efforts. Over \$10,000 has been raised to date through two channels, one from GlobalGiving and the other from donations sent directly to our treasurer..



Djoinga Bouli

Team meetings in Burkina Faso in January generated strong interest and support for GWGL. Our current task is developing a prototype rainwater catchment basin that incorporates in its design: an emergency spillway; solar powered water filtration system; solar powered irrigation system; correct porosity for the lining; and use of satellite imagery to have proper location siting—all to maximize: water collection to restore the water aquifer and raise the water table; water availability; and sustainability. We are working with Burkina Faso's Institute of Environment and Agricultural Research (INERA) to create the prototype that could assist many of the 8,400 villages in the country. It was curious that every person we met, when we discussed our rainwater catchment basins, had a village that also needed a basin.

As a former Peace Corps volunteer in Burkina Faso, you are requested to share any relevant experience you have had with water—small reservoirs, wells, boulis, micro-barrages, etc.

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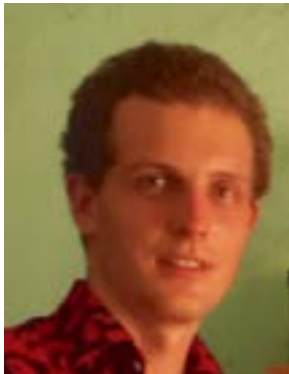
EXPANSION AND INNOVATION PORTRAY LPK'S COMPUTER-IT PROJECT

by Tom Vollrath, '67-'70

The computer-IT program at the Provincial High School in Koudougou (LPK) has made impressive strides since our update in last fall's Burkina Connection. Advances include more IT instructors, more students taking computer courses, and more effective classroom instruction.



Mahamadou Ziba
IT instructor



Ethan Heppner
PCV at LPK

Teachers-in-training multiply instructor power

A major change has been the rise in the teacher-student ratio, one that beats most liberal arts colleges in the United States. Last academic year, 109 students, in four sections, took IT computer classes with PCV Ethan Heppner being the sole instructor. This year four teachers in six classes of 26 students each are teaching 156 students.

Ethan is present in every class, but he takes a backseat in all but one of them. The teacher in training leads the instruction with the help of two "teaching assistants" (TAs)—students who previously took and excelled in IT class. All classroom instructors circulate around the room to ensure that everyone understands the lesson being taught. Ethan tells us that this new mode of teaching is not only "a lot

of fun" but that he "never wants to teach class alone again!"

A total of 16 students have been recruited as TAs. In exchange for their services, the TAs get free training in computer maintenance and repair every Saturday morning. Here is how Ethan sums up the new classroom teaching experience, "we are working with some of the top students in the school. They motivate us, myself as well as the teacher trainees, as much as the opportunity motivates them."



Jean Yameogo works to install software on two different computers running Windows XP and Windows 8

Hands-on learning = more program funds

Student TAs are unpaid due to lack of funds. But they reap important, non-monetary rewards from their work in the internship program. TAs earn playtime on the school's lab computers throughout the week. They may also sign up for special projects in marketing and network operations. For example, TAs are learning how to work the server, install Ethernet cables, and troubleshoot malfunctioning computers belonging to Koudougou residents.

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IT-COMPUTER PROJECT, CONTINUED

Repairing and selling refurbished computers to the general public is another innovative initiative. This program has generated modest but important revenue for the LPK laboratory. All earnings go into a discretionary fund used to meet often unforeseen needs for incidental items in a well-functioning computer lab. This past year, the fund paid for replacements for projector lamps that burned out, vacuum cables that got cooked due to unstable voltage, towels needed to clean computers, certificates for students who successfully complete their IT class, and more.

Management committee draws on broad involvement

Yet another step forward is LPK's new computer lab management committee. Members include the school's principal, three IT instructors, a non-IT teacher, a student intern, a student government representative, the PTA president, and a member of the mayor's cabinet. The committee addresses challenges confronting the current IT operations, recommends ways of resolving issues, and sets future directions and goals.

The Friends of Burkina Faso and its LPK subcommittee members, Désiré Bansé, Bony Porrogho, and Mead Over continue to follow developments at LPK and its IT program. From time to time, we provide assistance, encouragement, and expertise to the program. For example:

- Last year, LPK students complained that anyone could go into other students' personal folders and delete their work. Everyone, including teachers, now has

their own private, password-protected folder, thanks to the server FBF recently sent to LPK. The new server also offers better reliability and twice the speed when loading pages.

- LPK's projector was on its last legs until FBF stepped in. The old projector would overheat and shut off after little more than 5 minutes. Last year, FBF decided to buy a new projector for the school. Ethan tells us that with the new projector, teachers now produce PowerPoint presentations that better explain important concepts. They find students absorb lessons more quickly and thoroughly.

According to Désiré Bansé, FBF team leader for the LPK project, "Ethan is doing a fantastic job, and is working on getting more people involved so that the work continues even after he returns to the United States." And Ethan writes, "I feel lucky to have the opportunity to work with this group of bright and motivated students and teachers who have volunteered to give life to this project."

You can read more about Ethan's experience and the LPK project on his blog les-oeuvres-saute.blogspot.com



Priscilla Ouedraogo has fun adding her own French voice-over to a film that was originally in English as a part of Jamie's video-editing class

LAMBS SUPPORT GIRLS' EDUCATION PROJECT FULLY FUNDED

by Suzanne Plover, '67-'69

After 12 years, the Friends of Burkina Faso funding for The Lambs Support Girls' Education Project is complete! The *Lambs Project* began in the late '90s with a vision of its program coordinator, Lacine Savadogo, to introduce the idea of sending girls to primary school to all interested villages in the northern region of Burkina Faso. His goals were to:

- achieve at least 40% literacy among girls in the region with the aim of enabling them to participate in socio-economic development within their communities, region and the country;
- raise awareness among rural parents of the importance of educating girls and their future contributions to families, communities and the nation; and
- provide a model to the Ministry of Basic Education and Alphabetization of Burkina Faso for what can be achieved with improved educational opportunities for women.

Friends of Burkina Faso (FBF) began supporting this project in 2002. To date, thanks to generous donations from FBF members and many other donors to FBF, we have supported the enrollment into primary school of nearly 3,000 village girls. With donations from other individuals and organizations (in the U.S., Germany and Austria), Association NEEED has supported the enrollment of a total of 7224 village girls into 209 primary schools. NEEED foresees this project reaching all remaining interested villages in the region in the next two years.

NEEED has been successful inculcating the value of education in the local population and in providing a model for parents to finance their daughter's education. The strategy involves an initial gift of a lamb and school supplies to families participating in the program. Each family assumes responsibility for raising their daughter's lamb and selling it at the end of the

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Young girls supported by the 'Lambs' Project 2013-2014 school year at a village primary school in Komtanga Bilingue.



Ouedraogo Zoennabo with her backpack, school materials and lamb, ready to start the school year 2013-2014, in the village of Tangaye Bilingue.

LAMBS PROJECT FULLY FUNDED





LAMBS SUPPORT, CONTINUED

year. The family uses the proceeds from the sale of the lamb to purchase another young lamb to raise and to pay for needed school materials for the next academic year. This process repeats itself for the 12 remaining years of their daughter's primary—secondary education. NEEED has worked hard with villagers to encourage them to continue this strategy to send younger daughters to school.

Given that NEEED anticipates complete coverage of the region in the next two years, and the fact that FBF has received sufficient donations to be able to support 300 more girls in each of the next two years, we ended our fundraising for this project earlier this year.

Increasing numbers of village girls are completing middle and secondary school and are seeking assistance to continue their educations in fields that will benefit them and their communities. FBF began fundraising for postsecondary scholarships in 2010 and continues to seek donations to enable as many of these girls as possible each year to pursue a higher education either at the university or in nursing, midwifery, or primary school teaching.

You can read more about NEEED's girls' education program in the latest edition of the National Peace Corps Association Global Education News on peacecorpsconnect.org.



We wish to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who has so generously contributed to this project over the past 12 years.

CATCHING RAINWATER, CONTINUED

The basin in Sisene and a bouli in Djoiuiga (near Dori) are being used to test new ideas for the prototype by retrofitting both villages with new solar powered water filtration and water irrigation systems. New prototype basins that have the technology included in their design will then be constructed in two or three more villages within two years. When all goes well, many additional basins can be built based on the prototype developed.

Please note large dams and individual wells are still the priority of international agencies. Any information you can provide to help us realize rainwater catchment basins in Burkina Faso villages would be very helpful. Thank you.

givewatergivelifelife.org

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Djoiuiga Bouli Gardens

2013 TREASURER'S REPORT

by Suzanne Plopper, '67-'69, Treasurer

Project Contributions and Disbursements in 2013	
Contributions	
Unrestricted	\$6,401.99
NEEED: Lambs Support Village Girls' Education Project	\$28,999.79
NEEED: Girls' Lycee Lunch Project (fundraising ended) ¹	\$0.00
NEEED: Girls' Postsecondary Training Project	\$67,606.55
Rainwater catchment	\$2,655.08
Total	\$105,663.41
Disbursements	
Koudougou Lycee Computer Project	\$ 4,306.05
NEEED Lambs Support Village Girls' Education Project	\$24,979.82
NEEED Girls' Lycee Lunch Project ¹	\$27,352.19
NEEED Postsecondary Training Project	\$42,343.00
Yelbougua Pharmacy	\$6,100.00
Literacy Through the Arts	\$2,266.00
Total	\$107,347.06
Project Expenses	
Wire/Western Union charges	\$182.00
Photocopying & postage	\$341.70
Total	\$523.70
Year-end Balance²	-\$2,207.35

Organizational Income and Expenses 2013	
Income	
FBF memberships	\$2,706.70
NPCA memberships ³	\$1,435.00
T-shirt sales	\$118.00
Total	\$4,259.70
Expenses	
Membership letter	\$309.21
NPCA affiliation	\$80.00
NPCA rebates ³	\$2,310.00
NPCA: contribution to affiliate data base	\$250.00
Other	\$37.48
Total	\$2,986.69
Year-end Balance	\$1,273.01

¹ NEEED Girls' Lycee Lunch Project was fully funded in 2012.

² Negative project balance is offset by small reserves from earlier years.

³ Incoming memberships to NPCA and membership rebates to NPCA are received and rebated, at different times.





SHARE YOUR STORY



The *Burkina Connection* is a biannual newsletter and a great way for members to share information and stay up to date on all things Faso. One way you can contribute is to write an article about your experience as a Volunteer in Upper

Volta/Burkina Faso for an upcoming issue of the *Burkina Connection*. If you are interested in sharing a story, a memory, or some photos, please contact fbfnewsletter@gmail.com.

YOUNG BLOOD JOINS FBF



New recently returned Peace Corps volunteers have joined FBF and are eager to connect and share their knowledge. Right to left: Emily Forsyth Queen, Sara Thompson, Kathleen McDonald, Ebben Wiley Bell, Cindy Guo, and Jon Underdahl-Peirce.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are currently 110 Volunteers in Burkina Faso working in the areas of education, health and community economic development.



New PCVs about to fly to BF - October, 2013.



New PCVs swear in - January, 2014.

Photos from PCV Danielle Alden's blog at <http://danielleburkinabound.wordpress.com>.