

## **Safia in Burkina**

### **Day 1, Monday morning October 25**

Given the security situation in Burkina Faso, the health situation due to Covid 19 and my advanced age, I don't feel fit to travel to Burkina myself. Happily, we have a Burkinabè on our Board in France who goes twice a year to visit her Mom and other family members. Her name is Safia Morvannu, Safia for Safiatou because she is Burkinabè, and Morvannou because she is married to a Breton. (They met while he was doing his military service in her hometown, Bobo Dioulasso.)

Safia is an extrovert. I heard her speak animatedly on the subject of women's rights at an NGO meeting in 2015 and I said to myself immediately, I have to recruit her. And so I did. Here is our French Board in 2016; that's Safia, third from the left.



We proposed that the next time Safia goes to visit her family, she do some work for us on the side. She agreed. She arrived in Ouagadougou on Sunday, 24 October and checked into the Karité Bleu hotel where I always stay. (Our girls are familiar with it.) And she began meeting on Monday morning, starting with Christine, our one salaried employee.



Together, they welcomed Colette, a first year student in communications. She wants to be a TV or radio presenter.

**Flashback:** Christine had visited her home and family before we decided to help her. She was recommended to us by the Director of the Lycée Pennel of the Church of the Assemblies of God, whom I met last year. Christine found that she was truly poor. Her house had neither electricity nor running water.



Her mother sells charcoal to feed her family.



But she's proud of her daughter and wants her to succeed.



**Flash-forward:** Safia asked Colette how things were going at university. Colette said the courses were interesting but she found it hard to study at home. We had bought her a bicycle to get to school from home. Colette showed Safia her new bicycle.



“Let’s find a solution to your housing problem,” Safia said.



Safia is warm and physical; she assured Colette everything would be all right.



Next Charity came to the hotel to meet with Safia. They hit it off immediately.



**Flashback:** Christine visited Charity at home earlier in the year. She had been abandoned by her mother at an early age and raised by her grandmother. They are close.



Christine confirmed that there were no luxuries in this home.



**Flash-forward:** Charity is in her first year of law school and loves it. Safia joked with her while making a point. “You’re a beautiful young woman,” she said; “I don’t want to find you pregnant on my next visit.”

Charity assured her. “I just want to study,” she replied. She wants to be a judge.



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