

Day 11
Sunday, 19 January 2020 - Ouagadougou

Nadège, Christiane, Mariam, Lucie, Pauline, Noëla

The wind was up this morning, creating a dusty haze as we drove to meet Nadège at her sister's home.



We had already seen Nadège at her school. She met us at the main road and pointed us in the right direction.



Then she led us there on her bike.



Her mother is widowed and without resources; she sent Nadège to live with Nadège's sister, Judith, who is a primary school teacher. *Solidarité* paid the secondary school tuition. Judith has two children, a girl 8 and a boy 5. Her husband died two years ago at age 32.



At her school, Nadège had said she wanted to study law, but we discouraged her. Frankly, her grades weren't that good. We asked her to think about it, but mainly to study hard to pass the Bac exam; that would open a lot of doors with BWEF/CFC written on them.



At least her house was nicer than this one that we passed on the way out.



We had lunch with Christiane and her friend Mariam, who is the Burkina representative of Chance for Change. Mariam works for an accounting firm.



All CFC checks have to be signed by Christian and Mariam. It was good to touch both bases.



In the afternoon we drove to Lucie's house. We sat in the garden.



When her father died in 2017, her mother was left without means. With four children, she struggled. A teacher told her about *Solidarité* and they've financed her education for the last four years.



Lucie and I had a friendly exchange. She wants to study communications. Fine with me, I said. Now pass your Bac.



We said good-bye. At the end of their street, there seemed to be a dump.



Next we were to meet with Pauline. I asked if it was same Pauline I had met in 2018. *Solidarité* answered “no”. In this group photo from 2018, who stands out as the sassiest? That’s Pauline, hand on her hip.



She failed her Bac twice and disappeared from view. I asked *Solidarité* to help me find her, I wanted to help her, but they said they couldn't. Then today, on arrival, there she was! I'd know those dimples anywhere.



She told us that her mother died when she was a baby. When she failed the Bac a second time, she moved in with her mother's cousin in Ouaga. Three or four aunts chipped in to send her to a local Protestant school (she's Catholic, but it was closest) for a third try at the Bac.



Her mother's cousin's place was reasonably comfortable for her. There was no electricity but she had solar panels. Pauline could study at night. And she slept on a mattress thrown on the floor in the living room



I was amazed how these families stick together, no matter how remote the relationship. And I was so happy to find Pauline.



The last appointment of the day was with Noëla. She looked younger than her 19 years.



Christiane recommended her; she had been best friends with Christiane's daughter. We entered the yard; there seemed to be extended family.



Mama was at work.



We sat down with her mother and father and told them about our association.



Noëla told me she wanted to study communications. She knew the university she would attend and the cost of tuition. She had done her homework.



We asked about her grades and she said they wouldn't give her her report card because her parents still owed 35,000 Eco in tuition. I said we would pay that; what the hell, 50€?



We asked to see inside the house. Noëla showed us the salon where she, her mother and three other kids slept on the floor while her father slept in a bed in the single bedroom. Did she think that was normal?



I guess this is the open-air kitchen.



That evening, Armata, the primary school teacher, came by to give me her students' drawings to take back to their French counterparts. 54 of them.

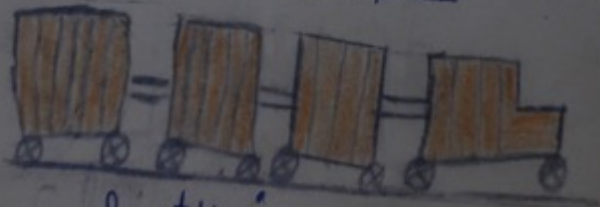


And so the Franco-Burkina exchange marches on.

te m'appelle
tall Ramata
CE2, école Monghinpéote.



la mosquée



le train

Chez nous, on
mange du té, du riz,
lenga lenga, malwani
la salade, du ser fallé
gonvi balenda, du
razetit, sarwa,
massa, la bouillie
et beaucoup d'autres.

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