

# Meet an MI Student

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**Burkina Faso, 2006–2008**



As an undergraduate student, I always wanted the opportunity to study abroad or work overseas. Having a political science background, I had often wondered how other governments operate. I wanted to experience other cultures, understand public policy, and develop a deeper knowledge of international relations. I decided that volunteering for the Peace Corps was the absolute best opportunity for me because I enjoyed helping people who are less fortunate than me.

I served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Burkina Faso, West Africa, in a town called Kombissiri, from September 2006 to September 2008. I was a part of the small enterprise development sector and served as an agribusiness advisor. My primary project was to work with a local cotton cooperative called "Faso Coton" to improve growing techniques and build technical expertise. The goals were to teach cotton farmers sustainable agricultural and environmental practices. At least 100 farmers worked at the cooperative.



Experiencing other cultures and discovering the way a government operated in another part of the world was a whole realm of learning outside of the classroom. The only thing I would describe as a "minus" that I experienced during my time abroad was that host country nationals often considered me to be an expert in my field. However, this challenged me to find answers and solutions to farmers' problems.

is the latest trend for study-abroad students.

For me, the most important aspect of the Master's International program is the real-life application and practical work experience that you gain from your service. MI is truly a global experience which permits students to graduate with an exceptional combination of an advanced degree and two years of essential professional skills gleaned in an international setting. I feel that MI



I chose North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University for my MI graduate school and worked toward a master of science in Agricultural Education. The program worked exactly the way it was supposed to for me: My Peace Corps service linked to my graduate studies, and the work I was assigned to do as a Volunteer was a perfect fit.

My MI experience was fundamental in establishing my current career working in economic development. I have received numerous invitations to job interviews as well as job offers, and I continue to notice that employers have a high level of respect for RPCVs due to their diligence and their ability to complete job assignments.

Currently I work for the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Program as an extension associate program coordinator. I coordinate, plan, and execute comprehensive farm management programs to meet the needs of small and limited-resource farmers across the state of North Carolina. My passion for local service and for assisting socially disadvantage farmers has only increased. And, I have found that skills I learned in the Peace Corps have improved my fundamental thinking, formulation analysis, and decision-making abilities in my current career.