

# Peace Corps/Burkina Faso

1995-2017 LEGACY BOOK







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THE DIRECTOR OF THE PEACE CORPS  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

## **Statement from Peace Corps Director Jody K. Olsen**

The Peace Corps has had a long history with Burkina Faso dating back to 1967 when the first Volunteers arrived in the country. With more than 2,100 Volunteers having served there, the Peace Corps has enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship with the people of Burkina. Volunteers have had the privilege of experiencing the colorful, dynamic, and welcoming country and the incredible people that live there. Volunteers and their communities have not only built a better mutual understanding on the part of Burkinabe and Americans, but also in helping eradicate Guinea worm from the country, support community members in developing thriving income generating activities, and educating the youngest generation from early childhood through high school.

None of this would have been possible without all of those that have supported the Peace Corps program. I want to give my heartfelt thanks to all of the communities and families that have welcomed our Volunteers into their home and hearts, by sharing meals, exchanging stories under the shade of mango trees, and providing true Burkinabe hospitality. My gratitude goes to the Peace Corps staff in Burkina Faso who demonstrated their professionalism and love of their country while supporting and providing care to our Volunteers. The Returned Peace Corps Volunteers served hand in hand with families and communities to promote peace, strengthen friendships and empower Burkinabe in the best tradition of Peace Corps.

This legacy book acknowledges the wonderful contribution of the thousands of Volunteers who now call Burkina 'home.' To all of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and the Burkinabe that supported them in their service, thank you for your hard work, kindness, and commitment to the goals of Peace Corps.

Respectfully,

Jody K. Olsen  
Director





## **Statement from U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso Andrew R. Young**

I am pleased to contribute to this Legacy Book that details some of the exceptional service of Peace Corps Volunteers to the social and economic development in Burkina Faso. Through their efforts to improve community health, strengthen educational outcomes, and build local capacities for agricultural transformation and income generation, Peace Corps supports the mission of the United States Government in Burkina Faso through encouraging sustainable development at the grass roots level. As Burkinabe communities welcomed Peace Corps Volunteers into their homes and hearts, Volunteers were also able to share the customs and values that epitomize the spirit of America.

The Peace Corps sent Volunteers to all corners of the country to teach students in the most remote regions; assist local residents to decrease the incidence of illnesses such as guinea worm, HIV/AIDS, and malaria; and engage youth, women, and men to raise household incomes and reduce poverty. Volunteers integrated into their host communities and spoke the language of their families while immersing themselves in local traditions and cultures. By sharing ideas and cultural practices, Volunteers consistently challenged media stereotypes about what it means to be American: Volunteers have come from a variety of backgrounds and identities. This diversity is one of the great strengths of our country. By their words and actions, Volunteers constantly reminded us of our common humanity and demonstrated that we are always stronger together than we are alone.

This book highlights some of the achievements made by communities through their ongoing collaboration with Volunteers. As stated repeatedly in this book and elsewhere, Volunteers are the first to credit their counterparts and communities for the success of their interventions. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the government and people of Burkina Faso for keeping our Volunteers safe and secure, for sharing their cultures and beliefs, and for providing the hospitality that is the cornerstone of Burkinabe society. I would also like to thank the Burkinabé and American staff for providing the training, language skills, and cross-cultural insight that allowed volunteers to fit so seamlessly into their surroundings and make such personal impacts on their communities.

As I saw throughout my travels in Burkina Faso and elsewhere, Peace Corps Volunteers among the best “ambassadors” that America has to offer. It takes an incredible individual to leave the comforts and security of their homes, travel thousands of kilometers to an unknown country, dive headfirst into a different culture, and devote over two years of your life to a country and people that they may have only heard of in passing. Volunteers made this commitment following the call of President Kennedy who pledged more than 57 years ago to promote world peace and progress through the creation of the Peace Corps. That same president famously inspired us with the phrase, “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” As you read this book, I hope that you enjoy discovering the contributions of Peace Corps Volunteers to Burkinabe society as much as I did, that you find inspiration on how we can contribute to the development of our nations, and look forward to that day when Volunteers will once again serve in Burkina Faso.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Young".

Andrew R. Young



### **Statement from Acting Country Director U.S. Peace Corps/Burkina Faso Julien Denakpo**

I am thankful for the extraordinary efforts Volunteers have demonstrated over the past 43 years in supporting the Peace Corps program in Burkina Faso.

On December 11, 2017 the Peace Corps suspended its program in Burkina Faso for security reasons. Since reopening the office in 1995, significant achievements were made that contributed to the development of Burkina Faso. These contributions include a variety of success stories that are worth sharing, not only to Peace Corps, but to the wider public at large.

We must recall more especially the various distinctions awarded to us by the Government of Burkina Faso among others, the Ordre du Merite, given to Peace Corps in 2012 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This award is a testimony of the work of the Peace Corps, and exemplifies the commitment of Peace Corps Volunteers to the communities that they most graciously served. It's particularly gratifying to use this opportunity to offer my warm congratulations to the Peace Corps Volunteers. Your efforts to help other people understand the diversity, the depth and the quality of the American culture speak to the ideals that have guided the Peace Corps since its inception in 1961. Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Burkina Faso, I sincerely thank you for your passion and cooperation over the years.

As always, I am grateful for the hard work and dedication of the local staff of the Peace Corps Burkina Faso. In particular, I would like to thank the Director of Programming and Training and staff of the program unit for their efforts in producing this legacy book.

As we close this current chapter of Peace Corps in the country, I want to personally thank everyone for their support for the Peace Corps as we undertook our critical mission “to build world peace and friendship” in Burkina Faso. It has been a great honor for me to serve alongside fabulous people who carried out our important work in this beautiful country.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and strokes, representing the name Julien Denakpo.

**Julien Denakpo**

## History of the Peace Corps in Burkina Faso

The Peace Corps is an agency of the United States Government. The Peace Corps entered Burkina Faso, then called Upper Volta, in 1967 and operated uninterrupted for 21 years. Major projects during that period included forestry extension, young farmer education, small enterprise development, secondary education (math, science, and English language), water well construction, agricultural and environmental extension, arts and crafts, basketball coaching, and parks development. In 1987 the Peace Corps program was suspended due to local political changes, but in 1995 the new government requested the re-establishment of the program. The program was relaunched with a group of 17 Public Health Volunteers, who began their service in Burkina Faso in December 1995. Then Peace Corps operated until the evacuation of its Volunteers in September 2017 with 124 Volunteers including three Peace Corps Response Volunteers serving in Burkina Faso. They were working in the areas of Community Health, Community Economic Development (CED), and Education. In total, over 2,100 Volunteers have served in Burkina Faso since Peace Corps first opened its program in 1967. Volunteers in Burkina Faso were placed within host communities in 12 Regions throughout the country and served for two years working alongside counterparts developing grassroots solutions to local needs. In their primary sector of intervention, small projects were implemented within the assigned sites with community initiation and leadership, with emphasis laid on sustainability.

## Why this legacy book?

In September 2017, Peace Corps evacuated 124 Volunteers from Burkina Faso due to ongoing security concerns. Subsequently, the program was formally suspended in December 2017. Across the decades that have spanned the two periods of Peace Corps contributions to socio-economic development in the country (1967-87; 1995-2017), thousands of Peace Corps Volunteers have worked with their local counterparts in hundreds of host communities throughout the country to promote the goals of Peace Corps: namely, 1) to help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women; 2) to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples they served; and 3) to help promote a better understanding of the peoples of other countries on the part of Americans. As Peace Corps closes the current chapter of its work in Burkina Faso, there is a need to reflect on some of our collaborations with local communities and the accomplishments that were jointly created. Thus the purpose of this "Legacy Book" is to select a sample of the work undertaken in communities throughout the country and highlight some of the best practices observed. These practices are consistent with the aforementioned objectives of Peace Corps and reflect the primary role of Volunteers as catalysts: e.g. to strengthen the capacities of communities to successfully address local development challenges.

No amount of external assistance (human, financial or otherwise) can successfully replace the desire and will of the people themselves to change their conditions for the better. By recording the results of Volunteer and community collaboration across Burkina, the legacy book aims to show that in the case of Peace Corps/Burkina Faso, cross-cultural collaboration coupled with local inspiration, imaginative partnerships and desire can indeed turn dreams into realities. In addition to strengthening capacity and building skills, Peace Corps is also founded on the principles of building world peace and friendship through person to person dialogues and exchanges. This book will also attempt to highlight the impact of the Peace Corps experience on local Burkinabe and the Volunteers themselves. Irrespective of class, creed, race or gender we are one species that shares one planet, and as any Burkina Volunteer will attest, there is much more that unites us than divides us. Obviously no one document can claim to accurately reflect the thousands of individual stories and experiences gained through Peace Corps' long presence in Burkina Faso. However this work aims in all humility to tell some of the stories of Peace Corps Volunteers, staff, local beneficiaries and the communities they serve.



## II. Interventions in Burkina Faso

Peace Corps/Burkina Faso was operating with three programmatic sectors at the time of the 2017 Suspension: Community Health, Community Economic Development and Education.



### Community Health

The Community Health program was based on active participation of stakeholders from the Ministry of Health, regional and local health officials, community representatives, NGO partners, and Peace Corps Volunteers. The project was designed to respond to the country's health needs and priorities, including HIV/AIDS prevention; reduction of teen pregnancies; nutrition promotion; water sanitation and hygiene improvement; promotion of family planning; and malaria prevention. The sustainability of project activities is enhanced through capacity building of health care providers to improve the health status of the population, particularly among mothers and children under five years old. Community Health Volunteers' primarily work in close collaboration with local health clinic staff to raise awareness on topics such as maternal and child health, malaria, hygiene, nutrition, family planning, and HIV/AIDS for people living in their communities.

**The Community Health program aimed to achieve three goals:**

- Promote sustainability
- Foster improved maternal, neonatal, and child health
- Promote healthy living





### Recent Achievements of the Community Health program 2014-2016

	2014	2015	2016	Total for 2014-2016
Individuals trained to conduct behavior change interventions in at least one of the following areas: maternal and child health, healthy living.	843	488	577	1,908
Individuals trained on proper water sanitation and hygiene Activities including hand washing station and diarrhea and rehydration treatment	6,565	6,995	2,470	16,030
Individuals receiving BCC/IEC outreach promoting malaria prevention care seeking	5,705	3,547	4,737	13,988
Population reached with individuals or small group education on essential maternal care services	1,400	478	596	2,474
Number of Peace Corps Volunteers	72	49	26	147
Number of sites	72	49	26	147

# Community Economic Development (CED)



**Agricultural transformation in action: Soybeans into kebabs, fried dough, sandwiches, and gonré (a local dish)**

The CED program, initiated in October 2013, evolved out of the Developing Agriculture, Environment and Business Abilities (DABA) project. After conducting needs assessment with stakeholders at all levels (community members, government partners, NGOs), it became evident that the project needed to be refocused on small scale income generating activities and business management, which would contribute to the improvement of household incomes and food security. The CED project was developed to support rural, small scale farming groups and individuals in improving and sustaining their agriculture-based enterprises. CED Volunteers help farmers increase their business skills and knowledge in an effort to develop profitable and sustainable income-generating activities such as gardens, woodlots, animal husbandry, and transformation of post-harvest crops into market products.

## **The Community Economic Development program aimed to achieve two goals:**

- Improve business efficiencies and profitability for agricultural-based organizations
- Increase smallholder farmer household income

## **Recent Achievements of the Community Economic Development program 2014-2016**

	2014	2015	2016	Total for 2014-2016
Individual trained in business development including income generation	1,073	1,491	1,100	3,664
Individual trained in financial literacy	58	440	242	740
Individuals who have received USG supported short term agricultural sector productivity or food security training	2,712	1,069	1,143	4,924
Number of PCVs	20	11	23	54
Number of sites	20	11	23	54



The Education program was developed in 1997, in response to a request for assistance from the Burkinabè government, and aligns with the educational priorities of the country. In 2012, the government of Burkina Faso established a ten-year education strategy designed to improve access to and quality of education, increase the number of preschools, and to promote bilingual education with a focus on local language in the earlier school years, and progressive implementation of English teaching in primary schools. As a result, the Education Project refocused its activities in 2013 to include early childhood education, childhood literacy, and TEFL. Math and Science teaching had been phased out in 2015, but following a request from government, was re-introduced in 2017. Education Volunteers used participatory student-centered approaches to teach English at junior-high school level and preschool level. School programs such as clubs, tutoring, and camps that generate awareness on life-skills and gender equality were also facilitated by volunteers.

**The Education program aimed to achieve three goals:**

- Increase student success
- Improve teaching
- Improve the school community



## Recent Achievements of the Education program 2014-2016

	2014	2015	2016	Total for 2014-2016
Preschool students taught by PCVs	789	219	668	1,676
Math and science students taught by PCVs	1,801	3,785	1,068	6,654
English students taught by PCVs	1,626	3,481	2,413	7,520
Students who participate in computer literacy classes	616	1,119	199	1,934
Number of PCVs	41	49	54	144
Number of sites	41	49	54	144





# III. Making A Difference!

Peace Corps Volunteers work with individuals, government agencies and civil society organizations to contribute to positive and sustainable change in their host villages. In close collaboration with local authorities and community leaders, Volunteers conduct needs assessments that inform them of the community's development priorities and then they work with various stakeholders to provide local solutions for local challenges. Through helping to empower women and men, boys and girls in remote and disadvantaged areas, generations of Volunteers have left an indelible mark on the lives of countless Burkinabé. The following section provides a glimpse into some of the community driven development interventions facilitated by PCVs in Burkina Faso. This is not intended to provide an overview of all of the work conducted by Volunteers, but merely to illustrate the contributions (large and small) of PCVs to their communities.

## Peace Corps' Contribution to Eliminating Guinea Worm in Burkina Faso



### Zones of Influence

Six administrative regions (Sahel, North, North Central, Cascades, South East, Center south).

### Project summary

Implemented at the request of Ministry of Health in 1998, the Guinea worm eradication project allowed Peace Corps Volunteers to work with their communities and with various partners such as The Carter Center, UNICEF and WHO to revitalize the activities of the Guinea Worm Eradication Program.

### Domain of intervention

Control of neglected tropical diseases and strengthening capacity of community health workers.

## Beneficiaries

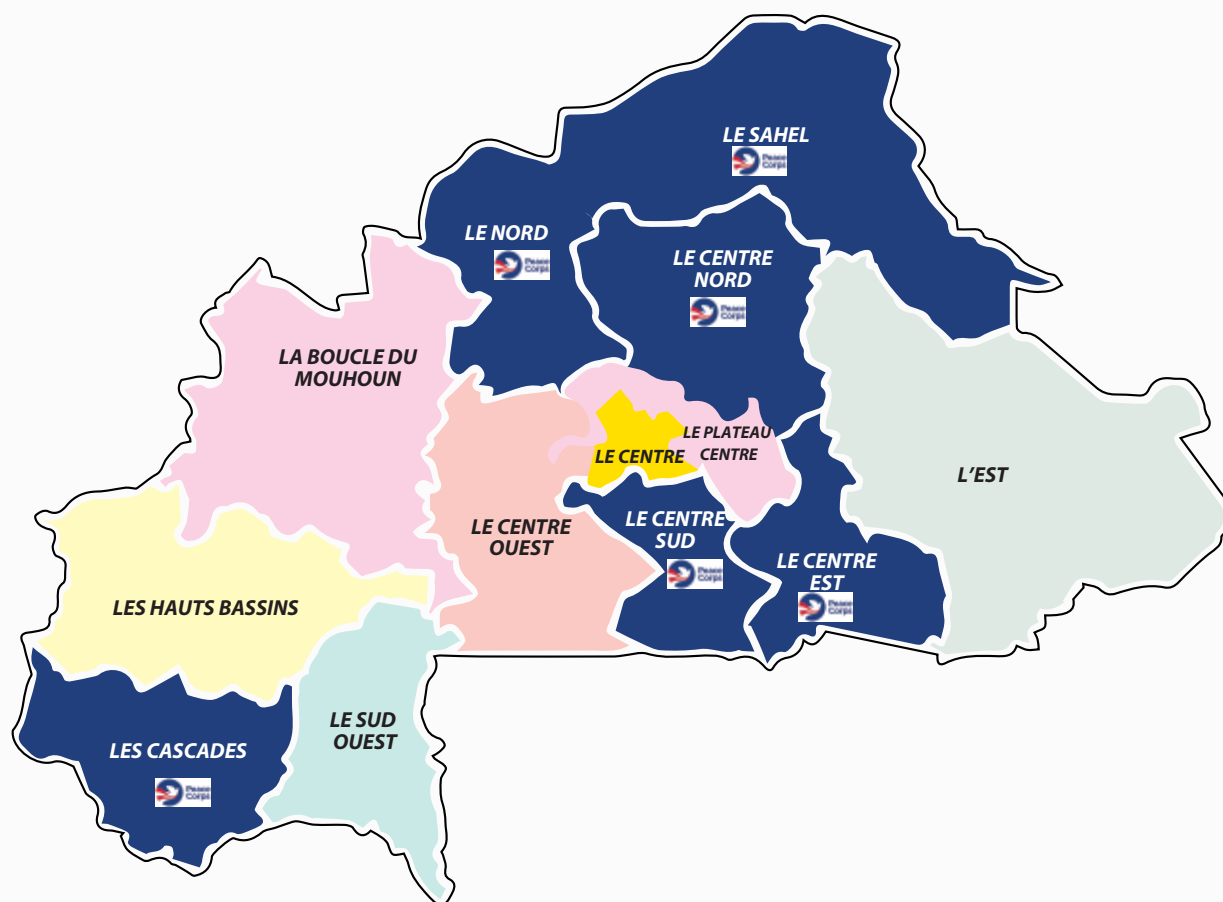
The population of these six regions was roughly 5,150,281 inhabitants in 2006.

## Community resource persons

Natéwendé Bamogo, Community health focal point for the Kaya health district

Raphael Ouedraogo, Former PCV counterpart in Pissila

## Health sector PCVs in regions affected by Guinea worm



## Context and background information

In 1998, Burkina Faso had the fifth highest number of Guinea worm cases in the world. There were more than 211 endemic villages, which constituted 3% of the total number of cases reported annually worldwide. In 1999, 23 new volunteers were assigned in endemic sites to contribute to the Guinea Worm Eradication Program activities. From that time to 2006, all Volunteers were trained in Guinea worm disease prevention. Peace Corps Volunteers were a critical community-based player in Guinea worm disease prevention by working with the national and local counterparts on epidemiological surveillance, community health education and installation of new sources of potable water.

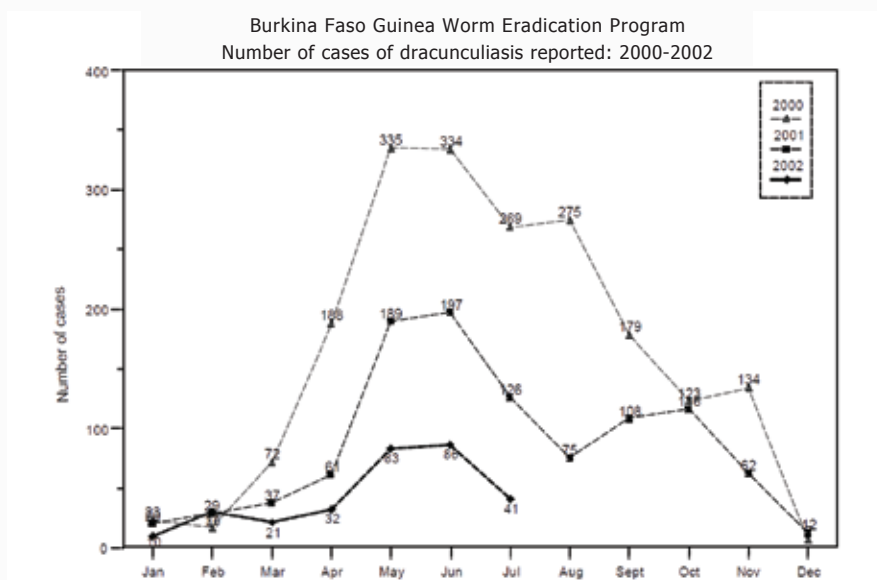
Guinea worm disease or Dracunculiasis is a crippling parasitic disease caused by infection with Guinea worm also called *Dracunculus medinensis*, a long thread-like worm. The infection is transmitted when people drink water contaminated with parasite-infected water fleas. Although the disease is very painful and invalidating, fatalities are rare and complications usually only occur in one percent of the cases. The most important consequences of Guinea worm are social and economic. The disease prevent people from cultivating the crops. The crippling pain leaves victims unable to work or attend school, sometimes for months, until the worms completely emerge from the body. It also isolates and ostracizes the sufferers from their communities.

### Worm Weeks: the power of the grassroots campaign

The Worm Weeks aimed at eradicating the guinea worm disease in endemic villages through recreational and motivational activities. Volunteers would spend a week in a site and during that time, along with communities and the local health clinic teams, they would saturate villagers with information on the Guinea worm life cycle, prevention methods of guinea worm disease, distribution and instruction on the proper use of water filters. It was also an opportunity to improve and update surveillance data on guinea worm disease. In 2000, the first “Worm Week” was launched in Pissila and the neighboring village of Soubeira. During this first campaign, 6000 villagers were sensitized and 3000 water filters were distributed. 35 Peace Corps Volunteers and their counterparts spread the messages and methods of Guinea worm disease prevention before the rainy season. After this first success, Peace Corps Volunteers organized several worm weeks in all the endemic villages with support from the Guinea Worm Eradication Program, UNICEF and the Carter Center’s Global 2000 program.

### Achievements

In 2002, Peace Corps Volunteers assisted nine endemic health districts to implement Worm Weeks in 18 villages that focused on the proper use of water filters, conducting census of households, and organizing health education events. This ensured that villages at risk acquired the knowledge and skills to filter their drinking water properly. These initiatives combined with other activities conducted by the Guinea Worm Eradication Program demonstrated quick results. Burkina Faso has achieved a substantial reduction of -54% in the number of cases of dracunculiasis reported in 2002 (302), compared to the 659 cases reported during the first seven months of 2001 (figure 1 below).



In 2004, Djibo had the highest number of Guinea worm cases in all of Burkina—20 out of 58 nationwide. The campaign was conducted by Guinea Worm Eradication Program in collaboration with Peace Corps and Global 2000. Six PCVs collaborated with the district staff, the Global 2000 consultant, and forty-two village volunteers to educate 4,329 people in Guinea worm prevention and trained them to use the 4,871 water filters that were distributed in total. They reached an additional 1,200 people during the nightly education activities.

## Empowering the local expertise: The most sustainable way to achieve the Guinea worm elimination

Raphael Ouedraogo was the Peace Corps Volunteers' community counterpart from 1996 to 2001. He was living in Pissila, an endemic area of North Central Region. He was 26 when he met the first Volunteer. His story illustrates how the Peace Corps Guinea worm eradication project was able to have sustainable results after the departure of the volunteer assigned in endemic areas.



Raphael (recent picture)

*"I have worked with five Peace Corps Volunteers in Pissila. A large part of our activities were focused on guinea worm disease prevention. At beginning, I was just a translator during the community outreach activities. But little by little and thanks to the training I have received, I became more confident and I started to play a more active role. I conducted several home visits to detect the new cases and to explain how to use the water filters with the volunteers. We visited all the villages in Pissila area, biking sometimes more than 40 km along with the volunteers on bad roads to visit some remote sites. After the departure of the last volunteer Lisa Rotondo in 2011, I was selected by health district and Global 2000 as 'Agent Renfort vers de Guinée'. I covered five health clinics and 21 villages. My role was to conduct health education on guinea worm, new cases surveillance and data collection.*



Raphael doing health education

*Each month, with a motorbike given by the program, I would travel more than 1,000 km for my job. I really enjoyed it. In 2004, after several quiet months, I discovered two new cases in Riboulou-Wemtenga a small remote village. I immediately notified the chief nurse of Lebda health clinic. He confirmed my diagnostic and promptly informed the health district of Kaya. With the support of the national program, we were able to stop the transmission. In 2007, I stopped my activities when the disease disappeared in our area. Unfortunately, I have never completed my elementary school thus I am grateful and proud because the volunteers taught me to be useful for my family and my country. "* - Raphael Ouedraogo



## Testimonies

*"I know what guinea worm disease means. I have been infected when I was a child and I know how humiliating and painful this disease is. As a head nurse at Pissila health center I have worked with several Peace Corps volunteers. I was also the supervisor of Raphael Ouedraogo. The Peace Corps Volunteers were really involved in guinea worm eradication. I was part of the worm weeks and we have reached thousands of people in remote areas. Eradication of Guinea worm was a fantastic adventure and Peace Corps volunteers played a critical role to achieve this result." - Natéwendé Bamogo*



Dr. Claude Millogo, Associate Peace Corps Director for Health (1996 -2016)

*"It is not possible to talk about the Peace Corps in Burkina Faso without talking about its role in eradicating the Guinea worm disease. Worm Weeks were created by the Peace Corps Volunteers. When the Ministry of Health asked us to get involved in the fight against the Guinea worm, I was impressed by the volunteers' enthusiasm. Their dedication to visit all the remote areas. Their approach was so different. They preferred working from the beginning with community health workers. They trained them so well that the work continued even in their absence. The example of Raphael Ouedraogo among many others shows what has been done for the sustainability of the program. The Peace Corps worked closely with the Ministry of Health. The management team included all the volunteers from other sectors in the Guinea worm task force. The partnership with the National Program, the health districts, the Carter Center and UNICEF was very fruitful. The results were very encouraging as it boosted the enthusiasm of Peace Corps volunteers to persevere despite the obstacles." - Dr. Claude Millogo*



Lisa Rotondo, RPCV Pissila 1999-2001 with Raphael

*"Thanks to Dr. Claude, I also had the opportunity to organize Guinea worm weeks throughout the Sanmatenga and in Ouahigouya as well as attend a global Guinea worm eradication meeting in Cotonou where I engaged with colleagues at CDC, Carter Center, WHO, etc. These are my colleagues to this day in my work fighting Neglected Tropical Diseases. Again, my career was launched from my Peace Corps experience, learning about the life of an 'agent renfort' or an "ICP". This knowledge can't be gained in school and makes me a more sympathetic and strategic public health professional now. I am still in close contact with Dr. Sankara (Guinea worm eradication program coordinator)). He is now at the World Health Organization in Geneva. He is the head of the Guinea worm eradication effort there so I think the Burkina Faso experience in Guinea worm eradication is now leading the world! My entire career has been dedicated to the elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases (like Guinea worm) and I am grateful for the 'toughest job I'll ever love' for giving me these amazing opportunities.*

*During my Peace Corps volunteer service in Burkina, I never saw one person living with Guinea worm in Pissila. It was thanks to the amazing efforts of the PCVs, Raphael, Bamogo, and the others who came before me that there were no cases in Pissila's catchment area from 2001-2003 (and beyond!). During my PC service, I was engaged in active disease surveillance, biking to nearby villages to make sure they had filters during the rainy season and asking about possible cases. Raphael was certainly proud and happy when we talked with the community health workers in Pissila's health catchment area and heard "yiini ka be!" (There's no Guinea worm)."* - RPCV Lisa Rotondo



Dr. Dieudonne Sankara was the coordinator of Burkina Faso national guinea worm control program from 2000 to 2005. He is currently the global team leader for guinea worm eradication at the World Health Organization in Geneva (Switzerland).

*“The elimination of guinea worm is an important achievement for Burkina Faso. It was the second disease to have been officially eliminated in this country after smallpox. This elimination has been certified by WHO. The Peace Corps contributed significantly to accomplishing this elimination more quickly than it otherwise would have been. The contribution of the Peace Corps was multifaceted.*

*The collaboration between the national program and the Peace Corps was fruitful. Each year as needed, we asked for the assignment of volunteers to endemic villages. We already had agents on the ground but human resources were lacking. A proverb from home says that only one finger can pick up flour. Assigned volunteers were important for the health center. State-assigned agents had to deal with many other primary health care services. The volunteers were really the link between the communities on the ground and the health teams at the clinics. They took part in the routine activities of the program but also they did a lot of work in social mobilization. Social mobilization is one of the most effective weapons against Guinea worm. There is no vaccine or cure for this disease. This social mobilization was done through Guinea worm weeks. Peace Corps worked with the National Program to develop the norms and protocols for the organization of social mobilization days. The volunteers also used their expertise beyond the borders of Burkina Faso. Even today, RPCVs from Burkina Faso are providing their technical assistance to achieve the eradication goal in the world. Peace Corps Volunteers and health workers were the linchpin of Guinea worm control in Burkina Faso with the support of UNICEF, WHO and the Carter Center.” - Dr. Dieudonne Sankara*

## Conclusion

The cases declined in the country from 1,956 cases in 2000 to only 24 in 2005. Despite, many obstacles such as imported cases from neighboring countries, the country reported its last case of Guinea worm disease in Tondia-Kangue village in November 2006. The World Health Organization certified Burkina Faso free of the disease in 2011.

# The Computer Lab at Lycée Municipal de Koudougou

## Zones of influence

Koudougou (Boulkiemde Province, Central-West region)

## Project summary

This project allowed some reparations in the structure of the library and computer lab and the installation of ten computers (five for the computer lab; five for the library) and two printers for the benefit of the Lycée Municipal of Koudougou (LMK) and the community. Furthermore, these new resources were used to teach technological literacy. This curriculum was developed by the Volunteer and the counterpart and had three modules. The first two focused on Microsoft programs and the Internet, and the third on photo and video editing, and computer repair. The project focused on three objectives: 1) Increased technological literacy within the high school; 2) Greater motivation for students to do research and study; and 3) Variety in lesson structures because of available new resources. Moreover, the Volunteer and his counterpart planned to set up a cyber café and computer repair center to be used in the future during school breaks. The reason is to generate revenue for the school community and give interested students the opportunity to apply lessons they have learned in the third stage of the curriculum.

## Domain of intervention

The project addressed capacity building in computer science, practice and maintenance for both students and teachers

## Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of this intervention were students, teachers, school administration, Students Parents' Association (APE) and the community living around the school.

## PCVs assigned to site

PCV Ethan Heppner (2012-2014)

PCV Galen Hoft (2014-2016)

## Community resource persons

Jocelin Tuina, Galen's counterpart

Mahamoudou Ouaedraogo, School Principal

Tiémoko Ouako, Parent's Association President



## Project presentation

Lycée Municipal de Koudougou (LMK) has more than 3,000 students each year. Also, it employs more than 40 teachers. Jocelin Tuina, the counterpart of Volunteer Galen Hoft had previously worked with a first Peace Corps Volunteer, Ethan Hepner, who was living in Koudougou and working also on computer project at a different school called Lycée Provincial de Koudougou. Witnessing the impact this had at LPK, the volunteer Galen and his counterpart have discussed about implementing a computer project at LMK. Koudougou is a progressive and intellectual town; so, a computer lab, with increased technological literacy, is essential.

This computer lab project perfectly represents the first goal of Peace Corps, specifically in Burkina Faso: to help Burkinabé in meeting their needs for trained men and women. The community was the driving factor behind this project and the leaders were exceptionally motivated, disciplined, and, most importantly, tenacious in making sure that it was completed efficiently and on time.

## Achievements

The PTA and school administration were responsible for project functionality. Twenty computers were effectively installed and the renovation on the general structures of the buildings minimized the risks of thefts. A project committee was established to supervise computer usage in both areas and teach computer literacy and a technologically-centered curriculum was drafted to increase the capacity of both students and the staff. Lessons in all essential Microsoft programs (such as Word, PowerPoint, and Excel) as well as the internet were provided to students (approximately 400 students attending grades 10 and 11). At least 100 students (aged from 18 to 22 years) successfully used basic Microsoft programs (i.e. Word, PowerPoint, etc.) and the internet for educational purposes.

Technical support was provided by the Volunteer, counterpart, school director and other faculty provided their services to establish electrical connections, install outlets and facilitate internet access. Students and committee members trained on computer repair were able to perform general upkeep on all computers to ensure long-standing and efficient usage. Lycee Municipal of Koudougou community was able to sustain these benefits because it is the driving force behind this project. The counterpart has already helped to arrange a similar project at the Lycée Provincial of Koudougou. The LMK's Parents' Association also contributed to the project through donating 1,000,000 CFA (about \$1,960). The computer lab is open to the surrounding community in order to extend this privilege to others while also generating additional incomes to ensure sustainability.

## Volunteer's Success Story

*"Since the beginning of my service, my community have expressed their desire and need for a computer lab. Other schools in the area had hosted Peace Corps Volunteers in the past who helped their respective communities arrange such a space, so my counterpart, administration, and parents' association were eager to meet the modern standard for education. This motivation was reflected in the work put in not only by those who were directly involved in the gestation of the computer labs, but also with outlying members of the community who volunteered their time for various tasks.*

*We realized that there was still technical work, such as installing outlets and connecting electricity and internet to each building that would be left unfinished. Consequently, we collected a group of students and teachers to help us with the remaining jobs. The resulting tenacity shown by all those involved makes me proud and thankful to have been able to participate in this project. For more than two weeks, the group worked long hours, during the hottest part of the day, to finish this project on time. Students and professors drilled, connected, and installed every outlet, wire, and computer. The larger student body, administration, and parents association were so pleased with our work that they will be holding a ceremony celebrating the completion of the project and naming the students' lab after me. I am incredibly moved by this gesture, and cannot express the importance of the lessons I learned from this experience and how proud I am to have been a part of such an event." - RPCV Galen Hoft*



Galen posing with some students



Galen posing with some students

*"After the implementation of the computer lab at the high school of Koudougou 'Lycée Municipal', the school community decided to name the computer lab after PCV Galen Hoft. The computer lab helped provided 10 computers for the high school. The school also benefited of ten other computers from a RPCV project, Steve Amodio. The project is implemented and community is taking the full leadership of the computer lab with a strong committee composed of teachers, students and parents 'association. Congratulations Galen for the good work!" - Mamadou Ouedraogo*

## Beyond Word, Excel, and Power Point: Computer Maintenance and IT Teacher Training

*"Nine teachers in Koudougou entered into a training program for computer service and repairs. Once the training program was up and running, Ethan and his counterparts expanded the program by getting more advanced students involved as Teaching Assistants (TAs). Each teacher in training has two TAs to help them out in class, explaining the more difficult and complex concepts to students. These TAs have set hours for maintenance and cleaning of the computers, and at any other time they are available to help with repairs. This computer-servicing program creates revenue that helps finance the computer lab. The teachers and students have learned that you sometimes have to buck conventional wisdom because the new way of doing things is more effective. Knowledge is important, but what is most important is knowing how to ask the right questions. With a computer, sometimes it is obvious what to do, or sometimes you must do specific research and ask a specific question (in French and in English). Ethan also incorporated English into his trainings, as there are so many more technology resources available in English. The computer training and service and repairs program has provided professional training for teachers and students that will serve them well in their careers, as developed an information technology resource base for the community, and brings in local revenue to ensure these beneficial services continue to be available for the long-term. " - RPCV Ethan Heppner*



PCV Ethan Heppner working demonstrating computer maintenance



Students trained by their peers



Students working on a computer

## Conclusion

This computer lab project is a very good example of sustainability, because it was proposed by the LMK community and not by the Volunteer. In fact, the counterpart, who had worked on a similar project at a different school, the Principal and other members of the community advisory committee have all expressed a great need for more technological resources. Also, other teachers have expressed the desire to learn more about computer usage, making their eventual participation in this project inevitable. The key lessons learned are the engagement of the LMK community to implement the project and their determination to make it successful. Also, by including students training to do computer repairs and by opening up the computer lab to the surrounding peoples, this project is on a good way of promising practices.

# **Raising Household Incomes Through Entrepreneurship: Tinga Finditi and the annual vegetable market fair of Bougui**

## **Zones of influence**

Bougui, (Gourma Province, East Region)

## **Project summary**

The project assisted in the establishment of an annual vegetable fair that continues to be held in Bougui and addresses multiple community needs. The goals of this intervention were: 1) establish an annual vegetable fair, 2) to secure better market prices for local produce, and 3) ultimately to increase profits for farmers in the area and improve household incomes.

## **Domain of intervention**

Increased food security and household incomes and strengthening resiliency through building capacities in gardening, planning, marketing and entrepreneurship.

## **Beneficiaries**

An association of vegetable producers composed of 100 men and ten women.

## **PCV assigned to site**

PCV Henry Van Damme (2015-17)

## **Community resource persons**

Association Tinga Finditi, vegetable farmers' association of Bougui

Michel Youma, PCV Counterpart

Hamtandi Namono, active member of the project implementation

Mindiediba Namono, active member of the project implementation

## **Context and background information**

Bougui is a village of roughly 2,500 people located five kilometers east of Fada N'Gourma. The village supplies more than 70% of the vegetables sold in Fada N'Gourma, (the regional capital and fourth largest city of the country). Due to its proximity to a water source, Bougui has always had the means of producing large quantities of vegetables but was lacking in the areas of market research, market analysis, proper gardening upkeep and nurseries. Thus, the introduction of the annual vegetable festival addressed multiple community needs. Not only did the festival create an additional market for three days in the month of December, but it also created an atmosphere where gardening techniques are shared and learned. The activity helped Bougui farmers to use their existing skills and resources to increase their revenues and thereby improve household incomes.



## Achievements

The first vegetable fair was organized from the 22nd to the 24th of December, 2015. To keep the production and the fair on-going, an association called *'Tinga Finditi'* (which means *'feed the earth and the earth will feed you.'*) was created and managed by local farmers. The capacities of farmers were built; they contributed in building sustainable stands and hangars, planning, marketing, and seven trainings ranging from gardening techniques to selling strategies. The fairground is now used year-round as a weekly village market where produce will continue to be sold. Customers come from Ouagadougou and the surrounding areas of Bougui and Fada to buy vegetables directly from local farmers during the fair in December of each year. *'Tinga Finditi'* functions with local resources based on annual fees and specific fees (if applicable) paid by the members. The association is the focal point of the project with the support of the local authorities and community leaders.

## Volunteer's Success Story

*"The goals of this fair were to better secure market prices, establish an annual garden vegetable fair, and ultimately to increase profits and food security in the area. This WAFSP (West African Food Security Partnership) grant assisted in the establishment of an annual vegetable fair that will continue to be held in Bougui. The problem was that the vegetables being sold were more profitable to the intermediaries, than to the producers themselves. In an effort to empower the farmers, we created 'Tinga Finditi' and decided to begin holding annual vegetable fairs. After months of building stands and hangars, planning, marketing, and undergoing seven trainings ranging from gardening techniques to selling strategies, we held the fair from the 22nd to the 24th of December, 2015. There are improvements to be made, but we achieved our goals as many producers were able to increase their profits. The example of Mr. Koadima is illustrative of this fact. He produced nothing but spring onions this year and he approached me to participate in the fair. I signed him up and the day of the fair he showed up with a sack of spring onions. He laid out his plastic tarp, sat down with his spring onions, and placed them in individual piles to be sold for 500 FCFA (\$0.90) each. Within 45 minutes, he had sold the entire sack for 8,000 FCFA (\$15). Mr. Koadima sold ten sacks on the first day for 80,000 FCFA (\$146), eight on the second for 64,000 FCFA (\$117), and twelve on the last day for 96,000 FCFA (\$175). In total, he earned an impressive 240,000 FCFA (\$437). If he had sold the same quantity in Fada for 5,000 FCFA (\$9) a sack, he would have only earned 150,000 FCFA (\$273); his participation in the fair earned him an additional 90,000 FCFA (\$164).*

*This project not only gave a new image to the village of Bougui, as a vegetable producer par excellence in the area, but it also established new partnerships and collaborations. An example of such partnerships is the Eastern Region Agricultural Valorization project. This program committed to improve the water retention capacity of the dam as the dam currently runs dry in February. Having water through May or June would greatly increase the production potential of the village and bring about further economic growth. In summary, Bougui has great potential to increase its production and sale of vegetables. It has an ideal location on the main roads to Ouagadougou, Niger and Benin with potentially large markets for Bougui's entrepreneurial producers like Mr. Koadima." - RPCV Henry Van Damme*



The Sign Showing  
The Fairground



Some Members Of The Vegetable Producer  
With PCV Henry van Damme



The Market Fair  
In December 2015

## Conclusion

The project focused on providing resources to promote local vegetable production and raise household incomes. The West African Food Security Partnership (WAFSP) provided the funds to buy the material for the hangars, but the rest of the resources were provided by the community people, mainly the producers who put money together to finance the rest of the expenses. Beyond the annual vegetable fair, the project was able to transform the fairground to a bustling market and promote entrepreneurship that will not only benefit local residents but also consumers on the way to Ouagadougou, Fada and Niger. The lesson learned is that to really have people take ownership of a project, you need to find a balanced relationship between catalyzing the process and empowering the people. This project was initiated by the community of Bougui; this also explains their commitment and appropriation of the project.

# Solar powered lights in Bilanga Yanga: Better Education = Better Futures

## Zones of influence

Bilanga Yanga (Gnagnan province, East region)

## Project summary

The small village of Bilanga-Yanga wanted their students to access the latest technology while also providing electricity and a photocopy machine to their junior high school. The school was already equipped with lights and electrical outlets, however, there wasn't a local power source for any of the outlets to function. The goal of the project was to buy six 150 watt solar panels along with an additional six large batteries to generate and store the energy. In addition, a photocopy machine and a printer were also planned to help produce study guides, worksheets, and other documents for the student body who currently copy everything off of the blackboard. The availability of the light would give the students in Bilanga-Yanga a safe and reliable place to study after the sun goes down, which will increase their opportunities for a better education.

## Domain of intervention

This project was implemented to support quality education and school retention.

## Beneficiaries

Nine men and one woman were involved directly in the project implementation to allow 16 staff and 620 students to benefit from the solar power project.

## PCV assigned to site

PCV Christopher Rowell (2014-16)

## Community resource persons

Hamidou Lankoande, member of the parents association  
Nadinga Youlougri, counselor to the mayor

## Context and background information

This project was proposed by the community to improve the educational outcomes in their village. The lack of basic infrastructure was so great and the location of the Junior High School was too far from any additional power source, so that the school lacked electricity. Another point of concern is how crowded and poorly lit classrooms were, which created a problem for students trying to copy notes from a blackboard illuminated only by light coming through windows. Additionally, after sun down there wasn't any light for students to study, except by flashlights or headlamps (or even a place for them to go to seek additional help after school has ended). This project aimed take a giant step in a direction to foster a more realistic education and study culture in village.

## Achievements

A Project Implementation Committee (PIC) was set up to run the project and each member of the committee learned about project elaboration and implementation. A periodical meeting was held to foster team work. The PIC strengthened their capacity in team work, community meeting, procurement and installation. The equipment was purchased based on criteria for the solar powered installation and a certified technician was selected to install the equipment.

Having computers and related equipment (printer, copy machine), is one thing, and knowing how to use them appropriately is another, so PCV Christopher Rowell trained the school secretary to use the computer, the photocopier and the printer while members of the PIC were taught to maintain the solar panel system. Students were allowed to study at the school at night under the supervision of an adult. The school staff and the parents' association who invested their time and money for the completion of this project were also well aware of the importance of looking after the equipment and as long as they cover the machinery from dust and sand and clean off the solar panels twice every month, the sustainability for this project is guaranteed.

*"The parents' association is the committee in charge of looking after the solar project. In 2016, two batteries were not functioning and the parents' association bought two big batteries to keep the system functioning"* Hamidou Lankoande



Computer, printer, copy machine and light bulb functioning with batteries and solar panels

## Volunteer Success story

*"The high school in Bilanga-Yanga is much like any other rural school in Burkina Faso. Each classroom is equipped with the standard chalkboards and desks and little else. In the early morning when class begins, if the sunlight is just right, students sitting in the back might be able to see the daylight sneak through the windows to illuminate the otherwise darkened chalkboard.*

*The school office is much the same: simple. The school secretary uses a typewriter from what might have been the 19th century to slowly type up tests for each of the nine classes of the high school. Upon completion they are then passed on to the school assistant, who routinely travels the fourteen kilometers to and from the neighboring town to use their photocopy machine.*



*He repeats this journey at least four times a week, a drain on the school's finances, resources, and time. In my first official community meeting in September 2014, this was the main topic of discussion and concern. How could the Peace Corps provide a solution for the lack of infrastructure which was negatively impacting the high school? There were already lights and power outlets installed when the high school was constructed, but none were connected to a power source and were therefore useless. We decided this was our starting point: electricity.*

*A few months and meetings later, the community created a specific plan and budget for the project. Power, lights, and a photocopy machine, this was the beginning for what would turn out to be an amazing combined effort. Both the community and I went to work raising the money. Before long, every dollar of the requisite \$5,080.15 was donated from family members, friends, and former Peace Corps Volunteers. Together members of the community and I travelled to market towns, first purchasing a Cannon photocopy machine and then the six 160 watt solar panels and batteries from local vendors. Traveling nearly a hundred kilometers to our regional capital, we purchased 25 LED lightbulbs to enhance the existing lightbulb supply contributed by the community. Soon, every one of the nine classrooms received indoor lighting. All the while, local technicians worked to set-up, install, and wire the solar panels and batteries to provide electricity to not only the lightbulbs but the newly bought photocopy machine. After the installation was completed the impact was immediately felt. No longer were regular trips to the neighboring village necessary, and photocopies of tests, study guides, and other school. Finally, all purchased items for the project ran under budget, so with the extra money available a brand new Toshiba laptop computer including an HP printer were purchased and installed in the secretary's office, replacing the out of date typewriter. The high school in Bilanga-Yanga is now fully powered, lit, and equipped with 21st century technology. A true success story for not only the high school and the community, but for the United States and Peace Corps as well. This project wasn't difficult because my community was so helpful. Everything went so smoothly, I wish all Volunteers could have a village and a project experience like I had." - RPCV Christopher Rowell*



Solar batteries and wiring, and solar panels

## Conclusion

Relying on the available local resource is a big step toward implementing a project. Burkina Faso being rich in sun, let's take the opportunity to use this resource to reduce the challenges the rural schools are facing. Also, projects involving equipment supplies and installation are seen as non-sustainable projects due to the risk of the material being stolen. Knowing the risk, it is very important to plan ahead by working in a committee to clarify the risk and request each member's engagement and transparency. Considering the committee in the leading role of the project operation and putting in place a system of control of the material can make the difference in the project sustainability.

# Improving Household Food Security and Incomes in Nakaba

## Zones of influence

Nakaba (Kouritenga Province, Central-East region)

## Project summary

This intervention provided Nakaba Women's Gardening Collective (NWGC) with the appropriate materials and knowledge to improve and secure small household gardens. The activities included purchasing materials for durable garden enclosures, training the association members on installation and maintenance. The women association NWGC was responsible for monitoring progress and sustainability, ensuring the fences are appropriately installed and well kept. The community contributed with the land and water access, transportation of materials, labor for fencing installation and some locally available materials such as sand and aggregate. Local gardening experts were available to train the population on necessary gardening skills.

## Domain of intervention

The gardening project covered two sector of activities: food security and entrepreneurship.

## Beneficiaries

There were approximately 90 direct beneficiaries (80 women and ten men).

## PCV assigned to site

PCV Erik Lund (2015-2017)

## Community resource persons

Patrick Nedogo, community counterpart  
Emmanuel Nedogo, counsellor for garden  
Mr Coulibaly, Nakaba health clinic nurse

## Context and background information

Nakaba is a village of seven distinct neighborhoods with a population of about 8,000 people. It is located in the Central-East region of Burkina Faso. The Women's Gardening Collective (NWGC) was founded in early 2015 and is a locally run group with the mission of improving productivity and security of the community.

Following the success of local primary school gardens, the Nakaba Primary School Garden in 2013 and the neighboring Birghin Primary School Garden in 2014, the practice of year round gardening in proximity of wells has expanded substantially. Today, in the neighborhoods surrounding the primary school gardens, there are 85 small household gardens being maintained by women of the Women's Gardening Collective (NWGC). A typical household garden fences are made of sticks, reeds, thorny bushes and rope which unfortunately cannot keep animals out, and that is a significant challenge to gardeners. Each of the seven neighborhoods included in the NWGC has a nominated representative.

This board of seven women is the decision-making and action-taking body that works to achieve the primary goal of the NWGC: improve and secure local community and household gardens. It was a member from the NWGC board who approached the Peace Corps Volunteer for a formal request for material supplies and training to expand and improve their gardening efforts.

The 85 members were motivated to start the activity within a zone of seven neighborhoods. Each small household garden had a woman registered as its primary caretaker. The objective was to provide each of the eight neighborhoods with materials and education to properly install and maintain a secure fenced enclosure. Added to that was access to technical training to better the productivity of the each garden's harvest. Finally, 75 household gardens were implemented in the course of the project for family consumption and for income generating opportunities.



Volunteer Eric sitting with the village traditional chief. He was honored by the village traditional leaders as the "Saan Naaba" meaning the "chief of the stranger" to symbolize how integrated he was as a member of the community.

## Achievements

Eighty women and ten men were involved directly in the initiation and the implementation of the project, leading to the effective implementation of 75 individual home gardens. All the gardens were built with more durable materials than usual and each gardener received fencing. Being organized in a group, the gardeners worked to support or inspire each one another to succeed individually and collectively. Technical trainings were provided to all the gardeners to help them improve their production and maintain their activities as long as possible.

The local health clinic was committed to assessing the outcome of the nutritional aspects of those village inhabitants who practiced the gardening activity and who consumed the produce from these gardens. PCV Eric Lund conducted periodic trainings on nutrition to increase villagers' awareness about consuming local products in a nutritious way. The surplus garden products were sold for profit (proceeds used to take care of family expenses, to be saved, replace worn out materials or buy new seeds for the garden). Traditional leaders and the men of the village were supportive, as being part of the beneficiaries of the outcomes of the activity, which was a motivation in sustaining the project.



Volunteer Eric Lund interacting with a community member



Garden materials distribution



Visit to a household garden with some members of the women's group

## Volunteer Success Story

*"During the first few months at site I started going to the school garden in Nakaba to help water and plant, but mostly to help my integration and awareness of the work being done. The core group who came each day to maintain the school garden led me to understand that gardening was happening at the community level in Nakaba. The President, Emmanuel Niodogo, offered to take me on a tour of the household gardens. We visited seven neighborhoods and eighty-five household gardens. At each stop, Emmanuel helped translate what each family viewed as their perceived vulnerabilities and setbacks to effective and continued gardening. Lack of access to water was the premier concern and the feeble strength of traditional fences was a strong second.*

*We saw wood, thorn bushes, reeds, sticks and mud bricks being used, unsuccessfully, to keep out animals. After some discussions with the leadership, we decided it would be possible to apply for a USAID Feed the Future grant with the intention of providing chain link fencing and metal posts set in concrete to all families interested and qualified. We set up a group, the Nakaba Women's Gardening Collective, and nominated representatives to each neighborhood. Together the neighborhood representatives, Emmanuel and I dictated the qualifications: 1) The family must have demonstrated a persistent effort to maintain a dry-season garden, 2) the family must have access to water year-round and 3) the family must be willing to contribute 3,000 FCFA to subsidize the community contribution. Once the money came through, we paid for the large quantity of materials with the help of an OCADES Koupéla employee who recommended a contractor. The fencing, metal posts, support wire and fasteners came from Ouaga and Pouytenga. The concrete was purchased in Nakaba. Materials were distributed on February 15th, 2016. To ensure the quick construction of the gardens we gave a two week deadline, after which we threatened to collect and redistribute unused materials. This was an effective method as fences very quickly popped up. Within a month, we had verified all but four families had constructed their small household garden. As of today, we see seventy constructed thirty-six meter squared gardens and five one hundred forty-four meter squared gardens which accounts for all the material purchased through the grant and totals 3,420 meters squared of secured gardens. The effects of the increase in household gardens can't be fully understood at this point. But the immediate observations show that families have more fresh vegetables in their dry-season diet and potential income source through the sale of excess produce." - RPCV Eric Lund*

*"When I arrived in Nakaba, I was positively surprised by the nutritional status of children in the village. Compared to the village where I was working before, it seems that we have less malnourished children here in Nakaba. It would be very beneficial for my former village to have a Peace Corps Volunteers as well.*



*The future work will focus on promoting diverse production for both health and economic reasons. We would like to schedule seed distribution events, at which we would discuss positive food preparation and behavior change gardening techniques. We will continue to monitor the use of materials to verify that families are appropriately and effectively gardening."* - Mr. Coulibaly



A woman selling vegetables from her garden

## Conclusion

This project by providing the materials to the villagers contributed to be the catalyst to make of Nakaba a gardening community. This project involved and got more people committed to gardening activities. As a lesson learned, when people initiate a project, they are likely to commit themselves provided that they are supported by appropriate trainings.

As people's awareness of their exact benefits being part of a project is raised, the more eager they are to take the leadership and the more they invest themselves continuously as one of their main activities. This project shows how people who were moderate producers of one type of vegetable can change rapidly into producers of a significantly larger quantity of vegetables while also varying their vegetables.

# Community Driven Preschool Education: The Story of Sirguin

## Zones of influence

Sirguin (Sanmatenga province, north-central region)

## Project summary

This project is an all-around preschool restoration project for the community run preschool of Sirguin, Burkina Faso. The project was about making repairs to the building including painting, re-cementing the floor, extending the blackboard, building a fence to encircle the preschool, installing an outdoor playground and educational equipment, and buying necessary supplies for the school's canteen. The overall objective was to have a well-adapted building and outdoor space for early childhood education where the space was conducive to providing protection, food, education, amusement and opportunities for positive social interactions.



Photos of Sirguin Pre-school

## Domain of intervention

This education project had the aim of making the school area safe and friendly to encourage learning.

## Beneficiaries

There were 40 people involved in the project composed of the preschool staff, students' parents and community members desegregated as followed: 20 men, ten women, ten young women.

## PCV assigned to site

PCV Luke Lampugnale (2015 – 2017)

## Community resource persons

Ascension Zabre, Counterpart  
Absetou Zabre, Preschool teacher  
Jacques Bamogo, Parents Association

## Context and background information

The community of Sirguin started their preschool program in December 2013 with the encouragement and partnership of the Catholic Relief Services project Beoog Biiga (Tomorrow's Children). This initiative is a result of the collaboration between Peace Corps and the US Department of Agriculture through the Food For Education project. Since the start of the program, over 100 children have attended the preschool. Before the preschool opened, the children in Sirguin had to wait until seven or even eight years old before starting first grade, and many students were required to repeat first grade. The community recognized that there was a need for educational opportunities for the young children of the village. The preschool was also created an opportunity to stop bringing young children with parents that were working in the dangerous gold-mining site in the village. Two community members were assigned to be the teachers at the preschool, both openly and enthusiastically accepted the position despite the difficulties associated to it. In the previous school year (2015-2016) the two teachers showed tremendous growth in their ability to be effective teachers, positive role-models, and loving care-takers for the children attending the preschool. The community displayed their commitment to the preschool by supplying salaries for the teachers, organizing community information sessions, and collecting contributions that started the restoration efforts. In community meetings the education for all ages is continually identified as a large need for the village and the preschool is a large part of the efforts to improve educational opportunities. So, they were very much happy to have an opportunity to design a project with the Peace Corps Volunteer Luke in order to make of the preschool a child-friendly school.

## Achievements

The project was very successful in providing a safe and child appropriate space for the students at the preschool. The capacity of the two co-teachers of the school has been strengthened through training on new aspects of early-childhood education. They learned about and practice guided play and incorporated crucial aspects of child-centered education. The application of these skills applied would not have been possible (besides in theory) without the new space. The process of renovating the space strengthened the ability of the two co-teachers to effectively advocate for themselves and for the children at the preschool.

The two co-teachers (along with the Parent's Association) were the ones who led community meetings and spurred people to show up and participate on the days of work. They took responsibility to advocate for the children and became more respected in their roles as preschool teachers through the process, as the community was able to see first-hand the work that they do and the benefits of that work. The community learned to work as a team to design and implement a project. Even if it is difficult to get all of the money or resources, they now have the capacity to get started. They are also aware that if they get started and take those first steps then people (both within and outside the community) can back up their efforts. The outcomes of the project were immediate and effective, with a lasting and beneficial impact on the entire community: The improvement in the school environment encouraged parents to enroll their children in the school and the co-teachers and parent association became a community resource and a think tank to produce new initiatives for the school. The school committee has served as a sign of solidarity and a commitment to education for the Sirguin community as a whole. The work was performed with quality, professionalism and care.

The community has become more involved in the preschool through this process, thus showing the sustainability for the preschool project. Because the preschool is not a government funded school it is absolutely critical that the community is implicated and involved in all aspects. Before this project there were many members of the community who were unsure what happened at the preschool, or why there was an effort to start one. But now that there is a beautiful space that is very visible, there has been a large increase in the number of community members who visit the preschool to witness the daily activities at the preschool. Thus more and more people are learning and becoming convinced of the importance of early-childhood education, which will in turn lead to better community support of the preschool project



Pictures of pre-schoolers at the playground of the school

*“We like the work at the Bisongo, we truly wanted to do it but we didn’t know how to. We didn’t have the right knowledge and skills but after working with Luke, we are now confident and can do the job at the bisongo even when he leaves. People in the community thought that children came to the preschool just to play. Thanks to all the work we did with the volunteer, community leaders got involved and people came to realize that the kids do more than play, they actually learn,” - Ascension Zabre*

### Volunteer Success Story

*“Timelines need to be flexible and that getting frustrated with delays is unproductive and unnecessary. I learned that it is crucial to ensure community commitment before starting a grant or project. Projects should come from the village’s idea of their development, not an outside NGOs idea of how the village should develop. A good practice is to get all people involved in the project. Meaning not just village elders, but women, young people, professionals living in village and representatives from each section of village should be directly encouraged to participate. By doing this the entire village learns about the project and is more likely to support the effort.” - RPCV Luke Lampugnale*

### Conclusion

The construction of the new space greatly added to the sustainability of the community preschool project. While several preschools in various neighboring villages closed, Sirguin preschool continued. The new space has made teaching easier, more rewarding and more enjoyable for the two co-teachers. They said that their motivation dramatically improved throughout this process and they are continuing the work following the departure of the Peace Corps Volunteer.



# Strengthening Household Incomes and Resiliency through Improved Animal Husbandry Practices: The case of Goundi

## Zones of influence

Goundi (Sangui province, Central-West region)

## Project summary

The project helped build eight complete and functioning pigpens. It was initiated to strengthen household resiliency and increase family income by reducing transmission of the swine flu (and thus porcine mortality). To that end, each participating member of the cooperative built a two-room pigpen in his family's courtyard. The members had to ensure the active participation of their family members in the activity. Each pigpen was supposed to produce two litters every six months. Each adult pig would be sold for profit in the local market in Goundi or in the nearby regional capital of Koudougou. The community contributed with labor, bricks, aggregate, food for the construction workers, pig feed, and construction materials.

## Domain of intervention

The project addressed the following needs: household food security, nutrition and entrepreneurship.

## Beneficiaries

There were 45 direct beneficiaries, of which 20 were women.

## PCV assigned to site

PCV Justin Gelb (2012-14)

## Community resource person

Mr. Bali, community member

## Context and background information

Like many villages in the region, the community of Goundi is known for its pig raising. However in recent years, the swine flu epidemic sharply reduced household incomes generated by the activity. Swine flu spreads easily among pigs since they were not commonly kept in isolated rooms. Wandering pigs in the courtyard or outside across the village is very common as a consequence, pigs would eat anything they can find on their ways resulting in increasing diseases and high mortality rates. As a result, the activity produced less profit than expected. The beneficiaries of the project discussed the issue with their Peace Corps Volunteer Justin Gelb and together they launched an experimental pig raising activity by keeping the pigs inside pens that will be cleaned and maintained appropriately.

## Achievements

Eight two-room pig pens were constructed per family (eight families were involved). The beneficiaries were trained by Peace Corps Volunteers who introduced new practices such as pig house construction, maintenance and cleaning, managing pigs' health, preparing food for pigs, using pig waste for gardening, etc. One of the beneficiaries, Mr. Bali, was the leader of the group who worked closely with PCV Justin Gelb and motivated his fellow producers. The project fostered team spirit and entrepreneurship in the beneficiaries.

Since the project started, the beneficiaries used the proceeds from the project to buy food for their families during the hunger season, pay for school fees and school supplies for the kids, take care of the family (health and other needs when necessary) and to care for the pigs (veterinarian's service and food). Poultry production and gardening are complementary activities also associated with raising pigs for market. Pig raising produces compost for gardening activities while the sale of chickens provide resources to buy food supplements for the pigs or to buy medicine for the pigs when necessary. The indirect beneficiaries of the project are consumers purchasing pork products in Goundi, Kyon, Koudougou and surrounding areas.



Pigs from Goundi



Site visit in June 13, 2017



Peace Corps Staff Visiting Piggpens in Goundi

## Volunteer Success Story (Kyon)

*"Three years ago, the African swine fever virus was introduced to the commune of Kyon. The highly contagious disease decimated the pig population in the community, and has continued to kill free-ranging pigs in unpredictable outbreaks. The virus has placed a huge financial burden on women who traditionally raise pigs for weddings and funerals and rely on those profits as a primary income source. Surveys of 115 women displayed a combined loss of 661 pigs over two years. The swine fever virus poses a significant threat to food security in Kyon; it has reduced the availability of a major protein source, and*



Martine Kando with her pigs from Kyon

*it has reduced the incomes of women, who use their profits to feed their families. The women of Kyon mobilized to reclaim their income source. After learning from the regional veterinarian that piggpens were the best method of disease prevention, they met with their Peace Corps Volunteer to discuss opportunities for collaboration with Peace Corps and the USAID West Africa Food Security Partnership through access to food security-focused grants. Over the last year, 31 women have received assistance and completed the construction of a piggpen."*

- RPCV Jamie Farell

## Conclusion

The pigpens have significantly reduced swine fever transmission; average pig loss per year for each participant has fallen to 0.7, versus 2.9 pigs per year prior to the project implementation. This reduction by 76% indicates an estimated savings of \$130 per year per participant. Beneficiary Marie Kando expressed her confidence in the efficacy of the pigpens after her pigs lived through an outbreak of the swine fever that killed all of her neighbor's free-range pigs. This project also placed a large focus on capacity building. Five men were trained in construction techniques for pigpens, and the 31 participants attended trainings on general pig care, and on business skills and profitability. The participants of this project have not only stabilized their small enterprises, but they now have an increased capacity to run them effectively.

We can conclude that the most important thing to take away is to make sure the association you are working with identifies and locates their resources. If this is clarified from the beginning, it will help start the project. Also, team spirit and support within the association increases the success of the project. For more sustainability, secondary activities can be created to support the project.

# Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders

## Zones of influence

Ouahigouya (Yatenga province, Northern region)

## Project summary

The goal of the 2016 Youth Leadership Conference was to inspire and empower youth between the ages 17-23 to take action in the development of their communities. This four-day conference was run by six PCVs and host country nationals from different educational and professional backgrounds. Twenty-five youth from different regions of Burkina Faso were invited. There were 26 sessions delivered to give the youth the necessary tools to return to their village as leaders capable of making positive impacts. Topics included gender roles and norms, goal setting, leadership, entrepreneurship, malaria prevention and other health topics. As part of the monitoring and evaluation, every student and Volunteer was required to bring new knowledge acquired about HIV/AIDS or malaria back to their villages and hold an awareness raising session within a month after the conference. In addition, each student was compelled to develop a youth group in their schools or communities with help from their PCV counterpart, focusing on a topic of their choice, with the aim of development.

## Domain of intervention

The project focused on capacity building, citizenship awareness and life skills.

## Beneficiaries

Youth across Burkina

## PCV assigned to site

PCV Michael Beals (2015-2017)

## Community resource person

Jean Pierre Ouedraogo, language facilitator

Juliette Ouedraogo Zombo, logistic facilitator and cook for the camp

Soumalia Traore, facilitator



Soumaila writing with his mouth



## Context and background information

This conference brought together 25 youth from Burkina Faso and enabled them to receive a wealth of new knowledge and skills. A professional panel brought together successful Burkinabè to share their experiences and explain how to be successful at school and the required certifications for their positions.

## Achievements

Approximately 26 sessions were delivered over four days covering a multitude of topics. Each session taught the participants theoretical knowledge, and in some cases hard skills. Example of hard skills included how to beautify mosquito nets, grassroots soccer activities, hygienic menstrual pads, savings plan, cost/benefit analysis, and liquid soap making. Each session was chosen because it was highly applicable to today's youth and enabled the participants to replicate and transmit the trainings back in their village, either with their community members, health clinic patients or their classmates. Participants were highly empowered and encouraged to share information with their peers, families, and community members. At the end of the conference, participants understood the importance of being a leader in their community. They have gained the confidence and empowerment to make change back home thanks to the sessions and the testimony of Soumaila, a young and successful student living with a severe handicap. When Soumaila was very young he lost all four of his limbs in a train accident. Soumaila has overcome challenges, but always made going to school a priority and is now studying law in France on a scholarship.

## Volunteer Success Stories

*"Today's Youth in Burkina Faso face an uphill battle in their quest for a better way of life, especially those from the smaller villages. A plethora of obstacles stand in their way, whether it's an under-performing educational system, limited support from their family or a general deficiency of outside information. Despite all these setbacks, some students continue to push forth and succeed. More youth development, both inside and outside the classroom, is a crucial need for this country to achieve its full potential.*

*With the objective of empowering Burkinabè Youth, the Peace Corp's Youth Development Committee held its sixth annual "Leadership and Active Citizen Youth Conference" in Ouahigouya using financial aid from a PCPP (Peace Corps Partnership Project) Grant. A cohesive team of seven Burkinabè facilitators and six PCVs put on a four-day conference for 25 students coming from several villages throughout the country. The students were trained on a variety of health and well-being subjects, entrepreneurship ideas and career planning tactics. A pre and post test showed clear improvement of topics which were taught, with the overall average going from 41.9% to 71.7%.*

*The results of this conference don't end there. Giving the participants this distinctive opportunity to travel across the country, meet other Burkinabè students, and collaborate with one another has provided them with an invaluable experience they will now share with their communities. Soumaila, a Burkinabè disability activist (who is disabled himself) was the guest speaker at the conference. His presence among these young high school students was seen as a model of potential inclusive education can offer. He, himself, has been able to complete university. His model provides impetus for students to stay in school and persevere even through hardship. Along with his participation and excellent speaking skills, Ismael was successful in instilling passion, desire, and hope in these young people. Each participant will lead a training in their village and start a club at their schools with their newly acquired knowledge. Because of this experience, they will see their own leadership capabilities grow as they partake in helping change their communities for the better. Now that these 25 youth have received the training and resources to become active leaders back home". - RPCV Michael Beals*



Family picture of participants and facilitators.  
Celebrating the end of a very fruitful conference



Soumalia with Peace Corps Volunteers

*"I have no hands nor feet but I am a student studying law at the University of Ouagadougou. And you, what are you waiting for? You can be even more successful! This is the place for me to reiterate my sincere thanks to Peace Corps Volunteers in Burkina Faso for the initiative of the conference. I, Soumalia, God has taken away all my limbs, but He has given me an ability to think and provided me with other sense organs, and that's what I use to live and progress. Young people should be proud of their conditions and use the little innate and acquired resources to improve their lives and furthermore improve their quality of life and that of others. Don't we say that youth is the future of tomorrow? By sharing my experience I was hoping to help better understand disabilities and stimulate reflection and to answer the many questions that they do not always have the opportunity to ask. Through the exchange, there was one question that particularly drew my attention; this is related to "What is a school and an inclusive classroom?" In my view, it must be equipped with an accessible ramp. The rows must be wide and the blackboard should be accessible by the wheelchair, toilets must be adapted and accessible, activities should be diversified, classmates must show solidarity and teachers must not only be patient, but also caring, courageous and determined. We must give envy to the disabled child to learn, to accept to go to school and also to benefit from scholarships or trainings." - Soumaila Traore*

## Conclusion

The assistance of local counterparts with logistical tasks, facilitation and overall training implementation is crucial to the successful execution of youth camps. Some conference materials (mosquito nets, condoms, etc.) can be received from the local Health Department, if a formal request is written and schools can be offered as a venue of the camp (if the school head is informed in advance). Empowering the kids with testimonies with people talking to them face to face is very important and can make all the difference; including Soumalia Traore, a young university student with a severe handicap was a highlight for many of the youth that attended the camp. Inviting him to talk about handicapped persons, as well as to motivate the youth was a great success.

# IV. Sharing Stories and Building Cultural Bridges:

## RPCV Jennica Betsch (Kaibo, province du Sanmatenga)

### A poem I wrote about living in Burkina:

*Joy  
Vibrant  
As the turquoise paint  
On every wall  
With a sunshine trim*

*It is the birds  
The early noise  
Of my closest neighbors  
Screaming their salutations at the sunrise*

*It is the left behind trace  
A footprint  
Racing*

*The chorus of the congregation  
Swelling over the brim  
As it erupts into dance  
That will not be repressed*

*The strain of a muscle  
Willing the bike pedal around  
Stirring the oversized spoon  
Lifting the child higher  
The sound of her delighted squeal*

*It is the echo  
Of an endless string of greeting*

*The kiss of the breeze  
The promise of rain  
The phase of the moon  
The colors in the sky  
The colors on the ground!  
The enormity of the stars  
That shine everywhere  
Everywhere!  
Bend back  
To gaze at the dizzying vast!*

*It is the intensity of the sun  
The intensity of the sun  
That will not be ignored  
The source of this joy  
That unrelenting light!  
Infiltrating late night thoughts  
It keeps us basking  
In the glory that is an overflow  
Of the love that doesn't quit*

*The sun refuses to quit  
So I bask*

### Un poème que j'ai écrit sur la vie au Burkina:

*Joie  
Vibrant  
Comme la peinture turquoise  
Sur chaque mur  
Avec une garniture de soleil*

*Ce sont les oiseaux  
Le bruit précoce  
De mes plus proches voisins  
Crier leurs salutations au lever du soleil*

*C'est la trace de gauche  
Une empreinte  
Courses*

*Le chœur de la congrégation  
Gonflement sur le bord  
Comme il éclate dans la danse  
Cela ne sera pas réprimé*

*La souche d'un muscle  
Envie de pédaler sur le vélo  
En remuant la cuillère surdimensionnée  
Lever l'enfant plus haut  
Le son de son crissement ravi*

*C'est l'écho  
D'une chaîne infinie de salutation*

*Le baiser de la brise  
La promesse de pluie  
La phase de la lune  
Les couleurs dans le ciel  
Les couleurs sur le terrain!  
L'énormité des étoiles  
Ça brille partout  
Partout!  
Se pencher en arrière  
Regarder le vertige vaste!*

*C'est l'intensité du soleil  
L'intensité du soleil  
Cela ne sera pas ignoré  
La source de cette joie  
Cette lumière implacable!  
Infiltrer les pensées de fin de soirée  
Il nous garde au soleil  
Dans la gloire qui est un débordement  
De l'amour qui ne quitte pas*

*Le soleil refuse de quitter  
Donc je me prélasser*

## Reflections on Education: Beneficiaries and PCVs share their stories



PCV teaching preschool children

### Sanou Dounko: Friends of African Village Libraries



*"My name is Dounko. I am currently the national representative of the NGO FAVL (Friends of African Village Libraries), a non-profit organization recognized in Burkina Faso.*

*I was a counterpart for Peace Corps Volunteer, Alison Wallace, from 2011 to 2012. To this end, I have benefited from the trainings which allowed me to improve my communication and animation skills on hygiene and sanitation, the maintenance of the latrines, the use of the hands-washing stations. Alison supported 5 Burkinabe girls coming from poor families, for their school education and today none of them have abandoned the school. 1 girl is currently studying at the university, two of them are attending a professional teacher school and two others are attending the fifth grade.*

*Thanks to the goodwill and support of the Peace Corps and their Volunteers, the communities of the communes of Niankorodougou in the province of Léréba, Bougounam in the Zandoma province, Béléhé-dé and Pobé-Mengao in the soum province and Kiemabra in the Sourou province, have benefited from the establishment of libraries. Today, these populations are improving their intellectual capacity and the passion for reading with the availability of books in these libraries.*

*I can say that the actions of the Peace Corps in Burkina Faso have touched the needs of the communities. Today Burkinabè people are grateful to the efforts and actions of Peace Corps and the Volunteers. They still need your support." - Sanou Dounko*





RPCV Isy Tavaréz (2009-11)

*"Being a Peace Corps Volunteer in Satiri (located in Houet province of Burkina Faso) goes beyond the achievement of Peace Corps three objectives. This service was for me a time of self-discovery and an opportunity to meet the moral challenges. My job as a high school math teacher put me in close contact with people who have asked for my help and advice in situations that I used to see without being able to do something. I helped a girl to make her own decisions about a forced marriage in which she was a victim. I reconciled a family with their daughter who was banished from his family to be pregnant. And I also helped to get tested and to treat an orphaned child living with HIV. Although my main work has been very beneficial for my community, I think that my biggest impact has been to touch people individually, outside of my tasks description as PC volunteer. Vice versa, these experiences changed me and filled me courage to all the challenges that I would have to face." - RPCV Isy Tavaréz*

## Reflections on Health: Beneficiaries and PCVs share their stories



PCVs teaching on Reproductive Health

## Pauline Kangoro, an Inspiring Role Model

Peace Corps Volunteers made a difference in Koukouldi (located 20 kilometers from Koudougou, in the Sanguié province, in central west region of Burkina).

Community Health Volunteer Joelle Petrus (2005-07), worked with Pauline Kangoro, a local community health worker on using moringa leaves to improve the quality of household diets in her community. Pauline's expertise in nutrition was further strengthened through her interactions with health Volunteers Stephanie Slater (2007-09) and Kelly Kerry (2010-2012). Both Volunteers worked with Pauline to treat moderately malnourished children using vitamin enriched porridge based on powdered moringa leaves.

Following her collaboration with the PCVs, Pauline strengthened her skills on using moringa products to treat moderate malnutrition and was so successful that local mothers with malnourished children came to her home seeking assistance. In 2013 USAID, identified Pauline as a leader in her community for the production of moringa and sent her for training at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in Niamey, Niger. The following year, Pauline was invited to the Ghana Permaculture Institute to learn how to process moringa for cosmetic uses.

Pauline is an example of a successful community development volunteer. She has parlayed her decades of experience as a community health facilitator into serving as one of two hygienists trained to promote hygiene and health in the community. For years, Pauline volunteered to support malnourished children in her village based on training she received from the Peace Corps to fight malnutrition using moringa products.



*"Some mothers were in such despair that they asked me to keep their kids to save their lives. This kind of despair challenges me to keep moving on".* Pauline Kangoro

Pauline with head nurse of Koukouldi health center



Pauline being interviewed <sup>2</sup>



RPCV Natalie Alaniz (2016-2017)

*"I am a daughter from the village of Rapadama, located in the Central Plateau Region of Burkina Faso. My name is Natalie Alaniz, better known as Roukia Tiendrebeogo or Nasara. I was a health volunteer for 15 months before all volunteers were evacuated in Sept. 2017 for safety concerns.*

*Burkina Faso was rightfully nicknamed the land of the upright people, never has a nickname been truer. Burkina Faso is a hard place not to fall in love with and it was the hardest place to leave. I fell in love with the people it brought into my life, people that came from all different walks of life to pour love into my life, the lives of other volunteers, and our guests.*

*Burkina Faso saved me. It taught me life lessons that no one else could have taught me.*

*It taught me KINDNESS through the actions of a friend who bought me degue because they were thinking of me. It taught me LOVE when I got sick and I had visitors every hour from what felt like my entire village, including the MCD. It taught me about FAMILY when I saw the 10+ bidons moms and daughters pumped for their families and all the sacrifices they made for one other. It taught me SHARING with each dish of Tô, rice, or spaghetti I was invited to take part in. It taught me PATIENCE in the face of my language tutors who sat for hours trying to explain the difference between words that sounded similar. It taught me APPRECIATION in the days that our Marché would have avocados and cold Dafani. It taught me JOY in the unavoidable laughter that came around my tanties and friends. It taught me SIMPLICITY in obligatory wake-up call of the roosters crowing. It taught me FRIENDSHIP in the people I did not see often, who came to say they were sorry when my dog died, a dog they did not want me to get. It taught me BEAUTY in the wonderfully printed fabrics worn by those who surrounded me. It taught me RESILIENCY in each one of the nurses who continued to serve their peers regardless of the hardship of the previous day. It taught me the importance of PRESENCE in every person who just sat with me with no distractions. It taught me ADAPTIBILITY through the minds of people who always had a crafty solution for when Plan A did not work.*

*Burkina Faso impacted my life in ways unimaginable. I will forever hear the voices of children yelling my name, the loud thunderstorms, and the tea being poured from pot to cup, the Gérant yelling, 'ma sœur', the laughs of each of my friends, and the 'coucou' from visitors. Burkina Faso is not just a memory. It has engrained itself into my thinking and into my being. There is not a day that one of those life lessons is not put into practice with my life outside of Burkina Faso. There will not be a day where my newfound respect and love for Burkina Faso is not shared with my community. I will always be rooting and applauding the successes of this country, my country. I will always mourn alongside the tragedies this country endures. Its rich culture and people are always with me. I went to Burkina Faso to help make a difference in the community I would be placed in and left with a bigger stamp on my heart than I could have ever left behind.*

*Thank you. Thank you for everything you taught me, for hosting me, and for making it so hard to leave. I am forever in your debt and gratitude." - RPCV Natalie Alaniz*



## Reflections on Community Economic Development: Beneficiaries and PCVs share their stories



PCV and counterpart teaching on Management of Income Generating Activities

### Lamoussa Traore: Helping people to help themselves



Lamoussa Traore, first on the right

*"Thanks to Peace Corps, I am now a confirmed trainer in transformation specifically in tomato paste making that can be stored for six months to one year. Since I was trained in 2015, my family never lacked tomato paste because I trained my family members to plan ahead by producing these products. I would have preferred to sell these goods to get money, unfortunately the tomato production is not enough in Guena due to the crucial lack of water. I was invited to travel with Peace Corps invitation to share my experience in several trainings, and I did it with pride. Travel to several Burkina Faso regions, Banfora, Koudougou, Ouagadougou, etc. wherever I went, it was my pleasure and did not hesitate to share the skills, knowledge and the recipe I have on tomato transformation to inspire people so that they can do it on their own.*

*Being certified by Peace Corps as a trainer, I expressed the desire to learn more about food transformation because I knew that I could improve my personal and community wellbeing with new knowledge. So, I was offered the opportunity for soybean transformation training. After the training, I made myself available to train people in Guena and the surrounding village (more than 75 women and girls) and to make myself available to share my experience with people outside Guena. As such, I was invited specially to Dorossiamasso to conduct a soybean transformation training to about 100 people. This was a great success and I am still receiving calls from people from Dorossiamasso until now greeting me or asking for advice. I can say that I am now a very important person going outside my village to help people.*



*The tomato transformation success inspired our association in Guena 'gnonsannson' to build a vegetable garden of two hectares to grow vegetable for consumption and sale to make more money. So, I can say that I am a very busy person thanks to Peace Corps. Since animal husbandry is a good asset for gardening, we created in Guena a cooperative of 25 people to conduct chicken raising activities. Thanks to USAIDS funding, we were about to start the project unfortunately with the Peace Corps Volunteers evacuation, the grants process was stopped and the money was returned. Despite this situation, we did not say die! I launched the initiative to start a chicken coop and I was followed by 24 people in Guena. So, we are currently 25 people working on this project. I am available for my fellow Burkinabè and the department in charge of agriculture and food security, to come anywhere needed to show my experience and train people on tomato and soybean transformation. My message to any villager in Burkina Faso will be to be positive, open minded and optimistic in life; this is where development starts. God bless Peace Corps! Hoping they will come back very soon to help people think and act positively!"*

- Lamoussa Traore

*"I was a local beer brewer and seller. After being trained by Lamoussa, I started a business of soy meat going from house to house to sell the meat. I realized that this activity was easy to carry than local beer business, also there was more profit. I can get at least 2,000 FCFA (\$4) of benefit. Before this business, I was relying on my husband for expenses like buying clothes and soap. Thanks to this business, I am now self-reliant. I have six kids and am able to take care of them. I was able to buy six goats from my revenues and have extended my income generation activities to include animal husbandry."*

- Fatima Traore



RPCV Edith Suarez (2013-2015)

*"It has been almost three years since I returned from Burkina Faso and just last month, I sent an old professor an email reading, 'I know I've thanked you many times before, but I will never stop thanking you,' because it was a conversation I had with him that sparked the path that led me to apply to Peace Corps and later live in Burkina Faso.*

*My time in Burkina Faso was such a life-changing experience and I am blessed to have lived in a small village that welcomed me and helped me feel at home by allowing me to share a space in their community. This was also true with every staff that played a key role throughout my experience including my language advisor who helped me learn French and the Peace Corps driver who drove me to my first day in village, where upon our arrival had to follow me and many local members for two kilometers as we danced to my new home; the Peace Corps driver became part of my first couple of hours of life in Seera. My life became a journey surrounded by family and learning that brought me closer to my identity and culture and shifted my views about life in general.*

*During my time in Burkina Faso I was involved in multiple activities including working with youth. After gathering youth to brainstorm ideas we decided that a weekend gathering to discuss different topics including health, gender roles, finances, followed by an hour of English was their main goal. We met weekly in the local school to discuss and learn as a group; this gathering then evolved into a weekend conference in village where we focused specifically on health topics around anatomy, gender roles, and malaria. During my time in Burkina Faso I also worked with women who were part of micro-financing groups who facilitated most of my activities in village and became part of trainings involving different income generating activities such as making tofu and mango jam.*

*What I love about Peace Corps is that every volunteers' experience and work will look different because the work that is done is primarily led by the community, which is one thing that sets Peace Corps apart. My life in Burkina Faso shaped who I am today by allowing me to gain knowledge while sharing knowledge and exposing me to a culture different than my own. I will always be thankful for every person who became part of my life throughout my journey in Seera." - RPCV Edith Suarez*

## V. Staff Reflections

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### **Paul Ilboudo, Program Manager/Education**

*"I discovered Peace Corps for the first time in 1982 through a Volunteer named Karyb who has taught at Ouagadougou's University. Since then, I promised myself to work there as soon as I get the chance. Finally, it's in January 2015 that I joined the wonderful organization as Peace Corps Education program manager.*

*What I remember from my time in the Peace Corps, it's the philosophy of development based on human relationships. While elsewhere we put on the financial and material resources to achieve the expected results, the Peace Corps approach consist to bring communities to be actors of their own development.*

*The Volunteer is just a coach. He does not substitute himself to the community. Thus, the development goes step by pas but the impact remains visible for a long time. I have a lot of respect for these Volunteers who choose to renounce to their comfort during their service. Their spirit of endurance and resilience is the secret of their ability to adapt themselves to their new living environment in villages devoid of all material comfort material but very rich in human values.*

*I remembered too, relations with Volunteers host communities which are sometimes warmth sometimes misunderstanding but always constructive. I never tire of speaking of the open collaboration with partners of the State, NGOs, Associations and Volunteers' counterparts without whom the results could not have been achieved.*

*One other thing that I will keep for a long time with me, is family spirit that has always prevailed among the staff. A team where jokes and laughter coexisted easily with respect and mutual consideration. This atmosphere helped us a lot to meet the challenges and for sure I will going to miss her.*

*But finally, I am very proud to have been part of the Peace Corps family."*

## **Jean Zongo, Safety & Security Assistant**

*"I started with Peace Corps very young when I was still a student at the university as a Language and Cross Culture Facilitator. I had no experience whatsoever with work in a multicultural environment other than African nationalities. I made a lot of cultural faux-pas, such as commenting on a girls dress or interrupting two PCTs talking to each other, the importance of being on time, the low level of formality with Americans, and the importance of diversity. I learned a lot about the importance of cultural differences in general and about American culture in particular from all these years of work with Peace Corps.*

*The Volunteer experience inspired me to look at issues in my community and also work with that community to come up with solutions that are sustainable. My work approach has changed a lot while working with Peace Corps. I now set goals and monitor and evaluate myself towards my goals. This is a skill I apply to all aspects of my life. I am more aware of gender roles and the importance of taking it into account in my decisions, and on the importance of educating about sexual assaults and harassment.*

*All these facts constitute the legacy of Peace Corps on me, a legacy that I will strive to pass on to others around me."*

## **Thierry Younga, Training Manager**

*"Working for the Peace Corps as the Training Manager was an extraordinary source of continuous learning in the sense that every year you learn from the new group of Trainees/Volunteers who arrive in country. You are continuously updated on the American culture, on new concepts on development and you have the chance to build new friendship."*

## **Sidi Mahamadi Guigma, Cashier**

*"There is a great sense of team work in Peace Corps; a team where everyone is listened to and accepted. I had the best welcome in a work environment. Despite other work offers, I decided to stay with Peace Corps because its goals of development and strategy of implementation were noble. Through Peace Corps, I saw the realities of communities of my own country. I saw that that I could easily thrive in this institution.*

*When I saw these Volunteers who abandoned everything in the home country to come and serve in Burkina Faso under conditions I am not sure myself could do, I developed a great sense of respect and admiration for them. I felt responsible for them and as most staff in Peace Corps, I worked hard and sometimes sacrificed other things to be able to best support PCVs in their work. This is to say about the integrity of staff towards Peace Corps and the work of Volunteers.*

*I now have a better understanding of American culture and I value more cross-cultural diversity. PCV's attitude was mostly positive; even during evacuation, one could tell that they did not want to leave country. Many of them kept in touch and sent me thank you notes, testifying that beyond work, we build friendship relations between staff, Volunteers, and communities.*

*I wanted to go live in the US; after my Peace Corps experience, I now want to discover the US and come back to Burkina Faso to help with its development."*



## Rachel Sawadogo, Deputy Director of Management and Operations

*“Before working for Peace Corps, I had no idea what it was doing. I discovered a unique institution where men and women from a very developed country go to very poor, underdeveloped countries to help communities with their development efforts. They learn the culture, the people, and are able to help; that’s what I call heroes. I learned a lot about American culture which is very different from ours. I had to learn and adapt to new Country Directors and Directors of Management and Operations. PCVs attitude and work at site forces the admiration of all. This fact encouraged me to always be on top of my job to best support PCVs who came to help my communities.*

*My Peace Corps experience was a lesson for me. It affects and will continue to affect my career and my life.”*

## Firmin Kiemtore, Program and Training Specialist/Education

*“I am Firmin Kiemtore, I joined the Peace Corps in 2000 as a language and culture facilitator. At the beginning of this first contract, I wanted to give up because I had trouble understanding and integrating American culture and diversity. But little by little, I understood them through observation and discussion. At the end of this first contract, I felt more skilled and strengthened. For 18 years, I worked with the Peace Corps, which was more than a university for me in terms of capacity building and cultural exchange. Challenging yourself, honesty, transparency and professionalism are the main values that prevail at Peace Corps.”*



## Alexis Lougri Compaoré, Driver

*"To me, Peace Corps is like a university: we learn a lot about life both in theory and by doing. Being open-minded will open many doors for you. A Volunteer once gave me an advice: 'If you want to be happy, work for Peace Corps; if you want to be rich, be an entrepreneur.' Today, I can say I am a happy entrepreneur. What I keep from my Peace Corps experience is that all employees are treated the same. I learned to express myself freely and to apologize when I am wrong. I benefited a lot from useful trainings (diversity, security, entrepreneurship), despite my low education level. I improved my English greatly, thanks to interactions with PCVs. Hearing communities talk about the great things that PCVs achieve is very inspiring.*

*My wish is for Peace Corps to continue around the world and to come back to Burkina Faso. I can only thank Peace Corps for all I learned that will stay with me forever."*

## Celestin Damiba , General Services Assistant

*"A lesson I keep from a conversation with a PCV is that we should not wait for everything to come from elsewhere; we can do a lot ourselves, should we have a little more love, comprehension and solidarity. PCVs experience is a sacrifice they teach us.*

*Peace Corps was a new experience for me. It changed my professional career to be more rigorous, proactive, and open-minded to cultural diversity and learning other ways of working. It made me reinforce my social network by making friends with my colleagues. Peace Corps was a great team-work environment."*

## Ramata Belemlilga, Executive Secretary

*"Peace Corps, I don't know what it is. This was my answer the first time I heard about Peace Corps. But Now, I can hold a presentation about Peace Corps in general and specifically about Peace Corps Burkina Faso.*

*My experience started in 2011 as an intern for Safety and Security Coordinator. Then I discovered Peace Corps, its mission, Volunteers activities and how the system is running. I got the chance to visit Volunteers in communities and to appreciate the incredible work they were doing with communities. I took part in some activities organized by Volunteers such as Camp G<sup>2</sup>low, demonstration of hand washing, soy transformation and I could not believe how enthusiastic they were to help their communities. Volunteers are respectful toward their commitment and they are doing a great job with communities. I was proud to be part of the Peace Corps Team and I will always remember that development begins with ourselves.*

*This experience made me a volunteer within my community, always available to help, to advise and to share what I learned with Peace Corps Volunteers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all RPCVs from Burkina Faso for their contribution to the development of our communities.*

*Peace Corps Burkina Faso is suspended but I keep a nice souvenir of my experience as the Executive Assistant and Volunteers' experience in my country."*

## Aicha Coulibaly/Pitroipa, Grants Manager

*"I am Aicha Coulibaly/Pitroipa, I was Grants manager at Peace Corps Burkina Faso. I joined Peace Corps in 2009. If Peace Corps did not exist, it had to be created! There is no better place to learn. It is a great and special university of capacity building: friendship, networking, humanity, high pressure control, diversity, Peace, understanding, innovation, initiative, development, in short every type of topics that can reframe and reshape a human being. American Volunteers were inspiration for me. Through the support of the grants process, with the validation and implementation of their grants, I discovered American volunteers engaged for population in needs. I truly learned from them and had a memorable work and friendship relationship beyond my expectation. To my Burkinabè fellow staff, I found a family of diverse skills and personalities that help shape me. Through the grassroots community I visited, I have discovered another dimension of resources we have in Burkina Faso and that we need definitely to develop. As a result, I become myself a "Volunteer", ready to make my part of touch to anything that can be helpful to humanity. I would like to express my gratitude for accepting me as a Peace Corps employee for nine years with the fruitful experiences I have enjoyed from this institution and its leadership. Let's keep in touch!"*



## Cyr Ouedraogo , Motorpool Coordinator

*"I got a lot of experience in terms of trainings: motor pool management and care, information technology, security... The work environment is good in general. There is a minimum of respect and autonomy in doing my work. Managers are more inclined to show you how to do things for capacity building purposes. Also, we had all we needed to do the best job possible.*

*I learned a lot about the culture differences. I also learned to be open-minded. PCVs are hard workers in general and kindhearted. They force the admiration by their courage and selflessness. I always wanted to go to the US prior to working with Peace Corps. When I saw PCVs happily living in our communities, I told myself the US must not be the "El Dorado" I thought it was.*

*By staying with Peace Corps, I realized myself financially. I was able to send my kids to good schools, build my house, and when my wife got very ill, the insurance I have through Peace Corps sent her abroad for care."*

*"My experience with Peace Corps is definitely a memorable one for me. I learned so much and shared so much!"*

*I learned more about the American culture being in Burkina Faso than over the six years I spent in the US. I learned about its diversity, its different cultures, the accents depending on when PCVs were coming from, etc. I learned about the job I am currently doing. I learned more than I could ever imagine or hope for in a job.*

*Beyond the job, I made connections that will last a lifetime. I made so many friends among PCVs. It is a real honor and pride to see them evolve with their lives and develop international careers. It is also always a pleasure to reach out to them again with some news about the progress of projects they had started with communities or to share with them something that the community said about them. That's what Peace Corps is and the legacy it leaves behind.*

*For me, what I keep is also the formidable family and friends I made among the staff. The cohesion, the team work, the good spirit among us is something I will greatly miss as we move along with our careers. One key lesson I take with me from observing PCTs and PCVs in their work is that you can have all the knowledge you want to help with development, if you do not have the right attitude, you will not achieve anything in the world of development. Attitude is everything!"*

### **Harouna Congo, Safety & Security Manager**

*"Peace Corps made me learn and appreciate Americans who are very different from what we see in the media and news. For about 15 years as staff in the same position, I have known and worked in an environment that I will qualify as very enriching. The procedures are clear, the practice follows the procedures, and equality and respect are shared values. Consideration for humanity is constant. There is a low level of protocol in general: the country director and the driver, the cleaner and the doctor talk to each other like peers; in all offices, we use the same chairs and the same tables.*

*I also benefited from numerous trainings at the office, online, at the US Embassy or in other countries. I have got to know and work with over 1,000 Volunteers since 2003. I am friends with hundreds of them on social media and we keep in touch. RPCVs who left over 10 years ago still email me when they want to visit Burkina to inquire about the national security and for advice. I also hosted RPCVs in my house for short periods of time over the last two years. I encountered difficult times when PCVs were victims of theft, burglary, but also sexual and physical harassment. I still think about it today.*

*After all these years with Peace Corps, I am now a mature person, with assurance and great knowledge about my work. I was also able to realize some personal projects and take care of my family who was born and raised alongside my Peace Corps experience. I put the skills and knowledge acquired with Peace Corps at the service of my family, my friends, and people I met. I now have a more critical mind and I analyze every idea more thoughtfully before acting. I bore with humility but also unnecessary hardship and arrogance of some staff, both local and Americans... but are we not just simple human beings? I am very proud of my Peace Corps Burkina Faso adventure and I hope the institution will return soon to the land of the Upright People!"*

## Bienvenu Noël Ouedraogo, Site Development Specialist

*"I saw the originality of the Peace Corps development approach at two levels:*

*At the Volunteer integration level: when the Volunteer was well integrated in his/her community, s/he becomes a model and a source of inspiration for a true community self-development.*

*At the community engagement level: the local communities are better engaged when they are conscious about their guide, their leader who is the Volunteer who is present, accessible and live fully the local realities.*

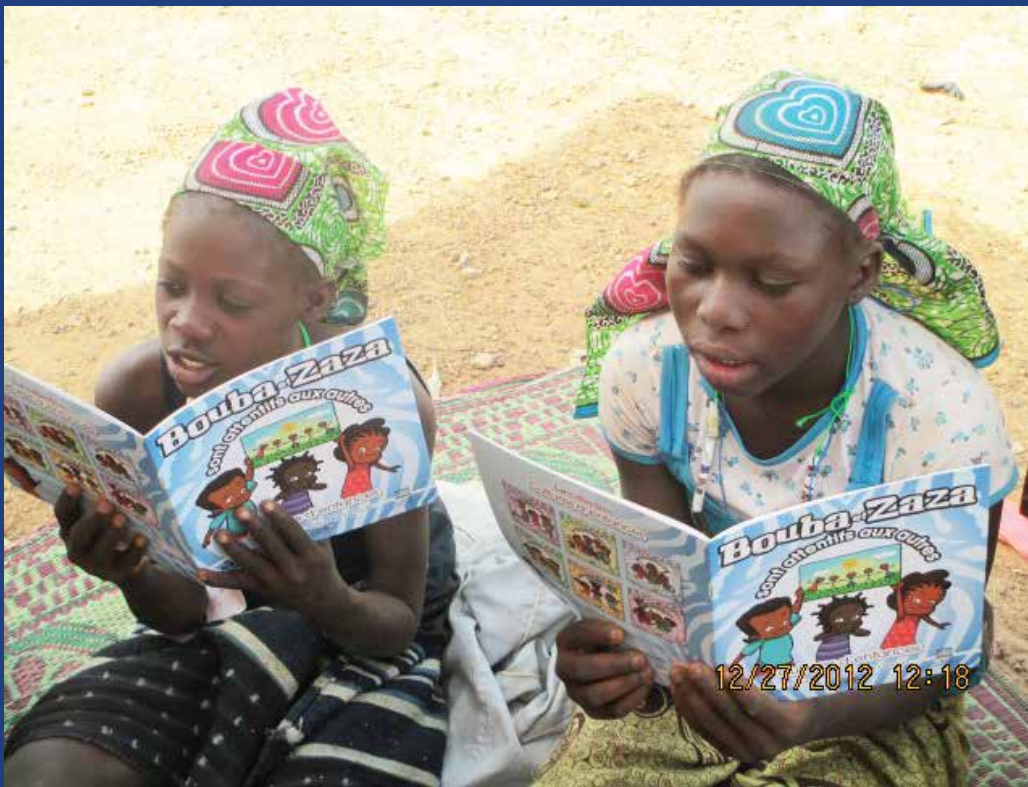
*After eight years of PCVs site preparation, I discovered over 80% of Burkina Faso, travelling some 110,000 kilometers to visit many times over 600 sites.*

*I did this task with passion on the ground, and it allowed me to better appreciate the quality of work of my fellow colleagues from the preparation of the PCTs in PST to communities' preparation to PCVs' activities monitoring at sites.*

*It is a unique experience rich in lessons learned for PCVs, staff and Burkinabè communities."*







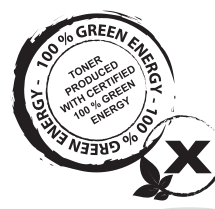
## VI. Acknowledgements

In preparing for the suspension of the Peace Corps/Burkina Faso program, the staff took on this legacy book. They worked tirelessly to share a sample of the incredible work that Peace Corps Volunteers have had on Burkina Faso and how the seeds of their integration and work with their community are already bearing fruit.

Thus this document is a collective expression of the efforts of Peace Corps Volunteers and Staff and their ongoing efforts to contribute to sustainable socio-economic development in Burkina Faso while building friendships between the Burkinabe and American peoples forged through the shared experiences, laughter, tears, and mutual understanding.

U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso, H. E. Andrew Young described the need to collect and immortalize the history of Peace Corps/Burkina Faso after the suspension became official in December 2017. Additional ideas for content and format were provided by the Peace Corps Acting Regional Director for Africa, Mr. Tim Hartman and the Country Desk Officer for Burkina Faso, Ms. Katie Gehron during their visit to Ouagadougou in March 2018.

Finally, none of the demonstrated results, innovative interventions, permanent friendships or life changing experiences would have been possible without the commitment of the Burkina Faso and United States governments, collaboration with development partners and civil society agencies and most of all, the love, support, wisdom and solidarity expressed by the Burkinabe people. It is the Burkinabe people, renowned for their integrity, kindness and hospitality that have remained a reservoir of good will and potent symbol of the best in cross-cultural friendships for generations of Peace Corps Volunteers. We hope that this current suspension will be a short one, and that we will once again resume our collaboration with the families and communities that have given our Volunteers so much.



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