

RUHR UNIVERSIT BOCHUM

Internship Report

Location: Bamako, Mali

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Bochum, 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my profound and sincere gratitude to [REDACTED] and the entire staff of the Institute of Development Research and Development Policy Ruhr University Bochum for the opportunity offered me to be part of the Urban Food Plus field research project in Bamako. I want to also thank [REDACTED] of Center for Research on Local Knowledge (POINT SUD), Bamako for the accommodation provided and also the Institute of Rural Economy of Mali for granting me the research permit. Finally, I would Like to say a gargantuan thank you to the International office for granting me the promos scholarship for my research stay in Mali.

INTERNSHIP APPLICATION AND PLANNING.

After a lecture of Cost Benefit Analysis, [REDACTED] made an announcement that the Institute of Development Research and Development Policy will need some students for a field research project in Mali on the Urban Food Plus Project. I got so much interested since I am so much interested in projects that will contribute to the growth and development of the African continent. However, I was very much concern about the security situation in Mali since there was a presidential election prior to the start of the research and there was so much uncertainty about safety and security. However, I applied to be considered for the project with my curricular vitae and a motivational letter, went for an interview with [REDACTED] and fortunately I was selected.

The entire preparation and planning for the research project was done by the Institute of Development Research and Development Policy. They prepared the questionnaires and sampled the farm plot and households that were used in the research and made arrangement for accommodation in Bamako and air travel.

The accommodation was on the second floor of the Center for Research on Local Knowledge (POINT SUD) office building with a 24 hours security and a free internet. The only problem with the accommodation was that, mosquitos infested the entire building and was very hard to eradicate but overall, I was very much impressed about it.

DAILY ACTIVITIES AND LEISURE



The Urban Food Plus Project aims at developing site-specific, farmer-tailored innovations for improved agricultural production, food safety, and value chains in West African cities. I had a routine daily activity which was specifically gathering

data from the urban farmers in Bamako. Since I could not speak French and Bamara which are the most spoken languages in Bamako, I had a local assistant to help me with the interviews and to get around the city. We had 303 sampled farm plots scattered across the length and breathe of Bamako to interview the farmers and take soil samples from the farms for laboratory analysis. We initial started our daily activities with a car but later opted for motor bikes since the car was inaccessible to some farms which the motor bikes could easily and quickly get to. We typically departed to the farms around 7 am each morning and returned home around 6 pm working six days a week and resting on Fridays since most Malians are Muslims and usually do not go to their farms on Fridays due to the Islamic congregational prayer.

The questionnaires were made of five sections which include the socio demographic characteristics of the farmer's household, the factors of productions, the production consumption and sales which included the intermediate inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, weedicides and pesticides used in production, where they sell their produce and for how much and some questions on food security,

Generally, most of the farmers were willing to speak with us and ready to share their concerns with us and sometimes even share their lunch with us. In some few instances however, some farmers were not willing to engage with us with the excuse that several people have come to interview them previously, but they have not had any feedback from them, and their concerns have not been addressed.



Majority of the farmers in Bamako produces vegetables such as lettuces, cabbage, carrots, onions, tomatoes, celery, garden eggs, potatoes leaves etc. The farmers along the river Niger and the islands on the river produced potato leaves. I must say that vegetables in Bamako are very safe as

majority of the farmers use organic manure and animal dropping as fertilizer for their vegetables and do not use waste water for irrigation and pesticides.

The field research was not without risk as we had to pass through very tick bushes to get to some farms which exposed us to poisonous snakes and other painful biting inserts. We came very close in contact with poisonous snakes on three separate occasions. River Niger which is the third longest river in Africa runs across Bamako and serves as a source of water for irrigation to farmers along its banks. We had to cross to river on several occasions without life jackets on canoes to get to some farms.



Bamako is considered as a fast-paced African city buzzing with energy and brimming with diverse arts and culture. I spent most of my leisure time playing football with a local football team and on one occasion, had my mobile phone stolen at the football field, visiting interesting places such as the central market the cultural and art center and

sometimes going for fishing at the river Niger. Socialization was a big issue because I could not speak French or Bamara and most people could not speak English.



The most popular mode of transportation in Bamako and other parts of Mali is the motor bike popularly called “Jakarta”. During the morning and evening rush hours, the roads become very chaotic as most traffic lights are not functioning and in some cases police men are deployed to direct traffic during the rush ours.

CONCLUSION

I was very much impressed by the hospitality and kindness of the Malian People. They were always ready and willing to offer any assistance

My research stay in Mali has exposed me to the challenges and difficulties peculiar to farmers in Mali and other west African countries and the measures that can be implemented to address them. It has broadened my horizons and taught me new skills as to how to communicate and interact with people from different cultures which will contribute positive in my future career growth and development.