

Câsiri Tono, Serial Drama Addressing Child Trafficking is on the Air in Mali

Câsiri Tono, PMC's serial drama program in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Ivory Coast, hit the airwaves on November 11! The drama will be broadcast three times a week over the Africa Learning Channel. It will also be downloaded and broadcast by around 100 community radio stations in Mali and Burkina Faso. Written by local scriptwriters and cast with local actors, the drama is recorded in the Dioula language, a market version of Bambara, which is widely spoken in Mali, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso.

In Mali, where 64 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, and where the average woman has seven children, families find it incredibly difficult to raise healthy children. A similar situation exists in neighboring Burkina Faso, where 45 percent of the population, particularly women and those in rural areas, lives in poverty – almost 28 percent in “extreme” poverty - and women have an average of 7.4 children during their reproductive lifetime.

This provides the perfect opportunity for exploitative plantation owners to seek out children to work on one of the thousands of cocoa plantations located throughout Ivory Coast. The Ivory Coast currently produces half of the world's chocolate, and approximately 90 percent of the chocolate plantations use child slave labor, as documented in the film *Slavery: A Global Investigation*, produced by the organization Free the Slaves. Plantation owners seek out children from neighboring countries, such as Mali and Burkina Faso, to work on their farms.

It is easy to lure these children away from their impoverished families through gifts (such as a bicycle) and promises of high wages. In reality, these children are brought to remote, inaccessible plantations, and are forced to work anywhere from ten to twenty hours per day. Most are subjected to psychological and physical torture. More often than not, they are never paid,

and basic food, health, sanitation and clothing requirements are rarely met.

One boy from the village of Foh in Mali recounted his experience. “I was desperate for money, so I went to the Ivory Coast to work for a relative,” said Ousman.

On his way, he stopped in Sikasso, a border town between Mali and Ivory Coast. Here, two men solicited him to come and work for them. He declined their offer, and explained that he was on his way to Daloa in the Ivory Coast. They extended a free ride, saying they were headed in the



same direction.

It was all a lie.

The men had no intention of going to Daloa, but headed for Frékessedougou where Ousman was held for three nights until someone recruited him to work on his farm. With no money or transportation to go anywhere else, Ousman accepted the job. He was told the work was “not complicated, and not hard – he would be getting up at 9 AM, and would finish around midday.”

This too, was a lie. The work was so grueling that “even a donkey could not do it.” Ousman stayed trapped in these horrible working conditions for 11 months and 26 days, until he was rescued.

Many families in Mali and Burkina Faso are willing to give up their children to child traffickers when they believe their children will be adequately cared for, in addition to sending money home.

This was the case for 10-year old Abdoulaye from Dori, Burkina Faso, who was given to a so-called “religious teacher” whom his older sister was going to marry. This teacher already had 51 children who were working in his fields in Ivory Coast.

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President's Message

Population Media Center is a non-profit, non-governmental organization working worldwide with broadcast and print media to promote population stabilization by encouraging the use of family planning, safe sexual practices, and elevation of women's status. Population Media Center is headquartered in Shelburne, Vermont, and maintains branch offices in Brazil, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Mali, Mexico, Nigeria and Sudan.

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As you will see in this newsletter, Population Media Center's global reach is at an all-time high. We now have projects in seven countries. One of these, a population cartoon contest in the United States, is unique in that it is reaching people through print media to help the American public understand that population growth is still a critical problem in the developing world and is aggravating poverty, environmental destruction, political unrest and human suffering.

Other PMC country projects are using serialized drama programs on radio or television to reach large audiences and motivate behavior change with regard to family size, use of family planning and elevation of women's status. In addition to PMC's long-running projects in Ethiopia, Mexico and Brazil, PMC went on the air in November in Burkina Faso, Mali and Sudan! The West African program in Mali and Burkina Faso, distributed via WorldSpace satellite, will also serve the Ivory Coast as soon as the political situation there allows distribution of satellite receivers to local radio stations.

The West African radio soap opera deals with tragic outcomes of unplanned parenthood: poverty and child slavery. Children and parents often feel there is no alternative to ensure survival. We are not talking about children with part-time jobs learning responsibility and work skills. We are talking about children captured or sold by their parents, smuggled to farms in the Ivory Coast, and worked 10 to 20-hour days with no pay, no education, barely enough food to survive, and little chance of escaping alive. Warning parents and children of the risks of "taking a job" with total strangers is a perfect opportunity for PMC to also talk about the importance of planning for a family that one can nurture and support.

The stories of Ousman and Abdoulaye are real. These two boys have experienced the cruelty of slavery and are now using their experiences to advise PMC on how to help other children avoid their fate. Ousman and Abdoulaye are truly the lucky ones, for many who go off to "seek their fortune" in the Ivory Coast are never heard from again.

This holiday season, think of what it means to prevent one child from becoming a victim of brutal slavery. The cost of PMC's work per person reached by radio is miniscule. As with family planning promotion and prevention of HIV infection, saving a child from slavery is a humanitarian imperative.

Your support for PMC's work results in direct life-saving, life-enhancing and planet-saving solutions around the world. Please use the opportunity provided in this newsletter to give your loved ones a very meaningful gift this year – a gift in their honor to support the work of Population Media Center. We will send them a card to tell them of your thoughtfulness and send them PMC's newsletters for the coming year.

Happy Holidays,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William N. Ryerson



Photo by Galen Fry Singer

GIVE A GIFT OF HOPE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

For the special people in your life, make a donation in their name to help PMC carry out its mission.

Gift recipients will be sent a holiday card and a subscription to next year's newsletters. You can send as many cards as you want, and each card can be made out for any amount.

Every donation is tax-deductible!

Your gift helps PMC to:

- Inform men, women, and children about healthy behaviors
- Encourage the use of family planning
- End the practice of child slavery
- Purchase radios for listening groups
- Train local producers and scriptwriters in the Sabido methodology

Focus on the true meaning of the holidays...

The text of the card will read:

A gift of hope has been made in your honor!

Dear [RECIPIENT'S NAME]

\$ [AMOUNT] has been donated to Population Media Center in your name by

[YOUR NAME]

This gift will help thousands of people in developing countries around the world. It will:

- ★ educate young men and women about the benefits of family planning
- ★ teach HIV/AIDS prevention methods
- ★ promote gender equity
- ★ help bring about stabilization of human population for a sustainable world

For more information, please visit www.populationmedia.org OR write to: pmc@populationmedia.org

Population Media Center, P.O. BOX 547 Shelburne, VT 05492 (802) 985-8156

**85 cents of every dollar you donate goes
directly into one of PMC's programs**



Photo by Mark Pelletier. www.markpelletierphotography.com



Gift Form

This gift is made in honor of:

PMC will send this person a holiday card and a subscription to next year's newsletters

Amount: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Mail to:

Population Media Center

PO Box 547

Shelburne, VT 05482

***This form may be photocopied
for multiple gifts***

** All gifts are tax-deductible.*

I would like to make a donation in my name:

Amount: _____

Please fill out information below

My name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

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★Checks may be payable to Population Media Center or PMC

★Please charge my total gift of \$_____ to my:

Visa

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Card No: _____

Exp. Date: _____

Authorized Signature: _____

I would like to be added to PMC's e-mailing list to get updated information on its activities and population issues around the world. **E-mail:** _____

**Thank you. The impact of your donation will be felt for generations
in the lives of people living in our listening areas.**

On the Air in Mali!

Casiri Tono Summary of the first 30 episodes

Dominant in the minds of all Malians is the everyday struggle to have enough money to get by and to create the possibility of a better life. In these first 30 episodes, we see several characters caught in various levels of this struggle.

Woshi is a beautiful, young peasant woman who runs away from her rural village to escape an arranged marriage. She seems naive but is smarter and more determined than she lets on. Rather pretty, she comes to be nicknamed "gazelle" by her friends. She arrives at the (fictional) city of Sewa and seeks work at the local bar/inn owned by **Tanti**.

Filiberi, is a portly, arrogant, rich plantation owner that frequents Tanti's bar/inn. He is unmarried but keeps numerous mistresses; he does not want to be "tied down." Filiberi exerts much power over the people he deals with, mostly because of the exorbitant amount of money he possesses. Of course it doesn't hurt that he is in cahoots with the local police chief. He spots beautiful Woshi at Tanti's inn and immediately sets his eyes on her. He tells Tanti, "I want THAT one." Tanti knows that whatever Filiberi wants, Filiberi gets. Tanti seems harmless, but she is motivated by only one thing - money. She does whatever Filiberi asks of her because he pays her well - he is a big drinker, and often buys rounds for the other people in the bar. So, Tanti is easily persuaded when Filiberi asks her to provide housing for Woshi so that he can keep a closer eye on her. Tanti pretends to befriend Woshi's friend, offering her a job, food, and accommodations, but she is only really concerned about making Filiberi happy - a happy Filiberi means more money for her.

Still, everything is not as placid as it seems. **Joe**, the bartender at Tanti's inn, and Woshi do not get along from the start. There doesn't seem to be any concrete reason, but the two of them are always getting into arguments. One day, Joe is venting to Tanti about his problems with Woshi when a male stranger arrives, looking for Woshi. Curious, Joe grills him only to find out that he is Woshi's fiancé! No one had known about Woshi's secret engagement - will this secret work against her?

In another plotline, in the village of Yanko, we meet **Kunandi**, a twelve year old boy with a knack for mischief. His best friend is **Lagare**, the school principal's son. Kunandi witnesses the benefits of having money when he and his mother, **Doussou**, are waiting at the hospital to receive treatment for a stomachache and a wealthy businessman rushes into the waiting room and walks directly past all the other patients into the doctor's office.

One day all the children go swimming in a swimming hole. **Barou** (another friend) arrives on his father's bicycle. The bicycle

attracts the attention of all the children, who begin talking about one day going away to find their fortune because it is the only way they will ever be able to afford a bicycle.

Kunandi and Lagare begin hanging out at **Senteja's** bar – helping her out with various jobs. Soon, they become indispensable and Lagare is offered a job there. However, Lagare leaves suddenly in hopes of “seeking his fortune.”

Kunandi is hired in Lagare's place at Senteja's bar. However, he too plans on leaving one day to seek his fortune. Upon getting the results of the school year, we find that Kunandi is



Representatives of community radio stations in Mali are trained to use their new WorldSpace receivers.

the only one in his class who has not passed to the second grade. The rest of the family is discussing this when a friend comes in to inform them that Kunandi was seen at the bus station getting into a bus with his suitcase.

Luckily, Kunandi had only gotten as far as Doussou's sister's house. Doussou brings him back home and chastises him for running away. However, Kunandi's longing to go and find his fortune is not over. He declares that if he is not allowed to go and seek his fortune elsewhere, then he will drop out of school and work at Senteja's bar to earn money. In a rage, **Aljuma**, Kunandi's father, swears to put Kunandi on the right track. However, he is calmed by **Kulu**, a family friend, who suggests that it might not be so bad for Kunandi to go seek his fortune.

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IN MEMORIAM Dr. Everett M. Rogers

Everett Rogers, author of numerous books and research articles on entertainment-education and a member of Population Media Center's Program Advisory Board, passed away on October 21st as the result of cancer. He was a world expert in the use of mass media and social change, including the entertainment-education strategy. His books and research findings are found in most schools of journalism and communication all over the world.

At the time of his death, he was Distinguished Professor Emeritus in the Department of Communication and Journalism at the University of New Mexico. He had previously served as Walter H. Annenberg Professor and Associate Dean of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California and before that was the Janet M. Peck Professor of International Communication at Stanford University. He first became widely known for his landmark book, *Diffusion of Innovations*, published in 1962, and now in its



fifth edition. The book explains how new ideas spread among members of a social system.

PMC President Bill Ryerson had the honor of working with him in the initiation of the research in Tanzania that measured the huge impact on people's reproductive health behavior of the radio soap opera, *Twende na Wakati* ("Let's Go with the Times") during the 1990s. The research overseen by Rogers was unique not only in measuring the effects of a radio program on a nationwide basis, but also in showing the key role in bringing about behavior change that can be played by entertainment-education serialized dramas that follow the strategy created by Miguel Sabido of Mexico.

Messages of sorrow have poured into PMC's offices from colleagues in Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania, Pakistan, the Philippines, Mexico and Brazil. The field of communications has lost one of its great leaders, and many of us have lost a good friend.

Câsiri Tono Summary continued

Aljuma is convinced. Doussou, Kunandi's mother, is still opposed to the idea, but Kunandi has gotten his go-ahead. He is ready for adventure.

Epilogue: Kunandi leaves and joins his friend Lagare on Filiberi's plantation. The conditions are dangerous and the work unrelenting. The situation is far worse than either the boys or their parents could have ever imagined. He is caught in a dilemma that is common for many Malians - should he stay and earn the money he desperately wants and needs, or should he try to escape the unrelenting conditions?

Woshi, on the other hand, is successfully wooed by Filiberi and becomes his primary mistress. She moves into his plantation but begins taking literacy classes without his knowledge. Soon she realizes that she can read the papers Filiberi leaves around the plantation. She realizes that they are the identification papers of the children...who were trafficked! What will Woshi do with this knowledge?



Dede Keita (left), PMC Mali's Country Representative listens to the first broadcast of *Câsiri Tono*.

Child Trafficking continued from front page

Abdoulaye was not accustomed to the brutal labor that was expected of him. So, as punishment, the teacher used a bicycle cable to bind Abdoulaye's hands and feet, and left him alone in the field overnight. By the time he was found over 24 hours later, his hands and feet were gangrenous from the lack of blood supply – and had to be amputated. By that time, the teacher had fled to Mali, and was never apprehended. Abdoulaye is handicapped for life.

In response to stories like these, PMC has developed a radio serial drama with funding from the US Agency for International Development. The radio serial drama will address issues of

child exploitation and the link between this problem and poverty-inducing factors such as unwanted pregnancy and HIV/AIDS.

Through the characters and storyline in *Cesiri Tono* ("All the Rewards of Courage and Hard Work"), PMC will educate the parents on the true consequences on sacrificing their children. We will also educate children on the true working conditions of exploitative plantations. Most importantly, however, PMC will show how family planning can break the cycle of poverty that leads to the exploitation of children.