

**TRIP REPORT**  
**USDA CSREES Higher Education Challenge Grant**

**New Paradigm for Discovery Based Learning: Implementing Bottom-Up Development by  
Listening to Farmers' Needs and Using Participatory Processes and Holistic Thinking**

**Mali – January 9, 2010 through January 22, 2010**  
**(arrive Bamako 8:50 p.m. January 10, depart Bamako 11:40 p.m. January 22, 2010)**

**Dr. P. Jane Saly**  
**Associate Professor & Chair**  
**Department of Accounting**  
**University of St Thomas**

**Mollie Mikl**  
**Master of Business Administration Extern**

**John Kamman**  
**Master of Business Administration Extern**

**Required Output of Each Faculty Member and Student Traveling on Grant Funding**

## **2.0. Executive Summary (1 page summary of the highlights of the visit)**

Overall, the trip was very successful in enhancing student learning about agriculture and differences in a developing economy. The group was amazingly cohesive as we mixed undergraduate French, Sociology and Engineering students with graduate Business students. The Business students learned about the other projects and how they all fit together. In addition, the full group who visited Borko got along very well. Aissata Traore, Adama Berthe, and Belco Tamboura were of immense assistance in our interactions with the villagers. They helped arrange the food, lodging, electricity, water and, of course, the meetings. They were very available to the student teams who needed direction for their projects. The students from IPR interacted very well with the American students and both sets of students learned from each other. It was a very good cross-cultural learning experience.

The work completed by the Business team was modest but appeared to be useful. The Seed Potato quality tracking items were translated into French with the help of Ashley and Martin and left with the villagers. The students were able to download a series of pictures of potato diseases. In addition, Kate Herzog had brought along a printer and we were able to print out the disease pictures and the forms as well as pictures of the villagers. The personal pictures made a nice parting gift for the villagers and I would recommend taking a printer and computer for that purpose. We also gave the pictures and forms in electronic format to Aissata and Belco. The team was also able to help Belco with the software for the business plan. They were able to get the Shea portion entered into the software and demonstrate its use to Belco. We were able to collect more information about exporting and transporting Shea and to introduce Kate Herzog, a potential importer, to the representatives of Coprakazan Cooperative.

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## **4.0. Objectives of Visit**

The business group had 3 basic objectives

- Further investigation into the export of Shea Butter from Mali
- Assist in the development of quality control tracking for the seed potato farming in Borko.
- Allow the business students to understand how business differs in a developing country

## **5.0. Accomplishments of Objectives**

5.1. By objective, what was accomplished?

- Shea – We brought some business plan software. Use of this software was demonstrated to Belco Tamboura and much of the current plan for Shea butter was entered into the software format. A brief report was prepared for the Mali Agri-Business Center and additional Shea butter product was purchased. We met with representatives of Coprakazan Cooperative and introduced them to Kate Herzog who is a potential import partner.
- Seed Potato – The business team prepared 3 separate reports - Planting Progress, Best Practices, and Inspections Report – to assist in tracking plant progress and in ensuring the best possible results. The team also developed a set of pictures of both potato and leaf indications of disease. These pictures will help villagers identify diseased plants so they can be removed from the field as early as possible. The reports and pictures were left with both the village of Borko and the Mali-Agribusiness Center. Lastly, the team developed planting maps of the seed potato fields for Adama Berthe.
- Student learning about different business environments. The students had a wonderful opportunity to interact with the Center members, to shop and to observe how business works. They both reflected on this in their reflective papers. For example, one student remarked on how the distribution of goods is very different. They noted that there was a calculator salesperson who went around to businesses to see if they needed a calculator. Hence, if someone needed a calculator, they would have to find the salesperson. In the US, one would go to a store that carries calculators. The other student noted that there is ample room for embezzlement. During the interviews with the farmers, the farmers were asked whether onions or garlic were easier to grow. The farmer mentioned that it was hard to determine how much garlic would grow as the eldest son was responsible for harvesting and selling the garlic. Thus, there was no outside objective measure of the crop – only the eldest son's report on what was sold. The students also had a hands-on learning about significant measurement issues when they tried to determine the return from growing onions versus garlic. The numbers they collected and analyzed yielded such varied results that they concluded the analysis was useless despite their best efforts. While their model was sound, the

input data was very poor. It is very useful to understand that the model is only as good as the input data.

5.2. What do you recommend for the future (specifically and in general)?

- Better communication and planning on both sides would have helped. However, this is a typical issue and the planning was really quite good. A little better planning would have led us to identify the Business Plan software earlier and given students a chance to start work on the business plan before going to Mali. They could have given more assistance in Mali.

## **6.0. Daily log of activities**

What was done when, visits, meetings, cultural experiences, other things related to visit objectives or helpful information for the faculty and students who will follow you here to Mali.)

### **Mali Trip Journal – 2010 Business Team**

#### **Saturday January 9, 2010.**

We met at 12:30, got checked in and went through security. Ashley had checked with security about carrying the enzyme kits and got a definite NO, we couldn't hand carry them. Fortunately, John had extra room in his bag so he was able to pack them and check them. We had plenty of time so we all got something to eat. Our flight was fully booked and Salif Keita was one of the booking agents. He was able to get Business Class for Ashley – nice treat for all her hard work.

#### **Sunday, January 10, 2010.**

We arrived a little late into Amsterdam and had to get our boarding passes before going to our next flight. There are kiosks where you just scan your passport and it finds your reservation and prints a boarding pass. It works like a charm unless the machine can't scan the passport. Both John and Mollie had to wait about 20 minutes to talk to an agent – frustrating. John's passport was well worn and the machines couldn't read it. Mollie's name was misspelled on her ticket. However, we were all able to get to our flight with plenty of time.

Paris was crazy. It took us 2 hours to get our boarding passes and pass through customs and security (security was at least 40 minutes)! The students had wanted to make a quick trip to the Eiffel tower but that wasn't going to happen.

We met Kate Herzog at the gate. Kate graduated with an MBA from St. Thomas in 2009 and has set up a company to import craft and other goods from Africa. She accompanied the group, at her own cost and with a small grant from University of St Thomas, to assist in identifying export potential for Shea and other products. There was little to eat in the gate area and it was very expensive – 4.10 Euros for a small yogurt. But we all managed to find something – about \$20 per person.

We arrived in Bamako late at 10:30. It took about 1.5 hours to clear customs and find out bags. The airport was a little less chaotic than usual. We had to seek out porters for a change. Kate helped us and negotiated a rate of 2000 CFA per porter. We ended up with 3 helpers.

The biggest change was that 8 of our bags failed to arrive. Some were people's personal luggage as well as some of the gear – the solar oven and the engineers' tool kit. Two students whose luggage was delayed had packed their malaria medication. One was taking Malarone so he was able to borrow but the other was taking Doxycycline. This was a big concern and we hoped the luggage would arrive the next day. As usual, we were the last to exit and the last to get assistance for lost baggage. We finally left the airport at 1:00 a.m. – Belco and Adama (bus driver) had waited patiently for us since our original arrival time of 9:00 p.m. We arrived at Cauris where our rooms were ready and as we had expected. We were all glad to have a bed and shower! We arranged to meet Belco at 11:00 a.m. on Monday.

Everyone appeared to be in good spirits and we were excited to see the rest of the city after a good nights rest.

### **Monday, January 11, 2010.**

Our hotel, Cauris Lodge, was a quaint place with a nice open seating area and pool. We were able to catch up on sleep and eat a nice breakfast at the hotel. We had arranged to meet Belco Tamboura on Monday at 11:00 a.m. We then took the bus to IER in Sotuba to meet with Aissata Thera and discuss the current state of the seed potato project in Borko. We learned that 3,000 potatoes have been planted, 1,500 of each of the two varieties the center has grown. The accounting student's objective is to create a control system for the farmers to monitor the diseases that can spread in the potato fields. We also discussed a project timeline for our time in Mali. We had a Malian lunch at La Gamelle – a nice start to our meals.

After having lunch, our afternoon was spent planning for our next day's meetings, changing money, and making email correspondence to home. We also took a walk around the neighborhood to see local stores. The streets are all dirt, and it is hard to get a sense of where you are as the streets all seem somewhat familiar. There are no street names, at least on the smaller back streets, and it's interesting to see residential and commercial properties completely intermingled. Dinner was at Hong Mai with HED consultants Andy and Cornelia. The students sat together while the faculty sat with the consultants and discussed our project. Belco and Aissata were able to join us and we talked about how the seed potato project had grown out of Aissata's thesis. We explained what each area was working on in Borko and how it all fit together to support all parts of the project. They were impressed with the progress and the linkages between Malians and Americans. Then, they asked what did we think was missing in general development plans. We mentioned systems thinking and financial literacy. It was a productive and delightful conversation.

After dinner the business students worked on a few items for our project and set up the printer to print a few documents for tomorrow's meeting. Kate Herzog brought a printer with her and the UST team purchased ink cartridges for it. This gave us the opportunity to print wherever we had electricity. It proved to be very useful.

### **Tuesday, January 12, 2010.**

Just after midnight, the baggage arrived. Fortunately, a few students were still up and sitting in the courtyard. Every bag arrived and we were able to get each one even though we couldn't wake

Susan to get her tags. The delivery people said we just needed to leave her tags with the hotel reception for pickup the next day. But they gave us her bags. The solar oven package had been opened and repacked. The box had a rip on the side of the bottom of the oven. Fortunately, nothing was broken.

At breakfast, Adama Berthe was already here with 2 IPR students – Filiba Bissan from Mali and Illiassou Mahomone from Niger. And he brought our phones. It was a really good start to what turned out to be a great day.

Camille and Ashley went to ENI to talk about the evaporative cooler. Adama took Susan, Jackie, Breanna, Ryan, Nick, and Bret to IPR to see the lab. Belco took Jane, John, Mollie, Kate, Filiba and Illiassou to meet with the marketing representatives for Coprakazan.

We met with Ouzman Fomba, marketing director and Soulymane Traore, sales agent for 2.5 hours. Belco introduced us and explained what we were trying to do. I explained why I thought Shea butter would appeal to the American market and that our role was to help increase their potential market by helping with export. Ouzman expressed deep thanks for our efforts because this would help Malians. He said the US market is the premier world market because it is so big and so profitable.

He is already selling some small amount of product to the US and is aware that shipping cost to US is more than double the cost of shipping to Europe. We talked about the fact that transportation cost is a major issue to resolve. There is a price point the US consumer is willing to pay for the product. If we can get the transportation cost reduced, we can improve the portion of the price that will go to the Malians.

He wanted to know at what stage was the ABC plan. Belco explained that he and Ernie Owens had worked on the plan for all 4 initiatives over the year and finally submitted a proposal to USAID in mid December – just before the holiday break. They had not heard back from USAID.

Kate mentioned an organization headquartered in Senegal, called the West African Trade Hub that provides assistance to African exporters. She will find the name of the Malian representative and provide it to Belco.

Ouzman also asked if there were any negative perceptions in America about the quality of product from Africa. We talked about the issue that developed when toys from China had toxic materials that made children sick or resulted in their death. Now Americans are wary of any product from China. However, if a product gets a reputation for quality people will be very receptive to buying African products. There is a portion of the market that is affluent and likes to buy products from developing countries as a way of helping them. And they will pay more if they can be assured that the price of the product goes to the people making it – the Fair Trade market. The product doesn't necessarily have to have the Fair Trade designation, an expensive proposition that the importer must satisfy. (see the report)

He wanted us to characterize the American customer. We said they want high quality. This implies ease of use (softness), accurate weight measure, and transparent information about how

much of the value goes to the primary producers. In the case of Shea, that would be the women who collect the nuts and process the butter. The typical customer is affluent, well-educated and informed about types of ingredients. The customers will want some relief from dry skin (which affect most people during the cold weather) or skin conditions such as eczema. The majority of the customers will be women.

We also talked about the need to be accurate in their measures. If the product says there is 240 grams but there is really only 200 grams, people will be upset. If such an obvious thing is not reported correctly, they will question the overall quality of the product. It is better to err a little bit over than under. People understand that precision is not always possible but they expect it to be closer. If the producers need help with this, we have some ideas about how they can improve their measurement.

We asked about volume. What level of volume would impact them? Ouzman mentioned that volume is not a problem for them. There are many women who want to join the cooperative so if their volume increased, then they would add more women to the cooperative. Given the number of women in the Zantiabougou area, he estimated about 15,000 women could produce, on average 180 kg/year, for a total of 2700 tons per year.

What is more important is price. That will impact the women more than volume. In 2009, they produced 31 tons with revenues of 45,000,000 CFA. Of that 19,000,000 goes to the women who produce (for salaries, for profit share). Of the total production, about 5-10% is exported. The biggest export is to Senegal with small amounts to Europe, US and Canada.

Together with Diolla and Siby, their market is about 5% of the total Malian market. They feel their organization has the best impact for women. They are not subsidized and operate under a business model.

We asked about how their current US orders are managed. They get orders by email. Customers pay in advance via Western Union or bank transfer and customer pays the shipping. We talked about paying 50% in advance and 50% upon receipt. That gives the producer incentive to complete the order. Ouzman mentioned that the producer is then in a position where the customer might not pay the remainder. We agreed that with larger orders and an established relationship, there may be need to reevaluate the payment scheme.

Order time: They have found that Air France freight to US takes about 2-3 days. US delivery through customs may take up to 3 weeks if this is a new import. The customs people have many questions and many forms must be filled out. Once customs gets to know the importer, imports can pass through more quickly.

Their high production time is March-June with best sun for drying. Their high demand is October and that would be best time for US market.

We talked about information on packaging. Mollie and John had researched the specific information that needs to be on imports to the US. In addition, US packaging has to be careful about claims. Some claims may require scientific proof and certification by US Food and Drug



Administration. It is better to avoid this as it is extremely costly and only done by large companies. They would like a picture example of packaging in the report.

They also asked about whether the customer has particular views about chemical characteristics and the color. We can do some market studies to determine preferences. However, the Malians are more expert about the chemical properties of high quality Shea.

We concluded the meeting by making some purchases. Jane arranged to make a large order.

We returned to the hotel and met up with the remainder of the group. We all went for a full meal at the Broadway Café at 3:00 p.m. After our very late lunch we had a few hours of free time. Our team then got together to debrief our experience on the trip thus far. We then packed our bags and prepared to leave for Mopti the next morning.

### **Wednesday, January 13, 2009**

We were packed and on the bus at 8:00 a.m. A good start but it went downhill fast. By the time we reached the bridge, Ashley realized that the driver had forgotten to pick up Aissata so after discussions with Belco, the SUV went to get Aissata and the bus went to Belco's. After we picked up Aissata, we remembered that we needed the enzyme kits and we had to turn around and go to Sotuba to pick one up. By the time we met up with the bus, it was 11:30. The riders in the bus had spent an hour in a local market while they waited for us. We arrived in Segou at 2:30 and decided to take a break and get some lunch. It took 2 hours. We left Segou at 4:30 and went straight to Mopti arriving at 10:30 p.m. It was a very long day and difficult – not one of our high points. The drive to Mopti, though long, was an interesting road scattered with towns, villages and markets.

We did use the day to interview Aissata and used the SUV for that purpose. The sociology students talked with her first and the business students after that. Then, Camille talked with her.

Our hotel Pas de Problem was very cute and clean, and it felt good to get some rest.

### **Thursday, January 14, 2010**

After having a quick breakfast at the hotel, most of the group visited a local market in Mopti. It was really exciting and fun to see all of the items for sale. The students made several purchases including some authentic drums. The professors bought supplies for our trip. We got sandwiches from the hotel to take on the road and departed for Borko about 12:30.

The drive to Borko was equally entrancing, and eventually opened to an oasis valley with more green than we had seen the entire trip. Borko is a beautiful village with residents living, I suspect, similar to how they would have centuries ago. We arrived in Borko about 4:00 p.m. and set up our sleeping arrangements in a cement building. We split up with the women on one side and the men on the other. Camille and Aissata took one room, Ashley and Jane in another and Sue was in the largest room with Jackie, Breanna, Mollie and Kate. Belco and Adama were in one room while Ryan, Bret, Nick, John, Martin, Illiasou, Filiba, and Amadou were in the large living room.

After setting up camp, we were invited to enter the heart of the town. We were led through channels of mud houses, passing goats, staring children and crumbling pathways to an area where the village chief was resting on a prayer mat. One by one, we greeted the chief and several of the other elders and officials present. The village is made of small, square mud homes put together in a tight maze. There is a lot of dust and sand in the pathways between the houses. Animals like goats and donkeys can also be found wandering the streets. After we met with the village elders, the children chased us back through the pathways trying to hold our hands and say “ca va.”

We waited a long time for the diesel. We paid 49,000 CFA for the 4 days. The first night it was on from about 8:30 to midnight (even though we all went to bed by 11:00). We had arranged to have Lala cook for us and she made a lamb and pea stew for dinner – very good.

Later in the evening the business team began to organize the forms and charts needed by Aissata to monitor quality and diseases within the village. Aissata also gave a list of 3 reports to prepare and print – Planting Progress, Best Practices, and Inspections Report.

Later in the evening a few of the young men on our trip brought out their new drums and John got his guitar. They played for about 45 minutes outside. About 50 children join us by the time we were finished. We danced a little and sang. It was a great way to bond the two cultures, even though none of us could communicate even a single word in the other language.

### **Friday, January 15, 2010**

We awoke to the sounds of the prayer call and goats bleating. The air was cooler and there was a breeze earlier in the morning. We ate a great breakfast of coffee and fried dough with sugar. Our entire team then met to go over the agenda for the day and to talk about cultural issues while in Borko.

The business team spent the majority of the morning preparing and printing the documents for the farmer’s training. Ashley and Martin helped to ensure the correct spelling. The farmers arrived about 10:00 a.m. and the sociology team began their interviews with the farmers. We got the generator started and printed out the forms. They were not able to translate the disease wording. Aissata previewed the charts and thought they were very good.

When the farmer interviews were completed, the sociology team interviewed the women. At the same time, Aissata, Adama, Belco, the business and engineering teams trekked out to the potato fields. The students were surprised by the size of the fields; they were substantially smaller than they had envisioned. The business team sketched the outline of each plot with some basic measurements to be used for farmer training the following day. They also picked samples for Aissata to take back to her lab for testing.

When the women were finished their interview, Jane demonstrated the solar oven. The women expressed a strong interest in the potential for a solar oven explaining that they walk 12 kilometers for wood and can only carry enough wood for 2 meals. Jane had started cooking rice at about 9:40 a.m. with water in one pot and rice in the other. She started by saying that she has used this oven and explained the various types of food that can be cooked. She also mentioned

that you needed less water for cooking this way. Then, she mixed the water (it had just about come to a boil) with the rice and put it back in the oven. They waited about 30 minutes to see the finished product and to taste it. It worked! The rice was fluffy and tasted good. The women were very impressed.

Lala and Kate had made a tomato sauce and rice for lunch. We ate both rices to compare and both were good. The tomato sauce was excellent – with garlic, onions, and goat.

At lunch, the business team designed a rudimentary cost analysis model to assess the profitability of growing seed potatoes versus other cash crops such as garlic and onions. They worked with Sue to design a couple of questions for the other farmer interviews on Saturday.

After lunch, the engineering students went to look at the generator while the sociology students summarized their interview results and the business students transcribed the farm maps onto the flip chart paper.

Later in the afternoon, Aissata ran a training session with the seed potato farmers. She outlined the best practices and explained why these practices are needed. She gave some Clorox to 3 farmers so they could clean their tools. Adama spoke also. Lastly, she demonstrated the simple test for disease that can be performed in the field.

### **Saturday, January 16, 2010**

Aissata left at 5:00 a.m. to catch a 7:00 a.m. bus out of Mopti. Camille, Adama, Ryan, Bret, Nick and Kate went with her to price materials in Mopti.

While the Sociology team interviewed the leaders of the village, the Business team worked on updating the seed potato diseases and Shea reports as well as preparing a sample packaging label. After that, we all met with the chief, mayor and other leaders to give blankets and medicines to the village. Sue explained how happy we were to be able to give these small gifts and that we appreciated the hospitality from the village. Belco did a nice job translating and sharing our thanks. The mayor said that they were very grateful for our efforts and wish success for the project. He thought this project was very good for the village. The chief added that he agreed with the mayor and would like to add his personal thanks. We also explained that these gifts were for the midwife for the women. They thought we should give it for everyone.

Jane tried a different approach to making rice in the solar oven. She started the water alone and added salt and rice after 1 hour. The temperature was already close to 200 degrees at that time. In one more hour the rice was ready. It was good but drier than Malian rice. They like their rice moister and stickier. They would want to add more water to the recipe.

In the afternoon, the Business team acted as transcribers for the Sociology interviews of the farmers who didn't plant seed potatoes. These interviews included questions about their costs and revenues from garlic and onions. In one group, there was a man who was not a farmer but rather a man of commerce. It was interesting to hear how he bought and sold the products in the marketplace through the Malian distribution channel. There are about ten men of commerce in the village, and they all work together instead of competing against one another. It was also

interesting to hear the insight from the farmers, especially in regards to the price they can command for their products. There was a lot of variety between the numbers the farmers provided.

The Business team was surprised by some of the inconsistencies reported when asked simple questions of cost per kilo. This may be due to our lack of foresight; kilograms may not be the unit most frequently used in determining prices. The data collected from these interviews was entered into the cost/profit analysis that we developed. Unfortunately the model, though accurately built, spit out results that were far too inflated. We suspect that inaccuracy with price/kilo information coupled with the multiplicative effect of the sample area approach that we used may have caused this inaccuracy. Though some of the information may be helpful in assessing decisions in the future, unfortunately most of the results must be thrown out. It is impossible to know which numbers can be trusted and which can not.

Next the Business team met with Belco and got feedback about the Shea report. He gave us some ideas for changes and asked several clarifying questions. Then he asked for recommendations for the ABC. We suggested they might act as quality certifying agency and export experts for Mali. He also asked for assistance with the business plan.

Dinner was very good and very popular. Latecomers almost missed out on dinner. After dinner, the students played music to the delight of a large group of villagers. Several of the students opted to sleep outside in our bug nets for the evening. Unfortunately, it was the first night that a wind storm swept through the valley.

### **Sunday, January 17, 2010**

We began the day with a group meeting to discuss the agenda for the day and our trip back to Bamako. Then, we had a cultural discussion among the students. The students from IPR also got a chance to let us know how the trip was affecting them. Illiasou mentioned that he has some expertise in seed potatoes and realized that he could have been more involved in the project.

Next, we took a tour of the village and visited some traditional storage sites as well as one of the natural water springs. The water is 86 degrees coming out of the ground. It is very clear, very good water but not useful for cooling because it is already warm. Nick collected some sand to take back for testing. To get there, we had to jump irrigation canals – difficult for the faculty. Then we walked back to the town and visited the home of Assaysif Mohammad, a grand cleric who spent many years in the town. We finished up with a visit to cave that had been used for storage. None of the sites was suitable for cool enough storage for the potatoes.

In the afternoon, we walked through the market to see what was for sale. It was mostly foods of many types (dried fish, spices, and vegetables), some charcoal, wood, animals, and some clothes. The market was attended by many people outside of Borko who rarely see Caucasians. We were met with a lot of staring and were followed by a line of about 50 children.

Late in the afternoon, Jane demonstrated the solar oven to the women and gave it to the village. The village was very thankful and asked if they could get more of them.

The Business team put up the potato disease pictures in the Mayor's office. Belco wisely suggested that they just post the diseases that are common in Mali. The other pictures would be kept in a folder that could be checked if needed. They also made a larger map of the potato fields for further training.

Then, we printed pictures to leave for the village and packed our things. The village leaders came to say goodbye after dinner. We thanked them for their hospitality and wished them success for the seed potato project and for their other crops. They thanked us for coming to their village and helping with the project. They apologized for any errors either intentional or unintentional (Yakama) and we also apologized. We thanked them for their patience with us and our students. They thanked us for our gifts. It was a pleasant ceremony. The faculty then went to Lala's house to say goodbye to her and to Maimuna. Maimuna had arranged our water supplies. We thanked Lala for her delicious cooking and tireless efforts on our behalf. She was grateful and sad to see us leave.

As we walked around our building, there were about 40-50 young people, dressed in their finest clothing standing in groups. They were patiently waiting for the students to come out and drum. So John, Bret and Ryan unpacked their drums and we set up a circle of chairs. A large group immediately formed in a circle. They started drumming and Jackie and Breanna started dancing. Then, Ashley asked if some of the villagers would like to do some drumming. Immediately, 3 young people rushed over to do that. For about 1.5 hours, they drummed and others danced. By the end of the gathering, there were easily 150 in attendance. It was a charming scene and a delightful end to our visit.

### **Monday, January 18, 2010**

We got up early and into the bus and SUV by 7:15. We ate granola bars and dried fruit for breakfast in the bus. The ride out to the road took about 30 – 40 minutes and we arrived in Sevaré at 10:00 a.m.. We stopped for gas and snacks. Next stop was Hamdalaye – the palace and burial grounds of the last kings of the Fulani people. We had a brief tour and with a history of the big battle just before the French arrived.

The next stop was Djenne at about noon. There were several vendors at the ferry. They sold jewelry, masks, a little cloth and other tourist items. We were swarmed by people selling. The ferry didn't come all the way to shore and we added too much weight to the bus, so we all disembarked and either waded across to the ferry or took a large canoe across the river. While a horse was being led on to the ferry, it slipped and its hind legs slipped between the two sets of planks leading onto the ferry. We were all sure it had broken at least one leg. But several men helped it get up and onto the ferry. It was a relief to see it walking after such a dramatic fall.

We stopped at the cultural museum and hired a guide who showed us the museum and found us a restaurant for lunch. The guide told us some of the history of Djenne and we learned of many connections with the history of Hamdalaye. We stopped, also, at an eerie shrine in memory of a young girl who was buried alive to save the city of Djenne centuries ago. We had a delicious lunch of salad (cowpeas, carrots, and other cooked vegetables), a main course of beef, rice and cabbage with carrots, and papaya for dessert – all for a fixed price of 5,000 CFA per person. It was fairly quick, given our large group. The waiters served all the women first which surprised

the Malians. By the time we finished it was almost 4:00 so we just walked around the Mosque and got in the bus to head to San. The guide showed us the vats used to prepare the coating for the building. It needs regular maintenance to prevent decay. The exterior coating is a mixture of Shea butter, Baobab fruit, and peanut that is left to ferment before being applied. This coating helps protect the bricks from moisture.

We arrived at our hotel in San about 7:00 p.m. with only about 40 minutes of night driving. This was much better than our journey from Bamako to Mopti. We had a tasty dinner for only 4,000 CFA per person.

### **Tuesday, January 19, 2010**

We left San at 8:15. We stopped for gas and snacks in Bla. About 10:00 a.m., the bus got a flat tire. Adama drove so well that we only knew it was flat because we could hear the air going out. He had complete control. He and Segou changed the tire in the middle of the road (it was the front left tire). We stood on the side of the road and waited. The area was full of Shea trees so we got a close look at them. We also saw a wild melon about the size of a baseball. The students used it to play catch across the road. We arrived at Hotel Independence at noon.

We asked for a lunch and put it our order. The manager said it would be ready in 30 minutes – 1:00 p.m. We all sat down at 1:00 and waited 1.5 hours for our food!! Very frustrating. After lunch, the students and most of the faculty went into Segou to shop at the markets. We went to the river and shopped around Hotel L'Auberge. Our hotel staff had recommended that for dinner so we made a reservation for 15 people for 8:00 p.m.

On the way back to the Hotel, we stopped at an artisan workshop where they made Bogolu cloth (mud cloth). We had a fascinating demonstration of how it is made and then got a chance to shop.

We had a short break before dinner and many took the opportunity to catch up on email. We arrived at dinner and waited for 1.5 hours for our dinner to arrive. Many ordered pizzas – a nice reminder of home after our time in the village.

Belco gave the Business team a copy of the business plan to review and give him feedback on the Shea portion. He also wanted some assistance with installing and using Business Plan Pro.

### **Wednesday, January 20, 2010**

January 20<sup>th</sup> is a national holiday in Mali: Army Day. We spent the morning in Segou working on our projects. The business group read over Belco's business plan for Shea butter. We made comments, suggestions, and discussed overall areas for improvement of the plan. The Business team rode with Belco in the SUV so we could discuss this with him.

Lunch was served quickly as we had asked – a nice change. We also took the opportunity to thank Belco and Adama for their patience and assistance and the two Malian students for their participation. Lastly, we thanked Ashley for her calm, competent handling of all our arrangements.

We left Segou about 1:00 and headed for Bamako. In Bamako, we first went to Belco's home to drop him off. At this point, the Malian students and Adama left for Koulikoro in the SUV. We all said goodbyes.

There was a running race going on and a major road was reduced to only 1 lane in each direction. It took us over an hour to get to our hotel. Most of the team went to La Campagnard for dinner. Jane worked on the finances and Camille had a dinner meeting.

After dinner, the Business team worked on putting information from the proposal into the Business Plan Pro software.

### **Thursday, January 21, 2010**

Thursday morning the business team met with Belco to continue work on the Shea business plan. Mollie and John had started to input the Shea business plan information into the software for Belco. They were able to help demonstrate how he could use the software. They also gave our overall and specific recommendations as to how to improve the plan, and talked about how ABC can best strategically move forward. Belco and ABC need to spend more time developing the plan, specifically figuring out how the group can earn a profit, whether it be by charging a percentage on commission for being a broker or by selling the Shea test kits. The meeting was very productive and a great way to end the business part of our project. The business students also worked to finish the Shea outline and save all of our documents on a jump drive for Belco's team. Mollie and Jane went to the Coprakazan office to pick up Jane's order of Shea. On the return, we got a call from the Engineering team saying they were going to get lunch on their own and be back at 2:00 to go the World Bank meeting. It turned out they were right in front of us – Bamako can be a small place.

After lunch, most of us went to meet with the World Bank – a meeting that Aissata had arranged. The engineers had a presentation about their work on a cold storage device for seed potatoes.

We had some free time – the students along with Ashley and Sue got dropped off at the artisan market and the rest of us returned to the hotel. About 6:30 Diarra arrived to take us to his home for tea. Diarra had been a driver for Camille on several occasions. He had a big van that 9 of us squeezed into. His home was an apartment in a complex of about 6-8. The apartments all opened from the central courtyard where everyone cooked. He served us Mango juice, wijila and then tea in the Tombouctou style. It was all very tasty. He had many pictures that Camille had sent him and we looked at them and the various teams he had worked with. It was great to see how an average Malian lives and experience part of that culture.

We met the others for dinner at San Toro.

### **Friday, January 22**

We met Belco in the morning and he accompanied us to Air France for check-in. Then, we went to the Museum and the bus driver took Belco back to his car. We had a lovely lunch and toured the museum. After that the students all wanted to go the Zoo. Adama said he couldn't park there so we walked up the road and toured the Zoo. It was very hot. The zoo was unlike any the students had ever visited. Though most of the animals had plenty of space, the zoo itself was in

crumbles, piles of donkey heads were stashed in the corner of the lion's den and fences/barriers were rusting away. After going to the zoo, we went back to the IER to visit Belco and another colleague at his house. He served us juice, tea, and aloko (fried plantains). It was again a great experience to see another Malian's home. Then, we went to Amandine for dinner and arrived at the airport about 9:00 p.m. Belco met us there and we said goodbye.

The flight was on time! A good end to a great trip.

## **7.0. List of Persons Met**

(complete name with correct spelling, their title, organization, physical address, phone, e-mail)

These are the people met specific to the business team:

Belco Tamboura, Mali Agri-business center

Aissata Traore, Mali Agri-business center

Adama Berthe, Mali Agri-business center

Filiba Bissan (IPR student from Mali)

Illiassou Mahomone (IPR student from Niger)

Ouzman Fomba, marketing director for Coprakazan

Soulymane Traore, sales agent for Coprakazan

## **8.0. Visit-specific Appendices**

For example tables, figures, photos (an extensive photo documentation is requested) maps, descriptions of village, collaborators information, interview questions (survey instruments), research protocols.

**Appendix 1 – Set of pictures of diseased plants for various potato diseases**

**Appendix 2 – Fiche de le pour Inspection (table to document dates and types of inspection of plants)**

**Appendix 3 – Les Bonnes Pratiques (list of best practices for planting, growing and inspecting seed potatoes)**

**Appendix 4 – Business Plan (printout from software)**

**Appendix 5 – Shea Butter Import Report**

**Appendix 6 – Business Students (profiles and reflections)**



## **9.0. Professional items (biological samples, equipment, supplies) given and received.**

For example, did you bring posters, flash disks, did you receive samples of wax, soil, neem kernel extract.

Items taken to Mali and left with various people:

1. Business Plan Pro software given to Belco Tamboura for the development of the Mali Agri-business Center's business plan
2. Various supplies to communicate with villagers in Borko (colored markers, flip chart paper, pens, other paper)
3. Solar oven given to the village of Borko

Please also include a header (using the header function) with the date of the draft and the location of the file and name of the file. For the header use font size 8.

A draft must be completed before leaving the country. The electronic version (may not include all Appendices) is given to Belco Tamboura (leader of the Mali Agribusiness Entrepreneurial Incubator Center), Dr. Kadiatou Gamby and the US project director (Dr. Florence Dunkel) and your institution's P.I. for the project you are on if it is different from yourself. A hard copy of the Executive Summary is given to USAID-Mali Accelerated Economic Growth Group (AEG).

These reports will be placed on our project website and specifically e-mailed to each project leader at each institution in our project.

**Student Journals:** In addition to the trip report, each student is required to keep a daily log of reflections, cultural observations. Copies of these will be turned in with the trip report.