

Project Proposal

To: National Peace Corps Association

From: Friends of Burkina Faso

Project Title: The Lambs' Project: An educational program for young girls
in northern Burkina Faso

Date: September 29, 2004

Friends of Burkina Faso (FBF) is submitting this application for a Continuation of Service Grant of \$1000 with the goal of enabling 25 young girls in Burkina to embark upon and complete a 6-year primary educational program. The measurable one-year outcome for the success of this project will be the successful completion of the first year of school by the girls. The measurable outcome at the end of six years will be the number of girls having earned and received their primary school diploma. The long term impact of this project will be to enrich the lives of school participants and to enhance their ability to contribute to the different aspects of development in Burkina by strengthening the social fabric of society, gaining greater control over family planning and health, and by increasing their own productivity and that of their children.

The Friends of Burkina Faso is supporting the education of 200 girls who will be entering school for the first time this year under the "mouton ecole" or lambs project designed by a Burkinabe secondary school professor and a midwife, supervised by a local non-profit organization, called Nimbus, Enfance, Environnement, Education et Developpement (NEEED), and a supervisor board that manages NEEED funding and reports activities of the association. As there has been a greater demand from parents than can be met by funding this year, FBF would like very much to be able to provide support an additional 25 girls.

NEEED was formed in 1996 to close the gender gap in primary education within the Tangaye Department by enabling as many young village girls as project funds will allow to enter school. In Burkina, fewer girls than boys go to school because parents put higher value on boys' education than on girls' education.. They are, therefore, inclined to spend their very limited resources furthering male education. As a result, in 1996 only 12% of girls entered primary school as opposed to 38% of boys in the Tangaye Department (Yatenga Province) of Burkina Faso.

Education of young girls has been identified in the applied economic literature as key factor that fosters sustainable development. Development experts would universally agree with and applaud NEEED's focus on primary education for females. According to the UN, "Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process. Educating women has a more significant impact on poverty and development than men's education. It is also the most influential factor in improving child health and

reducing infant mortality”. According to USAID, “One of the most important findings ever in the development community is that investing in the education of girls yields high returns for economic and social development. Women who complete formal primary school education live very different lives from women who do not: they are healthier and their families are healthier; they have lower levels of fertility; and their children attain higher levels of education.

NEEED works with rural primary school teachers and village leaders to identify girls between the ages of 6-7 who wish to enter school. There are no financial criteria in the selection of students due to the uniformly high level of poverty in the region. The project is currently assisting over 1000 girls in 21 primary schools. Each girl may benefit from project support during her six years of primary education, provided that she does well in school. NEEED is increasingly solicited by neighboring villages to support the education of young girls in their communities. The percentage of girls beginning primary school has risen to 19% as opposed to 41% boys in 2004 due to NEEED’s assistance.

The mechanism that the Friends of Burkina Faso has adopted to advance the education of young girls is to provide financial backstopping via NEEED’s lamb project. FBF aims to provide seed money to enroll as many girls (6-7 year-olds entering school) each year as our funds will allow. The cost of supporting a young girl to complete six years of primary school via the lambs project is approximately \$40. This program is based upon the concept of self-help. The funds that are made available to each girl are used to purchase her school supplies for the first year and one set of clothing to wear to school, plus a lamb to raise. The girl and her parents assume financial responsibility for the remaining 5 years of primary school. This is accomplished by the family mobilizing household resources so that the girls have the time to go to school and so that the young girl’s lamb is well fed. Proceeds from the sale of the grown lamb at the end of the year provides the family with the money needed to school materials and a new lamb for the next year, plus a small sum which is returned to the NEEED to enable the organization to extend its outreach to other girls. The lambs project is sustainable, in part, by yearly lamb sales. It is also sustainable because of the commitment to education by the participating girls, their families, and the community.

Girls’ education programs are most sustainable when they are ‘owned’ by the country’s citizens, not by the donors, and when donor resources are used to mobilize the human and financial resources of a country in support of girls’ education. When citizens ‘own’ the issue of girls’ education, they become engaged in developing and carrying out solutions to increase girls’ educational opportunities”. The FBF/NEEED lambs project is highly sustainable by virtue of its design.

FBF has enabled 269 girls to begin schooling due to its support of the lambs project during the last two years. Only two girls who have had to repeat a year because of extended absences due to illness.

NEEED, originated with and run by Burkinabe, has taken on the important job of making it possible for girls from rural areas to achieve at least a primary education--the threshold level which must be reached before the positive effects of education can be seen, according to UN Fund for Population Activities. NEEED is asking for additional help this year to enable it to support an increasing number of girls whose families are asking that their daughters be given an opportunity for an education. We at FBF believe that this is an exciting opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to development in Burkina Faso. We invite the participation of the NPCA in this very worthwhile endeavor!

Project Budget

For the school year 2004-2005:

- Funds already committed to NEEDED \$9350
- Funds sought from NPCA: \$1000

Expenditure of funds per girl:

- School materials for the first year: \$15.00
- One set of clothing for the first year: \$5.00
- One lamb: \$19.00
- Funds set aside for treating sick lambs (as needed): \$1.00