



November, 2014

This book is a compilation of 12 years of experience tromping through cocoa farms, drinking palm wine with village chiefs, and visiting people who want to ensure that the West African cocoa farmer earn a better living. About \$10 from the sale of this book contributes to the missions of Project Hope and Fairness.

I established Project Hope and Fairness in 2006 with Ernie Roide and Eric Parkinson. At that time, the Western world was abuzz with stories of child slaves, forced labor, and Worst Forms of Child Labor. Many large chocolate companies joined the World Cocoa Foundation, hoping to change the consumers' perceptions.

I established this non-profit with three missions in mind:

1. Bring people to the cocoa farmer to see the situation with their own eyes. Also distribute tools that would help cocoa farmers increase their own efficiencies.
2. Build chocolate businesses in villages in order to take cocoa farmers out of the commodity-only relationship.
3. Build cocoa study centers so that university students from the West can apply some of their knowledge to problems that require solutions.

Our NGO works in three countries: Cameroon, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire. These countries produce 5%, 21%, and 40% of the world's cocoa, respectively. In other words, these three countries control two-thirds of the world cocoa market.

Mama Ganache Artisan Chocolates, Inc. is a for-profit business based in San Luis Obispo, California. We manufacture and distribute chocolate and chocolate candies throughout the world. Our chocolate is strictly organic and Fair Trade. We contribute to the missions of Project Hope and Fairness.

To learn more, visit www.mama-ganache.com. Or call Tom at 805-441-6727.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ANIMALS.....	1
BICYCLES.....	6
BUSHMEAT.....	7
CASSAVA.....	8
CHIEFS.....	11
CHILDREN.....	13
COCOA DISEASES.....	21
COCOA FARMERS.....	23
COCOA GROWING.....	26
COCOA INDUSTRY.....	29
COCOA PROCESSING.....	31
COLONIAL VESTIGES.....	33
COOKING.....	35
CORN.....	37
DONATIONS.....	39
FISHERMEN.....	43
FOOD.....	46
HOUSES.....	57
MEN.....	59
PALM OIL, PALM WINE.....	61
RICE.....	63
RUBBER.....	64
SCHOOLS.....	65
SLAVERY.....	66
STUDENTS.....	67
VILLAGES.....	68
WFCL.....	70
WOMEN.....	71

ANIMALS

Anyone who has visited West Africa and who cares one whit about nature is depressed by the absence of wild animals--at least superficially. But then, you see people standing roadside with antelopes, grasscutters, rats, pangolins, snakes, reptiles, ocelots, and crabs. So the animals are obviously still around. Either their populations are severely reduced or they're scared stiff of ending up in a pot.

West Africans consider wild animals or *bushmeat* to be loaded with properties that strengthen the constitution--an attitude shared with the Chinese who have eaten the backfins off 90% of the world's sharks and who pay tens of thousands of dollars for a single rhino horn. There are, incidentally, only five wild white rhino's left.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the *dozos*, who are people from the north, function as hunters and security. You often see them walking along the side of the road, gun slung over the shoulder.



BIRDHOUSE. I'm not sure what sort of bird would prefer living this high off the ground, but I do know that the picture was taken in Mmaniaye, Ghana, not far from the Kakum national forest.

BIRDS AS PETS. Children everywhere love their pets. This bird cage, complete with floors and stairwells, is made with the pithy interior of a palm. In this village, again, Mmaniaye in Ghana, children catch birds and put them in the cages.



CHICKENS. In *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, Dr. Jared Diamond discussed at length the requisite attributes of an animal that can be domesticated.

The chicken has the attributes. It knows exactly where is home--it wanders around the village but always comes back. It loves to climb ladders and really appreciates a little nook where it can lay its eggs. The plantain sucker doesn't belong in the picture; someone just put it down for a moment.





DOGS. Like other domesticated animals, dogs wander the village, looking for spare scraps of food. This guy or gal took advantage of residual heat from a previous fire.

FIRING. Farmers burn down vegetation near their homes in order to keep the snakes and reptiles away. I took this picture near Zereguhe, one of the villages to which we have brought tools since 2006.



GOAT. You see goats everywhere, but in this picture, the animal is standing next to a lovely bamboo fence, typical of villages in the Fanti region of Ghana. The Fantis live south of the Ashanti, who would conduct slaving raids and take their victims to sell at the European slave castles, located on the ocean.

Goats are tasty, easy to catch, and they are the right size; being easy to carry, easy to slaughter and clean, and really not baaad on the palate.

GREEN MAMBA. This snake was found crawling through the rice hulls next to our rice hulling building in Depa, Côte d'Ivoire. It was pursuing a lizard. The Green Mamba is reclusive and generally arboreal. It can move up and down trees with great rapidity. Bites are often fatal, and the victim succumbs within 30 minutes.

The children were playing soccer on the rice hulls when they started to scream. David (manager of the rice hulling factory and chocolate making factory) picked up a stick and quickly chopped off the snake's head. It is partly because of the Green Mamba that cocoa farmers wear boots.



MILLIPEDE. A centipede has long antennae and very obvious legs. Centipedes are sometimes poisonous, but not millipedes, although they can secrete hydrochloric acid that functions as a skin irritant. The giant African millipede is sometimes kept as a pet. If a millipede feels threatened, it coils into a spiral.

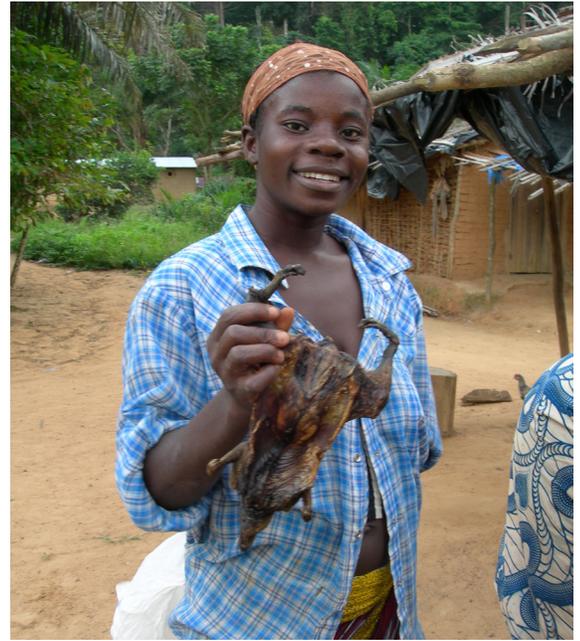
MONKEY. Our relatives sure taste good. Years ago, I was served a stew by an evangelical pastor from Abidjan. Halfway through the meal, I asked, "What is this meat? It's so good!" to which he responded, "Singe", French for monkey.

There is a "monkey village" near Issia in Côte d'Ivoire, where dozens of monkeys hang out in the neighboring Forbidden Forest, where people were traditionally buried. The village has a great name, "Gbeutitabia" and legend has it that when the French would march through to pick up free labor, the village doctor concocted a brew that turned his own family into monkeys. Unfortunately, he forgot to concoct the counterbrew, and his relatives have hung out in Gbeutitabia ever since.



RAT. I took this picture in Côte d'Ivoire on the road from San Pedro to Abidjan. The young woman was standing by the road, holding up her smoked catch. Evariste, my assistant, bought the rat; it is customary for a husband or a son to bring home food after a trip.

With bushmeat such as this, the animal is splayed on a wooden frame, then smoked until dry. It can be stored at room temperature indefinitely--until it is cooked in a vegetable-based stew. I ate rat in a restaurant in Abidjan; it was quite excellent. This woman is obviously either Christian or Traditional (African religion), as Islam prohibits the consumption of rat.



SPIDER. AUSTRACANTHA MINAX.



YOUNG PYTHON FOR SALE BY THE ROADSIDE IN WINNEBA, GHANA

Yes, it's a spider! Also called a Jewel Spider. In Australia, the spider is very colorful, hence the name. I found this in the middle of a rather large web in a grassy area. The spiky protuberances have no relationship whatever to its 8 legs. I'm not sure if there is any utility to the spikes.

Young pythons are often used as pets and are harmless to humans when small like this one. When they grow to up to 17 feet in length, they become dangerous, especially when people hand them food, thereby rubbing the scent on to their own bodies and becoming indistinguishable from the prey.



WEAVER BIRDS. Even if you don't see a tree full of hundreds of these birds, you are bound to hear it. They make the most pleasant twittering sound and they build their nests upside down.



OCELOT. Another of West Africa's beautiful creatures destined for the pot.



DOZOS. These are northern hunters who have moved south. They are a secret society. Each member wears an amulet that produces *gris-gris* or magical powers. Most of the hunting is done by the *dozos*. They are especially feared by the Baoulé and Bété peoples because the *dozos* side with the *Dioula* or northerners who moved south and bought land during the years of the Ivorian miracle, when the forests were cleared and much cocoa planted.

BICYCLES

The roads of West Africa are atrocious. A paved road makes all the difference in terms of getting product to market. Villages located along roads tend to be wealthier than those in the bush. Bicycles and motorcycles are the preferred mode of transport, especially on the small dirt paths that link villages to the cocoa farms. It takes many bicycle trips to bring product from the farm to the village, and children are critical to maintaining a steady flow of product.



ABEKRO, COTE D'IVOIRE. This cocoa farmer is carrying back a bunch of bananas and a container of palm wine. The average cocoa farmer grows multiple crops. This man cut down a banana tree, harvested the bananas, and then allowed one of the tree's suckers to produce next year's harvest.

The palm wine was collected overnight in the blue container (see chapter on Palm Wine) and he is carrying it home for his family to enjoy.

ZEREGUHE, COTE D'IVOIRE (below). Many Ivoirians believe that the French promoted the civil war that has led to their impoverishment. Furthermore, they believe that the French benefitted financially, as the civil war drove down the prices of cocoa. Farmers could not transport their produce and were forced to sell to the lowest bidder.

The result of the has been an increase in anti-French feeling. In the cities, taxis often sport American flags. In the country, bicycles are often painted with American colors.



BUSHMEAT

West Africa is rapidly cutting down rainforests and eating wildlife into oblivion. In 12 years of my traveling, these are the most common sights: people selling food at all the stopping points, fatal car crashes and bus crashes, enormous trucks carrying the logs of virgin rainforests, and the region's wildlife sold to the highest bidder.

The most popular meats are: pangolin and grasscutter. Pangolin is a scaly anteater made famous by the anthropologist Mary Douglas in her first book about the Lele People of the Congo who revered the pangolin. Likewise, the Chinese make clothing of pangolin scales and treasure its meat.

The grasscutter or cane rat or *agoutti* is a large rodent similar to a porcupine. It is especially consumed in Ghana, cooked with a "soup" often made of tomatoes, eggplants, and onions, and served with fufu.



PANGOLIN IN COTE D'IVOIRE



PANGOLIN STEW



GRASSCUTTER IN CHOP HOUSE



GRASSCUTTER IN SOUP

CASSAVA, GARI, ATIEKE, FUFU

There are two forms of cassava: sweet and bitter. Sweet cassava predominates in West Africa. Originally introduced by the Portuguese as a food for slaves on the long voyage across the Atlantic, it was first planted on the shores of the Congo river in the 16th century. It has since permeated all of West Africa as the perfect food.

What makes it perfect? Well, perfect should have quotes, because even sweet cassava contains some of the chemicals that release cyanide. For this reason, cassava, both sweet and bitter, must be boiled. Bitter cassava is rarely grown in West Africa because it is poisonous, although because of this, it is less prone to insect attack.

One of the great advantages of cassava, which is number 3 as a source of calories (after rice and corn) is that you can leave it in the ground. With rice, you have to harvest and dry before it molds. With corn, you can leave it on the stalk and you can dry it without shucking. But with cassava, you can leave it in the ground and the tubers just get bigger and bigger.

In the past--before colonial times, when villages were regularly at war with each other, if your enemy burned your houses down and stole all your food, you could re-enter the village, rebuild, and the cassava remained in the ground.

Cassava leaves are used in soups and in vegetable purees. Like other green leafy vegetables, they are good sources of folate, which is important for brain development in infants as well as vitamin C. The tubers are excellent sources of calories and quick energy, as most of the sugars are sucrose. They also function as good sources of minerals.



YOUNG CASSAVA PLANTS



YOUNG CASSAVA TUBERS

HAND SHREDDING CASSAVA. In Côte d'Ivoire, fermented cassava is shredded and steamed to produce *attiéké*. In the cities, it is sold in plastic bags. It is often served with grilled meat or with *Poulet Kedjenou*.

Below, left, a woman of Djahakro shreds *attiéké* by hand. To the right, an enterprising young man brings his gasoline-powered shredder from village to village.



GARI. Typically found in Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, and Cameroon, this is a granulated powder made of grated cassava that is fermented in porous bags for 1-2 days, then pressed to remove the juices and roasted over dry heat or in palm oil. The former is referred to as white gari and the latter as yellow gari. Reminiscent of American grits (which are made here with corn), it is mixed with boiling water.



FUFU OR FOUTOU. In Ghana, *fufu* is usually made primarily of pounded boiled cassava. In Côte d'Ivoire, *foutou* it is often sweetened with plantain, sometimes made solely of plantain. Fufu or foutou are pounded in large mortars using five foot long pestles. The gelatinized starch granules are busted open, spilling their contents and causing both forms of starch, amylose and amylopectin, to interlink into a gluey mass. This is usually served with a "soup" whose meat can be any type of fish, snails, goat and grasscutter.



**GARRETT MORRIS POUNDS
FUFU IN EBKAWOPA, GHANA**



**FOUTOU IS READY! BROGUHE,
COTE D'IVOIRE**



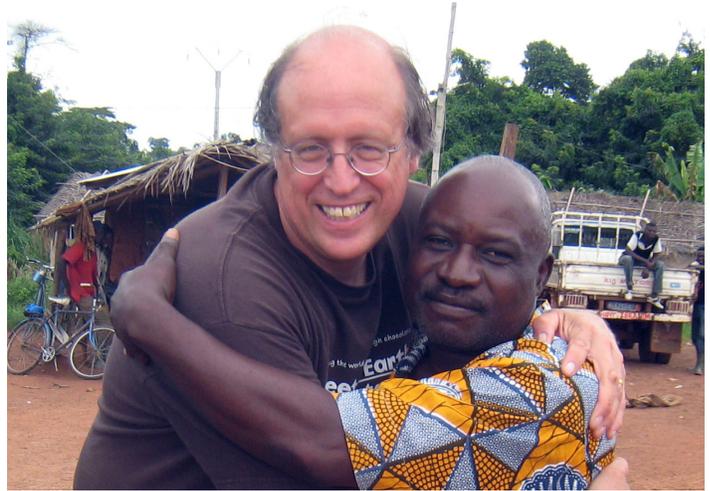
EATING BOILED CASSAVA

CHIEFS

Whether you are visiting a village in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, or Cameroon, it's the chief you want to see first. The chief is king. You ask him permission to visit, you **MUST** spend at least an hour exchanging "the news" or *les nouvelles* in the francophone countries. It is his responsibility to provide the beverage and sometimes the food.



CHIEF OF BATEGUEDEA, COTE D'IVOIRE



CHIEF OF BROGUHE, COTE D'IVOIRE



CHIEF OF PEZOAN, COTE D'IVOIRE



CHIEF OF MUNYENGE, CAMEROON



CHIEFS OF DJAHAKRO, COTE D'IVOIRE



CHIEF OF ZEREGUHE, COTE D'IVOIRE



CHIEF OF MMANIAYE. Taken in 2008. This was the second year that we had visited the village. Mmaniaye is about 5 miles away from the nearest paved road.



CHIEF OF FRAMI. Taken in 2014. This is the big chief. To his right are his parents. He is sitting in a small building with three walls, designed so that people can visit the chief and ask for favors.

CHILDREN

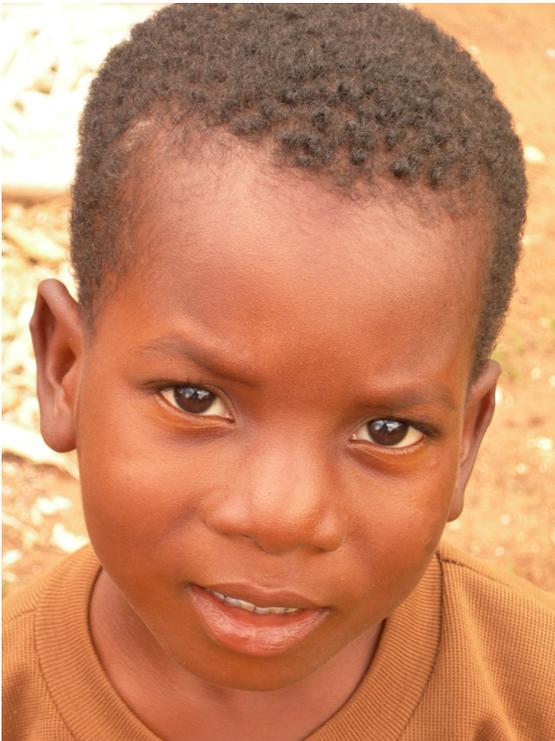
Anyone who has grown up in the West cannot avoid being impressed by the *joie de vivre* of West African children. They run hither and thither, finding joy in virtually anything, including your visit. You have to be a stone to not be impressed.

Children are rarely afraid of me and my white skin. After 12 years of visiting the same villages, they no longer want to pinch my skin to see if it's real. But in the beginning, they would run around, yelling "White Man!"

Children are really more part of the village than they are of the family. It would be unthinkable for a parent to say to their son or daughter, "Don't play with Mabel. She's selfish and unreliable." It's unlikely that any such judgment would ever be passed. There are no "yards", no careful delineation of property limits. Children just run everywhere--like the chickens, the sheep, the goats, and the pigs.

If any adult asks a child to do something, the child does it immediately, unquestionably, and cheerfully. A Westerner cannot fathom such behavior. In the West, children become sullen when asked to perform a task. Cheerfulness is much more measured in Western countries.

If the village offered job opportunities for teenagers and adults, the beauty of this way of life could be preserved. This is why Project Hope and Fairness exists.



BOY OF BATEGUEDEA



BABY BATHING

BOYS OF BATEGUEDEA



CHILD LEFT BEHIND. It is such an exceptional rarity for a child to be left alone that I had to take a picture. It's possible his mother or sibling had just stepped away. He is sitting by the fireplace, which consists of beautifully shaped mounds of clay that when fired become pottery. People set large aluminum marmites on the mounds and build fires under them. They push kindling into the center and gradually push the logs in as they are consumed.

JUSTIN WHITAKER. In 2005, Justin, who is the son of friends, was traveling throughout West Africa, taking video of farmers. He joined me in Abidjan and we visited a number of villages together.





TAPSOBA KADER. In 2005, when this was taken, I was very intrigued to find out how many laborers in the cocoa farms were not related to the cocoa farm owners. I took this picture of a young Malian who had taken the bus south to work on his uncle's farm. For Malian boys, who spend their youths with no work or education opportunities but who have heard of the riches just south of them in Côte d'Ivoire, this represents the chance of a lifetime.

Reading *Bitter Chocolate* or watching *The Dark Side of Chocolate*, one acquires an appreciation for the child labor situation in the cocoa business.

One of the symbols of "making it", of fulfilling a dream is possession of a bicycle. The thousands of children who have journeyed south into Côte d'Ivoire are often promised a bicycle at the end of a 2 year period of hard work. Many are deceived and return to Mali empty-handed. Tapsoba clearly was not. Perhaps it's because he's working for his uncle, not for some wealthy plantation owner.

DALE. In 2006, a local general contractor answered my advertisement in the newspaper regarding the opportunity to accompany me to visit villages in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. Dale elected to do the Ivoirian piece. Evariste, my assistant, and I met him at the airport and then drove directly to Port Bouët, a community of fishermen and northerners living in sandy beach communities next to the airport. In this picture, Dale has just arrived and has already made friends while we waited for the driver and the car that we had hired.



HIDE AND SEEK. This little boy befriended me while we waited. The Port Bouët neighborhood borders the airport and the French garrison. In 2004, when 8,000 Frenchmen had to leave Côte d'Ivoire in a massive and sudden exodus, they picked up into the garrison and neighboring airport. The exodus, which included virtually every white person living in the country, was provoked by the French military having bombed Ivory Coast's airforce, consisting of two ancient MIGs. The French did this in response to the Ivoirians having bombed about 9 of their citizens as well as one American missionary.



TOYS. Children in the cocoa-growing village have very little in the way of toys. An old innertube provides hours of satisfaction. Another toy is a bamboo stick with a set of wheels at the end. Sometimes the other end has a steering wheel. The teenagers in the middle have fashioned eyeglasses with bamboo and with an old coke can.



GIRLS DANCING. In 2007, we brought our first tools to cocoa farmers in Ebekawopa, Ghana. Reverend Sampson organized a fabulous dancing ceremony, including these beautiful girls, who had drawn on their bodies with kaolin clay.

SISTERS EATING. In the U.S., we eat at tables, usually with implements, and we wash our hands before touching the food. In West Africa, people eat much more casually, sharing dishes, sitting on the ground, eating at irregular intervals. Men are served by women and children often eat by themselves. Note how these two girls very carefully hold their left hands in the air while touching the food only with their right hands.





CHILDREN AND SELLING. In rural areas, markets are often found in villages located near the paved road. Women are in charge of the booths, but children, especially girls, are responsible for carrying food to the markets as well as selling things. In this picture, taken in 2007 in the village of Mmaniaye, Ghana, the girl is taking dried fish to market. Mmaniaye is about 50 miles from the ocean, and dried fish are important flavoring agents in *Fante* cuisine.



TWO GIRLS OF DEPA. Women spend a lot of time doing their own hair and that of their girls. Boys and men, as customary in the West, do almost nothing with their hair. Of course, some European/American men are now spending significant sums on their hair.



BOY WITH CHEWING STICKS. While Westerners purchase plastic toothbrushes and use pastes concocted in giant factories, West Africans use twigs from the tree, *Salvadora persica*, which one chews to produce a frayed, brushlike end. The wood itself contains antimicrobials that keep the breath smelling sweet. West African villagers suffer from very little tooth decay because they eat virtually no sugar.

The young man had spent much of the day with his slingshot, in the middle of his family's rice field, scaring birds away. When you drive past rice fields, you often see boys on dirt mounds, shooting pebbles at birds that are tempted by the rice kernels.



PRESIDENT OBAMA. Of course, the election of Barrack Obama to the White House was a very big event in Africa. People wrote songs about the event, and others designed clothing. This girl lives in Ebekawopa, Ghana.



BOY IN ABEKRO, COTE D'IVOIRE. This boy is weaving a basket for winnowing rice. Women grow, dry, pound, and winnow rice. Children are expected to learn all the basic skills required to run a firm. This includes weaving.

UNDERAGE LOITERING. These boys are just crouching on the corner, watching everybody walk by. --in Bafoussam, Cameroon, 2011.



BOYS WILL BE BOYS. One child is playing with a ball, and the other is dancing. I was just leaving Reverend Sampson's house where I had spent the night--in Ebekawopa, Ghana--when these boys started to show off. This of course is the natural response for children everywhere.





BOB PEAK. I have never traveled with anyone who responded in quite the same way as I--until 2014 when Bob Peak joined me for more than three weeks. Like me, Bob considers natural environments to be sacred. We also share a love of humanity, and we were both shaken to our roots visiting the pygmies, who had left the forest to live with the Bantu, the much taller agriculturalists who have dominated central Africa since their expansion about 3,000 years ago. The pygmies are true hunter-gatherers, and their language is much richer in words for the natural environment. In the area we visited, not far from the capital of the eastern region, Bertoua, the pygmies were leaving the forest because they were attracted to the easier life and because of the ready availability of sawed wood planks, useful as doors for their houses.





CHILDREN OF EBKAWOPA, GHANA.
Taken by Suzanne, one of my “tourists” in 2010.



BROTHER BATHING SISTER
Taken by Suzanne, one of my “tourists” in 2010.



DOROTHY NEUHAUS WITH CHILD. In Monatele, Cameroon, half an hour north of Yaounde, the capitol.



KELSEY TIMMERMAN . Kelsey joined my mother and me in 2012. He wrote three chapters about his experience in his second book, *Where Are We Eating?* The little boy is Albert’s son; Albert was my assistant from 2009 to 2012.

COCOA DISEASES AND PREDATORS

West Africa has been extremely lucky. The home of *Theobroma cacao* is the Amazon river basin. Typical of a botanical home are greatest intraspecies variation and greatest number of predators. Cacao has been planted in West Africa for about 130 years, an eyeblink in botanical history. The witches broom that decimated Brazilian crop has not significantly harmed African crops. So far.

The biggest problem in West Africa is “black pod”, caused by the *Phytophthora* fungus that piggybacks on the tiny biting insect, Myrids. Second most problematic are termites, mistletoe, and squirrels.



TERMITES. All over sub-Saharan Africa, one sees termite mounds. Termites have digestive systems containing cellulase enzyme, allowing them to eat wood and extract glucose from it. Termites are very fond of the cacao tree, maybe because it's fairly soft wood and its sap is sweet.

MYRIDS. Small biting insects bite through the tough outer shell and spread the spores of black pod, causing yields to drop by as much as 75%.

PHYTOPHTHORA. This is the fungus the causes whole pods to turn rotten, causing “black pod.”





SQUIRRELS & MISTLETOE. Squirrels and monkeys love the sweet flavors of cacao. They enjoy the white material that coats each seed, don't bother to chew on the seeds, which are bitter, and then excrete them on the forest floor, spreading the genes around. Mistletoe is a parasite that lives in the upper branches of a tree and sucks its juices. Cocoa farmers usually hire children to climb the tree and remove it.



OLD TREES. In Mungenge, Cameroon. This land belongs to someone who took a course sponsored by the World Cocoa Foundation. He proudly showed me his texts and notes. However, his cocoa does not seem to have benefited from the classes.

COCOA FARMERS

Cocoa farming became an occupation in the late 19th century, when missionaries and other colonialists encouraged African farmers to add various commodity crops. Today, the cocoa farmer faces a multitude of hardships: 1), bad roads; 2), corrupt governments; 3), global warming and resultant drought; 4), diseases both plant and human. The West is doing comparatively little about the situation, except to worry about Ebola. Very sad.



EUGENIE. I met her for the first time in 2004. At the time, I was looking for someone to put on the front of a chocolate bar. Eugénie was on the board of Kavokiva, the second Fair Trade certified cooperative in Côte d'Ivoire. Her husband had died and the tending of the cocoa farm was her responsibility along with her children.

You can see that she cared for her farm: there is plenty of space for breezes to blow through the stand of trees, reducing the probability of fungal attack. Also, the pods are of a good size and lacking in blemishes of any kind.

I put Eugenie on our bags of cocoa and chips bags.



ERNEST. We had to drive quite a way into the countryside to find Ernest, who was tending his cocoa groves. You can see from his face that he had quite a sense of humor. I put Ernest on our candybars but someone called and said he'd sue us if we continued to put Ernest on the bar, since our chocolate was from South American beans.

I never understood why that should matter, since many farmers in South America are African in origin. But others said that Ernest looked just a little too sly to properly advertise our product.

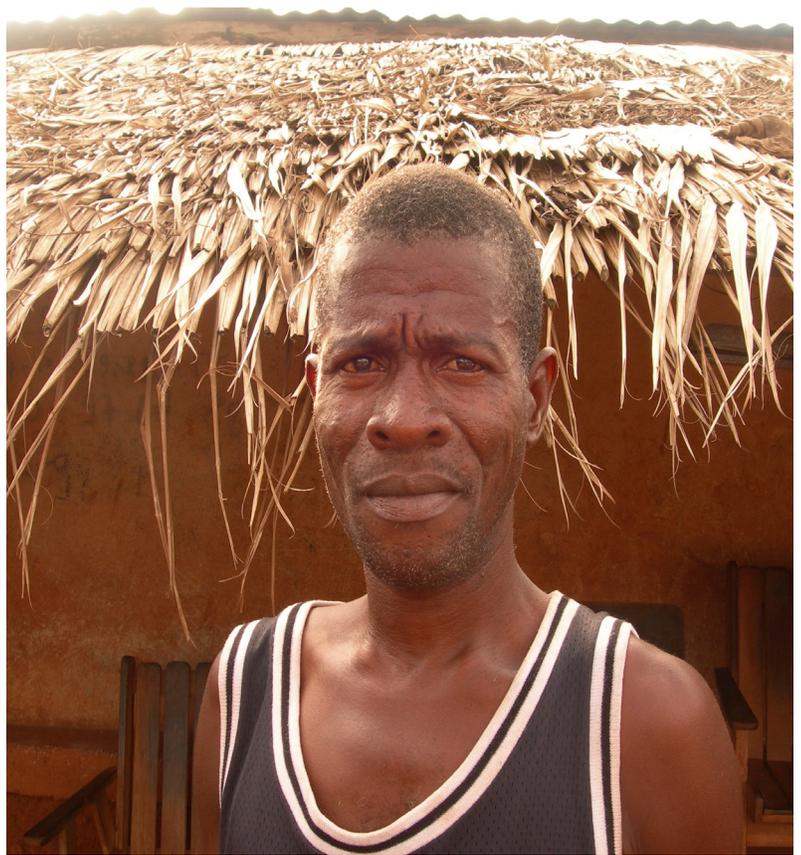
Ernest died a year after this photo was taken. People in West Africa don't last long, what with bad water, disease, and lack of access to quality health care.



NEKPATO. What a beautiful name. Evariste, Justin, and I were walking into the woods, past the spider (see Animals), past the rice field, and we ran into Nkepato. He was married to Marguerite Kipre. Both Nkepato and Marguerite were the sorts of people that you instantly like.



BASI BONI MATHIAS. We met him on the path leading from his farm back to Depa, in Côte d'Ivoire. He'd just spent the day weeding. Amazing, isn't it, that someone who has just spent the day in great physical exertion is wearing really nice clothing!



DROUGOU TAPE FRANCOIS. A cocoa farmer residing in Depa, Côte d'Ivoire. The roof behind him is made of grass shingles, which together with clay walls, make a home pleasantly cool. When some people acquire wealth, they build homes of concrete block or reinforced concrete and the roofs are made of galvanized steel. Still, the old grass roof, while leaky and prone to harboring various forms of wildlife, had its advantages.



DJABATE CHAKA. Lived in a "campement" or hamlet not far from Bateguedea, a village on the road to Man. He is standing right in front of a cocoa drying area, which consists of pounded earth mixed with cement powder to give it resilience.



JULES DALO. When this picture was taken in 2005, Jules was the head cocoa farmer for the village of Daloa.



JEAN BAPTISTE KIPRE Jean Baptiste was the spokesman for the chief, as he speaks very good French and he writes very well. He is a good friend.



OFF TO THE FARM This young man of Depa, Côte d'Ivoire, has just purchased a couple of cocoa seedlings and is transporting them by bicycle to his cocoa farm.

COCOA GROWING

In English, it's "cocoa" and in any Romance language, it's *cacao*. The scientific name is *Theobroma cacao*, the only commercially important member of the family of understory trees known as *Sterculiaceae*.



COCOA NURSERY. Each cocoa pod has approximately 40 seeds. To make cocoa seedlings, you crack open the pod and you plant each of the seeds. Fermented cocoa seeds are dead: during fermentation, the seeds heat past the temperature of viability, and the seeds are effectively sterilized. Children are often involved in running nurseries: they fill small black plastic bags with dirt, insert a fresh seed, and water. Within weeks, the result is as you see above: many small plants.



COCOA SEEDLINGS READY TO PLANT AND PLANTED



COCOA TREE. This tree is a hybrid. Note the tapered shape of the pod and the red color. Note also how the tree has been pruned to allow air to flow freely. This reduces fungal attack.



CAULIFLORY. The cocoa flower is very small and grows directly out of the trunk; this is called *cauliflory*. About 1% of cocoa flowers reach viable pods. If botanists could increase yield to 2%, the world's production of cocoa would double.



CHERELLE. The immature pod. Picture taken in Monatele, Cameroon, 2011.



COCOA PODS ALMOST MATURE. The Forastero variety is ripe when the outside turns yellow. These are still a little immature.



RIPE COCOA. Once the Forastero variety of cocoa is ripe, the skin turns yellow. There are 40-50 seeds in a pod and a mature tree yields about 40 pods per year, amounting to about 1600 seeds. When dried, each seed weighs 1 gram, meaning that a tree produces annually 1.6 Kg. At the current price of \$1 per Kilogram, a tree produces \$1.60 annually. Herein lies the fundamental cause of poverty, especially if the farmer has to purchase pesticides, fungicides, and fertilizers in order to ensure a decent yield.



COCOBOD SPRAYING. In Ghana, the Cocobod, originally established by the British, sends people out in the field to spray the cocoa crop. Since cocoa accounts for over 40% of foreign export earnings, ensuring a good crop is in the national interest.

COCOA INDUSTRY

What happens to cocoa once it is grown, fermented, and dried differs by country. In the three countries that we visit, the system differs considerably. In Ghana, the Cocobod controls the price, quality determination, and sales. There are about 25 Licensed Buying Companies in Ghana, but the main one is the government-owned Produce Buying Company.

Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon are two countries that underwent trade liberalization enforced by the World Bank; sales are made directly to private traders rather than to the government. In Côte d'Ivoire, there are three levels of purchasing: the *pisteur* who drives his pickup truck directly to the village, where he weighs the beans and pays cash to the farmer, the *traitant*, who supplies the cash to the *pisteur* and who owns a warehouse located near the village, and the exporter, located in a port.

Cooperatives are by definition farmer-owned. The advantage of the cooperative is that it often provides services that the private entities do not--access to inexpensive loans, financial advice, access to chemical inputs, etc. *Kuapa Kokoo* is a Fair Trade certified™ cooperative with over 40,000 farmer members located in Kumasi, Ghana.



**CARGILL WAREHOUSE IN GAGNOA,
COTE D'IVOIRE**



**KARIM BANDRE, PISTEUR
BATEGUEDEA, COTE D'IVOIRE**



**LEBANESE TRAITANT IN ISSIA,
COTE D'IVOIRE**



**LEBANESE TRAITANT DRYING AND
REBAGGING IN ISSIA, COTE D'IVOIRE**



**SAF CACAO WAREHOUSE
SAN PEDRO, COTE D'IVOIRE**



**SAF CACAO WAREHOUSE
SAN PEDRO, COTE D'IVOIRE**

COCOA COOPERATIVES. Two of the largest Fair Trade cooperatives are Kuapa Kokoo in Kumasi, Ghana, and Kavokiva Cooperative in Gonate, Côte d'Ivoire.



**KUAPA KOKOO WAREHOUSE
EDUMFE, GHANA**



**KAVOKIVA STORY BOARD
GONATE, COTE D'IVOIRE**

COCOA PROCESSING

Much of cocoa processing occurs on the farm. The beans are fermented, then dried and then sold. The buyer, whether a traitant, a cooperative, or an exporter, cleans the beans and dries them down to 7% moisture, at which point they are stable enzymatically and microbially.

Children often are involved in extracting the cocoa beans. They usually use a machete to make four cuts, then pull one side off the pod and then they remove the seeds and the “placental” tissue. When the child labor inspectors are watching, they open the pods with sticks, as seen below.



**CRACKING OPEN THE POD.
DADEASE, GHANA**



**CRACKING OPEN THE PODS.
ABEKRO, COTE D'IVOIRE**



**COCOA BEANS, FRESHLY EXTRACTED
ABEKRO, COTE D'IVOIRE**



**BOX FERMENTATION
TAFO, GHANA**



**FERMENTATION OF SMALL BATCHES
TAFO, GHANA**



**CLEANING THE FERMENTED COCOA AT
THE BEGINNING OF DRYING
MMANIAYE, GHANA**



**COCOA DRYING AREA
ADIYAW, GHANA**



**PARTIALLY DRIED COCOA
MMANIAYE, GHANA**



**COCOA DRYING USING RAINFOREST WOOD
NEAR LOUM, CAMEROON**

One of the problems faced by the Cameroonian cocoa business is the extremely wet weather near Mt. Cameroon. Cocoa farmers have been forced for years to burn rainforest wood in giant ovens such as the one at left. Unfortunately, the ovens are not kept in good running order and smoke taints the cocoa beans, causing them to lose value.

COLONIAL VESTIGES

Although West Africa is economically still in a colonialist situation, with most business built around raw materials such as minerals and cocoa beans and with very little of the value added manufacturing that typifies European and American economies, the rest of the colonial times are now mere vestiges of a by-gone era.

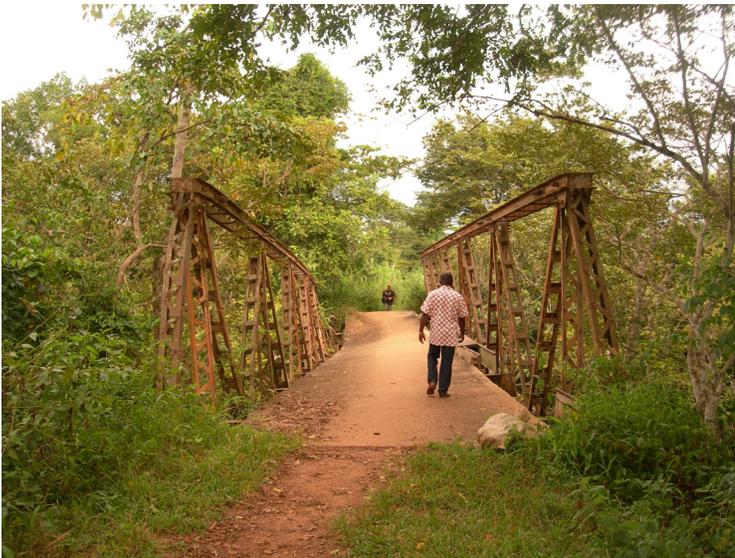
Pictures below...

This bridge probably pre-dates independence, which was before the 1960s. It connects the villages of Depa and Zereguhe.

Grand Bassam was the original capital of the Côte d'Ivoire. It was abandoned in 1897 after a devastating bout of yellow fever killed many of the European inhabitants. This hotel lobby has been abandoned for over 100 years.

The botanical garden at Limbé, Cameroon was established by a German, Paul Preus, in 1892.

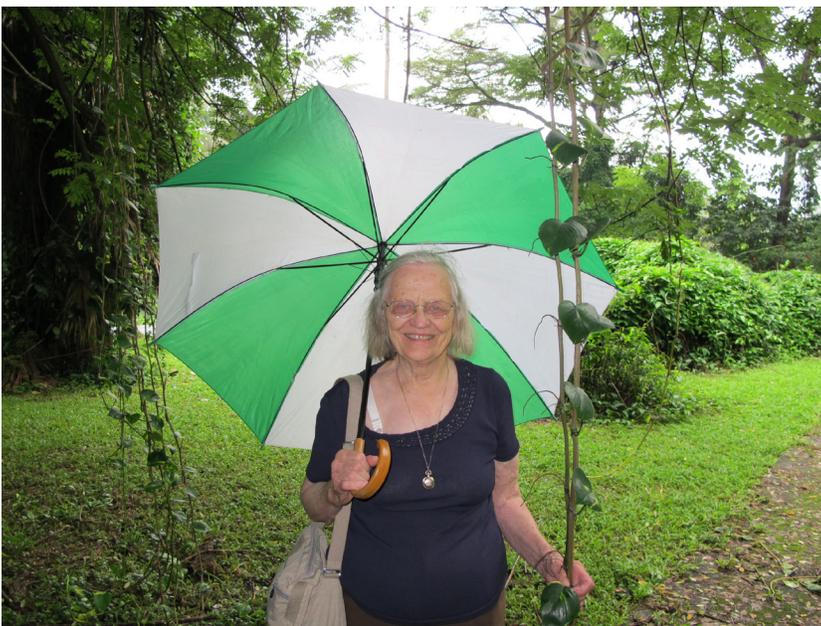
The German bridge in Mamfe, Cameroon, is barely usable. The sides have degraded, and only one of four planks is safe to walk on.



BRIDGE FROM DEPA TO ZEREGUHE



GRAND BASSAM HOTEL LOBBY



DOROTHY NEUHAUS IN THE GARDEN AT LIMBE



PRE-WWI BRIDGE MAMFE, CAMEROON



PALACE OF THE KINGS BELL. Built in 1905 for king Auguste Manga Ndumbe and still belongs to the Bell royal family. His son, Rudolphe, lived in the palace until 1914, when the Germans hung him for treason.

COOKING

The main fuel for cooking in West Africa villages is rainforest wood. People in cities often cook with charcoal, which takes up less space because the energy is concentrated during the charcoaling process. West African dishes are based on the idea of cooking in large aluminum pots, which are set on three clay protuberances made with local clay. Stoves and fires are often set under a roof. Cooking structures sometimes have actual walls and other times have no walls at all.

Because temperatures in tropical regions typically vary between 75 and 90 degrees F, people often cook out in the open or in structures lacking walls. Cooking inside a walled structure causes all sorts of lung problems because the smoke is trapped.



**OPEN KITCHEN IN BATEGUEDEA,
COTE D'IVOIRE**



**OPEN KITCHEN IN EBEKAWOPA,
GHANA**



**CLOSED KITCHEN IN DEPA,
COTE D'IVOIRE**



**CLOSED KITCHEN IN EBEKAWOPA,
GHANA**



INSIDE DR. BROU'S WIFE'S KITCHEN--Galebre, Côte d'Ivoire
Behind the wall is rice, stacked up to keep it dry.

CORN

Introduced from the New World (as part of the Columbian Exchange), corn is one of the three top sources of calories in the West African diet. Of course, it's the high-starch version that is made into grits and flour in the Americas.



DRIED, SMOKED CORN FOR LUNCH



DRIED CORN IN DJAHAKRO, COTE D'IVOIRE



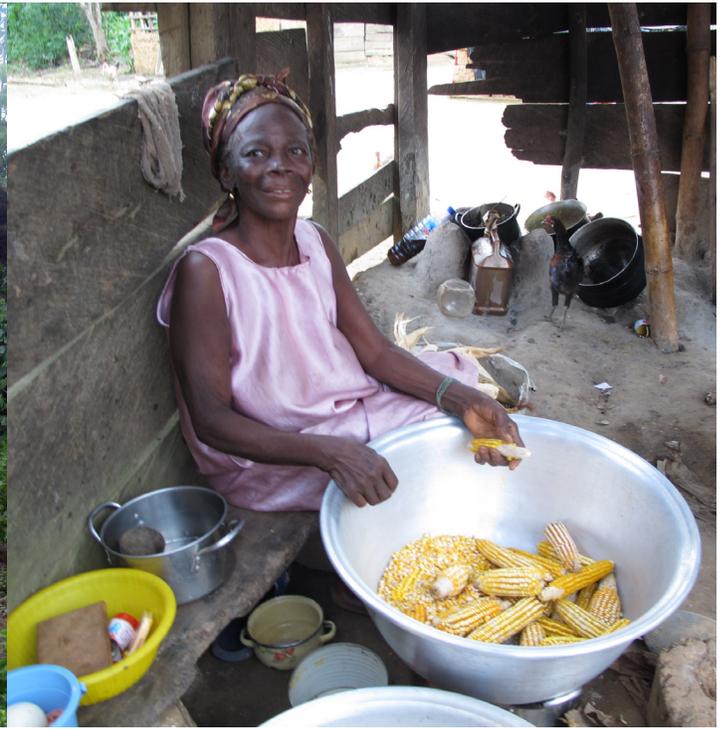
DRIED CORN STORED ABOVE THE GOATS



ANAEROBIC STORAGE KILLS BUGS WITHOUT THE USE OF PESTICIDES



STORING CORN IN EBKAWOPA, GHANA



SHUCKING CORN FOR DRYING AND STORAGE



CORN FOR THE PYGMIES. The pygmies, who speak Batwa, an entirely different language family from the Bantu speakers, come to the edge of the forest to take advantage of agricultural products while providing game for the dominant Bantu.

DONATIONS

Project Hope & Fairness was started in 2006, the first year that we began making donations to villages. Our first villages were:

Côte d'Ivoire: Broguhe, Battegadea, Galebre, Gonate, Pezoan, Depa, and Zereguhe

Ghana: Jukwah, Ebekawopa, Mmaniaye, Gyaware, and Adiyaw

After a few years, we added these villages:

Cameroon: Munyenge and Monatele

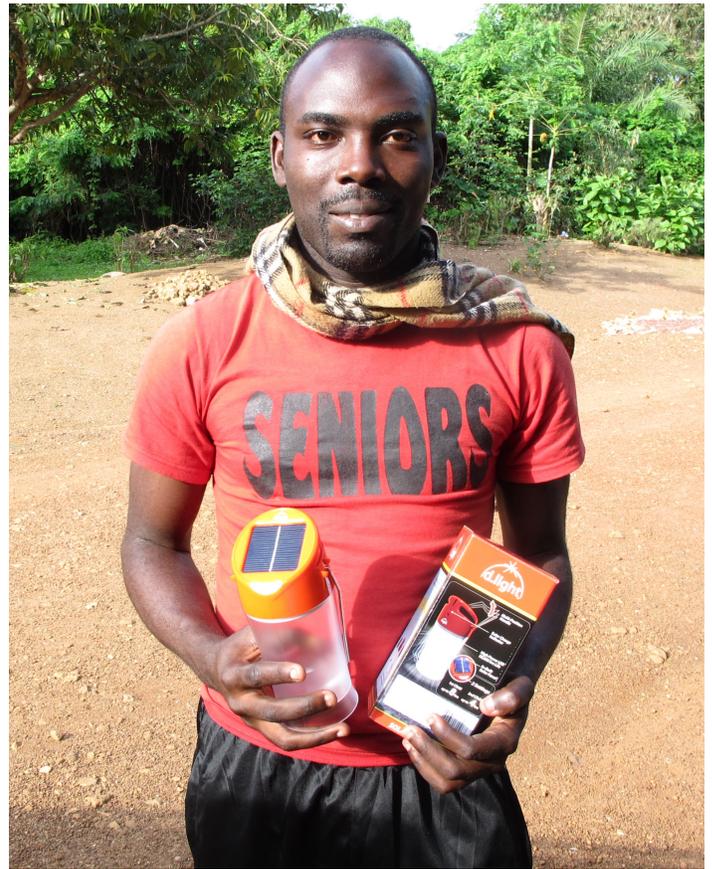
Côte d'Ivoire: Djahakro, Tetia, Djahakro, Soualikaha, and Abekro

We have donated over \$200,000 of materiel to villages in Cameroon, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire. Of course, charity is like water falling in the desert. But it does convey love and hope, two four letter words that should be used more than the other four letter words.

Items donated include: wells (2), roof for school (1), boots (500+), machetes (500+), t-shirts (200+), solar lights (200+), school notebooks(100+), pickaxes (dozens), shovels (dozens), knife sharpeners (200+), aspirin, scarves (500+), chocolates (500+), scales, dryness meters, and so on.



DONATION OF BOOTS TO BATEGUEDEA. Evariste Plegnon (in the middle with a blue cloth wrapped around his head) brought the first donations, which included boots. You can just feel the excitement in this photograph. Imagine how cocoa farmers feel, producing a commodity that the rest of us inhale thoughtlessly, while they struggle with malaria, cholera, dysentery, and now ebola.



SCALES. When I first started Project Hope and Fairness, I thought it would be nice to do a “6,000 Villages” campaign, where every village in Côte d’Ivoire would receive a scale manufactured in West Africa. It would have revolutionized the chocolate industry by giving cocoa farmers the knowledge enabling them to make money. 6,000 times \$500 equals \$3,000,000, the price of one propeller on a nuclear powered submarine. How can one have faith in humanity when we get our priorities so screwed up? No pun intended.

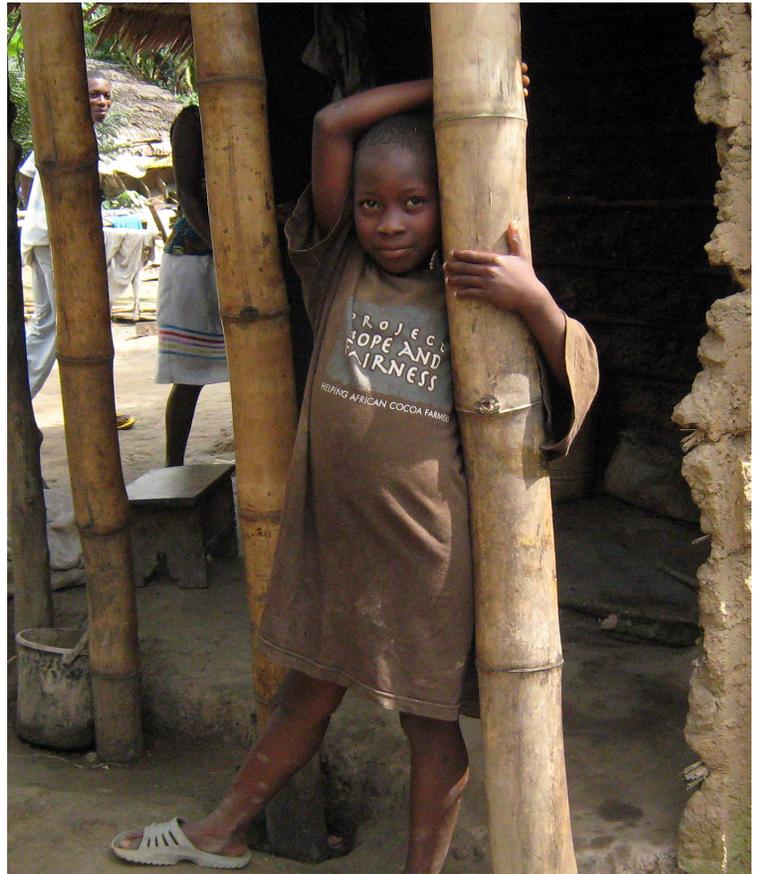
SOLAR. Africa is the perfect place for solar. There is no need to enrich European and American banks destroying African environments by plugging up their rivers. Instead, make electricity from solar energy! The young man at the right is holding a solar light that we bought from Total gas stations. Works really well!



MACHETES FOR MMANIAYE, GHANA



TOILET FOR PEZOAN, COTE D’IVOIRE



STORAGE BAGS. Some day, farmers will figure out how to control time, to store products, paying attention to commodity prices, and then selling when the market is right. Plastic storage bags are perfect as they are oxygen impervious, and insects perish in the absence of oxygen. I am talking about this to farmers in Dawayo-Chantier. The response of most farmers is, “We need the cash NOW. I have to purchase malaria medication for my son. I have to pay my daughter’s school fees.



SCARVES. We don’t just donate tools. We also donate scarves that have our logo on them.

SHOVELS, PICKAXES, AND HAMMERS. Cocoa farmers have to cope with virtually impassable roads. These tools make it easier to deliver one’s produce to the nearest market.



SEWING ROOM. PH&F raised \$2,500 to install a new roof, door, and electrify the interior. Before, the roof leaked, and clothing kept inside would mildew. The chief's wife teaches women how to sew. This room was rebuilt after dozos burned it, its contents, the sewing machine, 12 other homes, and murdered four members of the village about 8 months before this picture was taken. Broguhe, Côte d'Ivoire, 2012.

FISH AND FISHERMEN

People living close to the ocean dry fish by the side of the road and sell them as flavor bases for the many “soups” that are usually poured over *fufu*, *foutou*, rice, cassava, atiéké, or gari. Cocoa farmers near the ocean eat a diet rich in fish. Cocoa farmers living in the interior fish in the region’s many rivers, catching fish and shrimp. One of the favorite fish is a bottom-feeding catfish that looks ugly as sin but tastes heavenly.



FISHING BOATS IN CAPE COAST. It takes about 10 men to get a boat in or out. They set nets, then pull the ends back to shore, and people on the shore pull the nets back to catch many small fish, which are smoked, dried, and sold for stew flavoring.



SMOKING FISH. Cape Coast and neighboring Saltpond specialize in smoking fish, which is done in wooden structures such as this one or ovens made with clay.



SMOKING THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY. Hewing wood is of course more advanced than making mud pies. So these are the more primitive version of fish smoking ovens--in Cape Coast, Ghana.



ANATOMY OF A FISH BOAT. The planks are three inches thick and 10 inches wide. Tropical wood is so excellent as it doesn't split, it's easy to drive nails into, and it lasts and lasts. The boat of course weighs a couple thousand pounds.



FISH TRAP. This is a clever way to catch freshwater fish. The fisherman can string a net across the river except the portion directly below him.



SMILING FISHERMAN. This young fisherman of Depa uses the contraption depicted on the left.



NET AT LAKE BOSUMTWI. This is a meteor impact crater, about 10 miles across, quite deep, and filled with water. The most common fish is Tilapia



BOY FISHERMEN. These lads paddle Bosumtwi with their flip-flops. Their boats are tree trunks.



FRESHWATER SHRIMP. These were being sold in a market on the way to Yamoussoukro. Very nice treat while you're driving.



CRABS. We bought these on the road between Elmina and Cape Coast--right along the ocean. They live in the mangroves, however, so their flesh is sweet. And also very green--full of algae. This is a boy's occupation. They sew them together with grass and they are sold in strings, live.



ALLIGATOR?! That's what they claimed this was, although it certainly wasn't. Some sort of reptile that makes its home in the mangroves next to the ocean.

FOOD

Probably the most common West African food is the soup, which consists of a starch combined with a broth and a couple pieces of meat. Otherwise, perhaps the best way of defining West African food is what it is NOT. There are no salads, no appetisers, no desserts. Breakfast is not really a meal. But there are all sorts of dishes and sauces, some of which are included below, arranged alphabetically.



ALOCO. A common sidedish in Côte d'Ivoire that involves frying ripe plantains in palm oil. It's sweet and quite nutritious due to the vitamin A.



ATIEKE. Another common sidedish in Côte d'Ivoire that involves fermenting, shredding, and drying cassava. It is often served with grilled meat or fish.



ATIEKE FOR SALE IN PORT BOUET, COTE D'IVOIRE. Atieke keeps for up to a week at room temperature without molding.



BREAD OVEN IN EBKAWOPA, GHANA. Ghanaian bread dough is made of a mix imported probably from England, as the bread is decidedly English in flavor. It's sweet, fluffy, and redolent of mace, which only the English use in their doughs. This is a wood-fired oven. The bread has a richly golden crust and is wrapped in plastic film.



BANKU WITH HOT PEPPER FOR LUNCH. Ama and her friend are having banku, which is boiled, fermented corn paste. Hot pepper is a “soup” made of chilis, tomatoes and onions ground together and cooked, sometimes with dried fish.



STAN AND HIS BEER. Everywhere you go, beer is available. Stouts and lagers are found in most restaurants. Stan traveled with me in 2007 and died one month later of a massive heart attack. I’ll never forget him: totally non-judgmental, curious, and fun-loving.



WORLD-CLASS FRUIT JUICE. Blue Skies is an example of a highly successful Ghanaian business. It is based in Nsawam, north of Accra, employs 1,500, and makes the BEST pineapple-ginger juice. No pasteurization!



BOBOLO. The off-white cylinders are Bobolo or Minyando. Eaten mostly in Central Cameroon, it is made by soaking cassava, boiling it, packing into plantain sucker leaves, and boiling once again. It is very chewy and faintly sour due to fermentation. It is often served with grilled fish.



BOBOLO WITH GRILLED FISH. Specialty of Central Cameroon.



BREAKFAST IN BAFOUSSAM. The French influence is quite obvious: crudités and baguettes. Note the fried plantains on the fish platter; they are called *Tape-tape*.



FRUIT BAT ON RICE. It's like eating leather on wood. And, it spreads Ebola



KELSEY GOES BATTY. Kelsey enjoyed the experience more than the bat.



BANKU. On my first trip to Ghana, in 2003, I accompanied an official of Kuapa Kokoo to his village, where we hopped from one home to another, each time enjoying their food. On the table is *banku*, which is boiled fermented corn fashioned into loaves.



COCONUT OIL. Mmaniaye, Ghana does a lot of food processing. Mature coconut meat is heated over a fire to produce coconut oil.



CARP STEW. A luscious dish served in a restaurant in Issia, Côte d'Ivoire, 2013.



COCOA WINE. marvelously delicate in flavor with a 2% alcohol content.



COCOA YAM FRYING. In palm kernel oil, which has a high smoke point.



COW SKIN. Boiled until tender, then served with cassava greens and pumpkin seeds.



DINNER IN MONATELE, CAMEROON. Right-hand corner is grilled fish with chilies and onions. Lots of stews, including a gombo (made with okra) in the green pot and bobolos in the upper right



DINNER IN YAOUNDE, CAMEROON. Dinner with Pa Gody, Kila's uncle. Note once again the French influence--the crudités on the platter. Above it is a fish stew, rice and cucumber salad.



DONUTS! You won't find these in either Côte d'Ivoire or Cameroon because of the French influence. But you will find them in Ghana!



EGGPLANTS. They are not planted in rows as in the U.S. Instead, eggplants are treated as perennials, often planted next to homes.



CORN FRITTERS. Really, like hush puppies, which were invented by Africans working as slaves on American plantations.



CASSAVA FRITTERS. Cassava flour absorbs water nicely and makes a dough that can be fried.



FUFU POUNDING. You pound the cooked cassava until it becomes gluey.



FUFU WITH GOAT SOUP. Probably the first dish I ate in West Africa.



POUNDING FOUTOU. In Abekro, Côte d'Ivoire. It's called *foutou* in CI and is often 100% plantain.



FISH IN LIMBE, CAMEROON. Fish is an important part of the West African diet, whether caught in the ocean, rivers, or lakes. Tilapia, which is farm-raised, is also very important.



GRASSCUTTER OR AGOUTTI. A popular bushmeat and also raised in cages. AKA the cane rat.



GRASSCUTTER OR AGOUTTI SOUP.



GROUNDNUT BALLS. Peanut butter balls for sale at the local market. Ghana, 2003.



GROUNDNUT SOUP. Peanut soup. Excellent with beef, lamb, pork. Very nicely spiced with a creamy texture.



GRILLED MEATS IN ABUA, GHANA. Heavily spiced gizzards on a stick, foreground. Guinea hen grilling and behind that chicken feet.



GARI FRIED IN PALM OIL WITH GOAT STEW. Utterly delicious!



SOURSOP. Very moist, sweet and sour, fibrous with lots of black seeds. Messy to eat but luscious!



JOLLOF RICE. A type of fried rice or rice pilaf that originated with the Wolof peoples, whose empire extended throughout parts of Senegal; it was called the Jolof Empire.



KEDJENOU CHICKEN A traditional Ivoirian stew. Most often served with *atiéké*.



KENKE--COOKING. Like Banku but cooked thicker and sold in blocks rather than loaves.



KENKEY WITH GRILLED TILAPIA AND HOT PEPPER SAUCE



KATIE AND ANNA NAKAYAMA EATING LUNCH IN DJAHAKRO, COTE D'IVOIRE



A WELL-USED MACHETE. The most important tool to a cocoa farmer.



A STONE MORTAR AND PESTLE. Used to grind vegetables and spices.



OHONGHOBONG: Egusi seeds (from melons) and bitter leaf.



OKRA. Is called gombo, and that's where the North American soup derives its name. Okra is grown as an annual in the U.S. but as a perennial in West Africa. Often, one sees bushes 4-5 feet high.



ORANGES. In West Africa, they are green because the orange color only appears when nights are below 55°F.



MAKING PALAVER SAUCE. Cutting greens. First they remove the ribs, then cut directly into the palm.



PALAVER SAUCE WITH FISH. And with boiled yam.



PALM OIL. Rich in vitamin A, it gives color to West African food. It has now replaced hydrogenated shortening in the Western diet. While this means no trans fats, it's a disaster for Planet Earth.



PALM WINE. When first drawn, it is alcohol-free and sweet. By the end of the day, it's near 8% and brut.



PLANTAIN SOUP. It doesn't *look* good, but it was delicious! This is real home cooking; you probably won't find it in most restaurants. It's a specialty of northwestern Cameroon.



PINEAPPLES. Are mostly made into juice. They grow throughout West Africa.



PORCUPINE. In an Egusi sauce (made from melon seeds). Accompanied by *Banku*.



RED-RED. Probably the most universally loved dish by young Americans because it is the least foreign. Cooked cow-peas (aka black-eyed peas) simmered with red palm oil, then served with onions fried in red palm oil. Hence the name.



AFRICAN RICE. Aromatic and excellent. The second most important source of calories. Women grow, dry, process, and sell rice.



SMOKED FISH. A flavor foundation of certain soups that are served with rice, banku, kenke, or fufu. Also contribute much-needed amino acids to the diet.



STEWED REPTILE. We purchased this lizard in Ebalowa when we were inspecting a piece of land that could serve as a cocoa study center. It's a *kedjenou*, which is always delicious. The meat was very tender.



TRIPES. This is a French dish served in a restaurant in Douala, Cameroon. Served with flageolet beans and *pommes coin de rue*. Double-starching is generally frowned on in France.



YAM. The real thing, not the orange sweet potatoes we eat in the U.S. Most often served boiled or fried (as above).

HOUSES

A home is a state of mind--the house plus the emotions projected by its inhabitants. The following pictures are of houses. Essentially, West Africans live out doors. In the tropics, temperatures vary between 70 °F and 90 °F. This means that unless you are suffering from malaria or some other infection, you will rarely shiver. The house becomes less of a home than a place to keep you from shivering than a place to put one's stuff.

The kitchen is never part of the house. Instead, it is a separate structure. Toilets likewise.

Houses cost relatively little to construct, as they are made of saplings, mud, and leaves. In villages located near a road, houses are often made of mud-brick or concrete block.



BATEGUEDEA KITCHEN. A house has mud walls and a roof, but a kitchen often has no walls--in order to allow free air flow.



HOUSE BUILDER IN DEPA, COTE D'IVOIRE
Behind him is the frame of the house.



HOUSE UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN DEPA, COTE D'IVOIRE. First, the frame is constructed and all joints are tightened with fibers from a palm tree. Then the walls are packed with mud.



MUDBRICK WALL

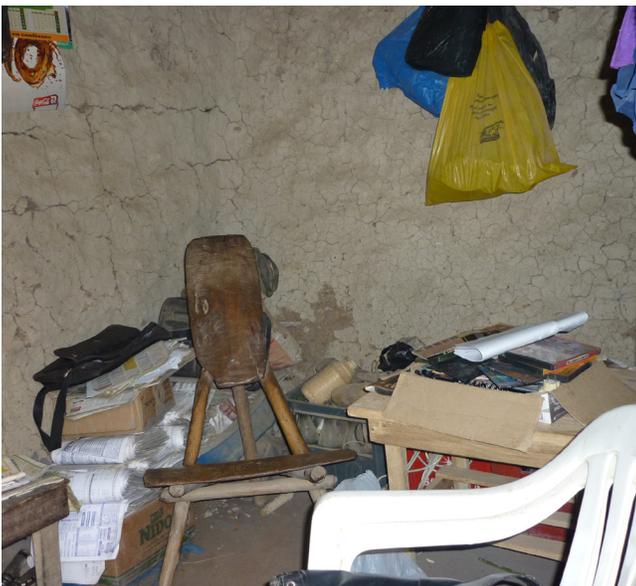
Mudbricks are good for hundreds of years if properly stuccoed. These obviously have not.



STUCCOING THE OUTSIDE. Dirt is mixed with cement powder and the surface that results is pretty much impervious to rain.



MAKING SHINGLES. Made from a species of palm. They are stacked and held until needed.



INSIDE A HOUSE OF ABEKRO. From this picture, it is obvious that the cocoa farmer is not rich.



BEAUTY. To the Western eye, the West African village may look shabby and poor, but to this author, there is real beauty in mud walls and palm roofs.



NORTHERN HOUSES. Picture taken at an outdoor museum in Yaounde, Cameroon.

MEN

West African society is heavily separated by gender. Like much of the world, unfaithfulness in marriage is tolerated for men, not for women. Men are expected to hold political office, although the barriers for women are not as high as they have been in Western societies. Chiefs are men, as are the sub-chiefs, the spokesmen, and the elders. The chief's mother does sit on councils, however.

Men are usually in charge of growing the cash crops and women grow everything else in addition to selling commodities at the local market.

Men often speak English or French because they were sent to school longer than women.

Men almost never cook or do anything around the house other than building the house itself. Men often sit together in groups--as do the women.



YOUNG MALE COCOA FARMER. He has just bought a young cocoa tree and is cycling to his field to plant it.



YOUNG MAN OF DEPA



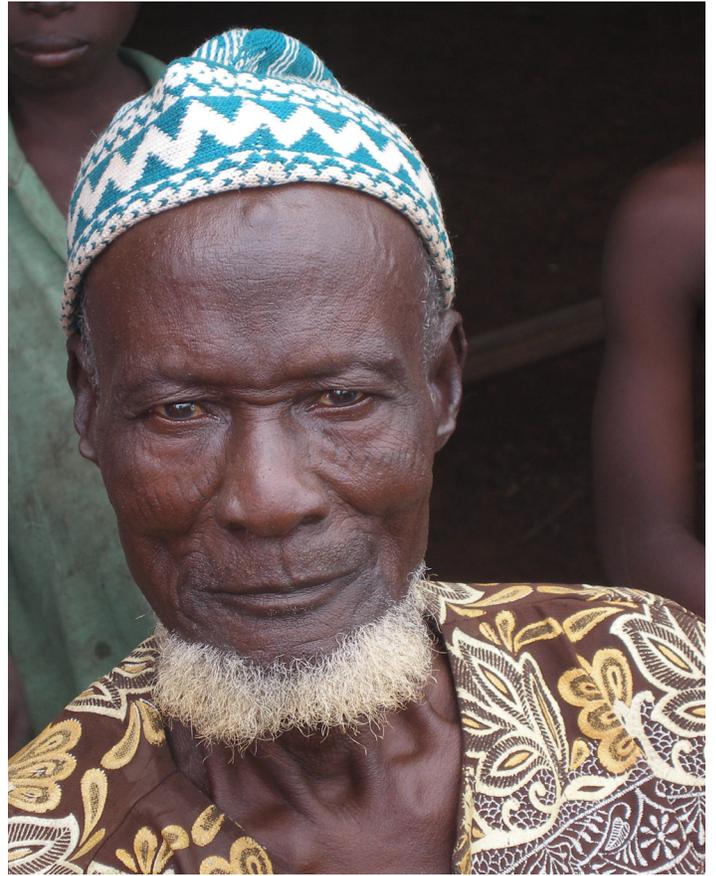
MEN OF DEPA



ANOTHER MAN OF DEPA



DAD



DAWAYO-CHANTIER ELDER.



CHIEF OF DEPA'S FATHER.



**SON SHAVES HIS FATHER, REV. SAMPSON.
Ebekawopa, Ghana.**

PALM OIL AND PALM WINE

The oil palm tree is West African *par excellence*. Humans have been using it for oil and palm wine for at least 5,000 years, as the earliest recorded evidence of its use is on frescoes of Egyptian tombs from 3,000 BC. The West African farming tradition is of mostly small farms, where the tree is planted in small groves.

The fibers of the tree, the fronds, the juice and the two types of oils of its seeds are used. Even after the tree is dead and rotten, mushrooms grow out of its trunk that are used in various West African “soups.”



There are two types of palm oil: that extracted from the fruit and the oil extracted from the kernels. For many farmers, the oil extracted from the fruit has value but not the oil from the kernel. One often sees thousands of kernels pressed into the dirt by the passage of many feet. Both oils are extremely useful. In the West, palm fruit oil has now replaced hydrogenated oil, with extraordinarily unfortunate environmental results as vast acreages of tropical forests are being cut down to make way for palm plantations. Palm kernel oil is cheaper than cocoa butter but has a very similar melting point range, making it quite useful in the European chocolate industry.



RICE

African rice, *Oryza glaberrima*, is an entirely different species from the rest of the world's rice species, *Oryza sativa*. It has a lovely aroma and texture when cooked. It also produces reasonable yields despite fluctuations in the quality of treatment. The downsides of this rice are its tendency to crack into bits when polished and its yields are sub-par to *Oryza sativa*.



RICE FIELD. In Bateguedea, Côte d'Ivoire.



RICE DRYING. In Galebre, Côte d'Ivoire.



RICE DE-HULLING.



RICE WINNOWING

RUBBER

Hevea brasiliensis, called *hevea* in French, is very important to the cocoa farmer. It is, without question, the alternative. In Côte d'Ivoire, when cocoa farmers give up on the commodity out of exasperation with the diseases and the world's apparent indifference to their welfare, when they cut all the cocoa down, they plant rubber instead. Rubber trees produce latex year 'round. Rubber trees are easier to tend and the commodity prices are more stable.

But rubber is less likely to support a family. You have to have more acreage to make it pay. Still, you see a lot of rubber plantations throughout the cocoa growing regions of Côte d'Ivoire.



GASHING THE BARK. Wounding the bark causes a natural substance, latex, to drip out. This is collected in a cast-iron cup.



RUBBER BALLS. When the latex sets, the balls are collected on the ground and are eventually picked up. They absolutely stink!



RUBBER BALL. I took this picture of a child's toy in Zereguhe. Someone made it from latex they had collected from a tree.

SCHOOLS

During the ten year period (2000-2010) when it was popular for Westerners to bemoan the Worst Forms of Child Labor involved in West African cocoa, a rising tide of collective tsks was uttered about children who worked in cocoa all day, every day, with no opportunity to attend school. The Harkins-Engel Protocol, signed in 2001, stipulated that certifications be developed assuring the chocolate consuming public that the beans in their bars did not involve WFCL, that children were not involved in the production of cocoa beans without having a chance to attend school.

After 12 years of visiting villages in the cocoa growing regions, I see little progress in making schools available to the children of cocoa farmers. The average child receives just two years of education, often with five children sitting at a single desk. Villages still build their own schools and if they are lucky the government supplies one teacher who then trains bright teenagers to be the teachers. Many villages, such as Gyaware, located at least 5 miles from the paved road, are too far away to provide any but the most rudimentary elementary education. Gyaware has not even built a school.

The pictures below are of schoolhouses built by the villagers themselves.



MMANIAYE, GHANA



EBEKAWOPA, GHANA



KONANKUAMEKRO, COTE D'IVOIRE



DAWAYO-CHANTIER, COTE D'IVOIRE

SLAVERY

Some historians consider today's politically unsettled West Africa to be a direct result of past depredations of slavers. Their argument posits that white slavers unsettled local governmental systems, changing the balance of power and allowing some ethnicities to prey on others while selling their captives to the highest bidder. The slaving forts on the Ghana coast, of which there were 60, are mute but powerful witness to the economic power possessed by the slavers and their mother countries. Whether slaving caused any substantial power changes is debatable, especially since there are few if any written records available with which to support the argument.

The Africans, meanwhile, were very much part of the slave system, which had existed since time immemorial. But the type of slavery they practiced differed quantitatively and qualitatively from slavery European/American style. African slaves were mostly acquired because of wars between villages or principalities and were treated more humanely. The European/American commercial slavery system was based on dehumanization and upon the assumption that slaves were little better than animals.

When the Europeans started slaving along the West Coast, the nature of African slavery changed. A common example given by historians is that of the Ashanti, who, faced with great commercial enrichment, would invade Fanti land to the south, capture individuals, and sell them at the European forts lining the Gulf of Guinea. To this day, all Ghanaians know that the Ashanti engaged in such behavior and many other ethnicities, less powerful and less aggressive such as the Fanti, Ga, and Ewe, have not forgotten.

How is this related to the cacao business? Cacao re-stabilized the rural areas after the termination of the slavery business in the late 19th century by encouraging Africans to become part of the international cacao value chain. At the same time, the market economy that existed within and between villages continued to thrive, but with input of capital from abroad. This allowed enterprising individuals to build plantations and to become rich from their commercial acumen.

It is my belief that we are now at the dawning of a new age: when Africans will trade more with each other and engage in more manufacturing, breaking the colonial bindings that currently inhibit social and economic progress. In the case of cacao, there is no valid reason whatever that Europeans should be manufacturing chocolate for Africans. *Vive le chocolat des villages!*



CAPE COAST CASTLE



ELMINA CASTLE

STUDENTS

From the very first time I set foot on the shores of West Africa, I believed that university students should make West Africa a destination during their four years of higher education. My usual argument is that there are two reasons for going:

1. **Economic.** Africa is extremely rich in mineral resources: oil, coltan, alkaline earths, gold, diamonds. African economies are also among the fastest growing in the world. If the United States, which is the world's second biggest economy were interested in not becoming the world's third biggest economy, it behooves our sons and daughters to know Africa well.
2. **Ethical.** It is our (American) collective responsibility to educate our children as *world citizens*, not as narrow-minded, cowardly individuals afraid of their own shadows. Optimally, every American university student should speak at least one foreign language and have traveled in Europe, the Americas, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.

How close are we to producing well-rounded, well-educated university students?

1. 18% of Americans speak another language; 53% of Europeans do.
2. 22% of American university students have a foreign experience; 90% of that is in Italy (to learn about the renaissance), in Spain (to learn Spanish), and in Australia (to learn English :=))
3. I asked the director of the Office of International Programs for the CSU system (effectively, the largest university in the world), "How many students are currently in Africa?" "One," he replied. Who was it? Lisa Wong. See below to read about Lisa and three others whom university students should emulate.



GARRETT MORRIS & LISA WONG. Garrett is currently a Peace Corps volunteer in Nepal and Lisa is finishing up her two-year program in Ethiopia. Both joined me to visit the 5 villages in Ghana in 2011. Both were presidents of the Fair Trade Club at Cal Poly -- SLO.



KATIE & ANNA NAKAYAMA. Katie spent half a year studying in South Africa before joining me in 2009. Anna was president of the Fair Trade Club at Cal Poly -- SLO and is soon to join Dr. Peggy Papatkakis in Malawi, working on developing a nutrition supplement for malnourished pregnant women.

VILLAGES

Villages in West Africa are still very intact. You can actually enter a village and believe that you are in 3000 BC or thereabouts, some time when hunter-gatherers gave way to agriculturalists. Of course, there are some articles that remind you that the industrial revolution actually did occur: plastic basins and buckets, machetes, rubber boots, flip-flops, cellphones, occasional electricity, a well...

However, the *shower* has not changed in 5,000 years; you stand in the middle of the village. Everyone can see you naked from the shoulders up and you suds yourself and pour cold well water over your hot body. The communal *toilet* hasn't changed either. You squat over a giant trench at the "bottom" of which lurk a couple of schizoid chickens. You wipe yourself with a corn cob, just like the early Americans settlers. For *light*, you burn kerosene just like the same settlers.

To visit the village, you have to purchase *liquor* to give to the chief as part of the welcoming ceremony, which is held in the *cheferie*. Finally, to remind you that the village actually has a history, you might find a *war memorial* located in the town square.



SHOWER, BATEGUEDEA, COTE D'IVOIRE



VILLAGE TOILET, MMANIAYE, GHANA



KEROSENE LANTERN, MMANIAYE, GHANA



LIQUOR, ISSIA, COTE D'IVOIRE



CHEFERIE, MMANIAYE, GHANA



WAR MEMORIAL, FRAMI, GHANA

WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR (WFCL)

The ILO, International Labour Organization, is a branch of the UN that defines WFCL in four ways:

- a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- b) - c) having to do with prostitution or other illicit activities such as drug manufacture
- d) work which, by its nature or circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

Although I have never seen child slavery, I have met an indentured servant who is described in Kelsey Timmerman's book, *Where Am I Eating?* Kelsey spent a week with me in 2012; he met and worked with an indentured servant, *Solo*, while working with cocoa farmers in a village near Liberia. The young man had had his papers impounded and had been fed and clothed poorly and wasn't going to be paid until the end of his year-long stint; this fits the category of *indentured servitude*, which is clearly a form of debt bondage.

And of course *The Dark Side of Chocolate* documents the use of child slaves in Côte d'Ivoire. A 2010 documentary by Miki Mistrati and U. Roberto Romano, it follows Malian children south as they are trafficked to work cocoa plantations. The most memorable moment in the movie: the Ivorian Travel Minister claiming that because they were trafficked in July, they must be on vacation as cocoa farmers don't need extra labor then.

In terms of work that is harmful to health and safety, on the cocoa farm, the activities most likely to fit this category are:

1. Use of machetes
2. Carrying of heavy bags of cocoa beans
3. Spraying with herbicides or pesticides
4. Working exclusively with no opportunity for education



WOMEN

West African women work extremely hard, rising early to sweep, carry water, keep the children in check, then going out to the fields where they tend crops such as rice or yams. With all this responsibility, they manage to preserve an air of dignity.





