

It is largely thanks to the supporters of the Jessica Jennifer Cohen Foundation that I was able to travel to Mali at the beginning of June to begin my fellowship with the Advocacy Project. Receiving a grant from JJFC was both an honour and a responsibility, it greatly helped me achieve my goals and also gave a much deeper dimension to my experience.

In my seven months abroad I had the fortune to work alongside Malian NGO Sini Sanuman on a programme of reintegration of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, in response to the widespread SGBV, particularly war rape, that took place during the 2012 conflict in Northern Mali. JJFC's support was invaluable in that it gave me the chance to launch this important project alongside my Malian colleagues. Through this project and with the help of JJCF these women were offered the chance to regain their confidence in the company of other women and become more autonomous while being socially and economically reintegrated. The first six months of the projects are now over, and the two reintegration centres have temporarily closed. Sini Sanuman and the Advocacy Project will be submitting, with my help, a new proposal to the donors to continue for another two years.

For the first time I was confronted with stories and experiences that I had only read about in books and articles, stories of rape and sexual violence, I got to see the faces of the survivors, be a witness to their inner strength, their struggles. This project, that I am fortunate to be part of, has the potential to have a real impact, and indeed already has. Again, all of this would not have been possible without the support of the Jessica Jennifer Cohen Foundation. My experience has meant the world to me, it has marked me both professionally and personally.

Mali is a wonderful country full of wonderful people. Much like many wonderful countries, it has been scarred by violence and conflict, and it is with the help of people like JJFC's supporters that Mali and its people can find their way back. Thank you, merci, *initié*. From me, Sini Sanuman, and Mali.