

ENERGIZING A REFUGEE COMMUNITY THROUGH ART

Goudoubo Refugee Camp March 17 – June 27, 2014

FINAL REPORT

A project of Colors of Connection In partnership with Save the Children International

**COLORS OF
CONNECTION**



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ABOUT THIS REPORT

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I. Abstract

The Energizing a Refugee Community Through Art project co-sponsored by Colors of Connection and Save the Children International (SCI) began its implementation in Goudoubo Refugee Camp in Burkina Faso on March 17, 2014 and was completed on June 27, 2014. The mission of this project under the leadership of Christina Mallie and Laurie Reyman of Colors of Connection was to introduce the arts in this Malian refugee camp through the collaborative creation of murals that would foster a more vibrant civil society, and a sense of place, culture and representation for the Malian refugees living in the camp, while simultaneously nurturing hope,



Almoubarak, age 12 painting on the Peaceful Cohabitation Mural, June, 2014.

cultivating well-being and promoting development in Malian refugee youth aged 12-18. The youth participants with the support and guidance of 28 community leaders designed two murals. Themes for the murals were decided upon and developed by the community arts council, the first expressing the importance of education to their community, and the second expressing their desire for the peaceful cohabitation of ethnic groups in Northern Mali. Challenges were experienced in monitoring and evaluation and insufficient staff, both due to limited resources. Despite these challenges, we believe this project was uniquely successful in a number of ways: We attracted a large number of girls to the program and were able to focus on their needs and interests; we succeeded in attaining ethnic and socioeconomic diversity within the group of participants; and we provided some participants with their first experience with education. Thirty-four graduates received highly prized certificates of achievement, and the project was celebrated and lauded by the community leaders, community members, the UNHCR and participants alike. The youth experienced something new, were challenged and encouraged, and succeeded in creating two beautiful murals for which they were publicly acknowledged. Their community felt great pride in them, and their accomplishments led them to be confident and proud of themselves too. This project brought something special to the youth and community members of Goudoubo – a chance to express their values and hopes through public art.



Some examples of the many camel drawings that were made during the recruitment phase by potential project assistants and youth participants in the camp, March 2014.

II. Introduction

Colors of Connection proposed Energizing a Refugee Community Through Art, a public art and youth project co-sponsored by Colors of Connection and Save the Children International, in accordance with the necessary focus on vulnerable youth aged 12-18 in Goudoubo Refugee Camp. Energizing Refugee Communities Through Art aimed to address the identified needs of the youth in this age group: their desire to exercise adult responsibilities and roles and to become contributing adults in their communities, emotional needs such as feelings of isolation and hopelessness, and the necessity for a social structure in which they can express their emotions and age appropriate concerns. The project also intended to introduce behaviors intended to emphasize and model greater gender equality and respect for all ages within this age group. In addition, Energizing Refugee Communities Through Art aimed to address the challenges of displacement, cultural bereavement and disruption of community and social support networks experienced by the camp community in Goudoubo Refugee Camp, which lead to a sense of disempowerment.

A. Project Description and Goals

During this project 36 youth aged 12-18 (eighteen females and eighteen males) in Goudoubo Refugee Camp over the course of nine weeks were charged with the task of designing and painting two murals on two permanent structures in the camp under the guidance of the artistic director, social work director, and a newly developed community arts council, transforming public spaces into positive visualizations of their hopes for themselves and their community.

Energizing Refugee Communities Through Art had 6 goals: 1) To enable youth aged 12-18 to exercise adult responsibilities and roles and to become empowered and civically engaged members of their community. 2) To foster in youth aged 12-18 increased optimism, self-efficacy, and social competence. 3) To challenge gender and age discriminatory beliefs and behaviors in youth aged 12-18. 4) To aid youth aged 12-18 in processing age appropriate concerns and emotions through art. 5) To increase a sense of efficacy and belief in the benefits of civic engagement for community members. 6) To create a more vibrant civil society, and a sense of place, culture, and self-representation for residents of Goudoubo Refugee Camp.

Participants Feedy, age 15, and Kawela, age 18, in front of the Peaceful Cohabitation Mural. They met in the program and became friends though they came from very different backgrounds, Feedy, a White Touareg, grew up in Bamako, the capital city of Mali, and had 8 years of classic education; while Kawela, a Black Touareg, came from a small town in northern Mali and had 2 years of classic education and 2 years of Koranic education. Goudoubo Refugee Camp, Burkina Faso, June 2014.



B. Background of Conflict and Malian Refugee Camps

Goudoubo Refugee Camp was established by UNHCR in Burkina Faso in response to the political crisis in Mali that began in early 2012. The crisis stemmed from ongoing conflict between the Malian state and Northern Malian ethnic group, the Touareg, who have been fighting for an independent sovereign state since the 1960's. In March 2012, a coup by Malian armed forces created a power vacuum that enabled the Touareg rebel group, Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azawad (MNLA), to stage successful attacks by which they were able to overtake major towns in the north of the country.¹ The MNLA claimed an independent state, but soon after Islamist militant groups overpowered the MNLA and took control of the north. The crisis has created a drastically worsening situation for citizens of Mali already struggling with drought and food insecurity. Basic services to populations in the north are no longer available and humanitarian actors are prevented from entering the region due to the presence of armed groups.² Human rights violations in Mali have worsened, as both the Malian army and the Islamic armed forces have committed serious human rights abuses. It has been reported that Islamic Armed Forces have committed unlawful killings and conscripted child soldiers and the Malian army have carried out extrajudicial



Top: goats tethered to a tree where laundry hangs to dry, April 2014. Bottom: two girls wait to fill their water containers at a pump, Goudoubo Refugee Camp, Burkina Faso, March 2014.

¹ George, W.L. (April 16, 2012). Mali's irrevocable crisis. Aljazeera. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/04/201241572956363410.html>.

² UNHCR (2013). 2013 UNHCR country operations profile – Mali situation (Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso). UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e484e66.html>.

executions and forced disappearances.³ In addition a harsh form of Islamic Law in territories controlled by Islamic armed forces was imposed on populations. Hundreds of thousands of Malians fled their homes, and **while the intervention by France in January 2013 helped to drive Islamic armed forces from major towns in the north and return control of the north to the Malian government, reunification of the country, and peace and security has not yet been achieved.**⁴

C. Profile of Target Population



Talhamisse, a White Touareg youth participant, waits for class to begin at Save the Children International's Professional Training Center, the partnering organization for the project. At age 14, she had never attended school before and was pregnant. Her father was very supportive of her participation and she attained almost 100% attendance, April 2014.

Refugees in Goudoubo Refugee Camp are predominantly of the Touareg ethnic group (93 %). Other ethnic groups present in the camp are Arab (2%), Peuhl/Fulani (2%), and Songrhāï (less than 2%).⁵ During the implementation of this project approximately 9,000 refugees resided in Goudoubo Refugee Camp

³ Amnesty International (February 1, 2013). Mali first assessment of the human rights situation after three-week conflict. Amnesty International Publications. Electronic PDF.

⁴ Allen P., and C. Oliver (February 4, 2013). Mali- a brief history and latest developments. The Guardian. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/interactive/2013/jan/15/mali-africa-history-interactive>.

⁵ UNHCR (2014, October). Goudoubo Refugee Camp. UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency. Retrieved from <http://data.unhcr.org/SahelSituation/regional.php>.

and there were approximately 3,800 youth between the ages of 12-17.⁶ Research shows that for refugee youth above the age of 12 in refugee camps there are few opportunities to support their positive development, and they typically receive less attention and support from government and aid agencies than youth in the younger age group of 1-12.⁷ In Goudoubo Refugee Camp, youth aged 12-18 have little to no recreational opportunities nor do they have alternative spaces to process emotions from their recent experiences of escaping the violence of conflict, or to address age appropriate concerns. This lack of organized activities in the camp results in the youth having no consistent structure in their lives, which is essential to their well-being. Not only are they dealing with the trauma they've suffered from having to leave their homes to escape danger, but it has been identified that refugee youth aged 12-18 also experience a sense of loneliness, depression, and hopelessness related to the fact that they generally feel that they have no control over their employment, relationships, and educational prospects.⁸ **The societal and cultural processes that aid youth in developing from children into contributing adults are disrupted when they become refugees, and the critical need for adult and peer support for this age group is lacking. These youth are a vulnerable group in the camp with few opportunities to engage in meaningful activities that can transform their lives.**

Within this age group, discriminatory practices against females and younger adolescents, both male and female, also affect their well-being. **Gender discrimination is high in Mali, according to the Social Institutions and Gender Index, Mali rates 86 out of 86, having the highest gender discrimination of 86 countries profiled.** Gender discrimination has resulted in many harmful practices against women: women have limited rights, violence against women is widely accepted, marriage at a young age is common despite laws that prohibit it, and female circumcision is widely practiced.⁹ As a result of a combination of limited resources and gender discrimination, the development of girls is given less priority than boys. According to Children's Rights Information Network, in contexts of poverty, "girls have less access to food, attention, education and play. They also have fewer opportunities to express themselves and may be taken less seriously, all of which can contribute to stunting their physical and social development."¹⁰

Age discrimination, the low status accorded to childhood and practiced in most societies, is also a familiar practice in Mentao Refugee Camp. In Mali, as in many African and Asian cultural contexts, a

⁶ UNHCR (2014, February 17). Synthèse des données des réfugiés au Burkina Faso par Site/Camp: Goudoubo. UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency. Retrieved from <http://data.unhcr.org/SahelSituation/regional.php>.

⁷ Maguire, S. (2012). Putting adolescents and youth at the centre. Being Young and Out of Place. Forced Migration Review, 08, 4-5. Electronic PDF.

⁸ Sandvik-Nylund, M. and Anna S., (2012). Participation of adolescents in protection: dividends for all. Being Young and Out of Place. Forced Migration Review, 08, 9. Electronic PDF.

⁹ Social Institutions and Gender Index (2012). Mali. Social Institutions and Gender Index. Retrieved from <http://genderindex.org/country/mali>.

¹⁰ Child Rights Information Network (2009). Guide to non-discrimination and the CRC. Child Rights Information Network. 3-7. Electronic PDF.

strict age hierarchy exists,¹¹ governed by the notion of “respect,” and is the strongest social hierarchy that exists in Malian society. As described by social anthropologist Liza Debevec, “respect is due to anyone older, and the older person can demand a service from anyone younger.”¹² Elders and older youth can exploit these cultural norms to coerce younger youth and children to perform manual labor, and deny them decision-making power on decisions that affect their well-being.¹³ This form of discrimination can also prevent younger youth and children from claiming rights to which they are entitled, which can put them at risk for abuse and neglect,¹⁴ and in more extreme cases can lead to physical or sexual abuse.¹⁵

Although the modality of “respect” differs between areas and social groups, there are substantial commonalities throughout sub-Saharan Africa. In a study in Namibia that examined the social positions of men and children, one adolescent girl expressed her frustration with this hierarchy: “It is not easy. Children get no respect as humans from adults... [you have to respect] all of them, but I think respect must be mutual, not all of them deserve it, they are rude and sometimes ignore us as children.”¹⁶ This statement clearly shows that while sub-Saharan African youth and children may be accustomed to age discrimination, they are not impervious to its harm.

In addition to the specific challenges faced by the vulnerable youth population, there are other adversities experienced by the entire community of refugees in Mentao Refugee Camp. This includes displacement, cultural bereavement and the disruption of community and social support networks.¹⁷ Residents of refugee camps generally have little to no role in the governance of the refugee camp and in the design and organization of the space and activities in their community. They also have few venues and forms of media for self-representation within their community or to the world outside of the camp. Humanitarian aid workers usually represent them outside the camp.

¹¹ Richter, L., A. Dawes, and C. Higson-Smith eds. (2004). Sexual abuse of young children in southern Africa. Cape Town, South Africa: HSRC Press. 95-103.

¹² Debevec, L. (2011). To share or not to share: hierarchy in the distribution of family meals in urban Burkina Faso. Slovene Anthropological Society. Electronic PDF.

¹³ Richter, and Higson-Smith eds. 95-103. (see footnote 10).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Jewkes, R., Penn-Kekana, L., & Rose-Junius, H. (2005). “If they rape me, I can’t blame them”: Reflections on gender in the social context of child rape in South Africa and Namibia. *Social Science and Medicine* 61: 1809-20.

¹⁷ Brundtland, G. H. (2012). Mental health of refugees, internally displaced persons and other populations affected by conflict. World Health Organization. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/hac/techguidance/pht/mental_health_refugees/en/.

III. Project Activities

The project involved bi-weekly classes with participants to cover key lessons on basic art skills and psychosocial arts activities, followed by the design and painting of the themed murals. Youth

participants received oversight from 28 community members from the camp who were brought together in the form of a community arts council to advise the project, ensuring full community participation and investment. Themes for the murals were decided upon and developed by the community arts council, the first expressing the between ethnic groups in Northern Mali. The community arts council members met at various stages of the

development of the mural design and painting in order to guide the youth participants in the creation of the murals. The youth participants also used photographs of people in their community that they took themselves or with project assistants, and incorporated these images into the murals to bring an aspect of realism to the people painted in the mural. The photos were composed to resemble the ideas expressed in the designs, and were used as references while they painted the murals.

Throughout the duration of the project, arts activities aimed at addressing the psychosocial needs and adversities that these youth are facing due to their circumstances were integrated into the arts lessons. Activities and assignments were completed in an art journal that was regularly shared with the group and reflected on as a means to further internalize the lessons learned. All project activities were governed by a code of conduct collaboratively established at the beginning of the project, which among other things, created an environment free from discrimination and where respect of every member of the group was expected.

In order to increase sustainability of appreciation and use of the arts in Goudoubo Refugee Camp, Artistic Director Mallie was assisted by two youth artists. The artistic director trained them in how to



Social Work Director, Laurie Reyman, starts class with a review of the homework and prizes for the first three who did it correctly and were the earliest to class. Homework was an opportunity for Mallie and Reyman to learn more about the participants' life experiences and emotional well-being, April 2014.



Drawings by the participants on how they visualize peaceful cohabitation, a step toward creating the Peaceful Cohabitation Mural, included depictions of children going to school, vehicles returning home to Mali, brewing tea for a guest, and people herding animals near a village, April 2014.

teach basic arts skills, and how to organize, instruct and execute a community arts project. The youth artists accompanied Artistic Director Mallie on the field during the project and received training on non-field days. In addition, two youth were trained by the artistic director in photography and video and assisted the artistic director and social work director in documenting the project activities and monitoring and evaluation. **This project placed much faith in the therapeutic and transformative power of art for individuals and communities in distress, and in the ability of community arts projects to inspire further positive actions by the community.**

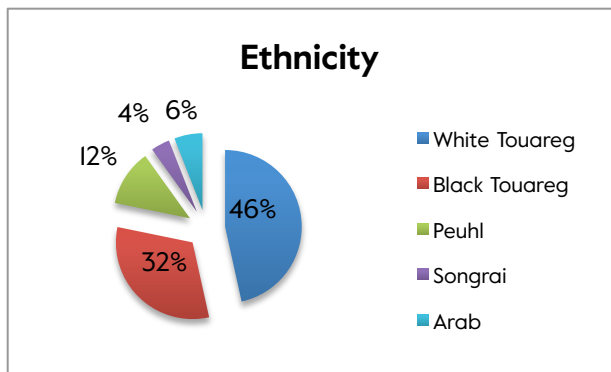
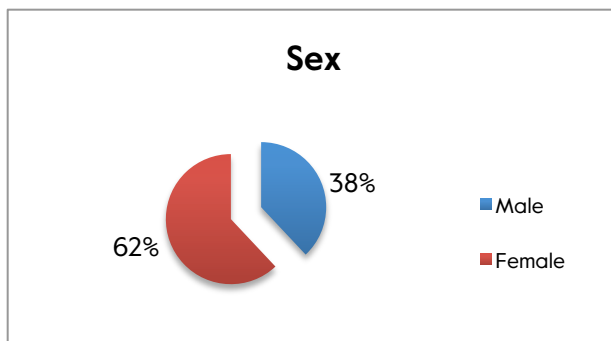
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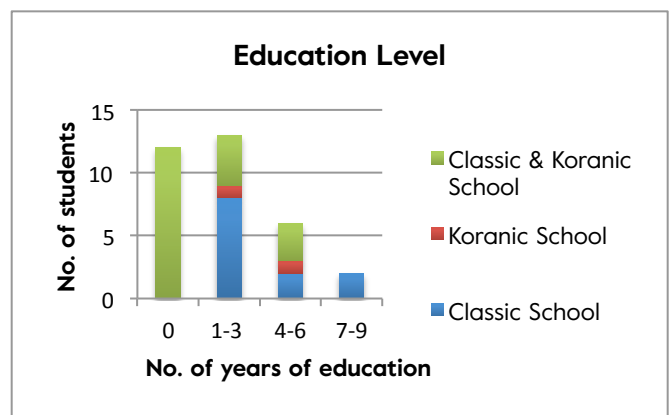
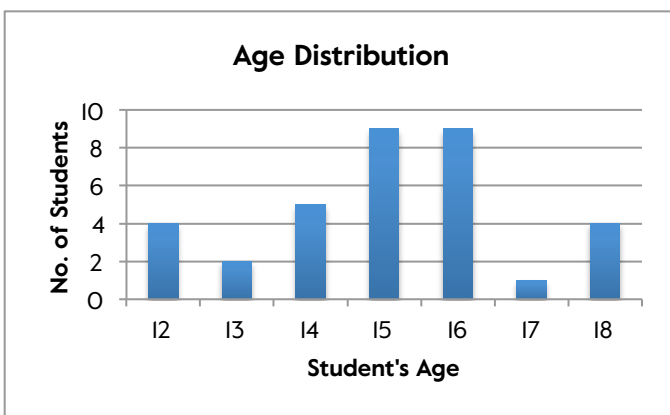
Above: Social Work Director, Laurie Reyman, holds a discussion with one group of participants after they completed a body mapping exercise. The discussion centered on how the body is affected by war and how it can be used to create peace, June, 2014. Right: A self-portrait exercise designed for the apprehensive drawer, this is a self-portrait of Sagda, age 14, created from a black and white photo of her decorated with crayons and sequins, April 2014.



Of the 36 youth enrolled in the project 34 graduated. Among the 34 there were 21 females and 13 males. This was the first time in the organization's history that project participants were predominantly female. Described further in project highlights, this provided a rare dynamic for the project to focus more on the perspective of females in activities and discussions. We succeeded in representing the complex social composition of the camp also described further in project highlights. The ethnic composition of the participants included 16 White Touareg, 11 black Touareg, 2 Arab, 4 Peuhl, and 1 Songraï. Their ages ranged from 12-18. Twenty of the participants were between the ages of 12 to 15, and 14 were between the ages of 16 to 18. The participants had different classic education levels (which is based on Western educational systems) ranging from none to high school. Fifteen participants had never attended a classic school, 12 had attended school at the primary level



(grades 1-5), 5 had attended school at the junior high level (grades 6-8) and 2 were at the level of entering high school but did not have any secondary school to attend in the camp (grades 9-12). **None of the participants were enrolled in school during the project.** Some participants had attended Koranic school in addition to or instead of a classic school. Of the 34 participants, 24 had never attended Koranic school, 6 had attended for 1-3 years, and 4 had attended for 3-6 years. Including both education in Western schools and Koranic schools, there were 12 who had never attended a school of any kind. Coming from an almost completely rural and pastoral background with minimal educational facilities, these youth engaged in trying something new and unfamiliar, and experienced the excitement, responsibilities and rewards of learning in a classroom environment and achievement. (More about this can be found in the project highlights.)



Haroune, age 16, at the Peaceful Cohabitation Mural site, June 2014. With a background of 5 years of Classic and Koranic education, Haroune was one of the exceptions in the group who had several years of education and could easily draw and paint.



As part of introductory meetings with community leaders, Artistic Director Christina Mallie and Social Worker Director Laurie Reyman meet with the leader of Bloc B, front and center, Mohamed Ag Almahadi, to gain community support for the project. Mohamed, with 20 other bloc leaders, formed a community arts council to guide the project that also included women and youth leaders, 2014.

Twenty-eight community leaders made up the community arts council that advised and guided the project throughout the duration of implementation. These community members contributed to the creation of the murals that aimed to improve their community and that expressed their communal hopes and dreams. The Council was made up of 20 elected representatives of the 20 different blocks that made up the camp, only one of whom was a woman, four representatives of the women and four representatives of the youth, two of whom were female. Matching the ethnic make up of the camp, the Council members were largely Touareg (25 members) with one representative of each of the other ethnic groups: Peuhl, Arab and Songrhai.



The Education Mural, created by the youth of Goudoubo, at the Central Office, Goudoubo Refugee Camp, June 2014.

About the Education Mural:

- Education was chosen as one of the themes by the community leaders because it is still not seen as valuable by much of the population. For a largely nomadic people who live off of their animals, such as the Touareg and Peuhl, the idea of attending school has historically been seen as unnecessary and useless, requiring a complete change in ways of living, and this mentality persists today. Schools are few and far between in Northern Mali, making access very difficult. This makes it challenging even for the more sedentary people, such as the Songrhaï and Arabs who largely rely on agriculture and business respectively. In the mid 20th century in Mali, the colonial French

government forcibly took children from their families in order to put them in school, essentially kidnapping them. One of the participant's fathers, Oussmane Ag Souleymane, described being taken from his family at the age of 10 to be enrolled in a school. On the journey there he tried to run away but they tied his foot to a large rock. His family took him back and tried to hide him in the desert but the authorities found him again and reenrolled him. Oussmane's father died the year he was taken and Oussmane never saw him again. After Oussmane was taken his family relocated, and moved outside of the town where he lived. Despite the trauma he experienced, he went on to finish his education, and became a government employee and is a huge advocate of education today, including for girls. (More can be read about him below.) This is a typical story of the colonial era and demonstrates the complicated relationship these populations have with education. Regardless, community leaders are convinced that education is one of the only ways to improve their communities and wanted to advocate for education through the mural.

- The Education Mural depicts different types of education, both Koranic and Classic. On the right, a marabout teaches children in front of a mosque. In the center and left of the mural a teacher in a primary school helps a student to write "Bonjour" and "Matolahad," which mean "Good morning" in French and Tamacheck respectively. Next to a school building, a woman prepares lunch for the school canteen. The community arts council identified portraying the feeding of students as an important motivation for both the students and parents for the children to attend school. Pictured below the school building, a father takes his child to school following behind other children on their way as well, indicating that parents need to support their children in attending classes. The classic education system at the university level is also represented in the top center part of the mural, in which a university building resembling the University of Bamako in Mali is shown with two students approaching it. Two former students in the camp who studied at the University of Bamako were photographed for this part of the mural. They both hope to return to the University when the crisis is over.
- The mural depicts types of work valued by the community that are possible through education. The three that were chosen by the community arts council were: a doctor, a customs official, and a lawyer. Fadimata Wallet Haiballa, a block leader in the camp, posed for a photo of the lawyer. While not a lawyer herself, she is one of the few literate women in the camp and therefore holds a prominent position as the chief of her block as well as a leader among the women. She is an advocate for minority groups and women in her community in Northern Mali and in the camp. Oussmane Ag Souleymane, a retired Malian customs officer with a 37-year tenure, posed for the photo of the customs official. It was important for the community arts council to show that members of their own community could have positions in government, which would be a step towards greater representation of this population in government in Northern Mali.

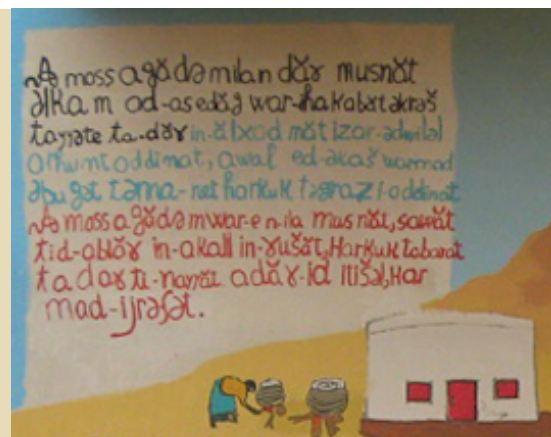
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- People pictured in the mural have both light and dark skin tones in order to show inclusion of multiple ethnic groups in the education system. This is a prominent issue in Northern Mali because those with lighter skin, the Touareg, have been, and are currently being discriminated against and targeted for acts of violence.
- Equal opportunities for women in education are also shown in the mural. Throughout the various forms of learning and employment depicted in the mural women and girls are included, as gender equality is another prominent issue amongst the population of the Camp.
- A poem about the importance of education was written in Arabic specifically for the mural by Sidi Hamd Ag Mohamed Ahmed, a Touareg poet in the camp. The complete poem was written on the mural in Tamacheck, the dominant language in the Camp, with excerpts included in French, Songhai, Arab and Peuhl. It is translated here in English.

Education Mural Poem

An intellectual has to act with clarity and a great sense of responsibility to lead his people and benefit from the admiration of all. His expressions must be relevant, worthy, and admired by others.

Ignorance is tantamount to a piece of clay between the rocks, which erodes in the winter rains. Every time a person walks on the eroding path, the path becomes more and more dangerous until it arrives at its ultimate decline.





The Peaceful Cohabitation Mural, created by the youth of Goudoubo, at the Community Center, Goudoubo Refugee Camp, June 2014.

About the Peaceful Cohabitation Mural

- Given the violence that engulfed Northern Mali and drove the refugees out of their homes, it is easy to understand the reason why the community leaders chose peace as the theme for the second mural. Although the conflict is often simplified to portray a conflict between the southern and northern ethnicities, as well as between the dominant darker skinned tribes versus the lighter skinned Touaregs, it is complex, with violence being perpetrated by all sides, and mutable and complicated allegiances to religion, politics, ethnicities, etc. Although all of the families in the camp had been forced to leave their homes and were equal in terms of the loss and trauma they had suffered, there were many prejudices and conflicts among the ethnic groups in the camp as well. The leaders therefore wanted to portray a message of peace that would serve bring the community together. The mural unifies multiple ideas provided by the community arts council on what peaceful cohabitation between different ethnic groups in Mali looks like.

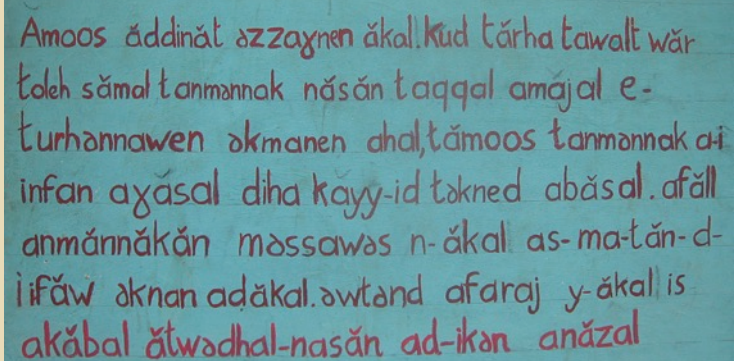
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- Different ways of showing hospitality to strangers and celebrating together are shown: In the center is a celebration attended by people of different ethnic groups including the White and Black Touareg, Arab, Peuhl and Songrhaï. Photographs were taken at a marriage celebration in the camp and the griot playing music, as well as the two women dancing in the center, are based on these photographs. In the upper part of the mural a father and son slaughter a goat to prepare food for an honored guest, two men shake hands as a sign of friendship and peace, and one man prepares tea for another man, also indicating friendship and peace. On the lower part of the mural a camel race is taking place, showing that the community is at peace and able to have festive activities. Camel races are an important tradition for this community.
- On the upper part of the mural, village life is shown with different types of houses built by the different ethnic groups. On the left are Touareg and Arab houses, in the center are Peuhl houses, and on the right are Songrhaï houses.
- Throughout the upper part of the mural the Touareg, Arab, Peuhl and Songrhaï are shown doing work within a diverse community that is typical to their ethnic group. The Touareg milk a camel, the Peuhl herd cattle, the Songrhaï cultivate the land, the Arab sells goods from a shop, and women from the different ethnic groups return together to the village with water from a pump.
- A poem about peaceful cohabitation was written in Arabic specifically for the mural by Sidi Hamd Ag Mohamed Ahmed, a Touareg poet in the camp. The complete poem was written on the mural in Tamacheck, the dominant language in the Camp, with excerpts included in French, Songrhaï, Arab and Peuhl. It is translated here in English.

Peaceful Cohabitation Mural Poem

They are the people of the land, no matter the different languages they speak. Social cohesion and agreement is the remedy against all their ills.

Reconciliation is a solution in the case of an injury, especially with everything is broken. If the people are in solidarity, they will live happily one day and they will be the pillars of the land as a result of their contributions.



Amoos äddinät azzaynen äkal. Kud tärha tawalt wär
toleh sämal tanmannak nāsän taqqal amajal e-
turhannawen äkmanen ahal, tämoos tanmannak äi
infan ayäsal diha kayy-id takned abäsal. afäll
anmännäkän mäsawäs n-äkal. as-ma-tän-d-
lifäw äknan adäkal. äwtänd afaraj y-äkal. is
akäbal ätwadhal-nasän ad-ikan anäzal

IV. Results and Outcomes

A. Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of this project were:

1. Youth aged 12-18 would experience an increase in civic engagement behavior and a belief in the benefits of civic engagement.

This outcome would be indicated through 12 youth becoming civically engaged in camp activities within three months of the end of the project, and 30 youth would demonstrate a belief in the benefits of civic engagement.

2. Youth aged 12-18 would experience increased levels of optimism and improved self-efficacy and social competence.

This outcome would be indicated through 24 youth being more hopeful about their future than they were at the beginning of the project, 24 youth demonstrating greater resilience and motivation in the areas of planning their future, feeling independent and being able to handle hardship, and 24 youth demonstrating an improvement in navigating and managing social situations and interactions in a constructive, non-violent manner.

3. Youth aged 12-18 would experience heightened cognitive dissonance regarding gender equality and equal respect of all age groups.

This outcome would be indicated through 18 youth reflecting on modeled behaviors of gender equality and demonstrating heightened cognitive dissonance regarding the issue, and 18 youth reflecting on modeled behaviors of equal respect of age groups and demonstrating heightened cognitive dissonance regarding the issue.

4. Youth aged 12-18 would experience constructive processing and representation of emotions and age appropriate concerns through art.

This outcome would be indicated through 25 youth constructively processing and representing through art their emotions and age appropriate concerns.

5. Community members would experience an increased sense of efficacy and belief in the benefits of civic engagement.

This outcome would be indicated through 20 members of the community arts councils demonstrating an increased sense of empowerment and increased belief in the benefits of civic engagement.

6. Residents of Goudoubo Refugee Camp would experience a more vibrant civil society and an increased sense of place, culture and self-representation.

This outcome would be indicated through 20 members of the community arts councils participating in creating a more vibrant civil society and 75 camp residents demonstrating an increased sense of place, culture and self-representation.

B. Methodology for Measuring Expected Outcomes

Monitoring of outcomes was done in four ways:

I. Visual and Auditory Data Collection

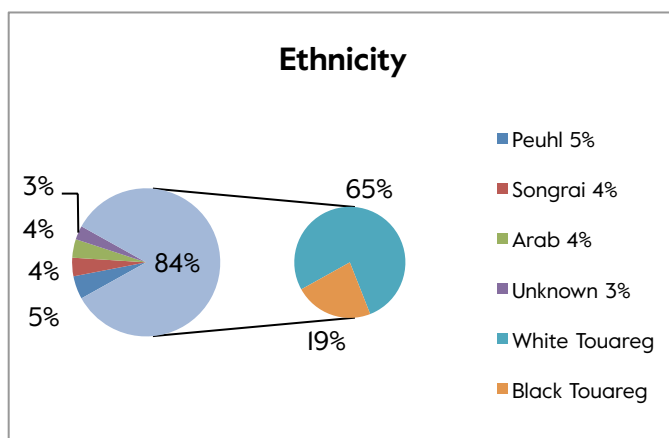
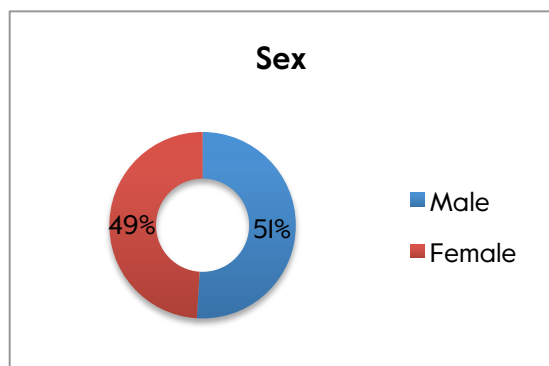
Photographs and videos were taken throughout the project. The video camera was used to record the murals in progress, tracking the visual changes. In addition, four participants were followed with a video camera to record their daily activities and interviewed by the Social Work Director, Laurie Reyman, to gain insight into the lives of the youth and how the project impacted the participants. The Social Work Director also interviewed eight community members chosen for their leadership roles, because they were represented in the murals, or both, in order to gain insight into the culture and community life, and the issues that were being addressed in the two murals.

Interviews Conducted				
Name	Sex	Ethnicity	Age	Occupation
Boubacar Ould Sid	Male	Arab	49	Businessman and Arab businessman represented in Peaceful Cohabitation Mural
Fadimata Wallet Haiballa	Female	White Touareg	??	Community leader, businesswoman and image of the lawyer in the Education Mural
Feedy Wallet Souleymane	Female	White Touareg	15	CofC Program Participant
Issa Alou	Male	Peuhl	17	CofC Program Participant
Langache Wallet Ifat	Female	Black Touareg	26	Housewife & Dancer represented in center of Peaceful Cohabitation Mural
Malik Ag Agali	Male	Black Touareg	40	Griot and Griot represented playing the guitar, called a Tehardent, in the Peaceful Cohabitation Mural
Mohamed Ag Attegal	Male	White Touareg	58	Community leader and Man Pouring Tea represented in the Peaceful Cohabitation Mural
Mossa Ag Ahmoudou	Male	White Touareg	16	CofC Program Participant
Ousayid Ag Sidi Ahmed	Male	White Touareg	24	Teacher
Ousmane Ag Souleymane	Male	White Touareg	68	Retired Malian Customs Official and customs official represented in Education Mural
Rhissa Al Hader	Male	White Touareg	??	Marabou (Islamic religious leader)
Soumaïyata Touré Mohamed	Female	Songhraï	18	CofC Program Participant

2. Pre and Post Questionnaires

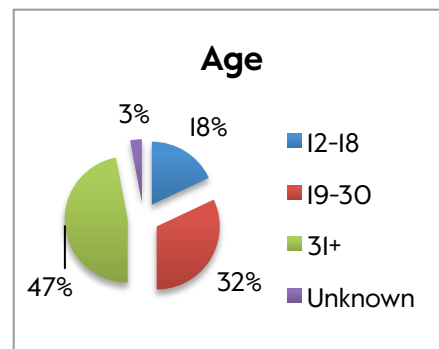
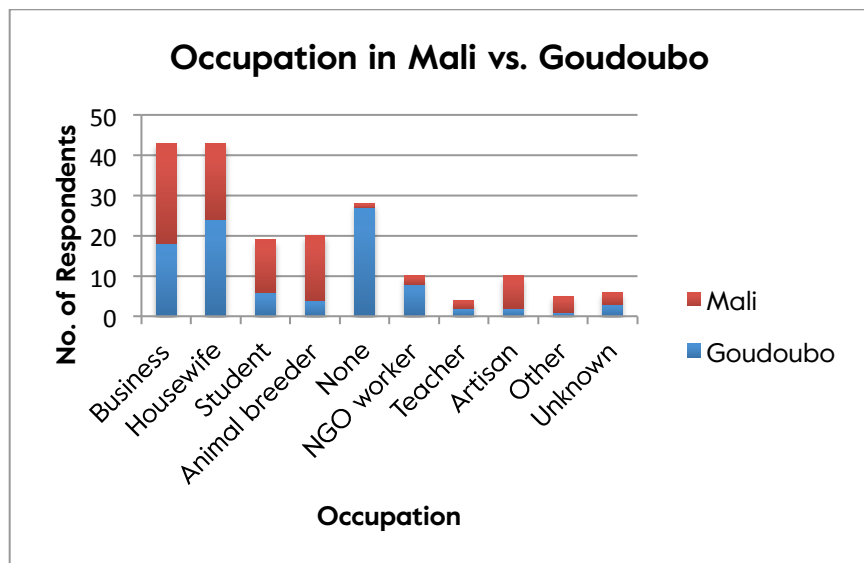
A pre and post questionnaire was done with 95 residents of Goudoubo, 20 members of the Community Arts Council, and 75 randomly selected individuals. The questionnaire contained questions regarding their opinions about the impact of the project on themselves, the participants and the community as a whole, their sense of civil society in the camp community, and their sense of place, culture and representation by and for the refugees within camp community. Enumerators not associated with the project conducted the questionnaire to ensure an unbiased response.

In line with the ethnic make up of the camp, the majority of those interviewed, 84%, were Touareg. Although camp demographic information does not break the Touareg population down into White and Black, we did so knowing the history of the Touareg people and the socioeconomic differences associated with skin color amongst this group. Historically, the Black Touareg were slaves to the White Touareg, and although slavery has officially been abolished, many of the prejudices associated with this persist and continue to result in socioeconomic disparity between the two groups. Therefore, 65% of those interviewed were White Touareg and 19% were Black Touareg. This does not necessarily reflect the correct proportion of White to Black Touareg living in the camp, but given as this is not known, we chose this number only to ensure we heard the opinions of both groups. The other ethnic groups interviewed included the Peuhl, 5%, the Songhraï, 4%, and the Arab, 4%.

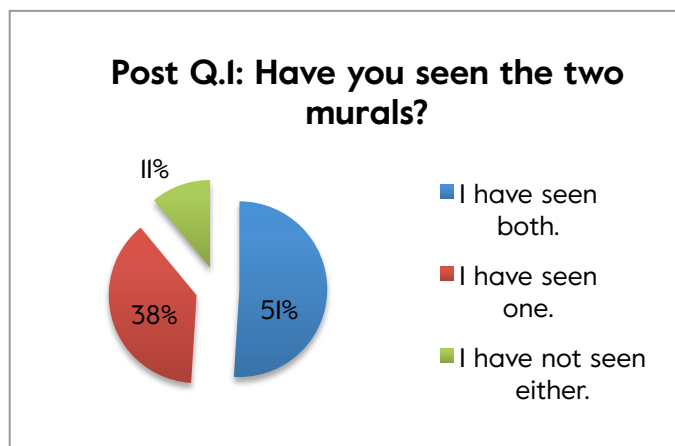


Fifty-one percent of those interviewed were male and forty-nine percent were female. This is also in keeping with the proportion of men to women in the Camp. Forty-seven percent of respondents were 31 years old or older, 32% were between the ages of 19 and 30, and 18% were between the ages of 12 and 18. We also gathered information about the interviewee's occupation, both in the Camp and in Mali. Most noteworthy is the difference between those who reported having no occupation in the Camp, 27 of the 95, versus 1 of 95 in Mali. Also of interest is that the number of women reporting themselves as housewives decreases from 24 in the camp to 19 in Mali. The number of individuals reporting themselves to be students in Mali, 13, is less than half of that number in the camp: six, and the number of those doing animal breeding in Mali is four times that of those in the camp, 16:4. Unsurprisingly, the number of those working with NGOs is significantly higher in the camp,

eight in the camp compared to two in Mali.



The first question of the survey inquired whether the interviewee had seen the two murals in the Camp. Fifty-one percent of respondents reported having seen both the Peaceful Cohabitation Mural and the Education Mural, 38% had seen one or the other, and 11% had not seen either. A large majority of respondents, 89%, had therefore been exposed to the project through seeing the murals.



3. Self-Reported Measurements

Participants kept an art journal where they completed bi-weekly art activities and assignments. The journals were regularly shared with the group and the directors, and reflected on as a means to further internalize the lessons learned, which addressed the key goals of processing emotions and age appropriate concerns, and fostering increased optimism, self-efficacy and social competence. Participants also completed a self-portrait activity at the beginning and end of the project. In the beginning of the project they drew a portrait of themselves as they were at beginning of the project

and a portrait as they imagined they would feel at the end of the project. At the end of the project they completed the same activity, drawing themselves as they felt at the beginning of the project and then as they felt at the time of completing the project. This activity was intended to give information about the participant's ability for self-awareness, the link between thoughts, emotions and behaviors, and the process of change.¹⁸

4. Written Observations

The artistic director and social work director monitored each participant in regard to their civic engagement, optimism, self-efficacy, gender and age equality, and emotional engagement.

C. Actual Outcomes

I. Youth aged 12-18 experienced an increase in civic engagement behavior and a belief in the benefits of civic engagement.

During the project youth participants had the opportunity to experience the benefits of being civically engaged. Through their participation in this project that worked to positively transform their community, we observed that this experience led to an increase in civic engagement behavior and in belief in the benefits of civic engagement. The public nature of this work meant that the 34 students were recognized by community members as being the youth who had created the murals. The post community survey showed that 79% of respondents believed that the project positively affected the community, therefore the youths' involvement reflected positively on them as well, leading to a status of increased importance and pride. Ninety-three percent of survey respondents reported positive feelings when looking at the murals, with 15% of those reporting that they felt that way because the murals were the work of their own youth who had worked very hard, and 5% reporting it was because their youth had worked well together despite being from different ethnicities. The graduation ceremony where the youth received certificates and were publically lauded for their work served to further validate their pride in what they had accomplished and exposed them to the admiration and appreciation of the community at large as well the agencies working in the camp. The head of UNHCR in the Sahel came herself to the ceremony to express her admiration for the project and the work that the youth had completed. This positive feedback showed them that their efforts made a difference in their community, which we believe helped them internalize the benefits of being civically engaged. In interviews with Issa, Feedy and Soumaiyata, they all expressed that the community members recognized them after having been involved in the project and they felt proud because of this.

¹⁸ Activity borrowed from: Hamama, L. & Ronen, T. (2009). Children's drawings as a self-report measurement. *Child and Family Social Work* 14: 90-102.

2. Youth aged 12-18 experienced increased levels of optimism and improved self-efficacy and social competence.

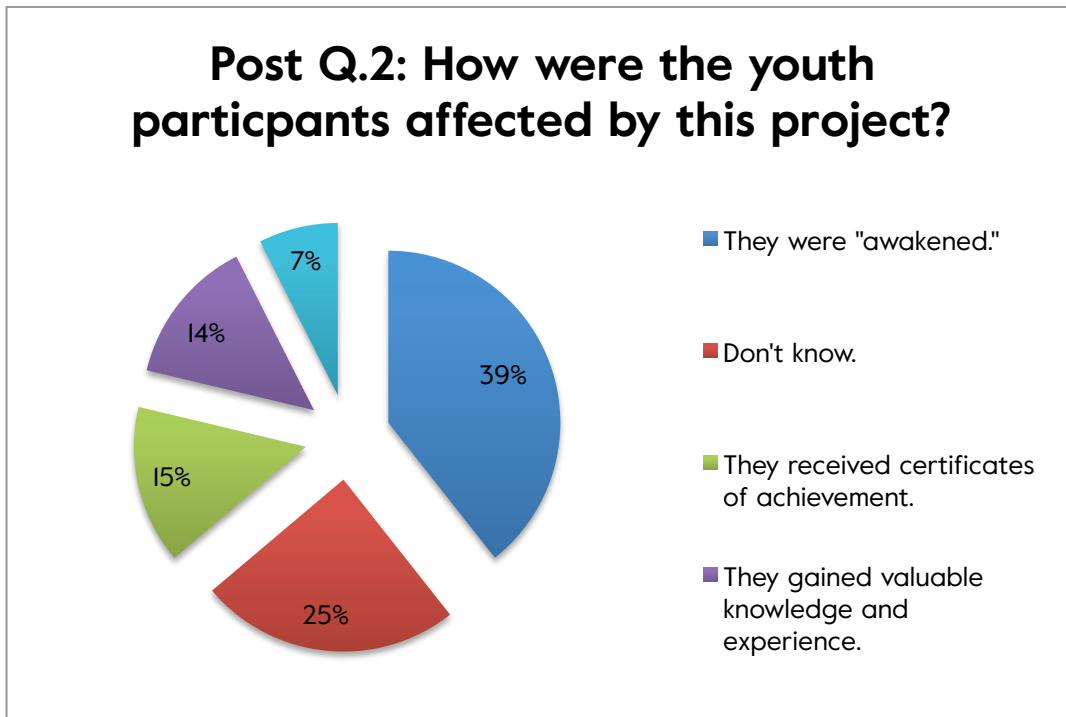
Participation in the project encouraged optimism about the future through engaging the youth in an activity that provided a social structure and adult and peer support, and through enabling the youth to positively transform their surroundings and express their hopes and dreams through art, which contributed to their well-being. Our participants had diverse personalities, some being outgoing and energetic and others being quiet and painfully shy. Twelve of the thirty-four graduates had never been to school before and therefore had never experienced a formal learning environment, which is significant because they were experiencing something completely foreign to them and had a lot of expectations placed on them. Thirty-three of the thirty-four graduates reported not knowing how to draw prior to the course and they all reported that they learned a lot and were happy to have participated. Two of the girls even reported never having used a pencil prior to coming to the course, and we believe there were more who also were new to pencils and drawing implements based on the skill level we saw from many of the participants. The fact that our 34 graduates persevered, even though at first the majority were scared that they could not draw or paint and were worried they wouldn't understand (self-reported), shows that their confidence and belief in their own ability to succeed grew throughout the duration of the course. Even one of our most competent students, Haroune, stated that at the beginning he thought he wouldn't succeed. For some, the difference between their willingness to participate at the beginning versus the end was substantial. For a few, specifically four girls Fatti, Aminatou, Gidatta and Bintou, they never completely overcame their timidity and hesitation to try the painting, although even they persisted by attending the classes and were responsive to requests for their participation. The fact that they continued to come despite the challenges they experienced with the technical skills required demonstrates that they were getting something that they needed and wanted from the course.

For many students, they indicated that the social aspect of the course was one of the things they most appreciated. This is quite significant given the language barriers in the course. The directors spoke to the assistants and a few of the students in French, which was then translated into Tamacheck, the language of the Touareg who were the dominant ethnicity in the camp. However, we also had youth from the other ethnicities in the camp, and two Peuhl boys and two Arab girls understood little to no Tamacheck or French, and so relied on others in the course to help them understand what was being said. Despite this barrier, they all participated and one Peuhl boy in particular, Boubacar, had no trouble communicating with everyone through humorous gestures and sounds. He quickly became the class clown and seemed to enjoy the role. In her interview, **Feedy reported having no friends prior to the course and feeling very lonely. But her involvement in the course allowed her to establish friendships that continued outside of the course itself. She reported feeling much happier with her life in the camp because of this. Issa reported feeling afraid to be around people from the other ethnicities before attending the course, but due to his interactions with the youth from other ethnicities in the program, he said he was no longer afraid of them because he understood them better, and they**

knew him better too. Soumaïyata reported that her participation in the course gave her the courage to go out in her community more and interact with people. She said prior to the course she spent a lot of time in her house, but because of the confidence the program gave her, she was much more sociable. The directors can attest to this fact, as we always seemed to see her out and about in the camp, no matter where we were or what we were doing. The youth, even the more timid ones, thrived on the social structure and support the program provided and they indicated that they appreciated being part of a group and the opportunity to make new friends.

One of the most powerful examples of increased optimism, self-efficacy and social competence among the participants is that of Kawela, a boisterous and happy Black Touareg girl, who had only two years of schooling. In order to increase ownership of the murals by the participants, all of their names are written in an area of the mural. One of the assistants was tasked with writing the names on the wall and then each participant would paint the letters of their own name. Kawela however, insisted on writing her own name as well as painting it. Even though it was not as well written as the other names, the pride and ownership that she demonstrated through this simple act leaves us with no doubt that this program built her confidence and made her feel that she had made an important contribution to something of significance for her community.

The community survey asked respondents how they believed the project had affected the youth participants. 15% focused on the fact that the students had received certificates of achievement, a rare and prized item in the camp, 14% stated that they had gained valuable knowledge and experience and another 7% said that their experience will make them more employable. All of these are positive outcomes for the youth. **Furthermore, a surprising 39% said that the youth had been “awakened.” This is a very powerful description and while they did not choose to expand on this word, common interpretation would suggest that the respondents believed that the project had exposed the youth to new and valuable experiences and knowledge, and this exposure had presented new and important opportunities for them.** This powerful imagery suggests that the youth did indeed experience increased levels of optimism, self-efficacy and social competence. One of the youth’s peers, Moussa Mohamed said about the murals, “I feel proud, I am happy because I have hope for the future.”



3. Youth aged 12-18 experienced heightened cognitive dissonance regarding gender equality and equal respect of all age groups.

Understanding that gender and age discrimination is an issue that spans all sectors of society and has deep roots in the dominant religious and cultural beliefs and practices of the target populations, Colors of Connection recognizes our limited capacity to address this issue in an all-encompassing way. However, we believe that our project contributed to addressing it through the more subtle means of modeling gender equality and equal respect of all age groups throughout the project. By establishing codes of conduct at the beginning of the project, which included a rule that all participants would equally respect each other, we encouraged youth to behave in ways that demonstrated these beliefs and attitudes. The youth were required to work collaboratively with each other across age and gender differences, all doing the same types of work, and were encouraged to treat each other equally. **Fatimatou Mint Taleb, an 18-year-old Arab female, observed that, “I feel proud because the murals are the work of our youth, and specifically our girls.”**

The social work director had a specific conversation with the participants intended to make them think about gender roles and how and why these are the way they are. To do this, she asked the students what the difference was between the boys and girls in the course. The differences they described were largely around types of work as these are completely defined by gender in the populations we were working with. She then asked them what would happen if one day everyone decided that the men would

do the work of the women and the women would do the work of the men. After some discussion everyone agreed that generally each sex could do the work of the other with no great trouble and that things would go on as normal, without any great upheaval in productivity. The girls stated that the women did the work of the men when they were gone anyway. Even Haroune, a White Touareg boy of 16, who was initially very insistent that this scenario was not possible, eventually agreed that they *could* do they work of the other sex, but that he just didn't *want* to. Once this had been established, she asked if there was any work that the other sex did that they wished they could do. Bouchra, a 15-year-old White Touareg girl, said she wished she could go out of the home to find a job. Safi, a 16-year-old White Touareg girl, said she would like to build houses. The girls stated that the women do more work than the men in their societies and generally the girls seemed more engaged in the conversation. The social work director emphasized that in the program there was no distinction between the work for the boys and the work for the girls. We believed that they could all do the same work and we expected this of them. The students agreed that this was the way that they experienced the course and that they liked it like that.

Being in a co-ed group where everyone was expected to do the same tasks was likely an entirely new experience for those twelve students who had never been to school. Every aspect of their home and social life would have been completely defined by gender and it's possible that they had never experienced a situation where expectations were the same for everyone, regardless of sex, age or race. The directors also observed a noticeable difference in the willingness of the older girls to engage in the activities, possibly due to the fact that at their ages of 14 through 18, they were considered to be of marrying age in their culture (some of them were in fact married), and as such, expectations of their public behavior would be different than expectations of the younger girls. The majority of them were initially very quiet and reserved, having to be coaxed and convinced to try the course activities. Over the duration of the course though, they came out of their shells and relaxed, engaging more and more in the activities. They all expressed being very happy to have been included in the course and to have learned new skills.

Regarding treating those of different ages with equal respect, the directors observed several occasions where younger, more skilled students took charge without much difficulty of a team containing older team members assigned with a certain task. There were several younger students, boys and girls, who were very dominant in the course and this never seemed to cause any issues. We were proud of the participants' behavior in this regard.

Even though we had not included the issue of racial equality in this goal, this became a prominent issue during this course based on presence of both White and Black Touareg. The cultural social structure that placed Black Touaregs at an inferior position to White Touaregs, despite everyone's insistence that slavery no longer exists and they are all the same, became evident in many ways throughout the duration of the course. The most prominent example of this is the relationship between Fatti, a Black Touareg girl, and Aïchata, Bouchra and Safi, all White Touareg girls. While they all claimed to be friends, Fatti was clearly picked on and occasionally bullied by the other girls, and she never stood up for herself as far as either of the directors saw. The White Touareg girls always passed off their assigned washing and carrying tasks to her, as these more menial tasks are culturally the work of the Black Touareg, and

Fatti never refused. This could be due to her personality, the status norms that were engrained in her, or both. Even one of the other students, Issa, a dark-skinned Peuhl boy, told the artist director that the White Touareg girls were picking on Fatti because she was black. At the insistence of the directors who required the White Touareg girls to treat Fatti with more respect, we did see an improvement within the class and we hope that our discussions with them made an impression, particularly for Fatti, while at the same time we realize that our efforts go against hundreds of years of cultural norms.

Based on these observations we believe that through this experience 34 youth participants experienced heightened cognitive dissonance regarding gender equality and equal respect of all age groups. Even though the process of internalizing beliefs and attitudes and changing behavior is a much more complex and long-term endeavor than can be addressed in this short program, we believe that the experience of acting out these respectful and equalizing behaviors during the project created a cognitive dissonance regarding this issue that will act as a seed for positive future change.

4. Youth aged 12-18 experienced constructive processing and representation of emotions and age appropriate concerns through art.

Through engaging in arts activities both individual and collective, youth had the opportunity to reflect on and articulate their daily realities, experiences, dreams, ideas or fears and record this in a journal that they used to complete arts activities and assignments. The very process of completing these art activities required the participants to connect to and engage with their emotions and to express them in a way that enabled them to be heard. This experience of connection and expression in itself has therapeutic value, and participation in these activities gave the participants a space to safely and constructively express these emotions and concerns.

Throughout the course, the students were given assignments intended to provoke expression of emotions in order to allow the youth the opportunity to express things that they had experienced and that were important to them. These activities were typically given as homework and were reviewed and discussed at the beginning of the next class. They included activities such as drawing an item of great importance to them that they had brought with them to Burkina Faso, and another that they had left behind in Mali; portraits of themselves which portrayed the emotion they were feeling; their homes and communities in Mali; and activities that portrayed their important customs and traditions. Many of these resulted in drawings of their animals and traditional dress, two things that are at the core of their identity. Based on the way they engaged with the drawing and painting exercises, the directors observed when certain students emotionally connected with a particular assignment. For example, Bouchra emotionally connected with an assignment where she drew a necklace that she had, and Boubacar loved drawing pictures of his cows, which were his most beloved possessions. The exploration through art of their important traditions at one point led to a demonstration of camel racing, an activity that their society takes great pride in, with one boy acting as the camel rider racing around a girl who drummed the traditional songs while the rest of the class clapped and cheered. These activities served as powerful reminders of who they were as a people and what unified them all, despite any differences they may have.

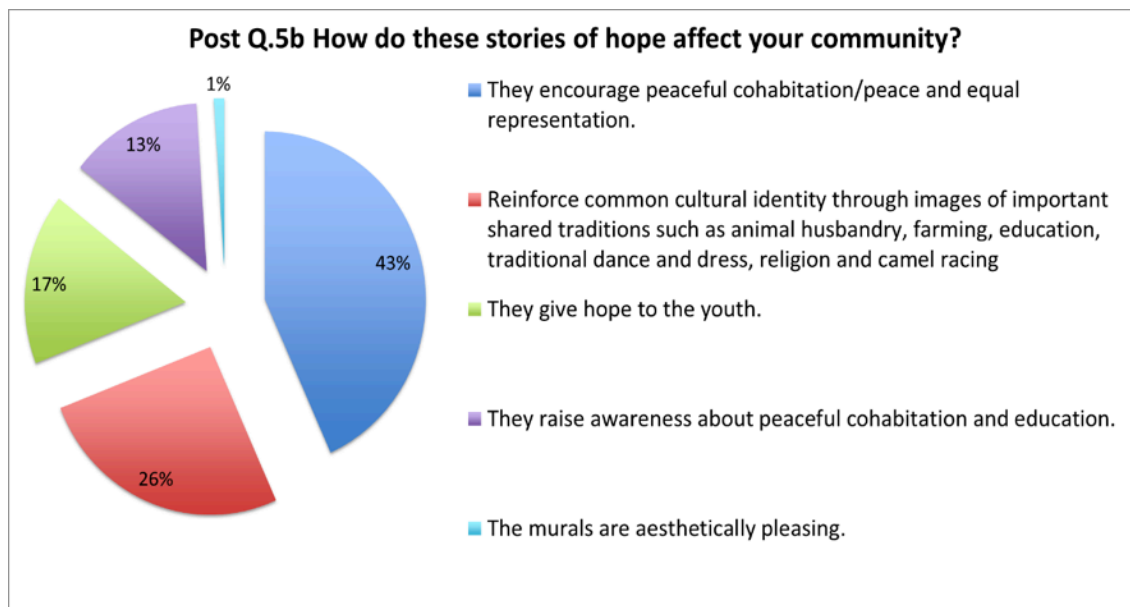
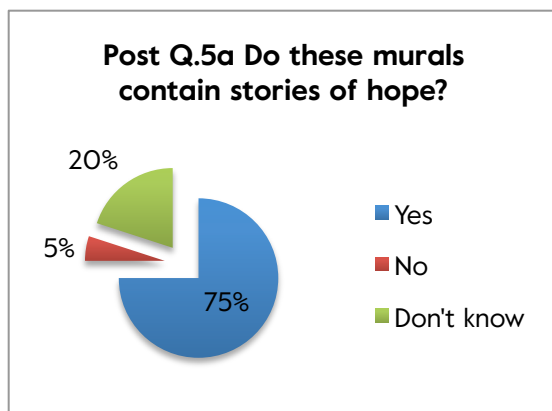
COLORS OF CONNECTION

Another activity intended to help them connect with and express their experiences was a body mapping exercise in which the students were paired up and drew the outline of their partner's body on a large piece of paper. They then painted themselves. This is a very powerful exercise, which helps the student connect with their body and also focus on their similarities with their fellow classmates. When the activity was done we had a discussion about how their experience of the conflict and living in a refugee camp had affected their bodies. Among things mentioned were: crying, heart racing, running until it hurt his/her stomach, his/her feet, his/her legs, his/her whole body, his/her ears hurting from the noise of the bombs, and falling and breaking a hand. We followed this by talking about how we can use our bodies to find and promote peace. Issa said not to use your mouth to talk badly to someone, Harouna said not to use your hands to fight with someone, Bouchra mentioned that you shouldn't use your eyes to look at someone badly and to keep your heart calm, Safi said everyone should join hands to find peace. This was a very dynamic experience for the group as a whole and brought more meaning to the work that they were doing with the murals. **Ati Wallet Ibrahim, a 41 year old White Touareg woman, stated, "I feel joy when I look at the murals because I see a message of peace, and now I am hopeful of returning to my country in peace because if the youth, who are the strength of the society, understand this message of peaceful cohabitation, all will be well for the future."**



Feedy, age 15, colors in her body tracing during a body mapping exercise, in which a fellow participant traced her body on a sheet of paper, June 2014.

The respondents to the community survey were asked if the murals contained stories of hope. The majority, 75%, said that they did, while 20% said they didn't know and 5% said that they did not. The 75% were asked how these stories of hope affect their community and 43% stated that they encourage peaceful cohabitation/peace and equal representation. Twenty-six percent said that they reinforce common cultural identity through images of important shared traditions, 17% said they give hope to the youth, 13% said they raise awareness about peaceful cohabitation and education and 1% said they are aesthetically pleasing. The youth put a lot of themselves into these murals, engaging with the ideas, the images and the process. The project required that they engage their emotions in order to be successful. Tadey Wallet Aklini, a Black Touareg woman of 31 years said, "When seeing these murals, one knows that these people are truly happy and are people of worth." While there were one or two students who completed the project without exhibiting much emotional engagement, the vast majority of participants demonstrated connection to the activities and to each other throughout the project.

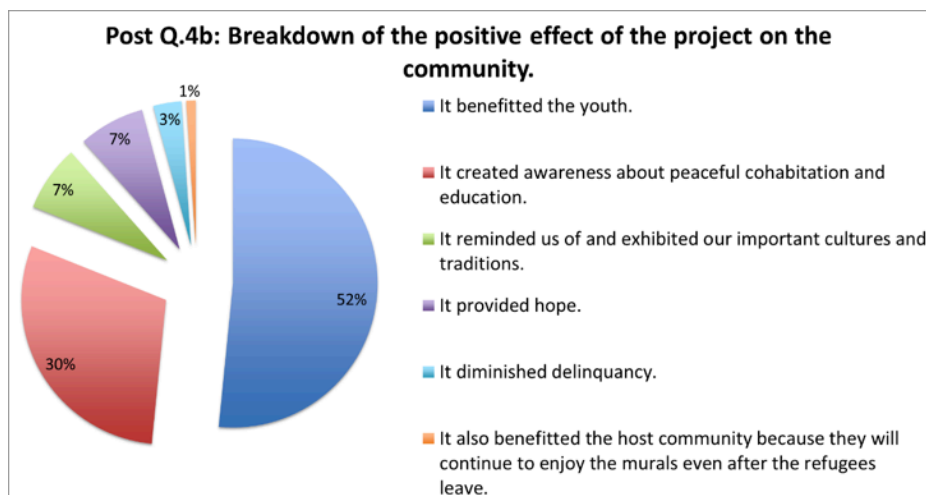
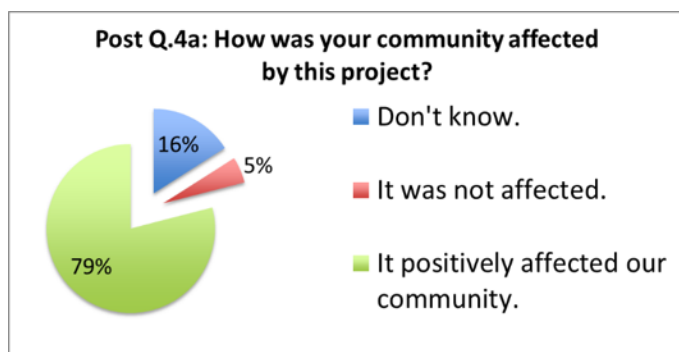


5. Community members experienced an increased sense of efficacy and belief in the benefits of civic engagement.

Through participation in the Community Arts Council, community members contributed to the creation of the murals that aimed to improve their community. This collaborative activity that expressed communal

hopes and dreams identified by them aimed to increase their sense of efficacy and belief in the benefits of civic engagement.

The members of the Community Arts Council, along with the other 75 randomly selected individuals, were asked how the project affected the community. Seventy-nine percent said it positively affected the community, 16% said they didn't know and 5% said the community was not affected. The 79% were asked what the positive effects were and 52% stated that it benefitted the youth, 30% said it created awareness about peaceful cohabitation and education, 7% said it reminded them of and exhibited their important cultures and traditions, another 7% stated that it provided hope, 3% said it diminished youth delinquency and 1% mentioned the benefit to the host community. In response to another question, 93% of survey respondents reported positive feelings when looking at the murals, with 15% of those reporting that they felt that way because the murals were the work of their own youth who had worked very hard, and 5% reporting it was because their youth had worked well together despite being from different ethnicities.



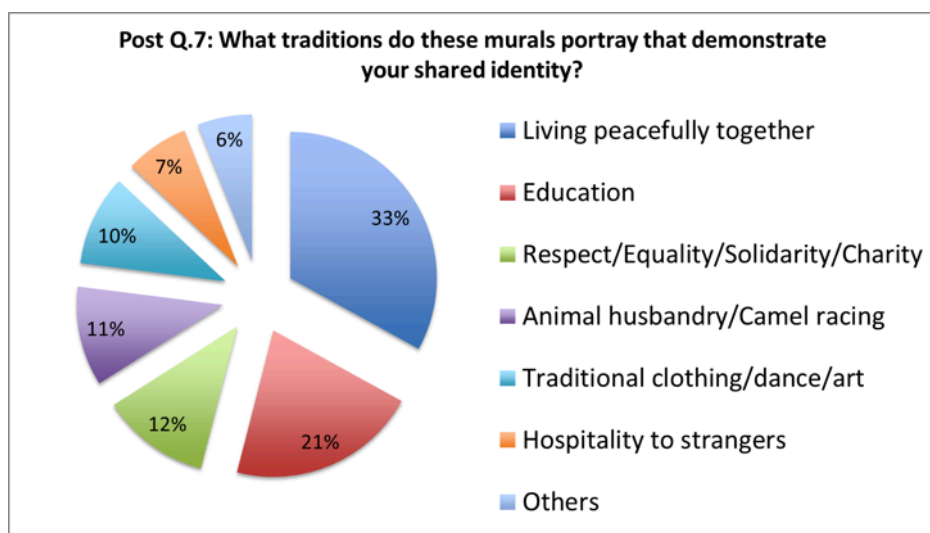
The members of the Community Arts Council made a significant contribution to the project by providing the themes for the two murals and providing ideas for how these themes should be portrayed. To see their ideas come to life made them feel happy and proud and left them with no doubt that their contribution had made a positive impact on the community. Assalamate Wallet Sidi Mohamed, a 27-year-old housewife, said, “I’m touched because this is the first time I’m seeing my culture in a painting.”

6. Residents of Goudoubo Refugee Camp experienced a more vibrant civil society and an increased sense of place, culture and self-representation.

Through the creation of the murals that publically expressed the communal hopes and dreams, as identified by community members, of living peacefully together and having a more educated society, we believe that the residents of Goudoubo Refugee Camp experienced a more vibrant civil society and an increased sense of place, culture and self-representation.

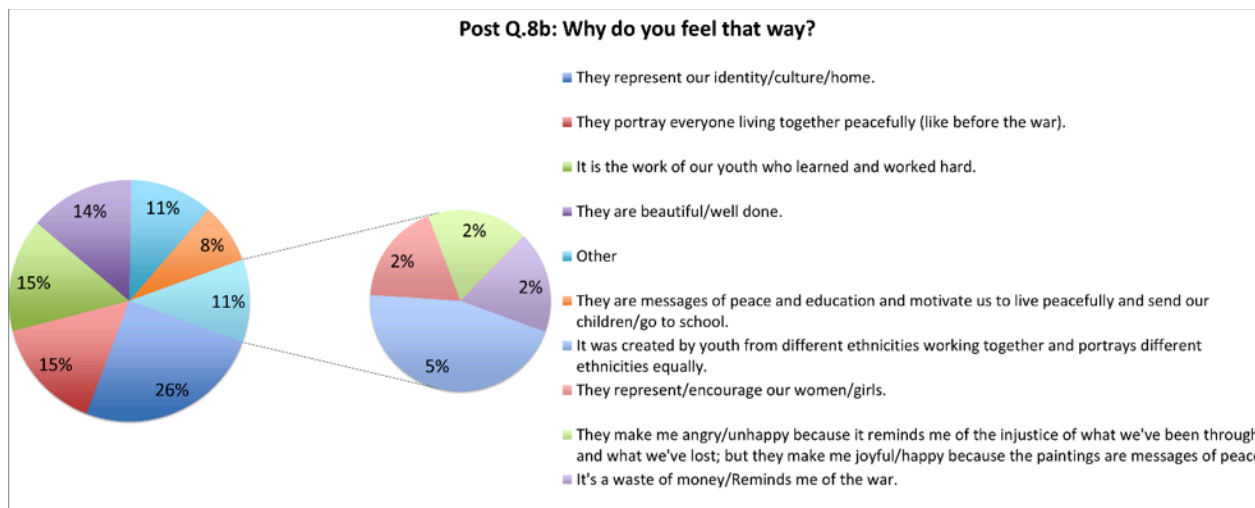
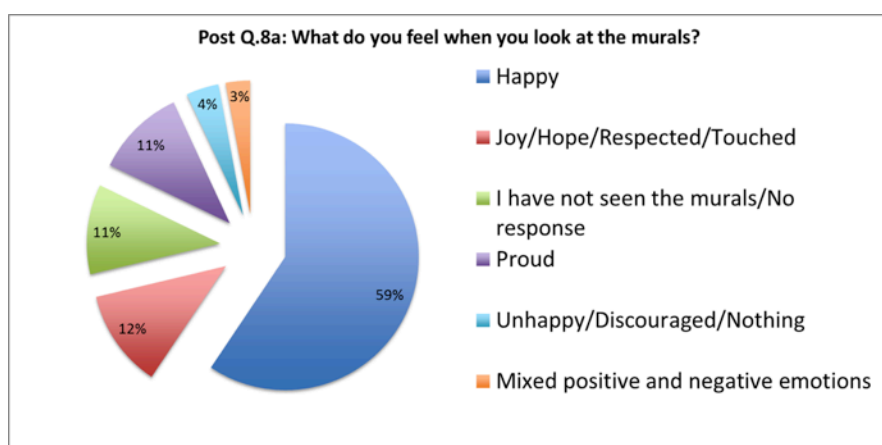
Community members who were surveyed post-project were asked if the murals accurately represented them to the outside world. The vast majority of respondents, 83%, believed that the murals did accurately portray them, while 14% said they didn't know and 3% said they did not accurately portray them. Sixty-one percent of respondents believed that the murals accurately expressed their shared identity through images of their culture and tradition, 21% believed that they showed that even though their community is made up of different ethnic groups, they are all living in peace, and 2% said that the murals accurately portray that they want peaceful cohabitation and education. Nallewat Wallet Toha, a Black Touareg housewife, said, "I feel good because when I look at the murals, it's as if I see people that I know."

When asked what traditions these murals portray that demonstrate their shared identity, 33% responded living peacefully together, 21% said education, 12% said respect/equality/solidarity and/or charity, 11% said animal husbandry and/or camel racing, 10% said traditional clothing/dance/art, 7% said hospitality to strangers, and 6% mentioned others.



Finally the community members were asked what they felt when they looked at the murals and why. An overwhelming 84% stated that they felt positive feelings: 59% felt happy, 12% felt joy/hope/respected/touched, 11% felt proud, and 2% felt mixed positive and negative emotions. Eleven percent said they had not seen the murals or did not respond and 4% said they felt unhappy, discouraged or that they felt nothing. When asked why they felt that way, 26% said it was because the murals represented their identity/culture/home, 15% said it was because it portrayed them living

peacefully together like before the war, 15% said it was because the murals were a result of the hard work of their youth who had learned a great deal, 14% said it was because they were beautiful/well done, 8% said it was because they were messages of peace and education and they motivate them to live peacefully and to send their children to school, 5% said it was because they were created by youth from different ethnicities working well together and represented all the ethnicities equally and 2% said it was because they represented/encouraged their women/girls. Those who felt mixed positive and negative emotions said that they felt angry/unhappy because they reminded them of the injustice of what they have experienced and what they've lost, but they also felt joyful/happy because the murals are messages of peace. Those who felt negative emotions when looking at the murals said it was because the project was a waste of money when people were hungry and because it reminds them of the war.



The Directors observed that these communities are very proud of their cultures and traditions and are eager for the world to recognize them as people who want peace, and who desperately want to return home to resume their lives and practice their beloved traditions in peace. Halimata Wallet Alhader, a 19 year old White Touareg woman said, “When looking at these murals I feel happy because I am hopeful that we will recover our values and culture that permit us to live in peace with our brothers despite our

differences.” Given that the majority of community members believed that these murals represented them accurately and felt positive feelings when looking at the murals, we believe that the project successfully increased the community’s sense of place, culture and self-representation.

V. Project Highlights

Introduction: This second project in a Malian refugee camp in Burkina Faso was well received by the youth and community members and was uniquely successful in a number of ways: We attracted a large number of girls to the program and were able to focus on their needs and interests, we succeeded in attaining a diversity of ethnic and socioeconomic groups within the group of participants, and we provided some participants to their first experience with education.



Some of our girl participants show off their newly decorated art bags, March 2014.

For the first time in our organization’s history, girls outnumbered boys as participants. There were 21 girls and 13 boys, providing a unique dynamic in which the girls were the majority in activities that

ranged from art skills training to discussion. In our projects so far working with Malian, Liberian and Ivorian participants, male participants have always outnumbered female participants. In this refugee camp however, many of the boys who would have been eligible to participate in the project were enrolled in school. This situation highlights the gender inequality in the community, in which education for boys is prioritized more than education for girls. The fact that fewer boys were able to participate in the program than girls meant that the usual dominance of boys in an educational program was reversed and as a result some of the tendencies of classroom behavior were also shifted. In areas such as Mali where gender discrimination is high, women and girls often automatically take a backstage to participation, letting boys and men dominate the space. However in this case with almost a two-thirds majority, the girls answered more questions during class, volunteered to demonstrate exercises in front of the class, and had more opportunities to take leadership in creating the mural than the boys. In classroom activities and creating the mural, in which boys might normally dominate the activities, the boys in our groups faced more competition for these roles from girls who were confident and/or had the knowledge to do what was needed. This led to a greater sense of accomplishment for many of the female participants because they were able to more fully participate. The dominance of girls in the class also created an atmosphere infused with their gossip, laughter, and jokes, from rumors of boyfriends, to jewelry. Because girls in this community tend to be quieter when men or boys are present, the fact that they were in the majority in the classroom helped them to socialize more openly and their opinions and participation were more easily given.



During recruitment for the project a Black Touareg youth, also known as a Bella, makes a drawing to submit for the application while her White Touareg foster father watches. Like many other youth in the camp population she didn't have a background in classic education, and drawing with a pencil was difficult for her. Unfortunately, even though she was considered a vulnerable youth and because of this was selected as a participant for the project, she did not attend. It is possible her foster father did not want her to be a part of the project, or that she chose not to, March 2014.

We also took steps forward from our last project in Mentao Refugee Camp to represent the diverse and complex social composition of the camp that includes different ethnic groups and social castes. In Goudoubo camp we were able to include a broad range of social castes, the White and Black Touareg, as well as all the ethnic groups in the camp: Touareg, Songrhäï, Peuhl and Arabs. This more balanced representation among participants created an environment that encouraged equality and communication between different groups, something that is much needed to help resolve the current

conflict in Mali and the refugee crisis it has precipitated. In addition to engendering communication and equality between these groups, the murals produced from this diverse group of participants represent a range of perspectives that reflects the diversity of the community.



Fatti, age 16, in front of the Education Mural, June 2014. Fatti, as a Black Touareg with only two years of Koranic school was often the target of teasing and harassment by the White Touareg females in the group. While this relationship is accepted as part of the culture, the Social Work and Art Directors worked to shift the behavior of the group toward more respectful and egalitarian practices.

Most significantly the Black Touareg made up 11 of the 34 participants, approximately 30%. The Black Touareg were regrettably absent from our last project in Mentao Refugee Camp. Typically the Black Touareg are marginalized in the camp as well as in Northern Mali. Historically enslaved by the White Touareg, a slave master relationship continues to this day in various forms. In Northern Mali the Black Touareg continue to exclusively do the work they originally did as slaves, though a few have managed to take on higher positions in society and government¹⁹. In the camp most Black Touareg work as domestic servants for the White Touaregs and Arabs, and are excluded from educational opportunities such as this project. We were able to have a different outcome in recruitment for this project as we were prepared by the challenges we experienced in Mentao with this issue. We diversified our recruitment efforts, not only asking block leaders to include these children in their selection, but also reaching out to partner organizations who had already identified vulnerable Black Touareg children and hiring a separate black recruiter to find them. While some White Touareg families did not consent for the participation of their Black Touareg children, the results of recruitment had some success. The presence of the Black Touareg among the participants was an issue that created the most overt conflict between the different participants. During the activities the artistic director and social work director worked constantly to disrupt cultural behaviors that enforced inequality between the White and Black Touareg and introduce behaviors that encouraged equality.

Because the classes themselves had created a set of rules which included mutual respect and equality of all participants at the beginning of the project, it was possible to appeal to the group to follow through on these behaviors.

From the artistic director's side, she worked to ensure equal participation in the range of activities that mural painting provides. Mural painting activities are often not equal, some more labor intensive and

¹⁹ El Ansari I., Magrassa, H., Ag Hamalouta M., McCullough A. *Northern Mali: Conflict Analysis for the Norwegian Refugee Council Final Report*. The IDL Group. October 2013. Electronic document.

others more fun and rewarding. While the community's culture would dictate that Black Touareg wash, clean, haul items, and generally assist the White Touareg, the artistic director assigned these less attractive jobs to each participant on different days. Several White Touareg girls refused to wash paintbrushes or carry supplies to the mural site, but over time consented to these new rules of the class. As the White Touareg girls tried to push these activities on the Black Touareg, the artistic director would intervene. These mitigated social interactions allowed the White Touareg and Black Touareg to experience, perhaps for the first time, a situation of equality with each other.

The social work director engaged the students in conversations and activities that challenged societal norms that are discriminatory and encouraged them to act in more equitable manner towards each other. Specific acts were addressed privately with any student who acted in a discriminatory manner and she checked in with students who were the victims of bullying or discriminatory behavior.

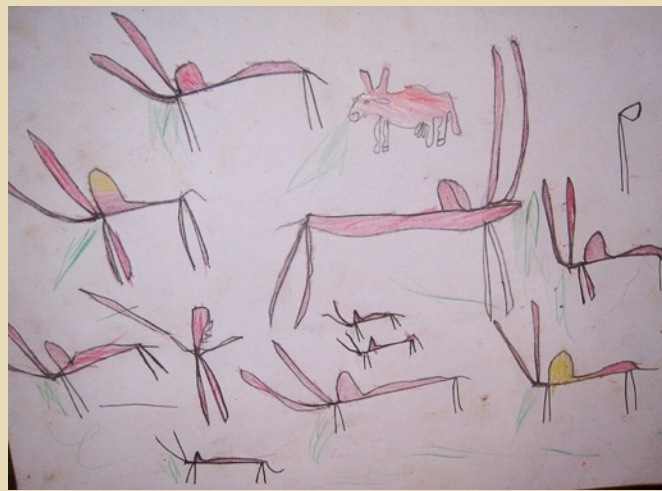
The inclusion of all ethnicities in the participant groups succeeded in diminishing animosity and fear between them. Because the camp is organized according to the different ethnic groups, interaction between them can be limited except for community meetings, or for those children who attend primary school. For our participants, as they were not in school, they didn't have many opportunities to interact with other ethnic groups. One Peuhl participant, Issa said, he no longer feels afraid of interacting with other ethnicities, namely the Touareg, because of the project. Soumaïyata, a Songhraï participant, said she used to spend a lot of her time at her house and didn't socialize much, but since she's started the project she's now always out seeing people and as a result, has made more friends in the community as well as the class. This in itself has been a positive experience for her.



Kawela, age 18, and Soumaïyata age 17 celebrate the closing of the project in front of the Peaceful Cohabitation Mural, June 2014.

Another exciting aspect of this project was that the population in the camp came from a pastoral background, and had lower exposure to formal education and so many experienced the challenges, achievements and successes of an educational program for the first time. For a third of the participants this was their very first experience in a formal school of any kind, while for others they had attended a Koranic or Classic school for a few years. What this meant was that some had never used a pencil or crayon before, done homework assignments, or raised their hands to answer a question in a classroom. Others who had been in school still experienced some firsts along with the others, such as working with paint, learning how to draw a person or how to climb a ladder and roll primer onto a wall. What we gathered from a post project discussion was that almost all participants were very afraid that they wouldn't be able to succeed in the program, and that by the end they felt they had achieved

something and were successful. This sentiment was shared by the broader community and its leaders. At the graduation ceremony, the president of the refugee camp, Mohamed Ag Attegal said that he feared that these youth participants, who were coming from a rural background and many without formal education, would not be able to accomplish the goals of the project. Yet they clearly had, and he was pleasantly surprised and proud of their accomplishments. In this case these youth lacked confidence in themselves and their community also doubted their ability. Alassane Ag Azezane, one of the community's leaders and member of the Community Arts Council said, "I am touched because I didn't know our youth were capable of doing all of that." Their low exposure to education made the community and the youth themselves doubt their abilities and made them question whether they were intelligent or capable. Showing this community and the youth that these participants had a lot of untapped potential hopefully can encourage the community and the families of these participants to support educational opportunities for their children in the future.



Above left: Issa, age 17 (left), helps out his friend Boubacar, age 14 (right), to practice drawing the mural design using the grid method. While Issa had 6 years of classic education, Boubacar had zero, and this was his first educational program. Above right: This drawing by Boubacar, who herds animals, shows his unique and mysterious style of drawing the cattle. Amidst them is a more anatomically correct cow drawn by his friend Issa. Who also herds cattle, May 2014.

VI. Challenges

A. Language was one of our biggest challenges. While the dominant language in Burkina Faso and Mali is French, the dominant language in Goudoubo is Tamacheck, the language of the Touareg. Also spoken are Peuhl, Songhrai and Arabic and some of the youth from these ethnicities do not speak Tamacheck or French. The directors' first language is English and they are learning French, but are

not fluent by any means. This created a challenge for their communication with the community leaders, other NGOs and their project assistants. There was only one person in the camp who spoke English, and oddly he didn't speak French, only Tamacheck and English which, in the midst of French speakers, even made communication with him challenging at times. For the students who didn't speak Tamacheck or French, further interpretation was required which meant the directors' at times questionable French was being translated first to Tamacheck and then into two other languages by the youth. No doubt, much of what was intended by any given speaker was lost by any given listener at any given time. This made having discussions about mural themes or any psychosocial topics quite challenging. Despite this, meaningful exchanges were held and the intended goals were successfully accomplished.

B. Relationships with our logistical partner, Save the Children International, were often challenging as the head office in Ouagadougou agreed to partner with Colors of Connection and provide logistical support without ensuring that the Dori field office was capable of providing for our logistical needs. Transportation to and from the camp at times that were suitable for our program sometimes proved difficult due to lack of vehicles. In addition, we were implementing the project during the dry season with temperatures over 100°F every day. Because electricity to Dori was supplied by a hydroelectric dam and there was a severe shortage of water, electricity outages occurred daily, resulting in us frequently not being able to use technology at the office in Dori. As Save the Children had no back-up generator, doing our work at the office proved very challenging much of the time. Getting our logistical needs met was a daily challenge. We also experienced frustrations in regard to often being unintentionally excluded from information that affected our programming by UNHCR and Save the Children. Given this experience, we will be more rigorous in our efforts in the future to ensure that our logistical partner does in fact have the logistical capacity to support the needs of our program.

C. Monitoring and Evaluation continued to be a challenge although with two staff on-site we were able to do a lot more in this regard than in previous projects in which case only one staff was on-site. Relevant and useful evaluation tools still need to be developed to more accurately measure the project's target outcomes as well as ways to better ensure that survey enumerators are carrying out the survey as requested. For the community survey, convincing the community members to respond was very difficult, especially the older women. Reluctance to participate and suspicion of people asking questions prevented us from getting more feedback from community members because they would not respond to our assistants' requests without one of the directors present, and we simply didn't have time to be present at all times with the assistants in their work. If some incentive were provided in the future we believe that community members could be more likely to respond. Despite these challenges, we did get some useful feedback from community members.

VII. Lessons Learnt

We believe monitoring and evaluation of our work is very important for accountability and essential to improve our impact. Due to lack of sufficient staff, it was not possible to develop and implement monitoring and evaluation tools that sufficiently measured the impact of the work. The main need in this area is for an experienced and dedicated staff member. In order to facilitate better communication between the directors and the youth and community we would need to have translators who would be able to translate from English when needed in future programs, as well as to have translators available to interpret for the minority of participants speaking languages other than the dominant one, which in this case was Tamacheck. To address this need a larger budget line for translators is necessary. To guarantee in future programs that our logistical needs are met, we will be more rigorous in our efforts to ensure that our logistical partner does in fact have the logistical capacity to support the needs of our program.

VII. Conclusion

We are confident in reporting that this project was a success. Two murals were designed and created by 34 youth participants with the support and guidance of 28 community leaders. Themes for the murals were decided upon and developed by the Community Arts Council, the first expressing the importance of education for this community, and the second expressing their desire for peaceful cohabitation between ethnic groups in Northern Mali. Despite the challenges mentioned, by the end of the project, it was celebrated and lauded by the community leaders, participants, UNHCR and the community at large. The 34 youth graduated from the program and received certificates of achievement, which were highly valued. The positive relationships that were built amongst those who participated in the project through the various activities and a shared experience were invaluable, and the affirming messages that were portrayed through the murals brought something to the camp that had been missing previously – that almost intangible sense of pride, purpose and belonging found when a person observes themselves, their family and communities and their culture being publicly affirmed and celebrated. For a community of people who have lost so much, we believe these murals will serve as a reminder of the good things that will come if they unite and work together towards achieving education and peace.

COLORS OF CONNECTION

Appendix A. Goals, Outcomes and Indicators, Colors of Connection: Energizing a Refugee Community through Art

Project Goal	Project Specific Outcome	Outcome Indicator
<p>Goal 1. To enable youth aged 12-18 to exercise adult responsibilities and roles and to become empowered and civically engaged members of their communities.</p>	<p>1a. Increased civic engagement behavior</p>	<p>a. Thirty-four youth from the project were publicly acknowledged and celebrated by the community leaders and the community at the graduation ceremony for their work that positively transformed their community, validating their civic engagement efforts.</p>
	<p>1b. Increased belief in the benefits of civic engagement</p>	<p>b. A post community survey showed that 79% of respondents believed that the project positively affected the community, therefore the youths' involvement reflected positively on them as well, leading to a status of increased importance and pride. In interviews with four participants who were followed with a video camera throughout the project, three expressed that the community members recognized them after having been involved in the project and they felt proud because of this.</p>
<p>Goal 2. To foster in youth aged 12-18 increased optimism, self-efficacy and social competence.</p>	<p>2. Increased level of optimism, Improved self-efficacy, Improved social competence</p>	<p>A surprising 39% of those interviewed in a post community survey said that the youth had been "awakened" when asked how they believed the project had affected the youth. This is a very powerful description and while they did not choose to expand on this word, common interpretation would suggest that the respondents believed that the project had exposed the youth to new and valuable experiences and knowledge, and this exposure had presented new and important opportunities for them. This powerful imagery suggests that the youth did indeed experience increased levels of optimism, self-efficacy and social competence</p> <p>34 graduates persevered to complete the project, even though at first the majority of them were scared that they could not draw or paint and were worried they wouldn't understand (self-reported), showing that their confidence and belief in their own ability to succeed grew throughout the duration of the course.</p> <p>For many students, they indicated that the social aspect of the course was one of</p>

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		<p>friendships that continued outside of the course itself. She reported feeling much happier with her life in the camp because of this. Issa reported feeling afraid to be around people from the other ethnicities before attending the course, but due to his interactions with the youth from other ethnicities in the program, he said he was no longer afraid of them because he understood them better, and they knew him better too. Soumaiya reported that her participation in the course gave her courage to go out in her community more and interact with people. She said prior to the course she spent a lot of time in her house, but because of the confidence the program gave her she was much more sociable.</p>
<p>Goal 3. To challenge gender and age discriminatory beliefs and behaviors in youth aged 12-18.</p>	<p>3a. Heightened cognitive dissonance regarding gender equality.</p>	<p>a. The Social Work Director had a specific conversation with the participants intended to make them think about gender roles and how and why these are the way they are. She emphasized that in the program there was no distinction between the work for the boys and the work for the girls. We believed that they could all do the same work and we expected this of them. The students engaged in a conversation about gender roles. At the close of the conversations it was agreed that this was the way that they experienced the course and that they liked it like that.</p> <p>Throughout the project, the youth worked in a co-ed group in which everyone was expected to do the same tasks. This was an entirely new experience for some of the participants, notably for twelve students who had never been to school, and every aspect of their home and social life would have been completely defined by gender.</p>
<p>Goal 4. To aid youth aged 12-18 in processing emotions and age appropriate concerns through art.</p>	<p>4. Constructive processing and representation of emotions and age appropriate concerns through art</p>	<p>Participants engaged in a body mapping exercise to help them connect with and express their experiences. Through a guided discussion participants explored their experience of conflict and their ideas on how to make peace. . Other activities relating to the participants' culture and experience of leaving their homes and living in a refugee camp provoked expression of emotions.</p>

COLORS OF CONNECTION

<p>Goal 5.</p> <p>To increase a sense of efficacy and belief in the benefits of civic engagement among community members.</p> <p>Goal 6.</p> <p>To create a more vibrant civil society, and a sense of place, culture, and self-representation among residents of Mentao Refugee Camp.</p>	<p>5. Increased sense of efficacy and belief in the benefits of civic engagement.</p>	<p>The members of the Community Arts Council, along with the other 75 randomly selected individuals, were asked how the project affected the community. Seventy-nine percent said it positively affected the community, 16% said they didn't know and 5% said the community was not affected. The 79% were asked what the positive effects were and 52% stated that it benefitted the youth, 30% said it created awareness about peaceful cohabitation and education, 7% said it reminded them of and exhibited their important cultures and traditions, another 7% stated that it provided hope, 3% said it diminished youth delinquency and 1% mentioned the benefit to the host community. In response to another question, 93% of survey respondents reported positive feelings when looking at the murals, with 15% of those reporting that they felt that way because the murals were the work of their own youth who had worked very hard, and 5% reporting it was because their youth had worked well together despite being from different ethnicities.</p> <p>The members of the Community Arts Council made a significant contribution to the project by providing the themes for the two murals and giving their ideas for how these ideas should be portrayed. To see their ideas come to life made them feel happy and proud and left them with no doubt that their contribution had made a positive impact on the community. Assalamate Wallet Sidi Mohamed, a 27-year-old housewife, said, "I'm touched because this is the first time I'm seeing my culture in a painting."</p>
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