

Bracelets to make Simeon Koalaga's Dream Come True



From 1991 to 1993, Daniel and I worked in the small town of Yako in Burkina Faso where we met Siméon, our tailor. He quickly became our friend. Since then, we have always kept in touch with him. Daniel visited him in 2010 and also last September. Siméon is now 50 years old. He and his wife Aminata have four children who are now 21, 17, 13 and 7 years old. They all go to private schools because Siméon and Aminata are convinced that it is through education that their children will live better lives. In recent years, Siméon's work has become ever harder: his sight is failing, there is no one to take over his business and demand for his work is decreasing.

He owns a piece of land that is, in a way, his nest egg for his retirement. Together with the entire family, he works his land during the rainy season and reforests parts of it when he can afford to. He can grow enough millet and white beans to provide for his family's basic food needs. His dream is to grow vegetables during the dry season. In order to do this, he needs to purchase a motor to pump water from nearby marshes to irrigate the vegetables. But a pump costs \$600 (300,000 CFA Francs), a huge sum since he barely earns \$1,200 a year (600,000 CFA Francs).

In 2008, when I worked in Senegal, I bought a large quantity of bracelets from a women's cooperative with the idea of later selling them to fund a project. By supporting the members of this women's cooperative, I knew that I would support another project. I kept 90

bracelets and the time has come for me to use them for this cause that is dear to me.

I am therefore offering you a chance to get involved in this practical and measurable project. All you need to do is buy 3 ox-horn bracelets at the supporting price of \$25.

Your contribution will help Siméon buy a pump (\$600) and build a fence (\$150) to protect his crops from roaming animals. All of the funds generated by the sale will be sent to him. He will finally be able to grow vegetables, improve his family's quality of life, peacefully live his old age and be proud of achieving a very special dream.

It is very important for me to involve you in this project. It would be easy to simply send the funds, but this goes against my values. Through this initiative, my goal is to demonstrate to Siméon, that at the other end of the world, there are people who care and want to support him in changing his life. Yes, changing his life! You will take part in something that is "very important" for this African family. Your impact might seem insignificant, but your \$25 will surely change the lives of the Koalagas for more than a generation.

Thanks in advance for your thoughtful and generous gesture! I will regularly give you news about how this project goes. In the Spring of 2014, Daniel will visit Siméon and bring back news and pictures. You can also purchase the bracelets by mail at no extra cost.

To purchase the bracelets and learn how you can become an ally for 1,001 Dreams, please email Jocelyn at jocelyne.desroches@videotron.ca. She will send you a pay pal invoice.