Build a School in Africa
2024 Newsletter

Dear Build a School in Africa Supporters,

Please join us in celebrating our 22nd year and the construction of our 33rd school! 2024 was a year marked by tragedy and hope for the Malian people and for our small, all-volunteer organization. Thanks to your support, we have continued our campaign of school building, and will soon complete our 34th school.

Judy Lorimer, in memoriam

It was with deep sadness that we learned that our former director Judy Lorimer passed away in June 2023. Judy was a long time kindergarten teacher, and during her retirement, she fell in love with Mali after a cultural exchange visit.



For many years, Judy traveled to Mali annually, at her own expense, visiting the schools she helped to build and spending time with the students and teachers. Judy will be missed tremendously by the whole Build a School in Africa family.

The Board & Volunteers

Long-time volunteer and webmaster Matt Heberger offered to serve as director and keep the organization going. We've also rejuvenated the Board and have been meeting every 2 to 3 months by Zoom. The Board currently has 4 members: Alice Heller, Karolyn (Midgie) Franz, Kyla Malone, and Matt. To read bios and see photos, please visit our website!

New Elementary School in Diassidian

In 2023, we made the unusual decision to begin construction of a new school, knowing that we did not have enough funds to finish it. The community wanted to begin construction before the rainy season began, when the dirt roads turn into mud and transporting supplies becomes difficult.



The old school building in Diassidian made from mud bricks was dark and required frequent maintenance.

Thanks to your donations, the school was finished in 2024 in time for the start of the school year. The new school is bright and airy and better for learning.



Putting a final coat of paint on the new school in Diassidian in October 2024.

Kicking off Construction in M'Pessoba

Thanks to a generous donation from a couple in Australia, we have initiated construction on our 33rd school!

In October, our volunteer in Mali, Abou Coulibaly, visited the village and held kick-off meetings with the village and the deputy mayor.



School committee meeting in M'Pessoba, Oct. 2024.

Widespread Flooding in Mali causes destruction, delays start of school year

This year's rainy season was particularly intense across West Africa, and caused widespread flooding, the worst seen in decades. Each of Mali's 20 regions was affected to some extent, and the government reported 30 deaths and the loss of hundreds of houses, latrines, and wells.

As a result of the flooding, the start of the school year was delayed from Oct.1 to Nov. 4. And in many areas, school buildings have been used as shelters.

Political Instability makes our work even more essential

Several West African countries are passing through a difficult period, marked by uncertainty and instability. Since 2011, there has been conflict in Mali including fundamentalist groups that have spread violence and chaos. Following a military coup in 2012, Mali has failed to hold free and fair elections. As a result, western countries have cut off foreign aid, neighboring countries have restricted trade, and some large nonprofits have paused operations in Mali.

As an African proverb says, "When the elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers." We are hoping for an end to the conflict, a return to democracy and the rule of law, and a brighter future for the Malian people. Despite all of this, our operations have not been affected. We are engaged in people-to-people assistance, working directly with deserving communities. This kind of help is more important than ever!

Your Contribution Makes a World of Difference!

Historically, it has been difficult for village schools to recruit and retain good teachers. Having modern, clean school buildings helps a lot.

Thanks to the work of the dedicated teachers and staff,generations of children will have the opportunity to realize their potential and make a positive contribution to society. By contributing to Build a School, you voice our support for the valuable mission they carry out. Any amount helps. Thank you!

Donate online or send your tax-deductible contribution to:

Build a School in Africa
4 Old Stonehill Road
Tyngsboro, MA 01879

Wishing you and yours a happy and healthy holiday season and New Year!

—Abou, Alice, Kyla, Matt, and Midgie
buildaschoolinafrica.org



Construction under way in Diassidian, early 2024.