

## West Africa Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Program (USAID WA-WASH)

### USAID WA-WASH GIS DEPARTMENT INTERNS' EXPERIENCES COLLECTING PoU INFORMATION IN THREE INTERVENTION REGIONS IN BURKINA FASO

Asmao Kabore, Ismaila Ilboudo, Romaric Koughuindiga and Yaya Malo are interns at USAID WA-WASH Department of Geographical Information System (GIS) and Food Security. They have 6 to 9 months of internship and they conducted a survey related to Point of Use (PoU) Information Collection in three USAID WA-WASH Intervention regions in Burkina Faso. This assignment has given them practical and professional experiences.



From left to right: students Yaya MALO, Asmao KABORE, Romaric KOUGHUINDIGA, and Ismaila ILBOUDO processing data gathered during the survey.

Formed in two groups, the four students had to collect PoU data in the field. Their tasks were: (1) to draw maps of the intervention areas of USAID WA-WASH; (2) to treat the information collected during the survey they conducted; (3) to work on their master's research papers; and (4) to help their supervisors in performing the tasks assigned to the Department of GIS/FS and all the Program staff.

For the four students, the internship at USAID WA-WASH is their first professional experience. They all acknowledged that this internship has given them an important edge, highlighting the skills they have acquired. "My internship at WA-WASH allows me to deepen

*my knowledge in map conception with a computer and to learn more about the working world", Ismaila Ilboudo said. He added: "This will allow me to feel confident, while addressing practical specific professional situations, which I am facing now and will be facing in the future."* Yaya Malo also had the same viewpoint and said that USAID WA-WASH allowed him to discover the work environment, the operation of an administration, its components and principles, and how to behave like a professional.

Romaric Koughuindiga, said that the benefit he got from USAID WA-WASH goes beyond the professional context. Indeed, he said that USAID WA-WASH has taught him to know more about Burkina Faso through the survey they conducted in the three regions of the country. According to him, the survey was an opportunity to discover the realities of the country. In fact, he did not know much about his country, especially in terms of people's access to WASH services. For example, he explained that he was stunned to discover that even in Ouagadougou, the capital city of Burkina Faso, many people do not have access to such services.

The four students agree on the fact that the survey they completed on the WASH data collection has given them a number of benefits including: (1) ability to use GIS for data collection; (2) access to data for preparing their theses for the end of their academic program; (3) opportunity to approach rural communities to know what they face as problems in their daily water-related, sanitation and hygiene issues; and (4) Improvement of their knowledge related to WASH services in rural areas. They said the experience acquired during their sojourn in USAID WA-WASH Program Regional Office will help them all their life time.

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