Cultural pathways to development among communities

MAYOR, Anne, HUYSECOM, Eric

Abstract
Illicit trade in cultural goods lead to heritage impoverishment and social destabilization of rural communities in Mali, whose cultural richness contrasts with economic poverty. Cultural banks were born in this context, to link actions of conservation and promotion of local heritage and income-generating activities. This chapter demonstrates how, through long-term engagement based on reciprocity, archaeologists can contribute to meeting community needs in the domain of culture, which has long remained marginal in development policies. Our effort has focused on the creation and monitoring of a cultural bank at Dimbal (Dogon Country). Critical assessment and comparison with other similar structures shows the potential of this strategy.

Reference
consequences (see Tuijnman 1995, 2003, 2007; Tuijnman and Ndoro 2003). The idea that not much has changed during the post-independence period supports my view that access to heritage sites in South Africa is defined not by cultural rights but by affordability (Ndlovu 2009a).

My main aim in establishing the origins of community archaeology in South Africa is to show the influence of politics in archaeology. I discussed some of the challenges with implementing community archaeology, focusing on the debates over what a community is and how best to consult with communities. What emerges from this discussion is the view that community archaeology may have been forcefed on archaeologists and has thus not been without challenges. I am aware that there may be exceptions to this observation. As may be deduced from the above, local African communities were isolated from archaeology during apartheid, while they are now seen to be crucial role players in the democratic era. Their inclusion in archaeological activities is today promoted by a discipline attempting to discard its racist elements and also through the demands placed by funding bodies. This is clearly reflected in the nature of the role communities play in this archaeological approach.

There are threats, however, to the possibilities of living successful community archaeology in South Africa. I identified three in this chapter: the factors preventing communities from accessing rock art sites for ritual purposes; the dichotomy between communities and archaeologists over what is considered an appropriate approach to the preservation of archaeological heritage; and the promotion of rock art tourism as an initiative that will succeed against the reality that it is not yet a well-developed industry in the country. Failure to adequately deal with these threats will cause further challenges to community archaeology in South Africa.

CULTURAL PATHWAYS TO DEVELOPMENT AMONG COMMUNITIES

The cultural banks in Mali

Anne Mayor and Eric Huysecom

Introduction

Discussions of the concept of community archaeology have developed over the last two decades, generally in the English speaking world, focusing on regions with a colonial history and the presence of indigenous or marginalized communities, as is typical in North America and Australia (Atlay 2000a, 2000b, 2011; Greer 2010; Marshall 2002, 2009; McDavid 2002). These reflections aim at encouraging archaeologists and heritage managers to go beyond the practices inherited from the colonial period by better including local communities in the process of research and heritage management, to consider how to fulfill development needs, to reveal the voice of these communities concerning their history (or voices, given their multiplicity and contradictions), and finally, to better disseminate the results of research and new knowledge within the communities themselves.

In much of continental Europe, this debate does not exist among archaeologists or, in any case, not directly in terms of community archaeology, since the absence of local colonial history does not readily lend itself to such a concept. Efforts have instead focused on public archaeology with the creation of many site museums, eco-museums, and festivals, typically the most frequented by the public. European archaeologists who work in formerly colonized regions, now developing countries, often continue to use strategies in which the relationship with the country concerned is limited to obtaining research permits, establishing a partnership with a state institution, and hiring local people for fieldwork. Rare are those who make a real effort in terms of capacity building, development aid, or dissemination of research within the communities involved.

Although not directly addressing community archaeology, important considerations have been brought up by anthropologists and museologists in French-speaking Europe on subjects close to this issue, such as the different views and terminologies
for cultural heritage (Bondax et al. 2014) and the messages transmitted by museums in regions formerly under colonial control (Briand and Girault 2014; Gugue 1999). Indeed, after having been the focus of policy issues for the benefit of colonial authorities and then for the nation-states after independence, African museums are now sometimes manipulated during processes of privatization by local populations seeking identities or territorial claims (Girault in press). A critical view of these issues is useful for management of heritage projects that integrate local communities.

In parallel, other discussions relate to the difficult question of the looting of African cultural heritage and potential solutions, as can be seen, for example, at a conference in Geneva in 2011 that brought together archaeologists, heritage managers, museum curators, and legal experts from Europe and Africa (Mayer et al. 2015b). This synthesis, published nearly 20 years after the first reference work on this topic (Schmidt and McIntosh 1996), agreed on the necessity of better taking into account the knowledge and needs of local communities and of giving priority to collaboration, in the presentation and local management of heritage, cooperation between museums in the North and South, and formulation of regulations accounting for local norms established by communities, all of which are in line with recommendations proposed for the practice of community archaeology.

In Africa, the Malian historian Alpha Oumar Konaré (Konaré 1983, 1995) initiated early the idea of better integration of communities in heritage studies. A precursor, Konaré asserted:

We cannot provide an ideal model, each people, each ethnic group, each cultural community will define, on the basis of their own traditions, the specific types and structures for conservation. In all cases, it comes down to the Africans themselves (and not to foreigners, however expert they may be), by freeing themselves from all cultural alienation, by rejecting foreign concepts, by decolonizing the modern museums and by inventing the museums that they need. These museums will be created to respond to local needs and not to satisfy tourists or strangers to the country.

(Konaré 1983:146, translated)

Just before his election as president of the Republic of Mali,1 and at the time president of ICCOM (International Council of Museums), Konaré clarified:

[It] is high time, in our view, to proceed to a total call into question, we have to "kill", I say kill, the Western model of the museum in Africa so that new ways of conservation and promotion of heritage can thrive.

(Konaré 1992:385, translated)

This view was a complete break with the generally accepted ideas at the time and fit well in the new democratic political project that was a reversal of the preceding military system. These positions certainly played a key role in the process of administrative decentralization that developed in Mali in the years that followed, and in the creation of "cultural missions," decentralized management structures emanating from the Malian Ministry of Culture and established in the different regions of the country with World Heritage Sites inscribed by UNESCO.2 This policy played a role in the creation of fertile ground for the development of "cultural banks," an innovative concept initiated in Mali in 1997 by a rural community in the Dogon Country and subsequently duplicated in Mali, Benin, and Togo—the main focus of the present chapter.

At the time of these bold concepts, the idea of better integration of local communities and listening to their needs was only rarely applied to archaeological research by Westerners in partnership with African state institutions, whether in Mali or elsewhere in West Africa. Very interesting projects were started, such as the community museum of Oursu Ou-Berreo (the OBB project) in northern Burkina Faso, initiated by Christoph Pelzer in 2004 following archaeological excavations by the University of Frankfurt at a mud-brick settlement site violently destroyed around AD 1000 (Peetz et al. 2011), but these were outside initiatives that remain poorly known. Yet another vein stressing community initiatives and full participatory management in anglophone Africa, several archaeologists in a reflexive approach have questioned practices and critically analyzed community archaeology, opening the way to the spread of projects favoring collaboration with communities (Chikunye and Pwiti 2008; Chikunye et al. 2010; Lane 2011; Moer et al. 2002; Pikirayi 2011; Schmidt 2009, 2010, 2014a).

Concerning the consideration of community needs, a major question, as pointed out by Pikirayi (this volume), is to determine how archaeology can be of service to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted by the international community in 2000 to reduce poverty and accelerate development in the world by 2015. It should be noted from the outset that the eight objectives developed by the MDGs do not expressly cite culture, and it was not until 2010 that this was recognized as an important factor for social integration and the fight against poverty, ensuring economic growth and the appropriation of development activities.3

In practice, Little (2009:118) points: "When one starts working with heritage and the meaning of the past, one must make linkages between archaeology and other activities." And, following her experience in Beline, Pyckro (2003:179) asserts that the "success of healthy change and development of any kind depends on long-term commitment to solving economic problems within the cultural system."

Our aim is to demonstrate how archaeology and heritage work can help meet the needs of rural African communities with particularly low development indicators through long-term engagement and relationships based on reciprocity. As Swiss archaeologists and ethnoarchaeologists from the University of Geneva, our approach is based on our experience and involvement in the Dogon Country with the inhabitants of the rural community of Dianbâl from 1993 to 2011 (Figure 8.1).

A specific collaboration was created and reinforced over the years with the Dogon community in Dianbâl and its surroundings during different activities: the
construction of a research base by the villagers; the filming of a documentary with blacksmiths on traditional iron smelting; archaeological excavations and ethnohistorical surveys done within the research program; and development aid actions carried out via the Dimbal association (www.dimbal.ch) that we created in 2002 in Geneva to obtain funding, and currently presided by one of the authors (A.M.).

This particular context allowed us to take into account the needs of the inhabitants of the community of Dimbal, not only in the traditional domains of humanitarianism (i.e., education, health, and economy), but also in the cultural domain. It is within this framework that a cultural bank was established with the aim of halting the deterioration of heritage of the communities after the sale of cultural goods, of promoting local knowledge, and of establishing a structure for community heritage management that would generate income and social well-being independent of tourism.

After a brief contextual presentation of the threats to the heritage of the Dogon Country by looting and the illicit trade of cultural goods, we will present the implementation of a relationship of reciprocity between the researchers and the residents of Dimbal, at the interface between archaeology and development. We will then
ded the cultural component of the development project, which is particularly relevant to our discussion insofar as we have adopted an original and innovative strategy, that of cultural banks. Finally, we present a critical evaluation of the operation of cultural banks in Mali, to show both the difficulties and the successes and to provide concrete data for the implementation of future projects.

A threatened cultural heritage

In Mali, the Dogon Country very early on became famous for its sculpted art, among the most prized and sought after in the art market, especially after its promotion by well-known French ethnographic researchers during the colonial period (see, e.g., Grünfeld 1938; Leiris 1934). Part of this region has been inscribed since 1989 by UNESCO on its Natural and Cultural World Heritage List. The magnificent landscapes are characterized by a sandstone plateau ending in an escarpment and a sandy plain. The Dogon people, one of the minorities in the country, have rich and varied historical traditions, and archaeological sites abound. However, local economic conditions are precarious and development indicators particularly low, even when compared on a national level. As in many other regions of sub-Saharan Africa, the cultural richness contrasts strongly with the economic poverty of the communities.

Since independence, the Dogon Country has experienced increasing pressures from tourism, leading to confrontation between radically different ways to act and think and between highly divergent living standards. It has also seen an increase in non-governmental organizations (NGOs), active in the field of development aid but rarely concerned with cultural life. Finally, the influence of Christianity and Islam, and more specifically the processes of re-Islamization since the 1990s characterized by the expansion of Wahhabism and then the Ansar Dine, has led to the loss of many traditions. Personal names, clothing styles, dietary practices, and funerary practices have all changed, along with the abandonment of traditional festivals, sacred places, and cult objects. For several years, many agents, traditional places of discussion, relaxation, and council when located near mosques, have seen their pillars, which had been carved with people and animals, eroded and replaced by undecorated ones. Ancient mosques have been systematically destroyed and replaced by new, larger ones built according to different values.

These different elements together have benefited the development of looting and illicit trade of cultural goods. Despite the enactment of new legislation by the Mali State since 1985 and actions of awareness-raising and repression of such activity since 1993 by the Cultural Mission of Bandiagara, the situation has become quite alarming. The material and intangible culture are seriously threatened, along with a grave challenge to the maintenance of social cohesion and the transmission of ancestral values to younger generations. Cultural banks have been created in the midst of this threatened heritage to social environments weakened by conditions of severe poverty, aimed at linking actions of preservation and promoting heritage with income-generating activities.
Collaboration based on reciprocity

The village installation

In 1993, at the end of an ethnoarchaeological research project on the ceramic traditions of the Inland Niger Delta (see, e.g., Galay et al. 1998; Mayor 2010a, 2011a), we wanted to start a new project on the history of settlement and human-environment interactions in the Dogon Country, so unique in both its natural and cultural histories. While passing through the town of Say, we suddenly saw a man waving to stop us, our former caretaker at Djénéf, a Dogon named Eli Térougué. Very excited, he told us that he had recently had a dream that had disturbed him so much that he returned to the village to have it interpreted by an old wise man specialized in the interpretation of dreams. In this dream, he had encountered both of us in the middle of a market filled with mountains of oranges—an unlikely situation in the Sahel markets where fruit is rare. The wise man told him that he would see us again and that we would have a “fruitful” future together.

Amused by this anecdote and astonished by this unexpected chance meeting, we hired the young man to come with us to the Dogon Country to find a place to set up our new research base. After a week on the plateau of Bandiagara without finding a satisfactory place, Eli suggested that we come to his village, located on the plain. We had not thought of putting our house on the plain, but the welcome of the village chief of Dimbl and his counselors was such that we decided to stay there and have the research base built by the villagers. A delegate of the houga, the traditional religious chief, made a foundation sacrifice and, at the end of the construction, an immense festival with hunters and dancers, organized by the villagers, illustrated their practice of colonial and historical values. While the idea of a research project in the Dogon Country was ours, the place and conditions for our housing in Dimbl were determined by the community, linked to our previous positive experience with one of its members.

That year, after the builders had been paid for their work, the village paid its taxes on time (which is very unusual in the region), and the government decided to build a school, the first one in the community inhabited by about 20,000 persons. This was the first indirect benefit of archaeology to development. At that time, there was no infrastructure at all, no school, no health center, no cereal bank—only a manual hydraulic pump that was continuously out of order.

Informed awareness

A year after our arrival in Dimbl, we heard news that deeply affected us: The council of village elders was in talks with an antiquities dealer from the nearest city to sell several of the most ancient carved pillars from the main toga of the village, despite the reluctance of many young people. Seeing that we were unable to understand this decision, an elder told us: “When you are hungry, would you sell your child or your grandfather?” This poignant declaration made us understand that to ensure the survival of families in times of hunger, it was considered better to obtain money by selling ancient objects than by losing descendants, children being the future of the group. This strong statement, perhaps recalling a period of slavery when humans were sold as objects and also weighing the balance between humans and wooden pillars, made us aware of the seriousness of the situation at both humanitarian and heritage levels. This placed us at the heart of the link between heritage work and development.

While waiting for funding for the archaeological project during these early years, we helped in a piecemeal fashion to fund a solar water tower (also essential for the archaeological team), a community granary needed to secure the food supply, and a school with three classrooms, among other local projects. We also saved the carved pillars from the toga that were destined for sale by creating a new toga in front of the research base, a highly symbolic act for the community that signified a new quarter and our active participation in the fight against cultural impoverishment. This toga included the ancient pillars recovered from the main toga and new ones ordered from several blacksmiths in the region. The youth association offered to gather wood and millet stalks for the roof. This action allowed strong links to be created with the elders, the young men, and the blacksmiths in charge of carving the new pillars.

Archaeology and development

In 1997, our international research project, “Human population and paleoenvironment in West Africa,” finally began (see, e.g., Hayescom 2002; Hayescom et al. 2009; Mayor et al. 2005, 2014). Several partnerships were formalized with Swiss and European research institutions and, in Mali, with the Institute of Human Sciences, the University of Bamako, and the Cultural Mission of Bandiagara (CMB). A special effort was directed toward capacity building: The young Dogon farmers from Dimbl, despite the fact that most had never been to school, were very eager to learn about the past and become skilled archaeological technicians, working alongside us. The community was happy because the good salaries paid to the young men allowed them to improve their quality of life and were used to help their families pay taxes. At the same time, several students studying archaeology at the universities of Bamako and Geneva participated every year to learn archaeological field practices and become part of a new generation of archaeologists familiar with fieldwork. This collaborative work opened the minds of the Dogon about the importance of heritage as well as the minds of Swiss students about development questions. This project generated 24 master’s theses (including those of nine students from Mali, one from Cameroon, and one from the Ivory Coast), and eight doctoral dissertations (including those of two Malian students, now employed at the University of Bamako).7

During these years of collaboration, we faced many requests from villagers for the care and evacuation of injured people or women undergoing difficult labor and a request by the village authorities for a health center. The chief of the village made
this request in public to the president of the Geneva State Council who had come to visit the Swiss projects in Mali, including our archaeological excavations. The president, who was very impressed by the people of Dindal and by our archaeological project, solemnly promised funding. We then decided, with new friends who are doctors in Geneva, to create an official association allowing us to raise funds and more closely monitor this project. The association Dindalch was created in 2002, with the objective to promote sustainable development in the Dogon Country, while respecting local traditions and values (www.dindalch.ch).

At that time, the first mayor of Dindal elected during the process of decentralisation initiated by the new democratic regime had, like all mayors of the country, the task of development planning for his community. This was made possible by taking part of the taxes paid by the community (previously paid entirely to the central government) and by seeking funding from external sources. A retired teacher and a self-taught historian of impeccable honesty, Paul Sodjo, took this responsibility very seriously. His background in education, history, and culture influenced the development priorities of his community, including the creation of a cultural center—the only one of its kind. Culture is rarely considered to be a development priority in regions that are impoverished. It is difficult to know if this choice emanated from the community or from an enlightened director, now deceased, whose vision moved others to action. In any case, the idea came from the community of Dindal, not from us.

Our first request for funding in 2003 from the International Solidarity Foundation of the State of Geneva was based on the four-year development plan for the community and all its representatives. The request included support for equipment for the new hospital, the construction of schools in several villages in the community, drilling of wells, funding of micro-credit for income-generating activities, and the building of the cultural center. Our request also included projects proposed by our association in a top-down approach, such as the introduction of telemedicine, an interest of doctors in Geneva. Finally, it included funding for projects proposed by the villages, such as support for a garden of medicinal plants and bringing together traditional healers in an association so they could share their knowledge before it disappeared. This included exchanges between healers of the community and the medical staff of the hospital, to promote complementarity. After more than ten years, there have been many achievements of the Dindalch association in the domains of health, education, economy, and culture due to major funding from the Swiss state of Geneva, the community foundations, and private individuals and to systematic monitoring by one of us (A. M.).

The rural hospital of Dindal, inaugurated in 2003, today operates nearly autonomously as part of the Malian health system, thanks to a Malian doctor (a woman in 2015) funded by the Malian state and supported by a local health-care team. The building of several schools, both primary and secondary, for which Mali is committed to provide teachers, enabled the education of more than 2,500 students in the community in 2013, a 61 percent enrollment rate. Despite our efforts to provide a good educational infrastructure (e.g., enough books, benches, and rooms), the quality of the teaching remains low mainly because of the low level of teacher education.

The provision of micro-credit to associations to launch income-generating projects has also been a success, although quite slow in developing. People who want to borrow money to start a business have to create an official association and submit their project, now to the local committee responsible for this activity. The credit is granted for a period of two or three years, with an interest rate of 10 percent if there is potential of generating enough income to repay the loan. At the end, if the credit is reimbursed, the sum of the rate is given back as a forced saving in order to pursue the activity, except for a small amount reserved for the operation of the committees.

The community today has 80 associations, for the most part female, present in all the villages. This strengthens the social fabric and economic dynamics and generates new demands for adult literacy training, as women want to be autonomous in conducting their associations; to do so, they need to know the basics of reading, writing, and calculating. Our current efforts focus on this issue. Finally, one of the oldest village facilities has been the cultural center, a large building made of stone and inaugurated in July 2007, the topic of the next part of the chapter.

Advantages and constraints

The history of our relationship with the rural community of Dindal shows how it was gradually established through archaeological and development aid projects as well as an ethos of reciprocity in which mutual support and responsibility are key components. This relationship developed naturally and is a good example of the way in which archaeology can help meet the needs of local communities and be in the service of MDGs.

In addition to the goodwill and efforts by many people, these project results arise from two important elements: the political situation in Mali and the political and economic situation of Switzerland. Under President Kounté, the new democratic regime of Mali decided to restructure administration through a policy of decentralisation. As a result, the village of Dindal became the capital of the rural community, administrated by a mayor elected by the population. The community was allowed broad freedom of action to define development priorities in cooperation with the population and with funding sources from Switzerland, a federal state where the cameras have a high degree of management autonomy and where the proximity between citizens and policy-makers makes this easier than it would be in a more centralized country. The president of the state council who came to visit Mali kept his promise by financing the construction of the (Dindal hospital, making it fairly simple for the Dindalch association to access other institutional funds intended for development aid.

At the beginning, we encountered resistance concerning our engagements in Mali based on the principle of reciprocity. On the academic side, our work was seen unadvisedly as lost time and energy for endeavors considered non-scientific. On the development side, people wanted to be involved in financing the economic,
Educational, and health aspects of our project, but the cultural component was seen as too ambitious and inappropriate in a rural context (conclusion of an external evaluation conducted by a Swiss medical doctor, November 2005). We then had to defend this approach with conviction to advance our heritage work. Moreover, some circles in Switzerland and Mali that cultivate an ambiguous relationship with the trade or management of African art exerted significant pressure on us to stop emphasizing the illegal trafficking of cultural goods and heritage preservation. Attempts were made to discredit us, to cut off funding for the archaeological project, and to push A. M. to quit the committee of the Swiss Society of African Studies, without any success. Our involvement was finally considered as positive in Switzerland and Mali, a recognition affirmed by a successful application submitted in 2010 to the Swiss Federal Office of Culture, centered on the preservation of Dogon cultural heritage through strengthening the Cultural Bank at Dimbal (Mayer 2010b, 2011a, 2011b, 2013).

Cultural banks: concept and background

Historical background

It is important to trace the path that led to the creation of this concept to clearly understand its context and developments. Articles by Keita (2007)1 and Yutani (2007)2 and unpublished reports by Crosby (1997),3 Guiye (2000),4 and Van den Oever (2005),5 as well as the guide for the cultural bank (Keita et al. 2005), discuss the origins and implementation of the idea of a cultural bank.

Women from the village of Fombori in the northern part of the Dogon Country (Doumassa Circle, see Figure 8.1) began to organize sales exhibitions of craft products in 1993, after having seen the success of such activity at the Dogon tourist site of Songo. Rivalries rapidly emerged between groups of women, and two development partners living in the village—a Malian employee of an NGO and an American Peace Corps volunteer—attempted to ease tensions by suggesting the idea of building a museum where one section would exhibit the cultural goods of the village and another would sell craft products. The Museum of Fombori was thus opened in 1996, supported by different funding sources, such as USAID, and by the National Museum of Mali. Unfortunately, two development partners and the museum’s coordinator were dismissed five months later because of my refusal to join the village to the museum, low attendance by tourists, and difficulties in building maintenance and object conservation. The problem arose from this failure with the residents of Fombori and concluded that the involvement of local communities for heritage protection could be done only with the improvement of their quality of life through micro-credits linked to the museum. In this way, the first cultural bank was created in 1997.

Informed about this initiative, the World Bank funded a pilot phase of the project between 2002 and 2004, including the construction of two new cultural banks in the southern part of the country at Koal and Lebetro (Figure 8.1). In 2004-2009, the bank also initiated and supported the Association for the Promotion of Cultural Banks in Mali (APBC) to reinforce the capacities of cultural banks. This Malian team of seven technicians, with the aid of World Bank experts, prepared a guide and a six-module training manual in French and helped with the launch of both of the new institutions (Keita et al. 2005).

The cultural bank of Dimbal (Figure 8.1), the fourth in Mali and the second in the Dogon Country, was begun in 2006 in a different context. It was implemented and closely monitored for several years by the authors in the framework of the Dinbal.ch association, backed by APBC technicians and the Cultural Mission of Bandiagara. More specifically, the initial project that we submitted in 2003 through the Dinbal.ch association to the Service of International Solidarity Foundation in the State of Geneva, following the request of the community of Dimbal, included building and equipping a cultural center, supporting an already existing theater group, and organizing activities for the preservation of local knowledge. Soon after obtaining funding, Danida Keita, at the time a Malian PhD student working in our archaeological project and member of the APBC, told us about the new concept of cultural banks in Mali. Together we talked with people in Dimbal and decided to frame the cultural component of the project by adopting the concept of a cultural bank, working in association with the APBC and the Cultural Mission of Bandiagara. In direct contact with the experts of the APBC, we were able to take advantage of past experiences, both positive and negative, concerning architectural choices and community outreach.

General concept

As Keita (2007:118) summarizes: "Cultural heritage has rarely been considered a measure of economic and social development for a community" (translated from French). Thus, people facing economic difficulties often choose to get rid of their cultural property, such as the moga pillar in Dimbal mentioned earlier. The idea of a cultural bank remedies this situation by preserving cultural heritage through the development of economic, social, and educational activities for the benefit of local communities. A cultural bank is a village or municipal institution that includes a museum, a micro-credit bank, and a cultural center with the aim to promote socio-cultural and economic development of a rural community through culture. It also aims to offer an alternative to the looting of sites and the sale of cultural objects while at the same time being a tool in the fight against poverty. It is a community institution managed by a village or communal association, which elects a management committee. Technicians from the APBC provided training for local officials as well as technical and logistical support (Keita 2007).

The museum serves as a repository for the preservation, documentation, and exhibition of cultural goods. The collection is formed from objects belonging to individuals or groups of individuals living in or near the community. The exhibition of these objects can be a source of income, following regional tourist development. The micro-credit bank operates as a system of micro-credits, allowing owners to use their cultural objects as collateral to obtain loans and initiate...
income-generating activities. The loan value is estimated on the basis of historical information provided by the client. A Memorandum of Understanding is then established between the owner and the management committee of the cultural bank. An interest rate is charged, and the repayment period is generally set at six months. The cultural center encourages the use of local knowledge and promotes cultural development of the population by the organization of shows for artists, literacy classes, and crafts workshops. The main advantages are the participation of communities in managing their own cultural heritage; effectively fighting against the export of cultural goods; making culture profitable by the creation of income; fighting against poverty and slowing the rural exodus of the younger generation; preserving local knowledge and recording objects that are sometimes undocumented; and strengthening the sense of pride and community of the inhabitants.

The cultural bank of Dimbal

During the first phase of the project from 2005 to 2010, the authors designed plans of the cultural center with the advice of Elia Tessonet and other community members and then worked with a professional Malian architect from Mopti. A local company from Burkina (a town 12km from Dimbal), with the assistance of residents of the community of Dimbal, constructed a large building of stone mined from the Bandiagara Plateau (Figure 8.2); the project included an outdoor stage with bleachers, three museum rooms, a training room, a library, an office, a refreshment stall, a boutique, and a room for the caretaker. For the inauguration in July 2007, a small exhibition with panels presented the development projects, and a dozen cultural goods formed the permanent collection of the museum (blanket to bury the dead, wooden carved grumpy windows, amulets, and so on). Thereafter, an acquisition donated around 700 books for the library from a second-hand market in Geneva.

Apart from the infrastructure, a local theater troupe created shows to sensitize the local population to the value of cultural heritage and the need to preserve it (Figure 8.3). The authorities of Dimbal organized a general assembly for all the chiefs and interested people of the 12 villages of the community. This assembly decided on the composition of a management committee of ten delegates from different villages, including two women. A. M. was present only as an observer, as this was an autonomous process. Technicians from the APBC, including Daniela Keita and Aïdosana Yatara, then trained the committee in March 2006 and June 2007, with the management committee translating into Tormo-kan, the local language, forms for documenting the objects in the collection. The micro-credit component was launched at the beginning of 2008, with an initial fund of 1,000,000 CFA (around US$1,800) once the museum was completed and the committee trained.

During most of this period, the salary of the caretaker of the cultural center, a member of the theater troupe, was paid by the dimbal.ch association while waiting to find a solution via local support.

![FIGURE 8.2] Blacksmiths carving wooden pillars in front of the Cultural Center in Dimbal (photo by Anne Meyer).
The second phase of the project (Mayer 2013), from 2011 to 2013, had three objectives that focused on establishing local autonomous and self-sustainable, operation independent of financial contributions related to tourism. These were to protect threatened cultural goods, complement the equipment of the cultural center, and continue to grow awareness about the project among local communities.

**Protection of threatened cultural goods**

The protection of threatened cultural goods included several actions. The first was the consolidation of the operation of the cultural bank following the observation of difficulties. The second consisted of securing the objects at the cultural center against fire and water leaks, moving the kitchen and the moonshine parking outside the center, and renovating defective roofs that had been built with sheet metal that was too thin. The final action concerned the documentation and acquisition by the committee of specific threatened cultural goods, a goal that led to two major achievements.

The first achievement was the preservation of the toguna of Sadia. The rescue of the toguna of Sadia, located near the mosque and conditioned by radical rainwater in the region, was a highlight of this project (Figure 8.4). Elin Tensougou, who

**FIGURE 8.4** Reconstruction of the rescued Sadia toguna in the courtyard of the Dimbal Cultural Centre by young men from Dimbal supervised by three elders from Sadia (photo by Atace Mayer).
associations, youth, elders) to protect carved togauna pillars. This workshop was held in spring 2013, and the future will show if the message is effective.

**Equipment for income-generating activities**

Income-generating activities are central to the concept of cultural banks; the management committee argued that equipment was necessary to ensure sustainability of the project, particularly a refreshment stall and a shop. Lacking tourists due to the political situation, the shop started to offer items useful for the villagers, like handles for hoes during the period of work in the fields, cosmetics for women, or pre-paid cards for mobile phones. Cinema was also a local demand for years, and we have financed audio-visual material and a collection of films, both documentary and fiction. A movie screening is organized every week, and pupils sometimes come to see documentaries with their teachers. The money raised is important and is used partly for the projectionist and partly as savings to replace used items. These activities, along with the library and the regular presence of the local dimbalab.ch coordinator in the cultural center, encourage villagers to come in, ask questions, bring cultural objects, have a drink, or read a book.

**Sensitization and exchange of experiences**

The management committee of the cultural bank considered it important to share experiences with the managers of the different museums and cultural banks in the Dogon Country and create a network of information exchange. In January 2011, a two-day tour took a group of 20 people from Dimbal throughout the Dogon Country to visit existing cultural institutions and to meet with those responsible for their management. These initial contacts were continued in 2012 by a visit of the management of the Museum of Soroll to Dimbal, accompanied by representatives of the Cultural Mission of Bandiagara, looking for solutions to manage their museum, which was facing difficulties. Seduced by the management system observed in Dimbal, they are now considering the possible adoption of the cultural bank concept.

Awareness of the community about various project goals is key to the success of such a project and requires long-term effort. Five years after the inauguration of the cultural center, it appeared to the committee that there were still misunderstandings among people concerning the aims of the cultural bank and the activities conducted in the cultural center despite all the outreach conducted thus far. The theater group created two new shows focused on the preservation of threatened cultural goods that were played throughout the community. On several Saturdays, schoolteachers brought all of the students to visit the cultural center, to reflect on and discuss the concept of cultural heritage and to participate in a reading competition.

Given these successes, the management committee organized similar events for the leaders of women’s associations, often poorly informed but open-minded and very interested. Finally, the mayor and the committee decided to directly reach the political and religious authorities of the community. In January 2013, the mayor convened the village chief, councilmen, imams, curates, and pastors (more than 100 participants) to debate questions concerning cultural heritage and the activities of the cultural center, with assistance from a moderator from Banksu. After eight hours of discussions at the town hall on the importance of distinguishing between culture and religion, the most radical imams agreed to visit the cultural center. This courageous action was conducted at a time when fears in the community were running high because the Malian army was fighting against theSeleuSys less than 100 km from Dimbal. It was a great success, leading to deeper dialogue between the different authorities, each with very different perspectives.

**Critical evaluations**

Since the beginning of cultural banks, several general advantages should be pointed out, including the creation of a Malian team of experts (APBC), and the writing of several training manuals. But in the absence of external funding, the APBC is totally inactive, meaning no monitoring, support, or evaluation of the cultural banks is taking place. Available evaluations of the cultural banks of Mali at the time of the Florida workshop in March 2014 were: (1) Fombori in 2002, five years after the beginning of the cultural bank (Deubel 2003, 2006); (2) Kola and Degnarkoro in 2006, four years after their launch (Kходят 2007); and (3) Dimbal in 2011, a little more than three years after the start of the micro-credit (internal reports of dimbalab.ch following information from Bourouima Tessougué, new local coordinator for dimbalab.ch). Having unsuccessfully asked the APBC several times for information about the operation of the cultural banks in Mali, we decided with the support of the dimbalab.ch association to appoint Bourouima Tessougué and Abib Cissé, the coordinators of the two cultural banks in the Dogon Country, to conduct an evaluation in April 2014, with the aim of gathering comparable indicators and feedback from local populations (Tessougué and Cissé 2014).

**Fombori**

The cultural bank at Fombori, established in 1997 with the museum buildings erected the previous year, benefited from funding from the West African Museum Programs (WAMP) for the training of artisans and the purchase of equipment. The evaluation conducted in 2002 reported 450 loans, 60 percent of these to women, for a total of 6,500,000 CFA (US$10,000; 1,000 CFA is around US$1.6) and an increase in capital from 200,000 to 5,000,000 CFA (US$5,400). The rich and diversified collection includes 440 objects from 13 villages, primarily jewelry and domestic objects, but also clothing, horse harnesses, musical instruments, weapons, ritual objects, statues, masks, togauna pillars, game, and a loom. Cultural events take place frequently in the courtyard playing a dynamic cultural
role and allowing the revival of customs being abandoned (Dawil 2003, Kotu 2007). The interest rate is set at 3 percent per month, or 18 percent over six months, and the reimbursement percentage has reached 94 percent. It is a great success, and not a single cultural asset has been sold in the area since the cultural bank began. An elder in Fombaeri said:

When I was younger we had so many things here. There were all kinds of statues that people used to make sacrifices, but I hardly see those anymore. People have sold them for money. If you went up on the cliff in those days, you could find objects left by the Telfen in the rock spaces. Now there are still bones there, but these objects are gone. I am glad that we have a Culture Bank now because it is a place where we can save what is left here and remember the old days. I was surprised when I saw so many things in the Culture Bank. People used to keep those things hidden away in their houses where no one could see them. Now we have a place that helps us look back and reflect on our past history instead of losing it.

(Dawil 2003:72)

More recently, two other financial contributions, from the WAMP in 2004 and the EPA (School for African Heritage) in 2009, increased the capacities of the craftsmen and allowed the restoration of the exhibition halls. In April 2014 (Tessouquié and Cissé 2014), the cultural bank contains 1,072 objects (Table 8.1) from 44 different villages and benefits the community through activities such as cereal trade for women, livestock trade for men, and other commerce in poultry or food stuffs. Unfortunately, the proclamation of the State of Azawad in April 2012 by the MNLA was followed by the takeover of the north of Mali by the Ansar Dine Islamic movement in June, has resulted in the collapse of tourism and major reduction in socioeconomic interactions with the rest of the Dogon Country. The effect on the economy has been disastrous. For the cultural bank, this has meant a drop in the repayment rate to 50 percent, the temporary cessation of activities, and increased surveillance of archaeological sites on the cliff to prevent looting (Aou Cissé, letter dated July 13, 2012, letter extant). Two voices evidence the seriousness of the situation:

My name is Fatoumata Ougoiniba, I live with my children and my husband who is a peasanet, and I carry out commercial activities. With the loans from the cultural bank I received for depositing two beads and three bracelets, I am an Itinerant merchant and sell everything (couscous, peanuts, groundnuts, condiments, plastic kitchen goods). I made a decent income and helped my husband pay the family expenses, and my daughters also help me with selling. But in 2012, the situation was spoiled: with the jihadism, I can't even go out for fear of reprisals or rape, even more so to sell anything. Today, I have big problems in repaying the cultural bank… After the jihadism left, we contacted the management of the cultural bank to ask for their patience and to
postpone the reimbursement deadline. The cultural bank develops the environment with generating activity and contributes to social cohesion because if each of us has something we can do, there would be fewer disputes.

(Tessougou and Cissé 2014, translated)

And:

My name is Oumarou Boly, I am from Fanibouri but I live in Douarhina. I have a loan from the cultural bank. I walk to nearby villages and buy small re- nants that I sell in Douarhina. This activity has always let me split the profit, put for savings and another for expenses. I have worked with money from the cultural bank for three years. But when the jihadi came, I lost everything, nothing works anymore in my family, I have to ask about my loan and you crossed me. The cultural bank, it's more than an enterprise.

(Tessougou and Cissé 2014, translated)

These testimonies indicate that the system works well and is appreciated by its users when the communities can go about their business freely, despite an interest rate that would be considered high in developed countries. But in situations of crisis and insecurity as in the north of the Dogon Country from 2012 to 2014, the system is not viable. As this cultural bank has proven its worth for 15 years, there is no doubt that with adequate aid, its operation will again achieve sustainability once economic and security conditions permit.

Kola and Dégnekoro

According to the evaluation of Kola cultural bank (Tessougou & Cissé 2014), it opened in 2002 after a decision by the World Bank to fund two new cultural banks in Mali (see history above). The partners brought in a plan of a seven-room museum and an architectural concept called “without wood” for a building made entirely of unfired mud bricks. Despite their skepticism concerning this mode of construction, the villagers made more than 60,000 bricks, but the buildings collapsed during the first rainy season; additional subsidies from two small NGOs allowed restoration of the damaged premises in 2004.

In March 2006, an evaluation (Kita 2007) mentions the care taken in building maintenance. The villagers claimed this place, called the "big house," where they often meet. The micro-credit component included 212 loans for a total of 67,714,500 CFA, benefiting mostly women (62 percent) engaged in small business activities and raising poultry, sheep, and goats. Men purchased fertilizer and oxen and opened a cereal bank. Nearly two-thirds of the interest on these loans (434,390 CFA) was invested in socioeconomic activities of general interest (e.g., digging a well, conducting a funerary, conducting a Cesarian operation, and carrying out building man-

agement and maintenance).

The Kola bank functioned well until 2009, when the building deteriorated after heavy rains. People mobilized to repair it, but the next year the entire building collapsed onto the objects and their documentation. The documentation was lost, but the objects were saved and safeguarded in a school. The collection currently includes 219 objects of different types (Table 8.1), but operations have halted.

Among the positive points, the report (Tessougou and Cissé 2014) emphasizes that the cultural bank increased awareness among villagers about protecting heritage and safeguarding many objects, initiated many revenue-generating businesses that improved the quality of life of the residents, improved social integration through literacy classes, and contributed to the village’s respect and self-pride throughout the region. Among the critical assessments was the use of cultural bank funds for the repair of a building whose architecture was inappropriate, low amounts granted for micro-credit, and lack of committee training.

A resident summarizes the situation well:

My name is Binou Conlubaly, I was married in the village of Kola. I borrowed money from the cultural bank of Kola and I bought millet to make couscous to sell. If I paid for 50kg of millet and made couscous, in one week I had sold it all; at the end of three months, I repaid half of the loan with interest and three months later I repaid the rest. This activity allowed me to pay for most of the household expenses. But today, with the collapse of the museum, the lack of the loan is seriously affecting our revenue… I haven’t gotten my objects back because I still have hope.

(Tessougou and Cissé 2014, translated)

As Dégnekoro, the conditions for the creation of the cultural bank and its abandonment were identical to those at Kola. In one of the rooms of the building that still survives, 99 objects can be seen, similar to those in Kola (Table 8.1). When a second renovation of the building was seen as necessary, some residents refused to cooperate. They felt abandoned by initiators of the project following an unsuccessful trip by a delegation to Bamako to ask for aid. The committee stated that it is important to collaborate with the population, to take into account appropriate architecture, and to train the management committee well.

In our view, the cultural banks of Kola and Dégnekoro are symptomatic of a top-down approach that did not sufficiently take into account the needs and knowledge of the communities and did not fulfill its responsibility in terms of funding, training, and monitoring. The closing of these two institutions is not for lack of motivation by the communities attached to their cultural heritage or because of a high interest rate or because of poor management. Rather, the strange architectural choices made outside the communities are at fault. These two villages should be able to start again with paraus competent in heritage studies, very much involved, and transparent.
Dimbul

The cultural bank at Dimbul has received important funding and long-term monitoring through the dimbul.ch association, which was not the case in the preceding examples. However, an assessment made in 2011 by Boureima Tesongou, at the request of dimbul.ch, revealed a series of problems at different levels that were corrected during the second phase of the project. First, it was to mobilize the population of the community. Despite the outreach efforts by the APBIC and the Cultural Mission of Badagoula that were amplified by the theater group that visited all the villages several times, and despite the favorable attitude of the town council, we found that several years after the construction of the cultural center many people had never visited it. Rumors circulated that the structure was a place of petition. The management committee rectified this condition by daily efforts, coupled with organization of many awareness days aimed at students, women, and political and religious authorities.

Another challenge was to secure the financial autonomy of the cultural bank in the absence of tourism revenues. During the first phase, income-generating activities were not sufficient, as the persons responsible for them were too busy with other activities. In a top-down manner, we nominated an energetic and charismatic young woman from the town of Koror at the border of Mali and Burkina Faso to be responsible for managing activities. After a long discussion, the committee members accepted the idea, with the profits divided into two parts: 80 percent to pay her salary (for full-time management of the shop and the refreshment stall, organization of concerts and dances, rental of the training room to external partners, preparation of meals, and occasional accommodation mainly for Malian NGO delegates) and 20 percent for maintenance. This strategy worked very well for three years until the young woman left in early 2014 to marry and live in Burkina Faso. The committee decided to try another strategy by appointing a Dimbul teacher to manage income-generating activities, from which he pays a monthly fee to the management committee for maintenance.

Concerning micro-credit, after an initial phase that seemed to operate well, in 2011 the micro-credit loans had nearly ceased. The initial funding received in 2007 was distributed in large part as loans against cultural goods, but only a small number of these had been repaid. The rest of the funding had been used to maintain the building and pay the caretaker. Thus, the cultural bank contained a large number of very interesting objects, but the program was moribund from lack of liquidity. The committee members gave several explanations. Sometimes the villagers would arrive with an important object such as a togauna pillar, but they wanted to sell it because they did not know how to manage a collective repayment plan. Other people wanted to get rid of an object, often as a matter of religion, and argued that if the cultural bank would not take it, they would give it to someone who would. These people took the loan without any intention of repayment. Other times, the loan was for an emergency, to pay for the care of a sick relative or to buy milk to feed the family just before the new harvest. Such loans did not generate income and were difficult to repay.

Finally, the committee members were reluctant to pressure for repayment, for fear of alienating the population. During the evaluation process, the committee members also realized that the loans amounts were too generous and could be considered by the owners as a purchase price. Very importantly, no discussions about planned income-generating activities were held with persons asking for loans, primarily being placed on the preservation of the cultural good and the financial help given to the villagers.

After long discussions, A. M. and the members of the committee redefined the strategies and responsibilities, starting again with a new fund of 2,000,000 CFA. The committee decided that the interest from the cultural bank loans would be used to pay two-thirds of the salary of the caretaker, the rest being paid by the town hall. The security of such a structure protecting cultural goods of value is very important and can only be ensured by a dedicated, responsible person who is paid correctly. At the end of 2014, more than three years after the start of the new management, the cultural bank now operates very well (Table 8.2). The repayment rate is at 100 percent for 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014, and the amount of interest is enough to regularly pay the caretaker. Two testimonies explain how people managed the high interest rate that is set at 20 percent for six months:

My name is Hawa Tesongou. I was married in Dimbul. After the harvest, my son asked his father for money to go and work in the Ivory Coast before the rainy season. I went to the cultural bank. I deposited a necklace that I inherited from my grandmother and received 20,000 CFA for six months. My son left and after four months sent me 50,000 CFA. I paid back the cultural bank loan and the interest, and kept the rest. If I had not received this loan, I would have sold my sheep, but thanks to the loan, I kept the sheep and my son was able to leave and work. The cultural bank is the hope of the poor.

*(Tesongou and Cizik 2014, translated)*

And:

My name is Amadou Tesongou. For me, the cultural bank is very good in a [poor] environment. My plough-ox died at the rainy season was coming. I went to the cultural bank with an old object from my father and received a loan of 35,000 CFA to have enough money to buy a new plough-ox. With the rainy season coming, animals are expensive. With the loan, I was able to buy a plough-ox and plant all my fields. I had a good harvest and repaid my loan.

*(Tesongou and Cizik 2014, translated)*

According to the evaluation report of April 2014, the cultural bank of Dimbul contained 229 objects, more than half of them of a ritual nature (Table 8.1). And, according to the general summary at the end of 2014 sent by Boureima Tesongou,
TABLE 1. Evolution of the micro-credit of the cultural bank of Dimbal from 2009 to 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>No. of loans</th>
<th>No. of clients</th>
<th>Total loans in CPA</th>
<th>Total clients’ income in CPA</th>
<th>Repayment rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>1,400,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>1,600,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>900,000</td>
<td>1,800,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>4,500,000</td>
<td>9,000,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since 2008, 497 loans have been made in the amount of 4,626,250 CPA, and 36 objects have been brought to the cultural bank without any demand for a micro-credit (Table 8.2). Objects come from an increasing number of different villages. Unlike the Fonbott and Kola cultural banks’ experience, where loans to women are dominant, these are less common in Dimbal because Dogon women have opportunities to obtain micro-credit through women’s associations, loans that are more attractive because the interest is given back at the end of the repayment.

The evaluation also notes that the Dimbal cultural bank has operational funds; that raising awareness is effective because it has ended trafficking of cultural goods; that it contributes to job creation within the community through micro-credit; that it has increased the local buying power; that loan repayments are made without too many problems; and finally, that it constitutes a guide for the younger generation. Requests for future improvements concern training for management committee members, creation of a group to discuss the museums’ issues, growth of participation, exchange of information between the cultural banks of Mali, increasing operating funds to allow more loans, and creating display cases to protect and exhibit jewelry. Finally, the people surveyed at Dimbal think that when a new cultural bank is created, it is important to choose the place on the basis of its cultural richness and the motivation of the populations, to construct a solid building, to train a management committee in advance, to have committee members who can speak French or are literate in the vernacular language, and to have evaluations followed by monitoring.

The cultural bank of Dimbal has experienced difficulties in its management, but thanks to open discussions, long-term monitoring by the authors through the dimbal.ch association, and intelligent and diligent efforts at outreach by Paul Sodo (the first mayor), Elie Tessaougu (first a local coordinator for dimbal.ch and later mayor of the community), and Boureima Tessaougu (present local coordinator for dimbal.ch and responsible for documentation), and many others, it was possible to find solutions for sustainable management. It should be noted that the profits in Dimbal are used to guarantee sustainable and autonomous operation of the structure and not to fund social aid, as such needs for a community of 20,000 inhabitants would far exceed available resources. This bank is now a reference case and its good reputation goes far beyond the Dogon Country due to visits of delegates from the EFA in Porto Novo and the European community in charge of culture, as well as citations in current studies on the subject (Girault in press; Lecup 2014; Mayer et al. 2015a, 2015b).

Conclusion

As in Katuruka in Tanzania (Schmidt 2010, 2014b, this volume) and in the Mandara mountains in Cameroon (David and Storrer, this volume), our experience in the Dogon Country shows how long interactions and good knowledge of heritage issues in an African community engenders a collaborative approach that brings advantages to both the community and archaeologists. We have clearly benefited
from deep local knowledge, from the skills of the young men working on the archaeological excavations, and from trust of the majority of the community. In a reciprocal manner, the community has benefited greatly from the development association that we created in addition to the archaeological project, improving the quality of life of people in health, education, economy, and culture. Thus, this experience provides a response to PhíMAR and Mehard at this volume, who ask how archaeology can fulfill development needs in the communities.

As in Shomar in Kenya (P. O. Akko, this volume), the communities of Dimbal and Fombori in Mali have interacted positively with their heritage resources in the context of the cultural banks to empower themselves socially and economically. But sustainability is difficult to achieve because these rural communities cannot count on tourist resources, at least during the present insecure political situation of the country, and need to find solutions that take into account local constraints.

We have presented the cultural banks transparently, showing critically the problems that arise and the pitfalls to avoid. The management of micro-credit loans should be closely monitored to avoid the problems encountered in Asia, leading to conditions entirely opposed to the intended objectives when borrowers cannot repay their loans. The cultural bank in Fombori, which was temporarily included in the state of Arazad of the jihadists, with all the danger and precautions that this involves, clearly shows the fragility of these constructions. However, we believe that when well managed, such projects are particularly promising in poor regions that have a cultural richness threatened by illicit trade in antiquities.

We hope that these experiments may encourage other desirable synergies between archaeology heritage studies and development that may give form to community initiatives based on local needs and knowledge. Indeed, two other cultural banks have recently been launched by the School of African Heritage of Porto Novo at Togou and at Koumenamoukou in Togo, a place listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with the financial support of the French minister of foreign affairs (Aliziz 2012, Leopold 2014).

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1 The term tests in French on the subject were written in reference to the Quebec context.
2 P. O. Komo was twice elected democratically as president of the Republic of Mali, the highest office, which he held from 1992 to 2002.
5 The date of 2011 marks our last trip to the field, when access was still permitted prior to the deterioration of security conditions due to the war with Islamic movements in the northern part of the country.
7 The Dogon is a monument characteristic of the cultural heritage of the Dogon Country, built on the foundation of a village or of a new quarter. It is used for relaxation, discussions, council meeting of the village men, and traditional justice. On the sand plain, nomads have carved wooden pillars that are highly prized in the international art market.
8 Period of several weeks preceding the new harvest.
9 The exhibition in 2006 of a special issue of Etudes africaines (a Malian scientific journal in human sciences published annually), in which all researchers on the project collaborated, as well as the broad dissemination of two CDs containing the PDP versions of the publications of the team, guaranteed access to the main results for Malian students and researchers.
10 The agreement made at this meeting mentioned that traditional healers, often the first consulted, should immediately refer cases of epidemic disease and severe malaria among children to the doctor, and conversely, the hospital should send cases of simple fractures, jaundice, and skin diseases to the healers.
11 Around US$1,000,000 between 2002 and 2012.
12 Both members of the Association for the Promotion of Cultural Banks in Mali (APBC), trained in archaeology and heritage studies.
13 Peace Corps volunteer.
14 Member of the West African Museums Programme (WAMP). This NGO, created in 1982, focuses on the development of private and community museums in West Africa.
15 Programme officer at the World Bank.
16 This phase was funded by the Service of International Solidarity of Geneva, the Commission for International Cultural Cooperation of the Swiss Ethnological Society, and several donations from individuals and communities around Geneva to the dimbal.ch association.
17 This phase was mainly funded by the Specialised Service for the International Transfer of Cultural Goods in the Swiss Federal Office of Culture.
18 Tourism has completely stopped since the onset of the current political crisis, leading to a major drop in income in many places.