

Safia in Burkina

Bobo Dioulasso, October 30-November 4

Safia flew to her hometown, Bobo Dioulasso, on Friday 29 October. Over the next week, she spent a lot of time with her family, but also did work for us, starting with a general meeting on Saturday organized by Anne-Géraude, our “captain” for Bobo.



From left to right, Hariane, second-year marketing; Antoinette, second year journalism; Emma, graduate 2021, social worker; Stéphanie, third-year law; Fatoumata, third-year accounting; Aïcha, second year, history and geography; Juliette, graduate, Master's in 2016, accounting; Sita, graduate 2020, nursing and Anne-Géraude, graduate, Master's in 2021, human resource management.

The girls chipped in and prepared a meal welcoming Safia.



Safia with Hariane, left, and Emma, right.

On Tuesday, she visited the *Association Tié*, recommended to us by a contact in France. Created in 1996, the association is dedicated to the welfare of children particularly street children.



On Wednesday, she met with Dr. Etienne Traoré, Director of our Health Fund and our health representative in Bobo Dioulasso.

Flashback: One of our first two beneficiaries in 2010 was Juliette. We sent her to university to study accounting. At one point she felt ill and was misdiagnosed with malaria. In fact, she had yellow fever. I went to the World Health Organization in Ouagadougou to ask if adults could be vaccinated against yellow fever. I spoke with Dr. Etienne Traoré who answered my questions.



He added that he was about to retire and admired what we were doing. I filed that away. Then in 2015, the UN Women's Guild in Geneva was looking for a cause in Africa to support. I was put in touch with them and we received a 6,000 CHF grant to look after the health of our girls. We created the Health Fund and I asked Dr. Traoré to head it as a volunteer. He said "Gladly." I was introduced to Dr. Odile Pagezy, a pediatrician, and together with Dr. Traoré we fleshed out our plans for the Health Fund. We would reimburse our girls for all their medical needs, from aspirins to operations. And urge them to get vaccinated. Both Dr. Traoré and Dr. Pagezy are now members of our Board.



Odile has been an especially valuable Board Member.



Flash-forward: On Thursday, Safia met with Catherine Yameogo, the President of our sister association, *Solidarité Goëlo-Burkina*, that supports girls at the secondary level. Since 2010, every girl financed by *Solidarité* who passed her Baccalaureate exam (and some that didn't) received a grant from us to go on to higher education.



Safia finished her day with a visit to Stéphanie's apartment. She had been housed at a university dormitory for her first two years of law school but the university urges third year students to find their own housing. Stéphanie is renting with two other girls but we wanted to be sure she was safe. She's an excellent student, always near the top of her class if not at the top.



Safia said the apartment seemed safe, if bare. There is no running water and Stéphanie sleeps on a mat on the floor. Not very comfortable.



Safia also interviewed a few candidates for 2022-23, but we will look more closely at them if they pass their baccalaureate next July.

Meanwhile, we're very pleased with Safia's work for us. She goes to Burkina twice a year to see her family. We will propose that she do some work for us each time.



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