

Project Description
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Project Title: Reducing the Risk of Sexual Violence in Mali

Supervising Organisation: Advocacy Project

Host and Partner Organisation: Sini Sanuman (Healthy Tomorrow)

The Advocacy Project (AP) helps marginalised communities to produce social change by partnering with advocates from the communities themselves. Each year the Advocacy Project recruits graduate students to volunteer with their partners as Peace Fellows. AP's newest partner, Sini Sanuman, is a Bamako-based NGO that has been working against female excision since 2002. Following the 2012 armed rebellion in northern Mali, during which rape was used as a systematic weapon of war, Sini Sanuman decided to start a new project aimed at the reintegration of victims of war rape and sexual violence during the conflict. As in many societies, reintegration of victims of sexual violence in Malian families and communities is made difficult by the stigma attached to the issue. This project will build healing centres where survivors of war rape will be able to receive medical and psychological treatment after their trauma. Help and mediation will also be provided to ensure their return and reintegration into their families and communities. Sini Sanuman also plans to develop a platform from which to launch risk-reduction activities and reduce the occurrence of sexual violence in Mali.

I will be travelling to Bamako to work with Sini Sanuman this summer as a Peace Fellow with the Advocacy Project. Sini Sanuman is the AP's newest partner and I will be the first AP Peace Fellow to work with them.

Specific tasks will be:

1. Developing, in conjunction with Sini Sanuman's coordinators, an effective strategy to kick-start the project by mapping the environment in Bamako, identifying stakeholders and the appropriate local authorities to seek support from. The subject of sexual violence is very sensitive in Mali; the topic is taboo in society and difficult to discuss, which will make this step both the cornerstone to the project and one of the most critical moments.
2. Provide assistance in fundraising efforts with international donors, grant-writing and budget creation.
3. In addition to these more technical tasks, I will be involved in boosting Sini Sanuman's web presence through regular website updates, the creation of informational videos, the keeping of a blog, collecting photographs and creating a social media presence. This will help Sini Sanuman become more known locally and internationally and thus attract attention and build an even stronger reputation. In addition to updating the sites it will be important to ensure the sustainability of the efforts: this will likely also involve small training sessions to the coordinators and staff to make it possible for them to maintain their web presence.