

New Paradigm for Discovery-Based Learning:
Implement bottom-up development by listening to farmers' needs while engaging them in participatory, holistic thinking.

Visit Report

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Project Objectives and Accomplishment of visit

Mali March 9 – March 21, 2008

Executive Summary

I traveled from Bozeman Montana to Mali with four students from Montana State University-Bozeman, Megan Matzick, Kelsey Meyer, Alonzo Antonucci, and Eva Mends and with Jane Mends a secondary French teacher from Helena high school in Montana. My trip objective was: 1) to serve as the team leader and therefore provide team members with logistical (arrange lodging facilities in Bamako, organize ground transportation, organize village visits and communicate with Malian support team) and academic support as they undertook their individual projects; 2) to learn more about Sanambélé and compile information about its inhabitants and institutions that could serve as reference for future teams working in the village; 3) to continue learning about Malian languages, civilization, arts and literature in order to include Malian culture as a component in my various French language and culture courses; 4) to meet NGO's in Mali and discover new volunteering opportunities for my book in progress entitled "Volunteering opportunities in francophone countries".

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TRIP ITINERARY

Sunday, March 9, 2008.

10:15 am: The group met in Gallatin Field Airport in Bozeman Montana. Our plane departed from Bozeman at 12:20pm. Upon our arrival in Seattle we had lunch while we reviewed the malaria information we had compiled in Dr. Florence Dunkel's course. We discussed how to teach malaria prevention to the school children we would work with in Sanambélé. Jane explained that it was important to impart the malaria information in an age specific manner in order to ascertain that school children understood the information.

Monday, March 10, 2008.

9:30am: We arrived at the Paris Charles De Gaulle airport. Eva, Jane and I had lunch in the airport and then went to the gate. We were exhausted and tried to sleep for a few hours. Alonzo, Kelsey and Megan joined us around 2:30pm. We discussed logistics of the trip and practiced Bambara greetings.

9:30pm: arrival at Bamako airport. We were met by Abdoulaye Camara and Sidy Bâ. One of Jane Mend's suitcases was missing. After doing all the paper work for the lost baggage, Abdoulaye drove the entire team to 2 different banks for ATM machines and then to our two apartments. We arrived to our lodging around midnight. We were in bed by 1am.

Tuesday, March 11, 2008.

Morning: We woke up around noon, purchased some breakfast food and had breakfast. Antonio, who felt sick with fever and headaches and a sore throat since Bozeman, was in bed all day today.

2pm-6pm: We went to the quartier Hyppodrome in Bamako to do our food shopping for the week at the *Libre Service*. We tried to exchange some money again for those who were not successful upon our arrival. As we waited for the supermarket to open, we visited the San Toro, had a drink and looked at the artwork and clothing for sale to get an idea of what Sanambélé women could market in Bamako and in the US.

6pm-10pm: The team cooked dinner and then had a meeting with Abdoulaye Camara and Aissata about the week's plan.

Wednesday, March 12, 2008.

10:00 am: Departure from Bamako to Sanambélé with entire team. During the short trip, everyone discussed their projects with Sidiki Traore who is an extension worker for Institut d'Economie Rurale (IER) and has worked with the villagers for over

10 years. As we were driving to Sanambélé I described to Sidiki the projects and goals of each team members.

11:30am-1pm: Arrival in Sanambélé. Sidiki began by introducing the team members to Bourema Coulibaly. He then introduced us to the English teacher named Alima Samake, to the Directeur du premier cycle, Moussa Keita, and to Mamadou Sissoko the Directeur du deuxième cycle. The other three teachers were either in class or in a meeting with PLAN Mali discussing the future library. The Directeur du premier cycle introduced us to the different classes. He explained to us that all through the country students from the deuxième cycle were taking national exams today, Friday and Monday morning. Since Eva, Alonzo and Jane are planning to work with that age group, we discussed logistics with the directeur. After our school visit, Bourema took us to visit Awa Diarra, the village midwife. The purpose of our visit today was to announce our arrival, our plan and decide with all concerned—the midwife, the women’s association, the school directeurs and Bourema--which days we should return to the village. The village members proposed that we return Friday, Monday and Tuesday. Since members of Plan Mali were on the premises, I began to talk to them about my book project that will feature volunteering opportunities for Anglophone/francophone people. They were interested and gave me their contact information.

- 1) Sekou Coulibaly, Coordinateur Education Plan Mali BP 1598. Phone 628 94 66; Email sekoubba@yahoo.fr
- 2) Mme Diakite Oumou Taye, consultante DPE/Plan Mali; email oumoufaye@yahoo.fr; tel. 671 48 98

1pm-2pm: Bourema, Abdoulaye, and Sidiki drove the entire team to a neighboring village called Bougoula to visit the market. Ada purchased two chickens for Bourema who offered to host the entire team in his home for the entire visit and the overnight stay on Monday. The market sold everything from fried fish to bicycle parts.

2pm-4pm: Departure from Bougoula. We dropped off Bourema in Sanambélé. We then headed to the airport to pick up a suitcase that didn’t arrive with the others. After that, Abdoulaye took us to the bank again to see if Alonzo and Kelsey could successfully withdraw money. After 3 different ATMs, they found one that worked.

4pm-5:30pm: Arrival back at the apartment. Ada paid rent. The group walked to Hotel Mande to inquire about products sold in their gift shop and how they merchandise their gift shop. The boutique did not sell clothing; there were mostly books and jewelry from the Touareg region.

5:30pm-10pm: Arrival back at the apartment. Megan and Ada prepared dinner. Everyone ate around 8pm. We discussed our return to Sanambélé along with each person’s individual projects. After dinner, we looked at everyone’s pictures from the past few days. Bed time at 10pm.

Thursday, March 13, 2008.

Morning: Eva and Jane were scheduled to go to the Mama Thiam school with Aissata Thera at 9:00. Aissata had difficulty with her car registration and so arrived at 9:30 am. Eva, Jane and Aissata were driven to the school and arrived at 9:45. They were greeted by the directrice, Madina Ba and the other school teachers. The meeting commenced at 10:00 with Housseyni Karambe and Amadou Traore, literature teachers. Also present were Mory Fomba, Sidiki Berthe, and Gilbert Keita (English teachers) and Seydou Konate, French teacher. Aissata briefly explained the project with letter exchange and cultural advancement. We discussed when the best time would be to return to the school next week. Aissata discussed the possibility of a science fair and discussion with the girls about staying in science. Students are in exams now so Eva and Jane will return next Wednesday to hear student presentations and teach about Montana. The entire team plans to return for discussion of Malian literature with the literature classes on Wednesday as well. Eva and Jane worked in the office to experiment with instituting an internet letter exchange with the students in the level three class at Helena High School in Montana. A list of science fair project ideas was also downloaded and given to the directrice and Aissata. The substitute teacher in Helena will have the students write letters to send for the students at the Mama Thiam to be received next week. This will allow the introduction of use of the internet to write letters, decreasing the time that it takes for the students to be able to respond to each other. Eva, Jane, and Aissata then said their goodbyes, briefly went to Aissata's house and met her extended family, and met up with the rest of the team for lunch.

While Eva and Jane were at Mama Thiam, Kelsey, Megan and Ada stayed at the apartment and began working on individual reports. The reports began at 9:30 am and lasted until 12:00. In order to do research for the meeting that is scheduled for March 14th 2008 with the Association Des Femmes du Village, Ada, Megan and Kelsey began searching for potential products/ ideas for Sanambélé. After recovering from being sick, Alonzo left with Ada, Megan and Kelsey for the markets and hotels. We talked with the sales person in a clothing boutique at L'hôtel de l'Amitié about the chemises crochet by the women in Sanambélé. We showed a chemise to the sales person who explained to us that tourists would not be interested in buying them and that they were mostly interested in buying Bogolan items. She did note that the chemises would sell more to Africans. As we visited various neighborhood markets in Bamako several potential items were presented for the Sanambélé women. The ideas included wood products, baskets made out of either wood or straw, cloth items (especially little bags made of textile used for traditional pagnes), incense holders which could double as trinkets possible children's toys or as little wire baskets. After the visit to neighborhood markets and the boutique at the Hotel de l'Amitié Ada, Alonzo, Megan and Kelsey met up with Jane, Eva and Aissata for lunch at the Radio Station cafeteria.

2:30pm-6pm: After lunch, the group walked to the Grand Marché located near the mosque. Everyone wandered around and browsed through all of the vendors. Megan and Kelsey kept a mental list of the products sold. They saw clothing but nothing similar to the hand crocheted chemises of Sanambélé.

6pm-10:30pm: Everyone walked back to the apartments. We had dinner with Sidy Bâ and discussed our projects. He didn't know much about Sanambélé so we filled him in. Then we went to bed.

Friday, March 14, 2008

8:30am: Entire team depart from apartment to go to Sanambélé with Sidiki and Abdoulaye

9:45am-10:15am: arrival at the Sanambélé School. Jane, Eva, and Alonzo played games with the children and then went over to the schools while Ada, Kelsey and Megan went to speak with the women's group.

11:30: Arrival of Mamadou Sissoko (Directeur de 2eme Cycle) and Moussa Keita the Directeur of the Premier Cycle. Eva and Jane showed them soccer balls, shirts, books, journals for the teachers and school supplies and gave them over to the directeurs to distribute to the students. Sidiki explained that village customs required that a formal ceremony take place as Jane donated these items to the school. He said that the items would be locked in a room until the team's return on Monday morning at which time the ceremony would take place with all the 'notables' meaning elders of the village and other village representative present. It became evident that school did not start again at 11:00 and was instead scheduled for 3:00. Eva and Jane went to Awa Diarra's house to visit with her but she was eating lunch and said she would meet up with them in a while. While they were waiting, Abdoulaye asked the directeur to make a prioritized list of things needed for the school. Eva and Awa and Jane visited with each other for about an hour while Alonzo played with the children. Eva and Jane shared their lunch with Awa and the children and then they all went together to find Ada, Kelsey and Megan.

10:30am-3:00pm: **Visits to former chief's family:** On the way to the meeting, Bourema and Sidiki Traore who understand the customs of the villagers explained to Ada, Kelsey, and Megan that they needed to be introduced to the three wives of the former chief and then to the brother of the former chief. It is a traditional practice in Malian villages to introduce visitors to the chief and his family. We learned that Sanambélé's chief died two months ago and tradition requires that 4 months pass before the next chief is installed. We learned that the villagers had already chosen the man who would serve as the next chief. We therefore visited the former chief's wives, they were very welcoming and rose to welcome us from their sitting positions in front of their homes where they were cutting up and drying green onions. We then visited the former chief's brother who lives right next door (according to customs I believe that he will marry his brother's wives). He too was welcoming and shared the traditional greetings with us. After these visits, we all walked to Bourema's compound to begin the meeting with the women.

First official meeting with key members of women's association: We all settled under the straw roof which serves as protection from the sun, in Bourema Coulibaly's courtyard. The main leaders of the women's association--Hawa Coulibaly, Maimouna and Miriam—were present as well as some other women

including Bourema's mother and his two wives. Sidiki Traore (our translator with a 10 year relationship with the village of Sanambélé) began by introducing us (Ada, Megan and Kelsey) and talked briefly about our overall purpose in asking the women to meet with us. He then directly translated my words. I thanked the women for welcoming us into their community and told them that it was a pleasure to see them again and to be in their beautiful village. I told them that I had been present at the meeting that took place in September 2007 with Prof. Dunkel when they expressed their holistic goal to protect their families from contracting malaria and their goal to earn more money to buy bed nets and to feed their children. They said that they remembered my presence at the meeting. I then asked the women if protection from malaria by acquiring bed nets and finding a better source of income, in order to fight malaria and hunger, were still their main two goals. Hawa Coulibaly spoke for the group and said malaria prevention and buying mosquito nets were still high on their priority list.

Introduction of Megan and Kelsey to women's association: In response I explained that I had returned to the village with Megan and Kelsey--two French, business and marketing students--who were interested in collaborating with them to develop new business opportunities that would generate more income. I explained that Megan's knowledge would enable her to teach the women how to determine the cost of making a product and the benefit they could earn from it. In addition, I added that Megan could teach them, if they were interested, how to keep a written business records similar to the records they were already keeping for the grinder. I then explained that Kelsey had more knowledge about marketing products. To illustrate what marketing means, I passed around the pamphlet that Kelsey had prepared which included brief information about the village, the women and their wish to develop sales of their products to buy bed nets. Her pamphlet, which was just a prototype, is colorful, with photos of the village and easy to read. I then explained to the women that on Monday and Tuesday Megan would help them keep a record for the products and price for the products, and Kelsey will be taking a lot of photographs to make new pamphlets with the new information. The women responded that they were excited and interested in Megan and Kelsey's knowledge and background in business and were glad to have them there to work with them.

Discussion and show and tell of possible new products: Now that introductions and goal descriptions were done and agreed upon, we began to discuss what kind of marketable merchandise the women could produce. When Kelsey and Megan visited various Bamako markets and boutiques on the previous day, they had purchased a variety of items—little purses made in colorful cotton, wood plates, wire baskets, jewelry—and they now showed the women these various items as examples of possible products they could perhaps make that would interest American buyers. The discussion was lively, as the women discussed the feasibility of making some of the items. Megan and Kelsey explained that the women could crochet bracelets, little bags, medium size bags with shells and hats. The women showed the kind of crochet items they were already producing—hats and shirts. Megan and Kelsey talked about the thread color that would best sell in the US, noting that the neon colors were not very attractive to potential buyers.

The women brought over some baskets to show us but we said that transportation of the baskets would just be too difficult. After the women decided on what they could make, Megan, Ada, and Kelsey placed an order for 200 fabric bags with ties. They also asked the women to make examples of a crocheted bracelet, a crocheted shoulder bag, crocheted small tie bags, and for the women to bring all the jewelry they could to the next meeting on Monday. We explained that once we saw the various items they could crochet, we could determine which ones to order. In addition, we told them that once a few new products were made, we could go through the process of figuring out how much they cost to produce and how much they could be sold for. Hawa addressed the issue of continuing transportation of goods. We explained that we would place the order and take it back in our suitcases. We added that if the products sold well in the US, we would continue to order some periodically and have them transported by one of the Malian scientists that we knew from the network or from future externs. We talked about the importance of creating products that would be easy to transport--meaning light, small and unbreakable. The meeting came to an end, as it was determined that we would return to the village on Monday morning (this would give them enough time to crochet some of the items and make the small bags) and that we would work together through Tuesday.

1:00-2:45 The meeting ended just in time for the Friday afternoon prayer. This is the most important prayer of the week and all practitioners make it a point to attend it. From Bourema's courtyard we could see numerous men heading towards the mosque which filled up so much that about 20 men ended up praying outside on mats laid out in front of the mosque. We stayed in the courtyard with Bourema's family and many other children. Jane, Eva and Alonzo joined us for lunch and some rest. After the prayer, Sidiki, Abdoulaye and Bourema returned and shared tea with us. The midwife, Awa Diarra, joined us as well. The Malians around us decided to have us practice our Bambara and work on our pronunciation. We had the book *Je parle bien banaman* to help us with vocabulary. We had some laughs as we shared communication in this new language. Hawa Coulibaly came back to the courtyard after the afternoon prayer; she was dressed entirely in white. She came over to me and Megan and asked to see Megan's black purse (we had shown it to Hawa as an example for a crochet purse in this very style and shape that we would like to have the women craft.) When Megan took her purse out, Hawa blessed it with her two hands, thanked us and left.

3:00-5pm The team members, Abdoulaye, Sidiki and Hawa Coulibaly went to the school to meet with the 95 children from the deuxième cycle who had just finished taking their national tests. Jane taught them a course (in French) on the United States and Montana using the maps, and talked a little about the animals of Montana using the Montana calendar. (Hawa Coulibaly sat next to me and attended the entire class.) After Jane's presentation, the directeur told his students that they could ask questions about their own concerns and about the presentation. At first, students were not forthcoming with questions. One student asked what one could do about the lack of books in her school; another asked a similar question about

inadequate number of teachers. One student asked if it would be possible to develop a relationship or a continuing communication with Jane's students. Other students asked what problems there were in education in the US, if everyone could go to school, when people started to learn French, if there were classes of mixed levels and about marriage and food customs. After this discussion, Jane distributed her students' letters to the Sanambélé students. She tried to match the age and sex of each students. These letters, which contained a picture of each American student were passed out to the students to observe and will be explained on Monday and Tuesday when students write responses. There were 95 students all in one room and everyone was very happy to receive correspondence sent by the high school students in Montana. The Malian students were very happy at the prospect of having an ongoing relationship with Helena High. Jane--who had a sum of money donated by her colleagues to use for purchasing school supplies--had asked the directeur to make a list of supplies needed. At the end of this day, he handed the list to her and Abdoulaye.

Saturday March 15, 2008

8:30 am-2:30pm: The entire team had breakfast and wrote reports. Working on the reports together was very informative as we each explained our activities in Sanambélé and talked about what we had learned and the people we met. This was an efficient way to write as well as to learn from each others' experiences. We also spent a few hours discussing possible strategies for our upcoming stay in the village. We planned our daily team activities in the village and discussed the kind of practical support we would need from each other. In the morning, I walked over to the Sarama hotel to greet Florence and her team members Gloria and Jaime. I met them in the lobby where they were having a meeting with Network members: Sidy Bâ, Abdoulaye Camara, Belco Tamboura and Aissata Thera. I spent about an hour with them and asked Abdoulaye if he could purchase some supplies, mostly paint, for Alonzo's project as he was asked by the school administrators to paint a mural on the school wall. Abdoulaye, with his usual grace and generosity, did not hesitate to come once again to our rescue. Alonzo arrived shortly after and Abdoulaye drove him immediately to a hardware store. Later that day, Abdoulaye also purchased all the school supplies that Jane would donate. I returned to the apartment and worked on the report.

3:30pm-5pm: The entire team except for Alonzo who stayed in the apartment went back to hyppodrome to purchase food and equipment necessary for the village stay.

7:30pm-midnight: Florence Dunkel and her team arrived at the apartment in preparation for our departure to attend a ceremony of Sidy Bâ's niece's wedding. Shortly after, Abdoulaye Camara joined us for the evening. In addition to good company and food, everyone had the privilege to enjoy the wonderful music produced by a traditional band. Many griots were at the ceremony, singing the praises of the family's bride and groom and guests. When one griot learned that there was a group of Americans present, he sang our praises and also sang for Kelsey who

was celebrating her 22nd birthday. I had an interesting conversation about ‘griots’ with Sidy. I wanted to know more about their role in Malian culture since I discovered Malian literature. In every novel, the griots are mentioned as the story tellers, the musicians and the faithful servants of important families. A text I read written by a Malian anthropologist explained that griots represented a caste, that they practice endogamy and were historically the oral historians. Sidy explained that these days, in the cities, griots often came uninvited to weddings and sang the praise of the attendees without really knowing them and expected to earn tips for their unwanted services. It also added that these modern city griots were self made griots and not born into this ‘profession’ or cast.

Sunday March 16, 2008

Morning: rested in the apartment

11:30-5pm: The team (except for Alonzo who stayed in the apartment) visited the Grand Marché guided by Aissata Thera. Eva, Jane, Megan and Kelsey then went to visit the Musée National de Bamako, and Ada went to the Grand Hotel to visit the bookstore, in search of Malian books for her classes and to use a computer in the hotel’s cybercafé.

6pm-8pm: The entire team prepared dinner and invited Dr. Dunkel and her team over for dinner.

8pm-9:30pm: After dinner, Dr. Giusti and Dr. Dunkel discussed the logistics of the various projects and their sustainability.

Monday March 17, 2008

6am-7:30: The entire team has breakfast and prepares for Sanambélé departure.

8:00-Abdoulaye arrived and showed all supplies purchased for the school. He was able to buy all the supplies on the Directeur’s list except for the digital camera. Sidiki arrived at about 8:30. We load the car with cases of water, bags and supplies and depart for the village.

10:30-Arrival in Sanambélé’s school courtyard. Bourema, the school staff and many children are there to greet us.

10:30-12:00: **Official ceremony:** Florence and our entire team (except for Alonzo) are escorted to a classroom for the official ceremony to be held in our honor. This ceremony was dedicated to the gifts that were brought to Sanambélé from Jane and her school and in dedication to our individual projects in the village. Many villagers were present, such as the chief’s spoke person, the *notables*, (these are the elder men, who advise the chief, and are of noble descent), the parent teacher representative, two representatives of the farmers association and others. I am surprised that Hawa Coulibaly, the head of the women’s association, is not present at the ceremony. I was told that she had to go to Bamako because a

relative had passed away the day before. I was assured that she would be back by noon. Jane stood in front of the classroom, showed each item donated and explained what they were and who donated them. Mamadou Sissoko translated all her words and the audience nodded in approval at each gift. A man behind me wrote down a list of the gifts. Once all the gifts were presented the elders took turns making speeches. The first to speak was the chief's (to be) spoke's man. He thanked us all for the generous gifts in the name of the chief. He said that the chief appreciated the long term relationship the village had with Florence Dunkel and her teams. He said that it was important to them that she had always followed protocol and honored the chief and *notables* by visiting them and consulting with them. He also said that he was particularly happy at the fact that this team was focusing on the children of the village and their education because it was clear to the chief and to them all, that the children were their future and that education was very important. At the end of his speech he offered the team Cola Nuts covered in a leaf of the Cola tree in a traditional calabasse (a bowl made from a gourd). The farmers' spokesman thanked us. He said that the village had a long history with Florence that the beginnings of the relationship were at time tough but that it had grown and improved with years. He added that he was thankful for the work she had undertaken with the farmers and that now that we were working with the women and the children he was truly appreciative of that inclusiveness. All the *notables* expressed gratitude for our presence, our work and concern for the wellbeing of the village. One man said that he knows how difficult it is to leave one's home behind and travel; he added that he recognized how far we had travelled to reach his village and how much planning it must have taken to gather all those supplies, bring them to Sanambélé and plan the projects. He thanked us for all the effort and said that since we had left our home, we could at least consider ourselves at home in this village. There were speeches and greetings by Jane, me and Florence. In French, I explained that it was an honor to be in their beautiful village and amongst such welcoming people. I also said that the root of all these activities was Florence Dunkel, that none of us would be in this school today if she had not taken the initiative to apply for grants and build a relationship with them all. Mamadou Sissoko translated my speech. At the end of this ceremony, Hawa Coulibaly arrived in the classroom. She was all dressed in black. I expressed my condolences and we walked together out of the school grounds.

12:00-3:00: Lunch and rest.

3:00-5:00: **Meeting with Women's Association:** About 15 women from the association, and about 30 children, gathered at Bourema's compound to meet with Kelsey, Megan, and me to work on the business development. During this meeting, headed by Hawa Coulibaly and translated by Sidiki, we counted at least 10 women doing crochet work. The women showed Kelsey and Megan the various pieces they had crafted and the students taught the women how to estimate how much each items had cost them in material and time. They then estimated how much we could purchase and sell these items in Bozeman. They began with the small sewn bags in the pagne material. They discussed the price of the materials

used and the time it took to make all of the 100 small bags. We found out that the women bought the material, cut it and had a seamstress make the actual bag. We concluded that the cost of the material was 100CFA and that it cost the women 150CFA to have each small bag sewn. The cost of the string to tie each bag cost 35 CFA for a grand total of 285CFA per bag. We determined that the bags would sell for 600CFA in the US and that the women could make a 315 CFA profit. For the “large” bag made out of the same materials, we determined the cost and that we would be able to sell them for in the US was 800CFA per bag. The calculated total cost of each of the large bags came to a total of 490CFA per bag. The next item that we were able to price were the hats. There was a variety of hats that the women had made examples of, these included very vibrant colored hats in neon green and neon yellow, which we knew would not sell in the US. There were hats in other colors as well. These hats were blue and white and maroon and white, these are the ones we decided would sell in the US. There were two sizes available, a size for a baby and a young adult size. Each baby hat takes approximately 3.5 hours to crochet and costs approximately 500CFA per hat to make. We came up with a fixed price of 1,500CFA for each of the baby hats. We ordered four of the baby hats. They also crochet adult hats. The time to make each one is relatively the same but it involves more material. I determined that each adult hat would sell for 2,700CFA.

After the hats, we went on to price the chemises. Hawa Coulibaly told us that it takes two spools of material for one adult chemise. The cost of the material is 2,000CFA. She told us she had been selling each one for 2,500CFA. I then asked her how long it took to make one chemise and Hawa replied five days. I think all of us were shocked that she was only making roughly twenty-five cents a day for those five days with the current exchange rate. We decided to price the chemises at 5,000CFA. They would make more like 600CFA per day versus 100CFA per day.

For the next meeting, which would take place the following day, we ordered four examples of small crocheted sacks (about the same size as the small cloth bag) and a black crocheted shoulder bag with a shell for a closure. Based on the chemises, we quoted the small crocheted bag at 800CFA. They only had one partially finished at this meeting and it looked beautiful. As the meeting came to an end, the women thanked us for the work and advice we were giving them. Around 4pm, the meeting was interrupted by the arrival of 2 spokesmen from the farmers’ association. They officially thanked us for working with the women and offered us two live roosters. I thanked them for their generosity

After the meeting, we went to the school to see Alonzo’s mural in progress. Alonzo was working frantically, trying to finish the project so that he would be free the next day to work with the children and his malaria art project. While he painted the mural about 20 children and adults just stared at him working, probably keeping him company. We then headed back to Bourema’s compound for music and dancing. To honor us and our work in their village, Bourema’s mother (actually his *petite maman* meaning his dead mother’s younger co-wife) brought in musicians and offered them sugar and tea and another food item as

payment for their service. About 60 people were present in Bourema's courtyard as young and old, Americans and Malians danced together to the beautiful sounds of traditional music and songs.

7:00-9:00pm: Dinner and discussion of our day with the entire team. Many of the women we saw were talking, walking and crocheting at the same time. Everyone was in bed by 10:00pm.

The entire team prepared dinner (flatbread, canned vegetables, sardines and cookies) and discussed the day's events. Eva gave us all a report on the health related information she had gathered during her meeting with the midwife. She told us that Awa had started a nutrition program for the malnourished infants in the village. We had noticed that there were children with red hair, a sign of malnutrition and others with kwashiorkor. Eva said that Awa also had training courses for mothers about nutrition. She learned that STDs were common in the village but not HIV. Awa Diarra and Maimouna joined us after dinner. We asked Awa some questions about health, especially about malaria and she told us that 8 children under the age of 5 had died of malaria in the past year. She reiterated her belief that the best prevention was the use of bed nets and that the villagers believed the same. Around 9:45 Eva and Alonzo walked Awa home. I took a shower out of a bucket and went to bed. The entire team slept in the same room on 3 mattresses covered by bed nets. We kept the window and door open because it was hot, so we could hear various conversations going on in the courtyard. We also had the two roosters that were gifted to us, right next to the door of the house under a basket.

Tuesday March 18, 2008

7:15-8:30: Some team members did not sleep very well due to the heat, the millet stalk mattresses, the dust, the crowing roosters and the braying donkeys. We all got up early and had breakfast.

8:30-11:30am: Sidiki and Bourema took Megan, Kelsey, Gloria, Jaime and I on a tour of the village. We began by meeting with the soon to be chief of the village. Bourema was already with him when we arrived in his courtyard. Sidiki began the meeting by apologizing for not coming to greet him sooner. The chief was very friendly and welcoming and said that he knew of all the work we had been doing in the school and with the women. He said that everyone reported to him about our activities and that he was very happy to get such good reports. He told us that he was especially happy that we were working with the school because this improved the future of the children and therefore the village. He also said that we were welcome in the village because Florence's teams had always respected village traditions. Gloria asked various questions which I translated into French and Sidiki translated into Bambara. They were mostly related to village customs and the role of the chief, often comparing these to her own Native American culture. She asked him how an outsider should or should not behave in the village. He responded that all outsiders are welcome if they show respect for the elders, and if they do not covet the husbands or wives of villagers. He said that if

an unmarried outsider arrived and wanted to begin a relationship with an unmarried villager, it would not be a problem. He said that the most important thing is that the village remains open. Traditionally speaking, if a village is not open, there is something wrong with the village. She asked if in the case of war, the villagers would come to his house for protection as this was done in her culture. He said that it was not the case and that all would probably disperse and try to find shelter away from a war zone. We stayed with the chief for about 30 minutes and he thanked us and urged us to return to his village and continue the collaboration. After saying goodbye to the new chief, we toured the village. We saw a man repairing the wall of his mud house and asked him if he had built his home himself. He said that generally villagers repaired their own home but that to build one from scratch professionals were usually hired from the village. We then saw the former chief's compound. Bourema explained to us that his family was still living there and that the former chief was buried in these premises. He explained that usually the new chief would inhabit the compound but that in this particular case he would stay in his own compound so that the former chief's family could continue living there. The premises were very orderly and clean and the various mud buildings were in good shape. We then saw a vegetable garden--strikingly green amidst the sand color of the earth and homes. Many peppers and onions were grown here. The gardener came to greet us; he could not hear or speak but he smiled and shook our hands. As we continued our visit, we could see the empty fields all around us, the brick laying area, and the dried up pond. We also visited a group of homes (it looked like a suburb of the village) and Bourema explained that an entire family with the same last name Samake lived there. After visiting this side of the village, we walked by the school and continued straight to see the potters, the blacksmith, and the carpenter, all of whom are believed to have divine powers. Then we all went back to Bourema's compound for lunch.

12:00-3:00pm: Lunch and rest.

3:00pm-4:30pm: **The Women's Association** gathered again for our final meeting. To begin our meeting, they showed us the finished product of the crocheted bags. When we saw the finished product, it became apparent that we had to find out who did which bag due to some quality differences. The best quality work was done by Koroutoumou Samake (small croche bag with cauris), Hawa and Maimouna Coulibaly and Sally Traore. Mamou Coulibaly does not have good work. Beginning with the crocheted bags, we determined that our original price was too low so we increased it to 1,000CFA per bag and we ordered four. The four we ordered are as follows; one black and white, one white and black, one black and blue, and one solid black with shells (for 1,200CFA). We were shown a prototype of the solid black shoulder bag. It was nice but we suggested a few changes. Only have one closure, change the direction from horizontal to vertical, and lengthen the strap. We ordered two for Friday, which Florence will pick up for us.

Next, we received and counted the 200 cloth bags (small and large). We checked our order of the hats which consisted of two white and blue striped with pom-

poms, one maroon and white striped with pom-pom, and one white and blue with triangular design.

Next, we were presented the finished bracelets and determined that each bracelet would sell for 600CFA each. Each bracelet was made by Korotoumou Samake. We decided that each bracelet should have a closure of some sort. The ones without would stretch too much. We also decided to go with the nylon material opposed to the cotton material. Florence purchased 14 chemises at 5000 CFA each.

We wrapped up our portion of the meeting by making complete payments of all the products to each respective woman. As we paid for the 200 textile bags, Bourema counted all of the money and then gave it to Hawa. Then Jane gave the money raised by her colleagues and community to the Women's Association for them to use as to build the business. We explained that it could be used for micro business loans. It was clear that the women were very delighted by selling so many of their goods. We said our goodbyes and parted ways.

4:45-5:30pm: We headed to the soccer field to watch a match set up by Alonzo. One team wore plain jerseys while the others wore the t-shirts given by Jane's high school.

5:30-6:00pm: We packed our bags, said our goodbyes, and departed for Bamako.

8:00pm: Arrival in Bamako. We are all exhausted but Kelsey, Alonzo, and Megan find the energy to prepare dinner. Over dinner, we discussed our work in Sanambélé. Bed time 11:00pm

Wednesday March 19, 2008

10:00am-12:00pm: Wake up, have breakfast. Over breakfast, we had an hour and a half discussion of our experience in Sanambélé. We concluded that it was a very successful trip. The village was genuinely happy to have had us there, and very appreciative of our work. We then discussed potential projects which would include or be based upon Awa's involvement in the community. We discussed her current needs and limitations at the women's clinic.

12:00-4:00pm: Lunch and then Kelsey and Megan wrote their final report. I dealt with the apartment rental, trying to get bills and part of our rental deposit back. The rental office showed me some of the new apartments that were built next door. They are not yet furnished but look good. I then went to a book store with Eva and Jane. We then went to the large supermarket to buy what we needed to make mango ice cream for the dinner party at Aissata's home.

7pm-midnight: Our team and Florence's walked to Aissata's home for the dinner party. Abdoulaye and Sidy were also present. The incredibly delicious meal was served on the roof because it was too warm in the house. It was wonderful to smell the

Shea trees that were flowering and to share such a delicious Malian meal with everyone. Aissata had cooked this entire meal that will be unforgettable.

Thursday March 20, 2008

Today we all packed and prepared for our return to the States. Some of the team members wrote reports. I spent some time finalizing the rental paper work and trying to get a plumber to come look at a ceiling leak in the bathroom. I also worked on finances for this trip. In the evening the two teams and the Agribusiness Network leaders—Belco, Abdoulaye, Sidy and Aissata—had dinner in a Vietnamese restaurant. As we waited for our food, each team member reported on the work they accomplished.

Evaluation of outcome

1) My trip objective was to serve as the team leader and provide team members with logistical and academic support as they undertook their individual projects. I successfully provided **affordable safe housing** for the entire team. I rented two apartments from Agence Immobilière Koita – Aik located in front of the Russian embassy and three blocks from the Sarama hotel. Each furnished apartment had 2 bedrooms, a large living room, a bathroom and kitchen. There were air conditioners and fans in each room. Apartment #12 had no mosquitoes as all the windows had screens. In apartment 16 there was no screen in the kitchen window so there were more mosquitoes in the apartment. We were very comfortable in these lodgings. It was a pleasure to cook for ourselves and sit around the living room talking or working on our reports. The opportunity to live together helped us create a bond and a team spirit. There were a few technical problems in our apartment, for instance during our second night the water tank in the kitchen broke. Hot water flowed into the kitchen, living room and out the apartment hallway. I took note of the situation and concluded that since all the water was out of the tank and the water was not damaging anything (there were tiled floors) we could just return to bed. In the morning I asked the rental office (located right inside the building) to fix it. We had another problem that they fixed immediately. I would highly recommend renting these apartments for future teams. It has the added benefit of providing us a means to integrate for a short time in society. Our neighbors were Malians and we spoke to them; we shopped at local street vendors and began a dialogue with them as well. We were charged 150 000 CFA to rent one apartment plus we had to pay for our electric, gas and water usages. The entire cost of the rental, with 3 people per apartment came to \$166 per person for 11 nights. I took care of all other logistics for the trip and there were no problems. As noted above, my role was also to provide students with academic support, to hone their language skill and develop their knowledge of this country: its history, people, religions, social stratification, socio-economic issues, literature... All the students were fluent enough in French to engage in meaningful conversations with francophone Malians; they also had a rudimentary knowledge of Bambara to greet and say their name. All these students attended a seminar on Malian culture and literature before arriving in Mali. They were therefore knowledgeable about rural and urban customs and all the subjects I mentioned above (see attached syllabus for this course). As far as I know, these were the most linguistically and culturally prepared undergraduate students from MSU who have worked with Malian villagers. Their knowledge of participatory method, biomedical

science, business, marketing and art also enabled them to successfully complete their projects.

2) My second goal was to learn more about Sanambélé and compile information about its inhabitants and institutions that could serve as reference for future teams working in the village. I collected the following information about the village:

SANAMBÉLÉ SCHOOL MARCH 2008

FACTS

- The school was built about 8 to 10 years ago
- 347 children attend classes in Sanambélé. Most of the students come from the village because the two other surrounding villages had their own school. We did notice that a few students from the deuxième cycle came from the villages of Karako and Bankoni.
- The school is divided into *Le premier cycle* (elementary school) and *Le deuxième cycle* (middle and high school). Each cycle has its own building and a directeur: Moussa Keita (1er cycle), Mamadou Sissoko (2eme cycle). These directeurs also teach in their respective classes. There are 4 other teachers for the entire school (a total of 6 teachers). Alima Samake is the English teacher. I met another teacher but I don't have his name. He is a young man who started a year ago. He teaches in the elementary level and explained that he had a large classroom with 2 grades because the school does not have enough teachers for each grade. This teacher is Christian and wears a small cross prominently displayed on his chest. (see photos of these teachers)
- At the moment, construction is on its way to build a library funded by Plan Mali. I spoke to the representatives of this NGO and they do not think that there will be funds for a librarian and it is not clear if they will be able to stock the library. I will email them to find out about this because perhaps if books or a librarian are needed we could collaborate with the villagers to make that happen.
- At the moment there does not seem to be any books in the school. We did not see one book in the classrooms or in the hands of teachers. The children did tell us that they needed books.
- None of the teachers are originally from Sanambélé. They do live very near the school. I suppose that they go home on weekends.
- **Curriculum content:** Whenever we visited a classroom, I took pictures of what was written on the board (see attached). The writing was always in French and the content seemed to focus on Africa, Mali and agriculture. For instance, one of La Fontaine's fable was written on the board (see photo) titled *Le laboureur et ses enfants (the ploughman and his children)*. The moral of the fable is that 'working the land is a treasure.' On another black board there was a dictation with the corrections in red chalk. It seemed to focus on the nasal vowels 'in' and 'en' but the sentences talked about Karim's garden located near the village. Again, agricultural activities are promoted in this school, as well as knowledge of

political structures such as ‘communes’. An exam question was: “What is a commune? Give an example of a rural and urban commune.” The curriculum content seems very appropriate to me. The pedagogical tools—dictations, national exams, fables—are still very much influenced by the French system but the content of the lessons promote Malian traditions and rural life based on working the land.



Directeur du deuxième cycle: Mamadou Sissoko



Directeur du premier cycle, Moussa Keita leaning against the tree.
Bourema is next to him



This is a teacher from the premier cycle.



English teacher: Alima Samake



A fable by Jean de la Fontaine “plowing or cultivating the earth is a treasure”

VILLAGE OF SANAMBÉLÉ

FACTS

- It is located 60 kilometers South East of Bamako
- About 1000 inhabitants
- One school
- One mid-wife Awa Diarra.
- 68 births in the village last year (2007)
- 8 children under the age of 5 died of malaria (2007)
- The midwife works with malnourished children and their mothers. She notes that malaria is a major concern in the village. There are other health issues such as STDs and HIV testing. The village also lacks basic medical supplies. The midwife would like to find a way to earn money to buy medical supplies. She stated that when supplies are donated, they inevitably run out and there is no way of purchasing more of them
- The villagers have identified the fight against malaria as their main objective, the second being the fight against hunger.
- There is one male nurse
- The former chief died in January 2008, the new chief has been chosen but not installed officially yet because tradition requires that he take the reign at least 5 months after the burial of his predecessor.
- The majority of the population is Bambara, animist and Muslim. I only met one Christian. I was told that there are some Fulani families living around the village who take care of the cows.
- There is a well-attended mosque in the village
- The villagers live on subsistence farming: millet, sorghum, corn, cowpeas, some rice and vegetable plots.
- There are many chickens in the village, and donkeys and cows.
- Polygamy is prevalent in the village as it is accepted by animists and Muslims
- Adults continuously expressed their wish to send their children to school, viewing education as a possible step out of poverty for the families
- This village has one chief and elders (*notables*; it has many associations, such as the farmers' association who had chosen Karim Coulibaly as its spokesperson and the women's association that has Hawa Coulibaly as the spokeswoman.
- The **Women's Association** has been in place for over 5 years. The women as a group work in other peoples' fields for money; they are responsible for managing the village grinder; and support each other when one of the members gets married. The main representatives of this association are:
 1. Hawa Coulibaly the former chief's daughter. She knows how to write and has even taught Bambara to the women during evening classes. She is the one who began crocheting and encouraging the other women to engage in that activity by teaching them.
 2. Mariam Traoré: the wife of Karim Coulibaly who is the farmers' spokesperson.

3. Maimouna Coulibaly: She is married to Hawa Coulibaly's husband's younger brother.
4. Korotoumou Samaké: She is married to Hawa Coulibaly's younger brother, known as 'vieux' but his real name is Doukoukoloba



The village Chief



This is Sidiki Traoré, an employee of Institut d'Economie Rurale (IER) and the extension worker who has been working with villagers in Sanambélé for many years. He visits the village at least a few times a month. His closest connection in the village is Bourema Coulibaly



Bourema Coulibaly has been the man who facilitates the action research of IER and the villagers. He is always the one who hosts the IER workers when they come to stay in the village. Bourema is the nephew of a former chief and he is well respected by the villagers young and old. He seems to be around 45 years old. He has two wives: Mamou (1st wife) 4 children; and Awa Djarra (2nd wife) 2 children. His wives are members of the Women's Association. His wives grow rice, onions, peanuts, and gumbo. His mother (who is actually his biological mother's co-wife) lives with him. Her name is Mussoni Samaké.



Moussoni Samake- Bourema's mother



This is Mamou, Bourema's first wife



Awa Djarra, Bourema's second wife



Awa Diarra is the village midwife

**THE FOLLOWING WOMEN ARE INVOLVED
IN THE
WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**



Hawa Coulibaly



Mariam on my right and Korotoumou on my left



Maimouna

Contact list:

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Rental agency for apartment in Bamako

Agence Immobiliere KOITA – AIK

En face de l'ambassade de Russie

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Email: aik@ikaso.net

MLF 450R: La littérature et culture malienne

Lundi et mardi de 15h10 à 16h25, printemps 2008

Prof. Ada Giusti; Bureau: Reid 322; Tél.: 994-6442; Courriel: adagiusti@yahoo.com

Heures de bureau: lundi et mercredi de 16h30-17h30 ; et vendredi de midi à 13h

Page d'accueil : www.montana.edu/wwwml/Giusti/

DESCRIPTION DU COURS ET MÉTHODOLOGIE:

1. Ce cours est accessible à tous les étudiants, en autant qu'ils sont capables de suivre un enseignement entièrement en français. Il veut être une étude approfondie de la culture et la littérature maliennes. Notre découverte de ce pays se fera à travers des essais philosophiques, des poèmes, des contes, des romans, de la musique et des films maliens. Ces œuvres nous inviteront à aborder les sujets suivants : 1) les traditions, la modernité et l'indentité; 2) les croyances religieuses ; 3) la vie rurale ; 4) la pauvreté économique et la richesse culturelle ; 6) la famille et le rôle de la femme ; 7) la colonisation française ; 8) l'espoir ; 9) l'histoire ; 10) le despotisme

2. Votre lecture et préparation pour les discussions: Cette classe est un séminaire, ainsi, votre participation active sera vivement sollicitée. Il est indispensable que la lecture soit faite d'avance, en général sur le programme indiqué, autrement le cours lui-même ne sera d'aucune utilité. Le travail de préparation des étudiants est donc l'élément essentiel du cours qui portera le plus souvent sur une étude en profondeur des textes. Votre présence active à tous les cours est indispensable.

3. Devoirs : Tous les devoirs seront ramassés, corrigés et notés.

4. Compositions: Vous écrirez trois compositions de quatre pages.

5. Recherche indépendante et présentation: Tous les étudiants devront entreprendre une recherche approfondie sur un sujet lié au Mali, sa littérature, culture... Le sujet sera décidé en consultation avec le professeur. Ce travail prendra la forme d'une dissertation de 15 pages et d'une présentation de dix minutes.

Bibliographie :

Seydou, Badian, *Sous l'orage* (Présence Africaine, 1997)***

Massa Makan Diabaté, *Le coiffeur de Kouta* (Editions Hatier, 2002)***

Famory, Fofana, *Les poèmes de la source Saniya* (Editions Donniya : Bamako, 1996)

Amadou Hampâté Bâ, *Aspects de la civilisation africaine* (Présence Africaine, 1972)

Amadou Hampâté Bâ, *La poignée de poussière* (Nouvelles éditions africaines, 1987)

Amadou Hampâté Bâ, *L'étrange destin de Wangrin* (Editions 10/18, 2006) ***

Fatouma Fathy Sidibé, *Une saison africaine* (Présence Africaine, 2006) ***

Films :

Ta Donna, Adama Drabo

Taafé Fanga, Adama Drabo

Distribution des notes:

Discussions/devoirs:	45 points
Rédactions:	30 points
Projet final:	25 points (à rendre le 8 mai à 16h)

Semaine	Lundi	Mercredi
Le 16 janvier		Introduction au cours La géographie, les langues et les ethnies du Mali
21-23 janvier	Congé	L'histoire du Mali <i>Présentations des étudiants</i>
28-30 janvier	Amadou Hampâté Bâ <i>Aspects de la civilisation africaine</i> (personne, culture, religion)	Amadou Hampâté Bâ <i>Aspects de la civilisation africaine</i> (personne, culture, religion)
4-6 février	Seydou, Badian <i>Sous l'orage</i>	Seydou, Badian <i>Sous l'orage</i>
11-13 février	Seydou, Badian <i>Sous l'orage</i>	Seydou, Badian <i>Sous l'orage</i> (composition #1 à rendre vendredi)
18-20 février	Congé	Amadou Hampâté Bâ <i>L'étrange destin de Wangrin</i>
25-27 février	Amadou Hampâté Bâ <i>L'étrange destin de Wangrin</i>	Amadou Hampâté Bâ <i>L'étrange destin de Wangrin</i>
3-5 mars	Amadou Hampâté Bâ <i>L'étrange destin de Wangrin</i>	Amadou Hampâté Bâ <i>L'étrange destin de Wangrin</i>
10-12 mars	Voyage au Mali	Voyage au Mali
17-19 mars	Voyage au Mali	Voyage au Mali (composition #2 à rendre vendredi)
24-26 mars	Amadou Hampâté Bâ <i>L'étrange destin de Wangrin</i>	Amadou Hampâté Bâ <i>L'étrange destin de Wangrin</i>
31 mars -2 avril	Amadou Hampâté Bâ <i>L'étrange destin de Wangrin</i>	Amadou Hampâté Bâ <i>L'étrange destin de Wangrin</i>
7-9 avril	Amadou Hampâté Bâ <i>L'étrange destin de Wangrin</i>	Massa Makan Diabaté <i>Le coiffeur de Kouta</i>
14-16 avril	Massa Makan Diabaté <i>Le coiffeur de Kouta</i>	Massa Makan Diabaté <i>Le coiffeur de Kouta</i> (composition #3 à rendre vendredi)
21- 23 avril	Massa Makan Diabaté <i>Le coiffeur de Kouta</i>	Fatouma Fathy Sidibé <i>Une saison africaine</i>
28-30 avril	Fatouma Fathy Sidibé <i>Une saison africaine</i>	Fatouma Fathy Sidibé <i>Une saison africaine</i>

PRÉSENTATIONS FINALES : LE 8 MAI DE 16H A 17H50 (projet final à rendre)