



January 2009

Dear Friends of the Mali Assistance Project,

I would like to bring you up to date with the recent efforts of "The Mali Assistance Project (MAP)", founded in 1999. MAP was created to help the villagers of Foutaka Zambougou, Mali, West Africa, fight famine, drought, and disease; build a sustainable infrastructure for the future; and support education for boys and girls. MAP has supporting the school since 1999 with salaries for the teachers, funds for school materials - books, pencils, paper - and providing funds for village-style desks and benches to be built for the three classrooms, and blackboards.

This year, MAP is providing the funds to build a new school, and the villagers of Zambougou are providing all of the labor. A new school is required at this time because the old "traditional mud-brick" school built 35 years ago is now collapsing. In the past few months, MAP provided \$13,500 toward the materials (cement, sand, re-bar, etc.) for the villagers to make their own concrete bricks to build their new school. This new school should last 100 years or more. The foundation is poured and enough bricks have been made for the 4-classroom building to be constructed "half-way". As of now, the walls are built to the height of the roof.

We have a Malian engineer who volunteered to design the school. He also created a materials list with estimated costs. Another \$15,000 is necessary to buy the essential supplies to purchase windows, doors, and the metal roofing, and to finish the outside and inside with a stucco type of treatment.

We all know the importance of schools and education here in the US. A basic education and a high literacy rate are mandatory for any group of people to govern themselves in this highly complex world and to compete in economic markets. Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world. The peaceful population in Mali is vulnerable to outside influence. It is imperative for them to have the education to be able to make proper decisions for their community; for the people to be capable of communicating with their own government; to stand up for their rights; for young people to learn to create their own business or to learn the best agricultural model for their area; or to have options for a good occupation to raise and support a family.

Additionally, having a proper education ensures that the people of Mali will not fall victim to the influences of fanatical fundamentalist Jihad leaders, who are now making their way into African countries offering money to entice young men to join them. Without an education and options, innocent and naive villagers may not understand the dangers that may be presented to them.

Building this school, and then other schools in the villages of Mali, and in other areas of West Africa, has become of the utmost importance for the security of our world and for freedom and democracy in this area.

For all who have helped the Mali Assistance Project make many incredible, life-changing achievements thus far, we extend our deep appreciation. Given that our own economy is in upheaval at this time and for the unforeseeable future, it is a sacrifice to make contributions to non-profit organizations. With this understanding, any contribution you may be able to make to help to build this school would be most appreciated.

Please take a moment to read this NY Times article about Mali and the threats to its security and peace, and ultimately the threats to OUR security and peace as well.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/13/world/africa/13mali.html?ei=5070&emc=eta1>

With gratitude for your "moral support" and financial contributions.

Warm Regards,

Karen Marx, Founder and Executive Director of MAP in 1999  
Abdoul Doumbia, Master Drummer from Zambougou, Mali, Co-Founder of MAP

Tax-deductible donations to be made out to "The Mali Assistance Project"- and mailed to:

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