



Peace Corps Success Story Community Economic Development



Paula Olson

**Small Enterprise Development
Mali 2010-2012**

EDUCATION: B.A. International Affairs and French,
University of Mary Washington

NOTABLE PROJECTS: Paula was the first volunteer in her village in over 20 years- she was also the first female and volunteer of color her community had ever seen. Paula worked with a women's association to create a system of savings and microloans in an area where acquiring capital for small business is scarce/ non-existent, especially for women. Paula also helped build programming for the towns new library- creating a lending system, teaching English, running Youth educational programs in nutrition and Microsoft Word and Excel computer classes in French.

CAREER/SKILLS GAINED: During my time at Peace Corps, I learned that giving yourself as fully as you can to the experience opens you to a new way of critical thinking and a rich perspective. Through my service I learned that being of value to one's community or future career is a balance of diligent study and real world experience. It is through this experience that I am currently working at the International Monetary Fund.

WHY DO PEACE CORPS: All I wanted to do as a child is serve others. As a female African American with heritage in West Africa (Cameroonian-American), I also always wanted to "Go Back." Peace Corps not only gave me the opportunity to grow and connect with my global community, grow as a person and professionally through leadership opportunities, but it allowed me an opportunity to explore the richness of my cultural heritage and be embraced by a new family."



"We can all do small things with Great Love"



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