

Day 9
Friday, 17 January 2020 - Ouagadougou

French Institute, Lucie, Kalifa, Françoise

For all of our students, French is a second language. If they are to become professional women in Burkina Faso, they will need to speak proper French. That's why I went to see the French Ambassador—to ask for preferential rates on French courses offered at the French Institute. We were graciously received at the Institute by the Director of the Language Center, Chiara Sponga, for whom French is also a second language—she's Italian.



She told us they give courses to small groups and large, for short periods or long, for beginners or advanced, and yes, the Ambassador told her to give us a discount. Great.



She gave us a tour of the Institute, right in the center of the city—a cool and serene refuge from the hubbub outside.



And the library is air-conditioned! Free internet access. A valuable find.



From there we visited the school of Lucie, a beneficiary of our sister association *Solidarité*, in her last year of high school.





The Director of Studies told us that her first trimester average was only 8.70/20, but that was the equivalent of a 12 in another school. He was sure she would pass and be a good university student.



I guess this is a tough school. We'll take his word for it.



In the afternoon, we went shopping for statues made by my friend Kalifa. We must be coming here for ten years. I bought ten of them.



Back at the hotel, Françoise was waiting for us. She received a two-year agricultural certificate with our help in 2018. She found a job right away with an NGO in the northwest near the Mali border but quit in February for security reasons.



Her experience illustrates how the job market here is tough. She nabbed a short-term contract with an agricultural firm from February to June, then worked as a secretary at a dress-making

atelier. During the summer, she took preparatory courses for a test for a job with the government's Agriculture Ministry. During down-time in August she took a refresher course in computer use. She's now preparing a paper as part of an enrollment process for a test for a government job on 20 November. 150 candidates are vying for ten posts. If she doesn't get one of them, she starts all over again.



Christine came by at the end of the afternoon for a two-hour working session. (She's the management consultant who runs our affairs here.) We resolved several key issues and agreed to have lunch before I leave.



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