

Ca V'a?



**The Newsletter of the Friends of Guinea
Advocacy, Information, and Networking for Guinea and Peace Corps**

A Letter from the Editor

Dear FOG Members,

Another issue of the newsletter and another theme. This quarter we celebrate unity!

First, a piece from yours truly about protests in Kankan that oddly mirror those of the States regarding violence. Universal struggles with perhaps more universal solutions.

For our continued focus on FGM, we have a detailed fact sheet from FOG's advocacy chair Lillian Mattacio.

Finally a new item, just for fun! Test your polygot skills with a crossword puzzle. Thanks for reading!

Hannah Koeppl
FOG Newsletter Editor
Advocacy co-Chair

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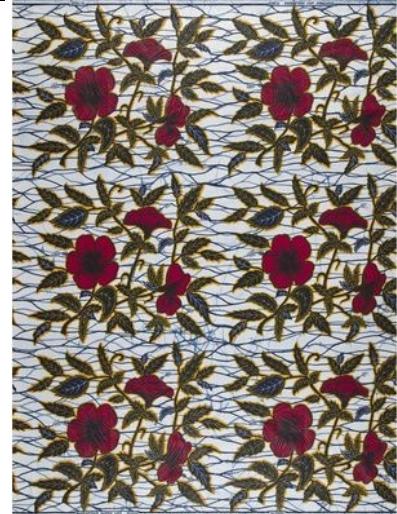
June 2016



Our New Website!!!!

Our webmaster, Marc Dysart, has put in many hours to primp and prime our new website. We are updating content to give you the most up-to-date information about everything Guinea. Please visit our site often and see how it evolves.

Thank you!





It Came One Night: An Exchange in Development

By: Hannah Koeppel FOG Communications Assistant, Advocacy Co-Chair, and Newsletter Editor

June 2, 2016 was a tense and restless night. Protests against senseless violence and deaths of loved ones. Protests against systemic corruption. Intolerance for justice. This description shows paralleled struggles and social issues in the world but more specifically it demonstrates the political climate of our organization's partner countries: the United States and Guinea.

From Laquan McDonald to Michael Brown and Freddie Grey, Trayvon Martin, the conversation around racial profiling, racism, police brutality, and general injustice has amplified in the past few years in the United States.

In Kankan on the night June 2, 2016, a gathering of grieving and frustrated women from Sidikidou exercised their right to protest. Three children were murdered and the community members suspect unlawful processes with the trial. A faulty and bribed witness and a corrupt judge were the source of their anger and frustrations.

These situations show comparable social issues in the world but more specifically they demonstrate the similar political climate of our organization's partner countries: the United States and Guinea. Two very different countries in many regards, yet the internal factors that divide them are similar in many ways. From these parallels, I propose a greater and deeper partnership and exchange to study and understand violence and find solutions.

So often as a developed nation we believe we have the answers to our lesser developed counterparts. Perhaps Guinea has the answers for our issues as well. The collective culture, sense of community, accountability, and conversation can lead to education and peace.





The history of human civilization is filled with dramatic differences between ideologies. Resolution to such differences in the extreme results in war. Besides war, what can be done?

In the collective history of the world there are examples that can help in difficult circumstances. It would seem that defining the problem (1) would be a necessary first step. How can we hope to address a problem if the problem cannot be defined? Once a problem has been defined it is necessary to bring it to the attention of those who can affect its resolution. Organization (2) is the second step. A single person protesting is not heard. The more people that share the sentiments give weight and importance to the problem. Persistent protests (3) are the next step in this process of resolution. In the fourth (4) step, both sides must recognize there is a problem and be willing to engage in its resolution. This is the hardest part of the process. Assuming that in some manner there is a willingness to address the problem, what then? There are many possible paths to resolution of problems both subtle and gross. There is one, however, that has proven time and again to work. It works because it appeals to our common humanity.

The eminent anthropologist, John Terrell in his book, *A Talent for Friendship*, may have uncovered a workable process or blueprint to follow. Of all places, we can look to the relatively remote Maori of New Zealand. In their history they have been recognized as a fierce and warlike people (25, *A Kiss is just a Kiss*). Perhaps it is because of their violent past that they developed a way to resolve conflicts without

its devastation.

There is no final step but the willingness to begin again to make this a better world in which we live and pass on to future generations. May Guinea, the U.S. and other nations continue and strengthen our friendship for future collaborations and solutions.



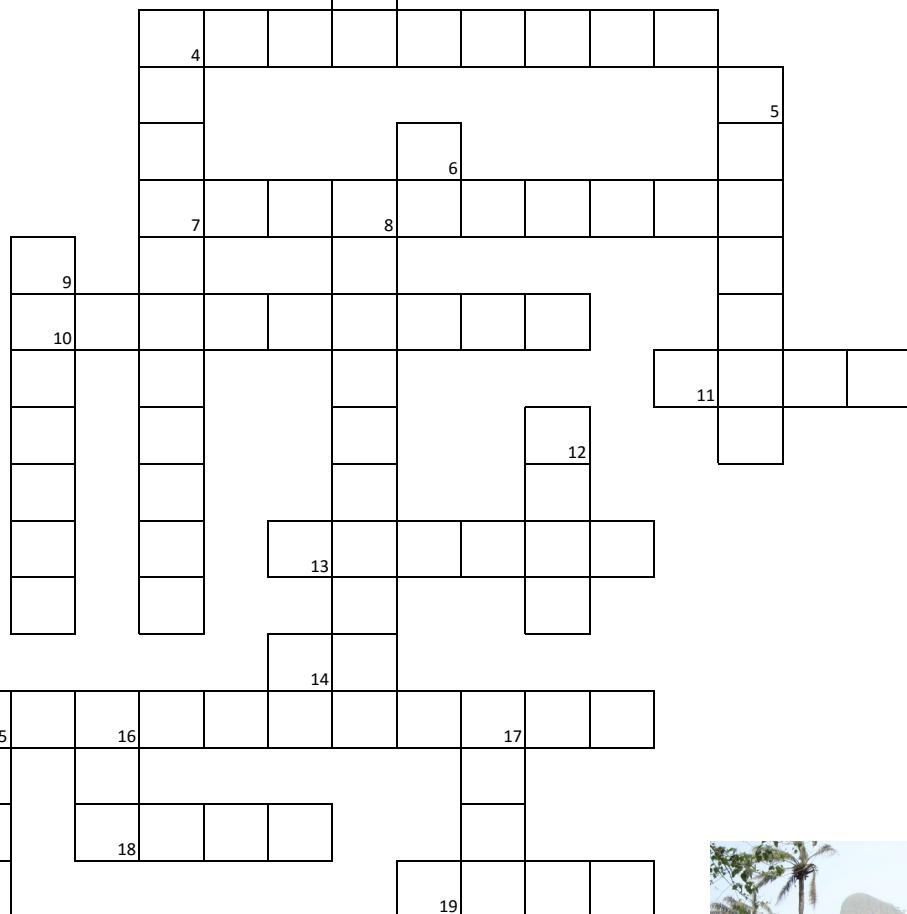
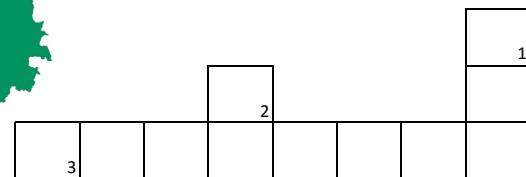
Sources:

Terrell, John E. *A Talent for Friendship: Rediscovery of a Remarkable Trait*. New York Oxford Press. 2015.

Barry, Amadou Timbo. "Justice : La cour d'assise perturbée par des femmes en colère, à Kankan." <http://guineenews.org/justice-la-cour-dassise-perturbee-par-des-femmes-en-colere-a-kankan/>. Web. 2 June 2016.



FOG Crossword Puzzle Fralinklar Suglish





Across

3. "Monarch" insect (French)
4. "Have you slept well"? (Susu)
7. Four across (French)
10. Thank you / Hi (Pular)
11. Coffee (Susu)
13. Tropical tree fruit - orange (Pular)
14. Very personal pronoun (French)
18. Eleven across (French)
19. Bread (Malinke)



Down

1. Ten (Susu)
2. Tomorrow (Susu)
3. First meal of the day (French)
5. Spicy, hot vegetable (Susu)
6. Water (Susu)
8. Ten across (French)
9. Thirteen across (Malinke)
12. Soft Boiled (French)
14. Negation (Malinke)
15. Speak (Susu)
16. "Ok" (short) (French)
17. Twelve down (Pular)





FOG FOCUS: A Newsletter Series

An Update on FGM in Guinea

By: Lillian Mattiaccio -FOG Advocacy Chair

According to a recent report from the United Nations, female genital mutilation (FGM) is on the rise in Guinea, with more girls undergoing the procedure at an earlier age than was previously the case,. The report reveals that 97 percent of women and girls between 15 and 49 years of age have undergone FGM in Guinea. Trailing only Somalia, Guinea has the highest rate of FGM in the world, and the practice is widespread throughout the country's various social, religious, and ethnic groups.

In recent years, according to a new study, FGM has also been inflicted on girls at a much younger age; 69 percent of women between the ages 20 and 24 enduring excision before the age of 10. The practice is traditionally viewed as an initiation rite for young Guinean girls and carried out in groups, with social pressures placed on them to undergo the practice. "Broadly speaking, non-excision of girls is considered dishonorable in Guinean society," the UN report says. "Social pressure is such that girls may request excision for fear of being excluded or forced to remain unmarried if they do not suffer the practice."

While there is a worldwide decrease of the practice, the proportion of women and girls in favor of FGM in Guinea has risen from 65 percent in 1999 to 76 percent in 2012, according to a study by the *Institut National de la Statistique*.

Considering the fact that FGM is forbidden by national and international law and is not a religious requirement, this is startling news. It is also recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. The issue of FGM is extremely complex--the tradition is deeply rooted in the Guinean culture and many factors come into play as to why it is practiced and why it continues to be so prevalent, despite its myriad negative consequences. The report states that support from political and religious leaders, inaction by the justice system, and impunity for FGM practitioners (both traditional and medical professionals) allows the practice to remain widespread.

FGM has no health benefits-it is a medically unnecessary and irreversible procedure that damages and has damaged the health of millions of girls worldwide. Moreover, it reflects deep-rooted gender inequality and is a form of violence against women and girls.

Some key facts on Female Genital Mutilation:

Definition:

FGM is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

Types of FGM:

Type I- Clitoridectomy: Partial or total removal of the clitoris and/or the prepuce.

Type II- Excision: Partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora.

Type III- Infibulation: Narrowing of the vaginal orifice with creation of a covering seal by cutting and appositioning the labia minora and/or the labia majora, with or without excision of the clitoris.

Type IV- Other: All other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, for example: pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterization.

Worldwide prevalence:

The WHO estimates more than 140 million girls and women in the world have experienced FGM and more than 3 million girls in Africa annually are at risk of undergoing the practice.

Consequences of FGM:

- Immediate health complications can include severe pain, hemorrhage, swelling fever, infections, urinary problems, shock and death. Long term health consequences can include problems with the urinary tract, vagina, and menstruation, scarring, sexual problems, complications in childbirth, need for future surgeries, and psychological problems.
- Refusing or being prevented from undergoing the procedure creates social consequences in the form of harassment, fear of being excluded, discrimination by peers, and perceived unmarriability.
- FGM has economic implications, with potential financial burdens to health systems and families due to costs of medical complications associated with FGM.

Causes of FGM:

- To conform to social and cultural norms and avoid social pressure, FGM is seen as a necessary-part of raising a girl and is often considered a traditional rite of passage.
- Because FGM diminishes sexual experience, it is thought to control a woman's sexuality, ensure virginity until marriage, fidelity when married. Hence, the belief that it also promotes marriability.
- FGM is associated with ideas of "cleanliness", including hygienic, aesthetic and moral.
- While there is the belief that FGM is mandated and supported by religion, it is not imposed in either Islam or Christianity.
- There is a lack of, or weak, implementation of laws and legislation to stop FGM.
- The medicalization of the procedure, which involves the use of trained health providers in place of traditional practitioners of FMG, both contributes to and seems to legitimize its continuation.



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Peace Corps Guinea**



Friends of Guinea is a non-profit organization made up of former Guinea Peace Corps Volunteers, Guineans inside and outside of Guinea, and others interested in promoting the cause of Guinean development in the world at large. We are a country-of-service affiliate of the National Peace Corps Association.



Do you want to contribute a piece to the next newsletter? Contact FOG Communications Assistant Hannah Koepl at
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