

Safia in Burkina

Day 2, Tuesday afternoon October 26

Safia again had lunch with Mme Toé and Christine. She then returned to the hotel to meet with Roukiétou, whom she found timid. Roukiétou is a first-year student in laboratory analysis, an interesting major. She said she researched it and found that the odds of finding employment were good.



Flashback: Roukiétou was proposed by Abdoulaye; she lives in his neighborhood. Christine went to visit and spoke with her parents. They fully supported her going on to higher education.



Their home was modest.



Her bedroom was cluttered but she had a serious place to study.



She told Christine she really wanted to succeed.



Fast-forward: Safia had confidence in her.



Safia then left the hotel to visit the home of Ursula, who is just finishing her coursework for a Master's degree in communication. She lost a year when she became pregnant; she decided not to marry. She is raising her son Dalil alone.



Flashback: Ursula graduated secondary school in 2015, a chaotic year after President Blaise Compaore was overthrown after 27 years in power. Her grade average qualified her for a government scholarship. We contacted the government office and they told us it was not sure, if ever, that the scholarship money would be paid. The government wasn't functioning.



Ursula and her Mom, depressed.

We advised her to wait.



Meanwhile the universities had begun their courses. Ursula borrowed books and notes from a friend and tried to keep up without being enrolled. We had to step in. We decided to pay her tuition at *Aube Nouvelle* University in Ouagadougou where she would study English/French translation. From the start, she was an excellent student.

In the summer of 2017, we decided to go all out and pay for her to do an internship in Ghana to perfect her English. Nane Annan found her a bed with a former school director, Maame Edusei.



Mme. Edusei arranged an internship at her former school. Ursula went to church with her and was introduced to the President of Ghana, who worshiped there.



Ursula with President Nana Akufo-Addo in 2017.

Nane, visiting Ghana at the time, took her to dinner. It was a fabulous summer.



She even did some touring.



She successfully defended her thesis for a *licence* diploma in December 2018.



She was one of 500 students who applied to an elite translation program at the University of Ouagadougou; there were only 10 places available, and she didn't get one of them. She had no Plan B. She stumbled. In June 2019, she had a baby--a boy named Dalil.



She pulled herself together and the next year she got into the communication program at the University of Ouagadougou for a Master's Degree. When I visited her in January 2020, she was full of optimism and was getting great grades. She's also fluent in English.



Flash-forward: She has just finished her course work and is writing her Master's thesis. Dalil is now two years old. Ursula is confident she can make a comfortable life for him.



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