

## Giving the Personal Face of an Issue

Mali, like many other African nations, has been struggling for an economic prosperity take off since its independence in the 1960s. Inherent in this struggle is a tremendous fight against poverty and attempts to better the living conditions of her people, many of whom are engaged in small-scale farming. Farmers are spread throughout the country, often in small villages or hamlets, problems with access to transportation and markets add additional hardships. Cotton is the largest commercial and export crop grown in Mali; nearly one third of Malians are engaged in the industry. US cotton subsidies hurt small-scale farmers, prohibiting Malian cotton farmers from obtaining fair prices. The far-reaching effects of US economic policies illustrate the realities and complexities of globalization, witnessed by Lindsey Moore and students like her who come far from home to see the world through a new lens.

Lindsey established an early interest in the cotton industry of Mali. She understood the importance of this crop for the Malian economy, and wanted to understand better how the industry worked. Through her coursework, field studies, homestays with rural and urban Malian families, Lindsey developed a research question and a specific area on which to focus. Additionally, Lindsey wanted to give a personal face to the issues, exploring the links of the production chain from farmer to the state industry. She wanted to showcase in a very real way the Malian farmers who pay the price for cotton subsidies. The cycle of poverty at the household level that is reinforced due to government policies on the other side of the world comes through vividly in Lindsey's work.

The goal of study abroad is to increase international understanding, and Lindsey's research represents a very fine example of this. Further, this deepened awareness, heightened concern, and the desire for more profound understanding are hallmarks of the global citizens we strive to create through international education programming. Lindsey has shown us that she is well on her way to becoming such a citizen.

**Modibo Coulibaly,**

*Academic Director, School for International Training,*

*Mali: Gender, Health and Development program*