



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

On a recent trip to West Africa, I met with two groups of remarkable women. They live in Bamako, the capital of Mali, and in Farkala, a village of 2,000 people in the Malian countryside, near the town of Sikasso.

These women run co-operative businesses. The revenue they earn makes it possible for them to better feed and educate their children in what are extremely challenging circumstances. Both small-scale enterprises are well-organized and have been operating for more than a decade. But both urgently need support.

After my visits with them, I was very moved and felt compelled to do what I can for them. I am writing to ask you to consider the possibility of helping one or both of these groups. Here are brief descriptions of what they do and what they need.



BOGOLON (FABRIC) ARTISAN WORKSHOP

Operated by L'Association des Femmes Veuves et Enfants Déshérités, Bamako, Mali (founded in 1991)

These women produce household items in light cotton fabric that they have skilfully woven, dyed and printed in beautiful patterns, using traditional bogolon (mudcloth) methods and natural dyes. Their products include pillowcases, tablecloths, shirts, blouses, and decorative hangings which they sell in a small shop at the front of their workshop compound. They also create a range of decorative paper products, designed by the director of the enterprise.



It is amazing to see how the women are able to create such lovely work with so very few resources. The workshop is located in an extremely poor area of Bamako, where it can be a daily struggle to provide food and education for their children. They need \$2,000 to purchase equipment and raw materials.

L'UNION DES FEMMES DE LA COMMUNE RURAL DE FARKALA

Founded over 10 years ago, this co-op, based in the traditional village of Farkala, produces a variety of foodstuffs and soap by processing the fruit of the local neri tree. Twelve hundred women from the village and twelve surrounding communities rotate the work which provides income for more food and improved education for their children.

They need two solar dryers for use during the rains when they are unable to dry the fruit in the sun. Cost: \$2,000

There are several ways to donate: online at <http://www.icasc.ca/support> or send a cheque to:

Judith Marcuse Projects
c/o Suite 210, 1688 West 1st Avenue,
Vancouver, British Columbia, V6J 1G1, Canada

Please indicate if you wish your assistance to go to one or both groups of women. We are pleased that JMP will provide an official tax-receipt. Your help will have a very meaningful impact for these excellent women and their families.

Thank You!

Judith Marcuse



Photos by Claudine Pommier