

Godelieve Spaas



Maaya Entrepreneuriat

Le Modèle Entrepreneurial
du Festival sur le Niger

Maaya Entrepreneurship

The Entrepreneurial Model
of the Festival sur le Niger



La Sahélienne



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Foreword

In Ségou (Mali), over the course of seven years, Mamou DAFFE and his staff built up a cultural event called the “Festival sur le Niger” which took up the daunting challenge of turning the city of Ségou into a must-visit destination, as was so beautifully sung by Bazoumana Sissoko:

“One can go to Ségou before another person, but every man will one day come to Ségou.”

Ségou the beautiful, the warrior; the conqueror who had managed to overcome impregnable strongholds like the kingdom of Samagnana Bassi, who had attracted great explorers such as the Scotsman Mungo Park and famous writers such as Maryse Conde, author of the bestselling “Ségou, les murailles de terre”, had lapsed into a deep slumber.

Mali’s second economic city had been effectively relegated to the sidelines. Over were the challenging and harrowing days of its rivalry with BAMAKO; over were the good times of the Office du Niger, the football teams and the mythical Biton National Orchestra with its Bamanan musical sounds.

Mamou DAFFE, initiator of the Festival sur le Niger, sought to involve the basis of our culture, the Malian concept of humanism (Maaya), in committing himself, his fellow hotelkeepers and cultural actors to the local development of Ségou centered around a cultural event: the Festival sur le Niger.

Ségou was built on “fadenya” (rivalry) at a time when war was a means, a necessity, a must. In these times of relative stability and peace, Ségou has gradually risen to the rank of a great city which is economically and culturally viable, thanks to Maaya, which allowed a humanist ethos from our ancient history to take root and thrive in present-day Malian society with a strong sense of sharing and community.

The Festival sur le Niger; Mamou DAFFE’s collectively-oriented organization, is a success story that deserves to be more widely known. This book, about Maaya Entrepreneurship: the Entrepreneurial Model of the Festival sur le Niger, involves a discourse that is enriched by the values of our past societies and the progress of our time. Mamou DAFFE invites us to discover a path of renaissance in entrepreneurship, which bases its organization on meeting the needs of a united, solidary, enterprising community, while incorporating the values of modern management.

As a witness to the birth and first steps of the Festival sur le Niger, these commitments and this success are reason enough for me, as an artist and former Minister of Culture, to write the foreword to this essay on cultural reflection and actions that not only play a role in turning Ségou into a region of cultural excellence but also illustrate a new way of working, a professional expertise that will help to structure the economy of culture for the benefit of cultural actors, the public and the government of Mali.

Cheick Oumar SISSOKO

Film-maker and former Malian Minister of Culture

I. Introduction

“Under a full moon all the children are playing, the girls dancing, the boys playing all kinds of sports. When it is colder, people tell each other stories. Through that, children learn to listen and to observe. They also learn responsibility for the environment. This playing and storytelling is an important part of educating our children, teaching them the difference between good and bad. Step by step, they are initiated in community values. The Festival sur le Niger has the same mission: initiating people in both traditional and contemporary art and in traditional and modern entrepreneurial values.” Mamou Daffé

This book tells the story of the Festival sur le Niger. The festival, a yearly cultural event held on the Niger river and its banks in Ségou, Mali, combines musical, dance and visual arts. Traditional and contemporary artists perform and exhibit their work for an international audience. Over the years the number of people visiting the festival annually has grown to exceed twenty thousand, many artists have become internationally known thanks to the festival and many local entrepreneurial activities have matured into companies capable of supporting families and the community.

The Festival sur le Niger

“How to realize artistic, economic and social sustainable development based on local values, incorporating modern management principles. By initiating the Festival sur le Niger, I found an answer to this fundamental question, inspired by the Malian vision of humanism: Maaya. The most interesting thing is that the concept of Maaya based entrepreneurship is applicable to all sectors.” Mamou Daffé, initiator of the Festival sur le Niger

The festival is based on a unique concept of entrepreneurship. By enriching general economic principles with cultural and social values, and vice-versa, the space to operate in widens enormously and enables the festival operators to transform their entrepreneurial acting and thinking in a way that leads to a profound contribution to the social and cultural development of the region. This book chronicles the evolution of the festival by telling the stories of the initiator and his staff, voluntary resource workers, artists, entrepreneurs and many others involved in the festival or in the community of Ségou. These stories unveil the entrepreneurial model, as a form of community based entrepreneurship, and the ideas behind it.

The story is very beautiful and worth telling in itself, but this book has even higher ambitions. The Festival sur le Niger is a perfect example of how entrepreneurship enriched with local values can lead to the meaningful social and cultural development of a region. Digging into the history, the difficulties and successes encountered along the way and the festival's impact on the region unveils an entrepreneurial concept that can act as a source of inspiration for entrepreneurs all over the world. This book tells you some

of the stories behind the festival. Like the story of Mamou Daffé, the festival's founder and initiator, whose personality and values are deeply rooted in the local culture, but who also has a strong connection with Europe. And stories of the Ségou community's involvement in the festival, connecting the festival with local traditions and making sure the whole community will benefit from it. And, of course, the experiences of the many volunteers, talking about what is needed to stage the event, the artists who participate, and the entrepreneurs who facilitate it. Each one of these stories contains little pieces of the puzzle that can help us understand the underlying model of the festival. Putting these pieces together unveils the model, its underlying principles and what makes it work. The reason for doing so is to make the model tangible and usable for anyone who wants to work with it, to start their own experiments, to make their own difference to the world they are part of. Not as a model to copy but mainly as a springboard for developing their own, tailor-made, form of entrepreneurship that contributes to specific social or environmental needs they want to serve.

The research

This book is based on four sources of information:

- Thirty-two interviews held with people from different groups
- Dialogues about the outcomes of interviews
- Mamou Daffe's guide "The Mamou Method for the Conception and Management of a Cultural Event", describing the various steps in the development of the Festival sur le Niger
- Research into the 'new economy' that included this study

The interviewees come from the following groups:

- Members of the founding collective of the Festival sur le Niger
- Artists performing at the festival
- Entrepreneurs from Ségou
- Entrepreneurial associations
- Volunteers contributing to the festival
- Community representatives (like religious leaders, representatives of the neighbourhoods in Ségou and elders)
- Experts on Maaya

The interviews can be characterised as open searches to find the patterns underlying the festival's entrepreneurial model. As a rule, they contained the following elements:

1. The person's relationship with the festival
2. His or her understanding of the way the festival:
 - a. Has evolved
 - b. Is organised
 - c. Contributes to society, culture and entrepreneurship
 - d. What (if any) Maaya elements can be recognised
 - e. What entrepreneurial principles can be recognised
 - f. What leadership principles can be recognised

Besides the interviews held, impressions collected by wandering through the streets of Ségou, listening to the artists playing their music and looking at their visual art also helped to colour this research. As did a process of dialogue about these impressions and their (mis)interpretation.

Based on the outcomes of the interviews, an initial draft of the model was produced. This was then verified in three dialogues involving a selection of the interviewees. The three dialogues covered the following themes:

1. Leadership
2. The entrepreneurial concept
3. In between Maaya and entrepreneurship

Finally, some insights are borrowed from the broader research into the new economy that included this study, mostly in order to deepen the understanding of the general entrepreneurial principles described in this book.

New Economy

“But today there is a new legal form of corporation called the B-corp: the BENEFIT corporation, giving legal protection to do good for society and the ecosystem. California is the 7th state to adopt this legislation. It’s odd that we even need legislation to protect the idea of business as an agent of world benefit, but it is happening and spreading.” David Cooperrider¹

This study of the specific entrepreneurial model of the Festival sur le Niger was conducted as part of research commissioned by the Dutch DOEN Foundation into the ‘new economy’². Identified by DOEN as one of the organizations most likely to demonstrate that social development can be established through a new economic model of entrepreneurship, the Festival sur le Niger is one of the twelve organizations being studied in this context.

Six of them, with the aim of contributing to social development and/or environmental improvements, were studied first, to define the initial contours of what a new economy might be like. Based on that, another six organizations (with the explicit aim of contributing to the development of a new economy that serves social and environmental development) are part of a more extended study. Of these, two are in Africa, three in the Netherlands and one in Indonesia. The Festival sur le Niger is one of that group. Looking at the various solutions and entrepreneurial models adopted by the organizations studied, a couple of shared underlying assumptions can be identified.

The first one is adding social, cultural and ecological values to basic general economic principles. While the rationale behind entrepreneurship, namely operating in a liberal

- 1 David Cooperrider, Professor of Organizational Behavior at the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University, and Faculty Director at the Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit at Case.
- 2 The study on the new economy is part of PhD research Godelieve Spaas is conducting at Unisa: a new cosmology for entrepreneurship www.creatingchange.nl

market based on competition (see page 21), is often regarded as independently valid in any culture, entrepreneurs in the new economy all strive to bring an ethical or cultural dimension to their entrepreneurship. They consider that a necessary condition in order to contribute to society and the environment in an entrepreneurial way. The second shared assumption is about connectivity. Entrepreneurship in a liberal market is based on the principle of competition. By allowing competition, market forces will guarantee a fair price for products and services, and innovation will be promoted. Striving for more collective goals, the organisations studied here all subscribe to the importance of co-operation with other organisations, in addition to competing with them.³

Rely less on production for sale, and more on production for use. Shape and motivate the processes of exchange to make them meet ever more effectively the aims of use and sustainability. Howard Richards⁴

Within the Festival sur le Niger, these two underlying principles are represented very strongly. This publication details the specific entrepreneurial model, its roots and its effects, and in so doing shows it to be a perfect example of what could be termed a 'New Economy'.

3 More information about this research into the new economy can be found at <http://www.doen.nl/web/projects/New-Economy.htm> or about the PhD research: a new cosmology for entrepreneurship at www.creatingchange.nl

4 Howard Richards, Professor of Peace and Global Studies, Earlham College, The Great Charter Theses and Counter-theses to Animate a Discussion of the Earth Charter

2. Making a difference

“I have a vision of how to make a difference in social development. With the Festival sur le Niger, I achieved it.” **Mamou Daffé**, initiator of the Festival sur le Niger

The entrepreneurial model of the Festival sur le Niger can be described as a form of community based entrepreneurship, due to the community's involvement at every step of the way and because the festival's aim is to benefit the community of Ségou as a whole. Involving the community your company is based in, in almost every activity in society, is part of the traditional culture of Mali. Applying that idea to business and combining it with general principles of entrepreneurship is what makes the festival's approach unique.

As the stories in this book illustrate, the people behind the Festival sur le Niger intertwine the spirit of traditional Malian values (Maaya) with more general principles of entrepreneurship. They combine both concepts to produce what can be called 'Maaya based entrepreneurship':

an entrepreneurial point of view that puts the community at the centre of their acting and thinking in developing and creating the festival. The term 'Maaya based entrepreneurship' is perfect in the Malian context, but the principles underlying this concept can be understood and used in many more regions and situations than simply in the case of the Festival sur le Niger in Ségou. To underline this general applicability, the Festival's model will be referred to as 'community based entrepreneurship'. By telling the story of the Festival sur le Niger, its initiator and the people and communities involved, by bringing their ideas and experiences into the light, others might be inspired to emulate the model and develop it further in Mali, in Africa or in any other part of the world.

Mamou Daffé

The Festival's story begins with the story of its founder Mamou Daffé. In the context of this research, he has been interviewed and encountered several times in various settings, different countries and in many roles, and each time he reveals different aspects of himself. As a host to his guests for dinner and music at the cultural centre in Ségou, as a brother and a father to his employees, an organizer, a visionary, a community member, a leader and a hard worker; sometimes displaying all of those facets at once. He is a man of many disciplines, being an entrepreneur, a hotel manager, a cultural engineer, and an intellectual at the same time. And he naturally combines being both African and Dutch.

Mamou puts it like this: "When I'm in the US, I'm 60% American and 40% African, in the Netherlands I'm 60% Dutch and 40% African and in Mali I'm 80% African and 20% Western." Mamou could be called an 'in between' man, a man who inhabits different worlds and is able to combine them. Mamou Daffé is a man who knows the art of making connections better than many. He connects people, cultures, ideas and worlds and present, past and future. In addition to all this, Mamou has a dream; he wants to make a difference for his country:

“In Europe, I could see what was missing here in Mali. What can be developed in the local culture, to lift things in Ségou to another level,” he says.

The Festival sur le Niger stemmed from his dream to contribute to the social development of Ségou. The way he made it happen is based on his ability to connect. The organization of the Festival evolves from combining two different worlds: traditional Malian culture (“Maaya”) and the general economic thinking that comes from a more Western-oriented perspective.

Underlying movement

“It is about how the Malian intellectuals can take the Western market roles and confront that with our traditional ways of doing business to meet the international or liberal market standards. I have a strong feeling it is possible.” Abdramane Dicko, economist at USAID and volunteer member of the organizing committee of the Festival sur le Niger

Mamou lives between two cultures; the Malian culture and the Dutch culture. He was in between the two worlds. It was thus natural for him to connect the best of several worlds to realize the best results. And, as time passed, his way of working turned out to be successful indeed. Being between two worlds is something that seems to come naturally for Mamou but is also part of daily life in Mali, highly influenced as it is by the rest of the world. Oumar Kamara, an artist, historian and teacher at the University of Mali, expresses that idea in the context of art, as follows: “Combining the universal, the traditional and the actuality can continue healing the evolution of the African contemporary art.”

So Mamou’s way of working aligns with a general feeling of being part of more than one culture. Looking at the Festival’s organization, two rational motives for aligning can be discerned: serving humanity and letting the community serve you. These two movements symbolize the continuously evolving relationship between entrepreneurs and the community, based on serving each other: One can’t do without the other; you serving humanity is conditional for the community to serve you. Acting from one gesture containing these two movements consequently has a huge impact on the ethos of entrepreneurship and on the way of doing business.

Serving humanity

Serving humanity here means contributing to the whole, the whole being an interdependent set of elements influencing the wellbeing of a community. Serving humanity differs from serving a person or a group of people in the sense that whatever you do needs to contribute to the interaction between all of the people and the environment they are part of. Adama Traoré, director of Acte Sept, a school and theatre for the performing arts, tells the following old tale that explains the natural interdependency between all creatures: “It is about two salamanders that are fighting in the house. The chief of the house calls his dog: “I am leaving for a few days so you have to keep the house in order.” Besides the fighting salamanders, he also leaves his mother in the house,

who is spinning cotton to make clothes. Because she is old, she needs a fire to keep her warm. When the two salamanders start fighting, the dog goes to see the cock and asks him to help the dog find a solution to the salamanders' fighting. The cock says: "two salamanders fighting is not my thing. And what has this to do with me anyway?" After that, the dog asks the sheep, the cow and the horse for help. They all say the same thing: "I've nothing to do with it, it's none of my business". So the dog can't solve the issue of the fighting salamanders and they keep on fighting. While fighting, they fall into the old lady's basket of cotton. Clambering out, they take part of the cotton with them and run around the house. That's how the cotton gets set on fire, which leads to the house burning down. The chief's mother is too old to get out in time, so she dies. When somebody dies, it is important to inform the families and villages in the region. The only one who can do that is the horse. So, all day long, the horse goes from village to village telling people about the death of the old lady. At the end of the day he is exhausted, but the funeral is able to begin. For a funeral you need food. The first day you don't need that much food to serve the first group of visitors. So it is enough to kill the cock. Three days later, you kill a bigger animal for the next group of visitors - that is the sheep. And a week later they kill the cow for the last ceremony."

This little tale explains beautifully how the interdependency between different people works. We are all related as members of humanity, and although you might not be aware of that as yet, you would do well to act accordingly.

The notion of serving humanity instead of people means constantly weighing up the impact of your actions on the whole. So doing business by producing and selling something affects not only the person producing or buying it, but the whole world they are part of or belong to as well.

Letting the community serve you

The second movement goes hand in hand with the first. As humanity is about interdependency, so the community serves you. The success of your organization or company lies in collaboration with other organizations. It's not about building your own empire but about creating a network of organizations that help each other and the whole in making a living and in social development. Mamou Daffé puts it like this: "In organizing the festival I need a lot of different kinds of expertise, most of them not in my field. So what I do is just find somebody or a group who have that specific knowledge. They can start or expand their own enterprise in doing whatever they are doing and I'll hire them for the festival. If there is no expertise in the region, I just bring it in from outside. I ask those experts to teach our people so they can start their business again after learning that specific expertise. Step by step, a community of people and companies evolves, that can run the festival today and can support the development of what it can become in the coming years."

These movements behind the festival colour every action, every vision and every goal it has. As part of a community of organizations, people and neighborhoods, the festival serves the social development of the area from the perspective of serving humanity,

and the community serves the festival by containing and empowering it. It is due to these two movements that the term community based entrepreneurship fits so well. In the chapters to come, following the trail of the festival in more detail, these movements will turn out to be the leitmotiv of the model and the entrepreneurial concept behind the Festival sur le Niger.

3. The Festival

“ True artists have the magic of showing or telling people who they are and what their personalities and their environment are like, in a way people can understand. So art communicates to you. Showing there are other realities surrounding you, it helps you to see the possibilities for improving your own situation. In Mali's recent history, if we have to tell the truth, in the change towards democracy in this country, artists took the first step. They opened peoples' eyes to what was going on in society.” **Abdramane Dicko, economist at USAID and volunteer member of the organizing committee of the Festival sur le Niger**

The Festival sur le Niger is a yearly, multidisciplinary cultural event in Ségou where artists of all kinds perform, exhibit and play music. One of the festival's aims is to stimulate the interaction between traditional and contemporary art by presenting the two side by side on stage, by holding expert workshops and by initiating co-productions. During the Festival sur le Niger, Ségou turns into one big festival site with stages and exhibitions all over and numerous restaurants and little shops on almost every corner selling everything you could wish for.

Everybody in town participates in their own way. Some attend the performances, others perform, some work as technicians, others provide food and beds for foreign visitors. Elders and religious leaders take responsibility in guiding the Ségovian community in how to honour traditions and open up to modernity at the same time. Kalifa Touré, the general secretary of religious association in Ségou and a member of the ethics committee of the Festival sur le Niger, explains how they deal with the traditional values becoming more liberal: “During the festival you sometimes get the feeling there are a lot of liberties, as if that is the product of the festival. But you cannot blame that on the festival, although some of the religious members of the community tend to do so. It is part of bigger changes that are going on in our society and not something that evolves from one week of festival only. For that reason we made the 'guide pratique du festival', a booklet with guidelines for good behaviour in accordance with our customs. Just to show we care and support the festival in our own way.”

Other community members work voluntarily for the festival, selling tickets, building stages or doing whatever needs to be done to get the festival in place. Two of them describe the festival as follows: “It is a whole: in the programme they combine traditional and contemporary art, big productions and small ones. There is something for everybody out there. If you are a singer, there are opportunities to express your talents. At night the well-known singers perform for everyone,” according to Mrs Sidibé Bana, a lawyer, and Siriman Sakho, an engineer and manager of the festival's scientific forum, both festival volunteers.

Besides performing arts, there is room for exhibitions by visual artists and there are workshops where national and international artists work side by side.

During the week of the festival, Ségou becomes the festival. Mohamed Doumbia, administrator of the Festival sur le Niger, explains what makes the festival one of a kind: “The

festival differs from other tourist attractions because it always changes, innovates. The nature of the festival is local, national and international. To keep it working at all three levels you need to change things, to remain attractive at all levels. And it also works the other way round; the cooperation between the three generates the innovation."

Cultural development

Another unique aspect of the festival is the contribution it makes to the cultural development of the region. By giving contemporary art a prominent place in the programme, it makes a statement. Traditionally, art in Mali is part of daily life, performing at ceremonies, festivities or producing handicrafts. By opening the space of art to artists working from a more contemporary concept, the cosmology of art transforms. At the festival the traditional and the contemporary come together, one does not replace the other; they simply influence and enrich each other, enlarging the artistic space. "The day when there is no difference any more between art from different countries and continents, then art would have achieved its main objective. But this is not true; there will always be a difference between arts. Art is a form of social consciousness.

Creativity is always a reflection of the person's social environment. The artist's style is the result of his personality, not the result of a will that has been imposed on him. That is why in Africa there will always be artistic expressions that differ from art in France, or anywhere else." Oumar Kamara, artist and historian. The work of musician Abdoulaye Diarra, lead singer with the Balanzan Band, gives a more specific example of what Oumar describes: "Last October we made our first CD with a mixture of traditional and modern music. We create our own songs based on stories from and lives of important people in villages around Ségou. We sing about the history of the communities, playing traditional music with a touch of modern style jazz and rock. We missed only the first edition of the Festival sur le Niger. Since then we have joined in every year, mostly on the smaller stages but last year we played on both the smaller and the large stage. At the beginning we won a prize, which was important, because with that money we could buy instruments. And the festival helped us to create networks."

Talking about his work, Diarra shows the importance of the festival for the development of their band. The festival enables them to perform not only to a local but also a national and international audience, at the same time opening doors to other stages and a huge network of musicians and performers all over. But most of all, the festival envisions the way contemporary art found its way into Ségovian society alongside more traditional art forms. This contribution of the festival goes beyond the bounds of the event itself. And that is exactly the intention of the founders and organizers of the festival. They don't just want to organize a festival, but aim to make a difference for society as a whole.

Social and economic development

Besides its contribution to cultural development, the festival contributes to the social development of the region. Wandering through the streets of Ségou, talking to people about their lives and the things they do, the spirit of the Festival sur le Niger can be felt

almost everywhere, and throughout the year. A lot of what Ségou's inhabitants do to make a living is related to the festival. The festival has been held for seven years now. It has grown into an internationally recognized event with over twenty thousand visitors a year. New hotels are being built, many businesses have spun off from the festival and Ségou has been put on the map for travelers and tourists. But more than that, Ségou has been seeded with small entrepreneurs running businesses they can make a living from. The businesses that arose in the wake of the festival are diverse in nature, ranging from food and restaurants, lodging and crafts to technical installation, shops and galleries. A nice example is the story of Colette Traoré, co-founder of a women's weaving cooperative, the Association de Femmes Artisanes et Tisseuses Traditionnelles (AFATT): "With ten local women we put our money together to buy a loom. That's how we started our cooperative. There were two main reasons for starting it. The first was to reestablish the traditional forms of weaving in a contemporary way. And the second was to help people make a living. We produce fabrics for all kind of purposes. Clothing, tablecloths and bedding. Since the festival came, we have grown considerably. For example, we supply the set builders with our materials. We create the costumes for some of the performers. For the festival, we work together with all the other organizations in the field of weaving, dyeing, sewing, and so on. Together we ensure that everybody gets a fair share of the work so that nobody is excluded from the benefits of the festival." In addition to the craft of weaving, other specifically regional types of craftsmanship were revived and helped people to make a living. An example is Bogolan, a traditional dye technique using clay to colour and design textiles.

Another example of increasing business opportunities coming with the Festival is its programme of accommodating festival-goers with Ségovian families for a fee, which is brought up by Kalifa Touré, the general secretary of religious association in Ségou and a member of the ethics committee of the Festival sur le Niger: "For example, regarding the fact that not all visitors can go to hotels. They have asked the population to make rooms in their houses available for foreigners. Of course, they could have asked hotels to build more rooms as well and that is the case, but that is still not enough and they did not put the emphasis on that. They put the emphasis on broader sharing of the income. So making sure that people from Ségou who don't have hotels can also gain an income from the festival. And that goes beyond money, because these are links, networks created between these people and guests that evolve during the festival."

In addition to the festival, the Gallery Kôrè and the cultural centre Kôrè were founded, enabling artists to exhibit and perform in the Ségou area all year round. The cultural centre houses a studio facility, so recordings can be made in situ. Moussa Berté, manager of the Gallery Kôrè, describes its activities: "Our objective is the promotion and development of visual art through multimedia and the exhibiting of visual art. We organize workshops, capacity-building of local actors, invite national and international artists to work and exhibit with us and of course we sell works of art to visitors to the gallery."

All of these examples show how the Festival sur le Niger has ignited many economic, social and cultural activities in the region. The festival has created a community of entre-

preneurs working together, serving the broader Ségovian community (humanity) and letting the community serve them. At the outset the festival mainly served the entrepreneurs. Today, that has become a two-way process: the entrepreneurs serve the festival and vice-versa, and everyone serves and is served by the community as a whole.

Transforming art and entrepreneurship

The Festival sur le Niger changes the entrepreneurial attitude and serves the transformation that is going on in the world of art. These are different movements, but in a way they enforce each other. It is probably not a coincidence that the two come together in the development of the festival. In a way, the artistic transformation can be considered inspirational for the development of the entrepreneurial model. Understanding the path of artistic change in Malian society deepens the understanding of the evolution of Maaya based entrepreneurship.

Traditionally, art is not seen as something separate from general life. Hama Goro, an artist and initiator of the Centre Soleil d'Afrique (a visual arts centre), expresses this beautifully based on his personal experience: "Traditionally, art is part of day-to-day life. It reflects the important things in life and symbolizes important transformations in life. Being an artist is something that is given to you by birth. You perform your art for and with the community. I look at art differently. I want to express what I experience, what I see, what's in me and I want to create my own reflections on society and existentialism. That is not always understood by my community. Some of them think I am lazy, or accuse me of leaving tradition behind. That's not what I want. For example, I use a technique inspired by a traditional method of colouring clothes for ritual ceremonies to express myself, in the language of the Bogolan. I transformed this traditional form of storytelling, symbolising community and family needs into an abstract form of visual art. The tradition is my source of inspiration along with my professional experiences acquired abroad; these two visions communicate and this interact constitute the sense of my artistic approach. I am rooted in the tradition of my country and I am educated in Western art. In my work these two visions of art interact."

So art was and still is a part of daily life, as is trade or education. Hama Goro explains: "Society is organized around families. In the family there is this system; it is a type of caste system. Expertise is connected to families. You cannot do something else, because that is not your family's thing; you are not allowed to do it. Even today, if you are not from a family of singers you are not allowed to become one. That is less the case in urban areas than in rural areas. Art as part of communal life is a beautiful thing but at the same time it can imprison the artist. Art as such doesn't have a position in Malian society."

In the festival, traditional and contemporary artists work side by side. The festival builds bridges between them and shows how they can enrich each other. The entrepreneurial concept behind the festival is based on the same synergy between traditional and modernity that exists in art. Through being rooted in the local culture and opening up to more general, global concepts of entrepreneurship, a new concept is created. A concept that looks forward from tradition and modernity, transforming both and

intertwining them into a form of entrepreneurship that can actually make a change in social development.

Embedding entrepreneurship

Where Malian art is rooted in the community, the overall principles of entrepreneurship per se are more universal (see page 21).

Many Malian entrepreneurs adopt this way of doing business, but that is not what Mamou Daffé wants to do. He aims for an entrepreneurial ethos that is not about individual profit but contributes to social development. To make that happen, he has to connect globally recognized entrepreneurial principles with traditional Malian values, following the model of contemporary Malian artists who understand how to create a connection from an independent position with the values of their society. They have found a way to relate to the community, to become part of it in a new way, from their own perspective. The Festival sur le Niger uses, more or less implicitly, this artistic transformational experience to re-embed the independent artist in the community as a source of inspiration. Learning from the artist's lessons in overcoming difficulties and in finding their way, how to embed general entrepreneurial principles within local values and culture.

4. Maaya values and entrepreneurial principles: a mutual source

“ Culture is never lost forever for everybody. It can be that it is lost for one group of people. But it will reappear in another culture for other people.” Youssouf Diarra, deputy manager of the Gallery Kòrè (*Festival sur le Niger*)

Developing the Festival sur le Niger is an entrepreneurial process aiming for social development. It is a community based concept of entrepreneurship that combines local Maaya culture with a more general concept of entrepreneurship (see page 21). Combining these two concepts to produce something that is greater than the sum of its parts, that improves both of them, by elevating them to a more abstract level where they can form a new concept that exceeds the zero sum. This blend evolves from the ongoing two-in-one movement: serving humanity and letting the community serve you, as a basis for this model of entrepreneurship.

In order to understand this concept of community based entrepreneurship that goes beyond its two founding concepts, it is important to have a basic understanding of both underlying concepts.

Maaya

Maaya is an integral concept of humanity concerning the relationship between the individual and the community. It is the core quality of being human, what makes us human. Through Maaya, people understand the importance of that relationship and learn how to act accordingly. The principles of Maaya are applicable to every aspect of life: work, leadership, politics, education, festivities, day-to-day life, art, science and anything else you can think of. Maaya emphasizes the unbreakable bond between individual and community and gives people a framework to hold on to, provides them with a 'design for life'.

Maaya can be identified as the sum of values, rules and attitudes based on the following general principles: humanism, respect for human beings and humanity, a sense of sharing and generosity.

“ There is a very famous Malian singer, a griot, who said: some people would spend the night without eating, while others have too much to eat during the night and throw it away. Even though you don't have enough food, your dignity wouldn't allow you to ask for it. It is Maaya that makes the other give it.” **Soumana Kané, a teacher, expert on Maaya and leader of the festival's traditional troupes committee**

Soumana Kané clarifies the relationship between the self Maaya (refusal to beg) and the Maaya of others (who offer without compromising your dignity), two sides of one

relationship, in balance, to the benefit of the whole. Maaya enables every person and community to be respected and demands that every person and community respect the other.

Maaya connects the individual with the group, with the community, on the level of values. This relationship between the individual and the group, between 'I' and 'We', is expressed in many ways. For example, in the way someone is naturally connected to the values of the community he originates from. He will always act based on that connection with others and will be treated and addressed as part of his community.

In order to relate to someone you need to understand the community he is part of. Maaya asks that people are open and listen carefully, so they can come to a profound understanding of the values of the other person and the community he originates from. This mutual understanding on the level of values opens up the possibility of connecting to the unknown, to outside worlds, and can be a source of personal and social development.

In daily life people refer to different attitudes that are recognized as being Maaya:

Dambé: someone who cultivates self-respect and respect for others in relation to the values of the community he is bound to.

Kari, Wageya: someone who displays his (material and relational) availability to the other, to the community.

Samè: someone who cultivates modesty, who makes sure not to frustrate others by understanding their values and their needs,

Diatiguiya: someone who has a very developed sense of hospitality, who is sociable and open to others,

Sinankunya: a very old system of joking relationships that creates links and correspondences between names, between ethnic groups and between different professions. Sinankunya is a way of acting that allows people of different status and from different groups to connect and communicate openly with each other. It makes relationships easier and allows actors to live together without conflict.

Looking at each of these principles in turn, a general idea of Maaya emerges, as a set of principles or a cultural concept that enables a person to be embedded in a community, to connect to others, to help others, to mobilize others with respect to their culture and that of others. In the combination of being open and welcoming to the other, the stranger, lies the possibility of developing the community as a whole by connecting with values and attitudes that are different from one's own.

Entrepreneurship

“There is nothing new about poverty. What is new is that today we have the resources and the techniques to get rid of poverty.” **Martin Luther King**⁵

⁵ King, Jr. Martin Luther (1968), recorded in the video documentary "Eyes on the Prize."

As with Maaya, many stories are told, and books written, about entrepreneurship. Some of them stress its positive aspects, others the more negative ones. As in Maaya, the basic principles of entrepreneurship aim to benefit society. Adam Smith, the philosophical founder of today's dominant economic thinking, explains how entrepreneurship can contribute to the social benefit of all: "Guided by the invisible hand of selfishness, more than by doing good, the world would be able to solve poverty. The world being a market place as a basic regulating principle serving the rich and the poor." That vision still has many followers. Ann Bernstein, the head of a South African think-tank called the Centre for Development and Enterprise, explains how companies benefit society simply by going about their normal business. "In a free and competitive market, firms profit by selling goods or services to willing customers. To stay in business, they must offer lower prices or higher quality than their competitors. Those that fail disappear. Those that succeed spread prosperity. Shareholders receive dividends. Employees earn wages. Suppliers win contracts. And when everybody has a job poverty will disappear."⁶ Although not everyone will still agree with this rather positivistic point of view, the economic rationale underpinning it still dominates the entrepreneurial world.

Looking into entrepreneurship as controlled by the 'European competition authority', the following basic principle is generally agreed to form its basis:

I. Competition as regulating principle

The system is based on the rationale of competition. By allowing competition, market forces will provide a fair price for products and services, and innovation will be promoted. This ultimately leads to more consumer prosperity. Individual entrepreneurs do not need to worry about their contribution to this prosperity; by obeying the rules of the system that is taken care of.

The market, as a space, or more precisely, the only space, is a venue for trade. A place where all sellers and buyers meet to buy and sell their products and services. In this marketplace, all sellers are equal: the only way they can differentiate is in the things they sell, the quality, or in the prices they ask. Since every transaction takes place in this marketplace, it is transparent to all participants (i.e. all sellers and buyers), which means that everyone knows what is being sold, at what price. On that basis, every participant or potential participant is free, or better, is invited to do better.

As is evident from today's economic crisis, this basic principle of transparency is not always lived up to, resulting in a decline in prosperity for many.

From this basic assumption on competition, we can derive two further principles that go hand in hand with the first:

a. The ethos of making a profit

The *raison d'être* for many of today's entrepreneurs is to make a profit. This profit, as a result of good entrepreneurship, doing better than the competition, serves as a reward

⁶ Schumpeter; Companies aren't charities, In poor countries the problem is not that businesses are unethical but that there are too few of them, *The Economist*. Oct. 21st 2010

for the entrepreneur and/or the company. The profit therefore belongs to the company and its owners. The lower the costs or the higher the price, the bigger the profit. Therefore, most organizations will generally strive to increase efficiency and standardization in order to make the best products for the lowest price. Others choose to strive for innovation in a bid to disable the competition.

b. Globalism

The playing field for entrepreneurship is basically the world, since the market is a worldwide interdependent space where local entrepreneurs' prices or quality of goods are compared to, or directly or indirectly influenced by, those of their global competitors. Buying and selling becomes a global activity, buying things wherever they are best or cheapest.

These three principles define the general boundaries of today's dominant entrepreneurship. They describe the way trade has to take place: transparent and global, based on competition between those who are selling, to ensure that buyers get the best products for the best price.

All entrepreneurs are obliged to act according to the first principle. Most of them are aiming to make a profit and are part of the global market.

But there are more and more entrepreneurs who want to add other rules to the game in order to protect the environment, or to contribute to society by means other than just making a profit.

The awareness of entrepreneurial models based more on social values is increasing. The Festival sur le Niger is one of the organizations that are making this change and serves as an example of how it can be done from the heart or the core business of the organization.

5. Community based entrepreneurship

A blend of Maaya and general entrepreneurship

“You cannot take a shower without becoming wet. What is not good, the bad characteristics of tradition wash away with the water of modernity. So you are cleansed of the bad aspects of traditions, you become a new person. You will be modern and traditional at the same time.” **Dr Simaga, a pharmacist, expert on Maaya and Godfather of the Festival sur le Niger.**

Both concepts, Maaya and entrepreneurship, have their advantages and shortcomings in day-to-day use. Both are based on values or principles that aim to increase well-being, and both in fact do so. But there is also a darker side to both concepts: Maaya can imprison individual action and entrepreneurial principles can exclude the collective mind or interests and values.

The organizations participating in this new economy research don't dispute the basics of entrepreneurship; they simply want to add a notion of ethics. Neither does the Malian community dispute the basic values behind Maaya, but the community around the Festival sur le Niger for example, do want to add some scope for individuality. Taking that into account, there seems to be a mutual benefit in bringing the two concepts together, bridging the collective and the individual orientation of both.

Open mind

“Life often involves tensions between important values. This can mean difficult choices. However, we must find ways to harmonize diversity with unity, the exercise of freedom with the common good, short-term objectives with long-term goals. Every individual, family, organization, and community has a vital role to play. The arts, sciences, religions, educational institutions, media, businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and governments are all called to offer creative leadership.” **The Earth Charter (2000)** <http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/pages/Read-the-Charter.html>

Having an open mind, being rooted in tradition and educated in and connected to modernity can be a way to bring the two concepts together without losing the spirit of either. It takes courage and respect at the same time to make that effort. Mamou Daffé describes himself as a person who could do it: “I come from a traditional family, with strong values. But I am open and unorthodox. I oppose things that I cannot accept. Sometimes I even act against the rules that are not fair to me. My dual culture and my trips around the world taught me a lot. It opened my vision, my mind to other values. It also helped me to understand the local values better. Being in Europe, I could see what was missing from Western society. What can be developed in the local culture, to lift the things in Ségou to another level!” However, it is not about one person making it happen. It is about a community allowing and helping him to do so.

One of the key things that needs to be done is stated in the Earth Charter: "We urgently need a shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community." This statement refers to the development of a universal set of values guiding all people and organizations towards a more social and sustainable world.

Howard Richards, discussing the Earth Charter, adds: "We urgently need to nurture the diverse (not shared) cultural resources of local communities."⁷

Adding ethics to our entrepreneurial principles seems increasingly to be becoming the prevailing opinion. A way to do that is by nurturing local cultures and intertwining them with general entrepreneurial and global ethical principles. That is exactly what the organizers of the Festival sur le Niger are establishing in their entrepreneurial model.

Different ways of combining Maaya with entrepreneurship

Mamou is not the only person who wanted to make a shift in thinking. For example, there are the artists who combine traditional and contemporary art. But local entrepreneurs too, each in their own way, are connecting the values of the West with Malian values: "As an enterprise [hotel - gs] you need to be in relation with culture and the concept of Maaya, because our society as such is based on it. For example, when high-ranking people come to stay in the hotel for a couple of days you give them a farewell ceremony. I still do that because it is Maaya custom. I like doing it so I find ways to transfer that particular custom to other farewell ceremonies or hospitality habits. Like for this tourist coming to Ségou every year. This tourist likes the music of the balafon, when he leaves I organise people to come and play it for him. Or another example, when Malians from a specific ethnic group stay over, and like a specific kind of food, during the whole stay I will try to prepare this kind of food for them. And when they leave, the musician will play something especially for him. So my guests will remember their stay at the hotel and the music performed for them. For me, that is the link between culture (ceremony), entrepreneurship (hotel) and Maaya. It is all about how you relate one to the other. So I always start with finding out what is the interest of that specific visitor. For the French I figure out which cocktail they drink, and I know that most Americans like traditional food, so I organise a dinner with all these things. And the Dutch I give a present when they leave." Moussa Fofana, hotelier in Ségou

Being open to other communities and their cultures is a Maaya principle, as is respecting and welcoming these communities. This responsiveness enables Mamou and his community members to raise their own culture to another level by bringing in essential elements from entrepreneurship as described earlier in this publication. If they need to transform certain aspects of their own culture to make it work, they will do so. But only with the consent of the community. Getting this consent might be difficult, might take time and a lot of effort, but it can be done, as long as you make a concerted effort to obey the Maaya basics in gaining that consent.

By leaving out ineffective habits, or distortions of both concepts, you purify both concepts in a sense and from there you can develop the blend of both, using only the

⁷ Howard Richards, Professor of Peace and Global Studies, Earlham College, The Great Charter Theses and Counter-theses to Animate a Discussion of the Earth Charter

best. The best in the sense that the new concept contributes to the social development of Ségou.

Blending in the service of social development

Blending the concept of Maaya with the general principles of entrepreneurship can be done in many ways, depending on your aims and values. Mamou Daffé's aim is to support the development of (local) society. He puts it like this: "I have the desire to contribute to my society and the development of it. I am lucky to have a certain quality of life thanks to my companies. Coming from where I come from (the son of Nioro du Sahel), I cannot accept the fact of not contributing to my community, and keeping all of these opportunities to myself. That is why I have chosen to stay in Ségou, and keep only Malian nationality. I have often had opportunities to live and work in the Netherlands, but I did not take them. I live here in Ségou and I want to contribute here. Morally, I feel I have to share what I earn with my family that gives me everything, my community and others. I want to be a role model by not leaving the country and making a living at the same time. I want to set an example for young people, to show them that it's only by being anchored in our own values that we can better open up to the world, and then real development can take place. That is one of our difficulties. People think of their own development and not about the society. And that is why some go to the West and stay there and do not bother with the family or community. I cannot accept the idea of me doing the same.

I was lucky to have opportunities, and the ability to make a change. So I decided to use all of that to contribute to the social development of my country. In the beginning it was a challenge. From the western perspective you can change the world and build your business all by yourself. But I want to make a combination with the local tradition and to do it together. The only way to make it happen is by the engagement and commitment of others. That's why the festival should be a collective activity, a social event. Otherwise it wouldn't work."

The concept of community based entrepreneurship evolves from a person and a community living in between the two concepts and having the desire to realize and improve the communal situation by the social and economical development of Mali and more in particular of Ségou. Mamou Daffé and his team simply started working from what, for them, were natural values, combining them with their knowledge and experience of modern entrepreneurship.

Being in between

There is a space between Maaya and entrepreneurship, as there is between art and entrepreneurship and art and Maaya. Being in this in-between space can liberate you from the constraints of either one of the concepts. It gives you the freedom to change the position you're in. It is this space that allows you to choose a more inclusive concept, combining elements of different worlds. During the dialogue on Maaya, the difficulty involved is put into words: "But you have to realise that the elements from the different concepts might not go together naturally. The challenge is to listen, talk, propose and negotiate until the blend unfolds and they go together without any force and with consensus of all who are involved."

Step by step they find out what works best, combining culture, society, art and the economy in a single movement. Every choice Mamou Daffé and his team made was made in the service of social development. Their major justification for using certain elements from Maaya or entrepreneurial principles, or leaving some of them out, was if it would help them any further in their aim of social development. Being unconditional in that, they were able to establish an entrepreneurial mentality or ethos that does actually contribute to social development.

It is only afterwards that they can see what model of entrepreneurship has evolved in the developmental process. In fact they needed, as Mamou had experienced in travelling to Europe before, the eyes of a stranger to really understand the value of what has emerged.

Community based entrepreneurship

Carrying out this research in Ségou offered an opportunity to talk to local entrepreneurs, local business associations, artists, local leaders, elders, religious leaders and government administrators, some of whom are also volunteers for the festival, and all of whom are also members of different communities in and around Ségou.

The entrepreneurial model that came to light from their stories doesn't change the entrepreneurial principles as such, but adds an underlying attitude that derives almost automatically from the movements of serving humanity and letting the community serve you, as described in Chapter 1. This attitude can be used to define the concept of community based entrepreneurship as follows: entrepreneurship submits to the values of the bigger picture and takes responsibility to contribute to the benefit of an interdependent set of actors, namely other entrepreneurs and society as a whole. Again, a two-in-one movement containing:

1. Entrepreneurship is subject to the values of the society it operates in

Entrepreneurship transforms to a common activity based on the values and social rules of the society it operates in. Every enterprise is part of one or more societies and therefore acts in accordance with social values. So the entrepreneur steps beyond the bounds of trade and functions as a fully-fledged member of the community, acting under the same conditions and with the same responsibilities as any other member of that community. Entrepreneurs are in fact part of the community, like all other members such as fathers, mothers, elders, artists and employees. They are therefore just as responsible for the wellbeing of that community as every other member. Entrepreneurship benefits the community as a whole, not just the company itself. Furthermore, the community is (based on its values) restrictive, decisive or even supportive within the whole process of entrepreneurship.

2. Entrepreneurship is a collective activity

Entrepreneurship becomes a collective activity, not just an individual one. The responsibility of an enterprise shifts from care for the company to care for the entrepreneurial

playing field. From striving for the company's benefit only to achieving benefits for other companies and society too. Specifically, this means that entrepreneurial actions benefit the entrepreneurial, social and cultural system the company is part of. It is about: "how do we gain success?" and: "What benefits all of us?" It is about sharing success with the community and, if you are successful, helping others to become successful too. Success is the result of co-operative action.

Since every company is part of a community, serving that community as a whole, you would be working against your community by competing another company out of business. Entrepreneurship therefore becomes about sharing business; competition becomes about making a difference rather than pushing others out of the market. Or, as Soumana Kane, a teacher and expert in Maaya, puts it: "Africans become entrepreneurs, but since they'll keep on contributing to society they don't become entrepreneurs in the Western sense: real businessmen who want to extend and keep the revenue for the individual."

So on the one hand the entrepreneurial concept is determined by its social and cultural context and at the same time entrepreneurship exceeds the limits of the company. Doing well just for one company isn't enough. As a company you take responsibility for making the system as a whole function smoothly and benefit all, subject to the values of the society in which you operate.

These changes in the concept of entrepreneurship do not rule out the existing ones, they simply put them in a broader perspective. There still is a liberal market space where supply and demand meet. There are still no restrictions on who enters that space and all transactions are still transparent, so the best price or quality can still be determined in the interaction between producer and consumer. At the same time, that market space will be influenced by another set of values and rules which are part of that specific society, like respect, serving humanity and each other. In this case, these are the Maaya principles as mentioned above.

There remains the ethos of making a profit. All of the companies in Ségou approached as part of this study want to make a profit. But, they also ask, what you do with the profit you make over and above your basic needs. The question that is asked in addition to making a profit is, what are you making that profit for? How do you serve humanity with it? How are you serving other entrepreneurs or community members with it?

The third principle, namely globalism, is enriched by adding localism. Everyone in Ségou is aware of the broader world around them, of its importance, of the possibilities it opens up. The additional perspective is that it needs to be connected to local values, local culture and local needs. "We're talking about globalization, there is one general culture being formed around the world. If we talk about developing countries, we realize an improvement won't happen overnight. We need to strengthen peoples' capacities and skills, but not forget their traditions. You need to know your own cultural heritage," says Abdramane Dicko, economist at US aid and volunteer member of the organizing committee of the Festival sur le Niger. "If the youth goes to the western world to be educated, and they come back home, we need to find a bridge between the new things

they have learned and traditional values. One thing that we're trying to get a grip on is how to achieve that. What works in the US might not work over here. But we need to understand what the others (Americans, French and Australians) have already accomplished, in the area of technologies, behaviour, etc. We don't need to reinvent the wheel. We can adopt those new behaviours and adjust."

The Festival sur le Niger shows how global entrepreneurial principles can interact with local values. The art of community based entrepreneurship is to conduct local interpretations of global entrepreneurial principles to create tailor-made blends of entrepreneurship.

These changes in the entrepreneurial way of acting are not exclusive to Mali, or Maaya based entrepreneurship. Many other entrepreneurs all over the world are changing their mindset towards a more sustainable way of entrepreneurship, adding values to their way of doing business.

Maaya based entrepreneurship

In the case of the Festival sur le Niger, the concretizing of community based entrepreneurship is strongly coloured by Maaya culture. Looking more deeply into its specific way of dealing with community based entrepreneurship, called 'Maaya based entrepreneurship' in this book, clarifies the implications of this rich concept of entrepreneurship on a more practical level.

Based on the stories told by local entrepreneurs and artists about the development of the Festival sur le Niger and about their own activities resulting from it, three types of "guidelines" for Maaya based entrepreneurs were distilled. These are, amongst others, probably useful for community based entrepreneurs in general:

Guidelines regarding:

- a. The company's relationship with the community
- b. The entrepreneurial attitude
- c. Entrepreneurial action

A. The company's relationship with the community

One of the insights that ignited Maaya based entrepreneurship comes from the video club (Alphi) in Ségou that Mamou Daffé worked for and owned. This club was a meeting place rather than a shop where people came to rent a video. Many of them did rent videos of course, but the main reason for coming was to catch up with each other. Hospitality or Diatiguiya was one of the main pillars of the success of the video club. Looking back, Mamou realized that this way of facilitating interaction with and in the community had a huge impact on the economic success of his company. Mamou says: "Being part of the community and supporting the community is the first priority of any enterprise in a developing country."

After the market for videos declined, Mamou thought about looking for a new business. A hotel seemed like a good idea since there was an opportunity in this sector. Running a hotel was actually quite new to him. So Mamou worked side by side with his

employees to develop the hotel into a successful business. Acting like brothers helping each other out in good and bad times, in business and in life, they managed to create a cozy and friendly hotel where people could meet, eat and stay. The hotel again is based on the principle of *Diatiguiya*⁸. The process of creating the hotel is the process of building a community at the same time. The hotel originates from the community of people, and their broader environment, working in it. Employees all refer to the hotel as their community based on *Dambé*, a set of positive values they all share and are all proud to represent.

Djibril Guissé, an expert in local economic development working for the CPEL (Conseil pour la promotion de l'économie locale), explains it as follows: "I think it is necessary to integrate *Maaya* into modern enterprises. In the old days a company was a family business structured by family commitment and values. If you break that link you lose the community's support for your business. It is important to use this base to build a modern enterprise on, because the person is the centre of everything. You need people around you that help you. What creditability and honour are for the family companies can also form the base for modern business."

These stories illustrate two major principles in the relationship between entrepreneurs and the community: one is to interact with the community and its members, and the second is to base the structure of your organization on community or family-like values.

How to increase the number of people visiting Ségou

Mamou has a passion for culture and is engaged in the local development of Ségou, which has a rich culture with great potential that is also worthy of promotion.

Since not many people stayed in Ségou for more than one night, business was quiet. Not just for Motel Savane (Mamou's hotel) but also for other hotels and restaurants. The question was how to get more people to spend more time in Ségou. Meetings were organized with colleagues in the hotel business and some cultural actors. They brainstormed on possible ways to increase the attractiveness of the Ségou area and to show off the rich cultural heritage of Ségou to best advantage. They came up with the idea of organizing a cultural festival.

Before the founding collective started to put the concept of the festival into operation, they got the community involved in their plans. Local leaders, elders, religious leaders, artists and entrepreneurs were consulted about the idea of the festival and the aims pursued. These dialogues went on until everybody agreed to support the coming festival. As Guissé has already pointed out, a company needs the support of the community to become successful. That's the only way to get things done. Youssouf Diarra, an artist, phrases it as follows: "You need to be initiated in the environment you are an entrepreneur in."

Mamou as well as the community members needed a lot of *Sanakounya*, diplomacy, flexibility and powers of persuasion to gain everybody's consent and involvement in this project. What Mamou essentially did was to make a gesture by presenting his own idea as that of the community, in order to construct the network he needed to build

⁸ For an explanation of this term and others in the following text, please refer to page 19.

the Festival sur le Niger:

Getting the support of the community is key in the relationship between the community and the entrepreneur:

With the community behind it, the organizing of the festival could get underway. Artists, technicians, set builders, restaurants, hotels and their suppliers geared up for the first event in 2004. Anyone who wanted to contribute was welcomed. When things went wrong the community, having agreed to support the festival, was always prepared to help out.

Gaining the consent of the community leads to a continuous involvement of the community. The representatives of the community become focused on consensus, acting as an advisory board for the organization. Helping out when there is trouble, guiding you where you tend to go wrong and sharing in problem-solving and devising ways to improve or extend the organization.

Community based entrepreneurship

Guidelines regarding the company's relationship with the community

- 1. Interact with and support the community*
- 2. Organise the company's structure based on community values*
- 3. Gain the community's support for the company*

B. The entrepreneurial attitude

When knowledge or experience wasn't available locally, people from further afield were invited to come and contribute and teach their skills. Step by step, the process became more and more efficient. Organizational skills like planning, producing, reproducing, distributing, control, organizing, structuring and quality became part of the way of working in organizing the festival. Maaya and effective and efficient entrepreneurship were intertwined at every stage.

Listening to Mamou's experience in building up the festival, it becomes clear that one of the factors behind the success of the festival is his ability to ask for help and to learn from others. "Meeting the Western world brought in a new angle in my career.. Due to so many visits to the Netherlands, I learned method and organization. I studied at the Open University. It helped me to structure; but the most important thing in my life was what I learned in my family, from the elders - namely from my father Keba Daffé, who was a role model for me."

So Mamou chose a team containing traditionalists, economists, Europeans, anthropologists, sociologists and technicians to work with. "It was a cosmopolitan team," he says. It took one and a half years to launch the first edition of the festival.

Being aware that you don't know everything, that you can't do it all by yourself, is a very important part of the entrepreneurial attitude in Maaya based entrepreneurship. You need to have the will to establish something with others.

Not one but many companies arise

In fact, this attitude goes a step further: it aims not only to establish your initiative but also to establish other initiatives and entrepreneurial activities in the same movement. In fact, Maaya based entrepreneurship is more about creating various economic activities than about building just your own business. That process of building an entrepreneurial playing field is explained succinctly by Mohamed Doumbia, the administrator of the Festival sur le Niger:

“The whole idea has been to build on something else. For example, Mamou's enterprise ESEF, they sell air-conditioning and do the maintenance. This company helped Mamou create the hotel. Then there was the association of hotel managers, which helped to initiate the festival. Initially the festival was on the shoulders of the hotel. Now the festival takes on other things, such as the cultural centre. The festival enables many people to start their own businesses. One thing leads to another and another. The first company led to the second, to the third, fourth and so on. That's the family spirit guiding us in organizing the festival.” This example shows how one company sprouts from another. Looking at the festival, this spirit of helping each other forward goes beyond the level of one leading to the other. Due to the festival, an entrepreneurial spirit evolved where the many support the many. So an exponential growth of small entrepreneurs could be established based on mutual benefits and collective entrepreneurial activities. As a consequence the entrepreneurial playing field becomes a living and shared system that will be managed by everybody participating, and from which natural growth and development can follow almost automatically. One comes out of the other (Esef, Savane, Festival sur le Niger, other/new enterprises, social change). Or, as expressed in the dialogue on entrepreneurship: “The conscious and the unconscious of the system start working together, creating continuous seeding in many ways; personal development of people, new enterprises, social and cultural initiatives, increase in social impact and so on.”

This is the second part of the entrepreneurial attitude: making a contribution to the development of a shared entrepreneurial ethos. This ethos can be compared to the traditional economic system in Ségou: “Traditionally, there was a form of economy: farming (livestock and agriculture, fishing and hunting) in which everybody worked together. Work was a collective responsibility.” Dr Simaga, a pharmacist, expert on Maaya and Godfather of the Festival sur le Niger. The ethos of shared entrepreneurship can be understood as a contemporary form of this understanding about work.

Based on these stories, another aspect of the entrepreneurial attitude emerges. Maaya based entrepreneurship is not about making the highest possible profit for your own business, but about enabling everyone to make a living out of the festival. Entrepreneurship is about establishing something in the world you are part of. Making a profit is not the aim but the means to another end: just as the festival needs an entrepreneurial spirit to contribute to the enhancement and development of artistic expression and cultural development. It is about being Maaya and having an entrepreneurial orientation at the same time: making the profit and sharing it, using it for the benefit of the community. That is what the last part of the entrepreneurial attitude is about: combining tradition with modernity. Not in an abstract sense but on a practical day to day

level. Community based entrepreneurship as such is a blend of tradition and modernity on a conceptual level. Combining individual gain with collective benefit, combining doing good and doing well are day-to-day actions coming from it. It's about merging values and about merging indigenous and scientific economic knowledge, intertwining traditional and modern production skills and about interweaving traditional and contemporary products and services. It about finding solutions for operational issues that effectively balance traditional and modern elements. The entrepreneurial attitude in the Festival sur le Niger is explicitly about combining local tradition with a general modern entrepreneurial concept. In other communities this might be different since the accent is on local values and not necessarily tradition. The third guideline can therefore be formulated as: combining specific community values with general entrepreneurial concepts

Community based entrepreneurship

Guidelines regarding the entrepreneurial attitude

- 1. Having the will to establish something with others*
- 2. Making a contribution to the development of a shared entrepreneurial ethos*
- 3. Combining specific community values with general entrepreneurial concepts*

C. Entrepreneurial action

As time went on, the festival had to overcome a number of hurdles. Some of these were easier to deal with than others. Challenges faced during this difficult and protracted process included finding the money for the start-up, finding the expertise, the artists and the space to perform. The hardest part was to explain, to convince all of the stakeholders to express support for a festival that aimed to develop art, culture and the local economy and could actually contribute to their wellbeing. Only once the first results had been achieved and the benefit for each participant had been demonstrated, the majority was prepared to step in. The consensus with the community was established step by step. First a small group of community members stepped in, later others followed. Gradually, everybody joined in. Although still hesitant, they were able to give the initiative the benefit of the doubt. Another very difficult challenge was overcoming the resistance towards contemporary art. Oumar Kamara, artist and historian, explains that resistance: "Malians are used to the type of art that explains something to them. A story, a symbol or play that refers to an aspect of daily life. Art reflects on it, criticizes it or just reminds you of the past or your family values and history. Contemporary art changes that. Sometimes it is not about that but about the expression of the artist himself, and sometimes the visualisation of it is too far away from the traditional African mind to understand it. That is why some members of the Malian public, when they go to see those things, say that artists create crazy works of art. Because they see things they cannot recognise or identify with." Since the combination of contemporary and traditional art is the heart of the festival, community support for it is vital.

Exhibiting and performing contemporary art wasn't an easy hurdle to take. The community, and some of the local and participating artists, had to overcome their doubts about the importance of introducing contemporary art in a local festival. Because the community had agreed unanimously on the festival, it was possible to overcome this issue. At the same time Mamou Daffé made sure that art brought in some money for

artists, while gaining recognition for them and advocating the development of the cultural professions. In discussing the festival with the community and the artists, Mamou had been clear about his intentions: bridging tradition and modernity. Although not everybody was happy with that, the whole community allowed him to proceed on that basis. Thanks to this consensus, the resistance to contemporary art could be dealt with by bringing it back into a community dialogue. Having a consensus on values is vital in order to achieve social and cultural development. Any change that is not rooted in an agreement with the community is likely to encounter resistance. Without this consensus, it is difficult to transform the traditional to meet with today's local and global requirements.

Through consensus the extension of the community's values can be reached. The community, Mamou and his team need to be aligned in order to understand each other and respect their different values or perspectives on the festival. They need to find a way to communicate, to debate on an equal footing. The principle of Sanakounya is conditional to make that work without becoming offensive, and to smooth the process of coming to an agreement.

This example illustrates two guidelines for action in Maaya based entrepreneurship. One is about consensus (called Benkan in the local language, Bambara) and the other about including everyone. In the concept of Maaya, any action to be taken needs consensus first. This doesn't mean that you need to seek consent for everything you want to do; rather, you need to have consensus on the values underlying your actions. This consensus must be achieved by (representatives of) all members of the community, not excluding any person or any group.

That brings in the second principle for action: include everyone. Since the sense of belonging to a community is so important, being excluded is one of the worst things that can happen to a person.

Successes

Besides the difficulties, there were many successes too. Talking to people about the festival, it becomes clear that they are all very proud of what they have achieved. Some of the artists gained international recognition thanks to the festival. Local technicians are now equipped to run the festival completely, and craftsmen and women have found a new market for their products. Although everybody credits Mamou Daffé for these successes, they all feel appreciated and rewarded for their contribution to the development of the festival.

This brings in the third principle for action: share success. Or share tangible and intangible revenues.

Colette Traoré's story about sharing business evolving from the Festival sur le Niger enriches the third principle of entrepreneurship: it involves not just sharing success but actually helping each other by passing on work to colleagues working in the same field. The entrepreneurship Colette is talking about is competitive, but in terms of making a difference rather than pushing others out of the market.

Community based entrepreneurship

Guidelines regarding entrepreneurial actions

- 1. Include everyone*
- 2. Obtain a Consensus on values*
- 3. Share success and pass on work to others*

The spirit of Maaya entrepreneurship

The Festival sur le Niger has turned out to be a catalyst in the social, cultural, social and economic development of the community of Ségou. An economic system based on relationships between the individual entrepreneur and the community, between entrepreneurs themselves and between traditional and contemporary artists and entrepreneurs has been established. A system that could not have been achieved without the fatherly leadership of Mamou Daffé or the brotherly cooperation of the community members.

Today Maaya entrepreneurship is finding its own way. Companies offer their shoulders for young entrepreneurs to stand on. Almost automatically, one activity leads to another and another. Learning is capitalized upon, better understanding of materials leads to new applications, and transforming traditional skills paves the way for new products. Maaya entrepreneurship is the spark for social, cultural and economic development based on merging the contemporary with the traditional. That is the spirit of Maaya entrepreneurship.

6. Leadership in Community Based Entrepreneurship

“A leader is someone who brings people together. You have to listen first to others, understand them, let them express themselves and let them make themselves understood.” **Adama Traoré (Acte Sept)**

Community based leadership leads the collective, leads the collective within the values of the community the company or initiative is embedded in. This kind of leadership bridges two opposite characteristics: being humble, serving and caring with being strong, decisive and willing to lead. The issue of leadership turns up in many interviews. A dialogue with seven of the interviewees is dedicated to this subject. The stories explain beautifully the form that leadership takes in community based entrepreneurship. Based on that, the principles of community based leadership will be described.

Mutual trust

Talking about leadership, the leadership of Mamou Daffé is cited frequently. Tiémoko Diarra, who works at Motel Savane and is responsible for hotel reception and management, describes Mamou's way of leading: “When I joined the company there were only four rooms. There are over thirty now, and a conference room.

The relationship between Mamou and me developed by gaining confidence little by little. He is like an older brother to me, to all of us. Talking about the hotel management, we have open discussions about what works and what doesn't. In developing the hotel to what it is now we looked for solutions to whatever came up together. Mamou says, this company is not for him but for all of us. If it works, it works for all of us, if it doesn't; it doesn't for any of us.”

The proof of sharing the benefit lies for example in the fund he set up for the employees in case one of us has any problems. Besides that, there is a fund for doing things together. It is an open and transparent system. Everybody feels responsible. “We feel that it is not only the boss who makes a profit.” Tiémoko continues, “Everybody knows whether there is profit or not, and which investments are made, or which project are started. Even if there is no money in the social fund, Mamou will take money from his own pocket to help out an employee in trouble. When I started here I was very young. So Mamou rented a house for me, paying the rent and the electricity. And I could eat at the hotel, so my basic needs were taken care of. That gave me confidence and created my desire to work for this enterprise. You feel like a co-owner of the company.”

Mamou is the one who trains his employees. Tiémoko: “He makes me trust and believe that, even without a degree, I can do my work well. I just have to believe in what I am doing. Mamou says: If you believe in what you do, that normally makes it work. Since then, I believe in what he told me. That's what I mean when I speak about building mutual confidence.. Even when he reads a book, he tells me about what he found out. That is how I learned to do my job. To trust him and myself in the same movement.”

Togetherness

The other employee, Mamadou Diarra, who works for 'Enterprise Ségouviennne d'Electricité et de Froid' (ESEF) as its general manager, tells a similar story. Mamou even sent Mamadou abroad to see how things are done there. He also mentions the importance of gaining trust in him, to become self-confident. When Mamou asks him to take over the general management, to become the boss of ESEF, he knows that he can do it because Mamou taught him how to do this. "Mamou is like a father to me," he says, "My father told me to take on my responsibility and to acknowledge it if I make a mistake. Mamou repeated that message: I can make mistakes. If I do, Mamou says: "I am not firing you, let's sit and talk about it and learn from it. If I fire you, somebody else will gain from these lessons." Later on he adds to that: "Everybody feels part of the system and feels involved. Together we take care of wedding and birth presents. It is a family, so we manage together."

Diarra is managing ESEF on his own now. He talks about his own leadership as follows: "Inside ESEF I am teaching people and in the festival too. In general, I do it the same way that Mamou does. But I have my own personality. For me unity is important, working together. Employees helping each another, working together with more and less experienced people."

"In the beginning we just worked for the Ségou festival, but now it is for other festivals as well. I teach people outside the festival and the company. For example, the people that came for an internship, they keep on calling me for advice.

I teach people by doing. And tell them if you hesitate you cannot do a good job. So just feel free to do and try. If it does not work or they make a mistake, I will solve it without the customers knowing. And I will explain it to the employee."

Later in the conversation he continues on this theme: "Teaching is a social way of sharing. Inside the enterprise and outside, people will benefit. For example, someone asked me to go and work abroad to earn my money, better money. But why would I go? I earn one part, and give the other part to family. But here I am part of the society and people benefit from my experience. And people benefit from what I earn. So I have no reason to go."

When people speak about Mamou Daffé and about leadership in general, they consider Mamou a good example of leadership in community based entrepreneurship. He listens, he shares and he cares. But he also leads the way, makes choices and takes responsibility for the people and for getting things done. He is willing to learn, he is aware of the fact that he needs others, that he cannot do it alone. He looks for people who can teach him and his employees, and he looks at all people as people he can learn something from.

Understanding the person within his context

“A person is not only the individual but also someone who is seen within the society where he comes from. The individual is a person in its narrowest sense of the word. If you look behind that, at the family, ethnic group, caste, or region the person is coming from, than you will look at the person in its wholeness. That is how the person within Maaya is understood.” **Naffet Keita, anthropologist at the ‘Faculté des Lettres, Langues, Arts, et Sciences Humaines’ of the University of Bamako**

In the dialogue about leadership, a more general idea of leadership in Maaya based entrepreneurship emerges. The first ability that a leader needs that comes to the table is the ability to listen, to understand. Adama Traoré puts it like this: “There is a famous song here by a young Malian woman singer. It says ‘I don’t accept that people do that to me. I don’t accept that people say that to me’. This kind of person cannot be a leader.” “As a leader you need to be the road others can walk on,” adds one of the other participants. So one of the first things is listening: mutual listening, with a spirit of tolerance in discussions. Adama continues: “There could be problems: people could be critical, people could go beyond and say things that are not normal, but you have to ignore all these and be tolerant. You have to understand that a person is more than just the words he is saying. The most important thing is to stay truthful.”

Besides listening, being an authority is an important habit for a leader, according to the participants in the dialogue. Not being dictatorial, but having an overview, being strong and respected. A good leader knows how to be strong, how to lead the way and at the same time is able to be humble, to listen, to understand his employees, recognizing them as whole people and not excluding anyone. That is not an easy job in the case of the Festival sur le Niger, where many people from different cultures and with different opinions, ranging from quite traditional to rather modern, come together. In the dialogue it is expressed like this: “The leader should inspire confidence. That is necessary to bring people together. And also to know how to talk to people by talking to them in such a way that they accept what you say. Because as we said at the beginning [of this dialogue – gs] the elements that are together do not naturally go together. You have to be available and sensitive to the values of others and what they say. You become an intermediary between different people... a link. The leader enables people to accept each other. Because normally they maybe don’t talk to each other. You are the leader that makes that happen.”

Decision making

In Maaya terms, according to the people on which this research is based, the most important ability of a leader is to be Same and Horonya (see page 19). A leader needs to understand every person, as part of his particular community, by giving respect and by placing him in the organization. A leader needs to create a sense of belonging, a community where everybody fits in, everybody can be who he is and can trust the other.

It is in this context that decision-making takes place. As a leader, you decide where to go or what to do. Before you do so, you make sure that everything known about a specific subject is on the table. Everybody involved should have had the opportunity to bring in their ideas. In practical terms, this means the leader has to set a clear framework before asking people (who are involved in this subject) to contribute their ideas. After the leader has listened to everybody, he analyses what has been put on the table. What is personal, what helps the situation and the community forward and what enriches the direction to choose. The leader probably needs help in doing this. He won't be able to understand it all by himself, because he needs to understand what has been said from the cultural context of the person bringing it up. Based on all that, the leader proposes how to move forward. He does not impose things. If he makes the right analysis, and does justice to the community, the proposal will be accepted, partly as a result of his authority.

In the way that Mamou Daffé's employees describe his leadership, this method of decision-making appears to be a very informal and personal method, just sitting down together and talking things over. When things don't go well, the leader needs to be very precise on how to move on. Tiémoko Diarra describes such a case: "There was this Senegalese maître d'hôtel. When he came [to work at Motel Savane – gs] everything was already in place. But this man wanted to change everything. Mamou did not agree. The maître d' said he had worked in big hotels and wanted to apply that knowledge. His way of working was modern, and not based on traditional values of Ségou. Mamou wanted the customer to feel at home at the hotel. As a family member as well. So there was a misalignment between two visions of running a hotel.

The new manager wanted to introduce a rather fixed system of working, fixed time schedules and so on. We preferred a more flexible system." Tiémoko explains how Mamou solved the issue as follows: "They had meetings where Mamou analysed their differences and explained them. In the end they decided not to continue together. There is still a relationship between Mamou and the Senegalese manager. He joined the festival's finance committee."

Tiémoko describes the process between Mamou and the manager. The analysis Mamou shared with the man was based on what he heard from his employees. He didn't discuss that with them, he just listened and from there he took the situation forward. What is very important in this example is that he kept on seeing the maître d' as a whole person, as more than the sum of his actions as a manager. There is a distinction between the misfit in working for the hotel and the person who is very experienced and valuable for the festival. Mamou does not exclude him but puts him in a different position in the community of the festival, a position where his knowledge is invaluable. Preventing him from ending up in a position of shame, of Maloya.

Consensus

“Wisdom is the fruit of ‘L’arbre à parole’, the tree under which people sit and discuss. The skin of the fruit is just simple friendly talking, but the fruit itself is a serious dialogue and leads to wisdom.” **Dr Simaga**

The basic idea behind all decision making is the principle of consensus. Within Maaya entrepreneurship, all decisions have to be made with everybody involved, nobody can be excluded. Within the boundaries of an organization, that might not be easy, but since organizations are part of the community, decisions concerning the community should be taken in consensus (Benkan) with the community. In the case of the Festival sur le Niger, Mamou and the founding team members have to gain the consent of the community. And that is done in the way as described above, excluding nobody, listening to them all, never imposing, simply proposing and asking the help of the right people in analyzing everything you hear, to come to the right understanding to base your next steps on.

The way to do that is described by one of the participants in the dialogue: “The other thing is that the leader should have the will to lead, to pave the way. When problems occur and are solved successfully, the leadership should have the humility to say “this is not mine. What happens is not the fruit of my action; it was common action that led to this result”.

Leadership is the fruit of being related to the community, of listening and having conversations with them.

After the process of getting consent, that community will help you to avoid making mistakes and to keep acting in alignment with the consensus achieved. They monitor whether the general values are still being preserved. The network around you (people representing different interests, who were involved in coming to a consensus and others who make the implementation possible) will make you aware, warn you, and correct you. This way of working improves and constantly educates the leader.

To commit the community to the festival, Mamou needs to get them engaged in something in between tradition and modernity, in two ways. He wants the community to allow its members to enter the free space where they can explore contemporary art as artists and as sponsors. And he wants the community to allow some of the more general entrepreneurial principles to mingle with Malian values. He needs to be flexible and strong for that.

Guidelines for leadership

Leading in community based entrepreneurship means leading three levels of dynamics at the same time. It means coping with organizational dynamics within the organization, within the collective of entrepreneurs and within the community in one movement. To cope with this combination of dynamics you need to find a balance in holding on to your anchor; your plans and ideas, and being responsive and adaptive to the needs, values and habits of the (entrepreneurial) community at the same time.

Mamou compares his role to that of a motor continuously driving the initiative forward

to completion. "You can't let go of it," he says "not for a single moment, any transformative idea like this needs attention and needs to be energized, all the time, all the way."

In the stories mentioned above, two major principles of leadership that are specific to community based leadership can be identified: building trust and linking people. These two seem conditional to get the job done.

There is a third one, being imaginative, that can clearly be discerned when studying the work of Mamou Daffé and his founding collective. "My main characteristic is my ability to create, to be creative and imaginative. I have the desire to create," says Mamou. Or, as expressed in the dialogue on leadership: "Entrepreneurship is about combining logic and creativity" and "Entrepreneurship is innovation, it is the quality of creating something new."

As a leader in community based entrepreneurship, it helps if you are imaginative. Analyzing the road the founders took, it becomes clear that they had to be very inventive to overcome all kind of setbacks, times when they got stuck and were misunderstood by people they tried to involve. Overcoming that calls for imagination, for the creativity to explore alternative routes or to find solutions to the seemingly insoluble. Imagination helps to link people and thus link their ideas and opinions. This concerns the ability to elevate the various ideas to a connected story that contains all the elements brought in by people and the community and that rises above the individual stories. It is about being able to fill in the blanks in between, to imagine what emerges from a mosaic of ideas, people and opinions that creates a new story from which everybody can benefit.

Bridging two quite different concepts itself calls for imagination to figure out a way to design a blend that combines the best of both. To operationalize it, you need to imagine where people can meet in between tradition and modernity. How people can be your employees and your entrepreneurial family at the same time. But most of all, it is about being able to see what can be. To envision a concept, to express what you imagine the future will be like.

"The environment is reflected in your expression, as is your personal knowledge and imagination," says Oumar Kamara, an artist, historian and teacher at the University of Mali, referring to the creative process of artists. Creations like the Festival sur le Niger can be compared to that process in the sense that they also contain the reflections of the environment, in this case Maaya and general entrepreneurial principles, and the knowledge and imagination of its founding fathers.

Analyzing Mamou Daffé, it also becomes clear that it is important to be creative and convincing in finding ways to make people understand you, to figure out different ways of expressing yourself so that everyone wants to listen to you, can hear you and understand the meaning of your intentions. Sometimes you will need humour, other times more symbolic language or just very explicit instructions. You need to adapt, and

to adjust your ideas step by step by listening and imagining how to connect all that information and wisdom to enrich your ideas, your plans, without losing the basic idea of what you are aiming for. You need to be imaginative to let people experience your ideas. So they can imagine what it will be like once things have been achieved. You need to seduce them into following you, awaken their enthusiasm and gain their support.

Besides all that, you need the imagination to see people in their surroundings, as a person in the context of a larger group. To envision the community to which they belong, of which they are part, because the only way to really understand them is to see them in relation to their family, their community and their ethnicity. Even if you don't know all of the community members and their values yet, you must be able to see them, to feel and imagine where they belong.

Community based entrepreneurship

Guidelines for leadership based on consensus:

1. *Building trust*
2. *Connecting people and ideas*
3. *Being imaginative*

7. Stepping stones to move along

“There is a lot of potential in Ségou. The trick is how to use that.” Madani Samba Niang, teacher of literature, alderman at Ségou’s Town Hall and leader of the Festival’s ethics committee

In previous chapters, the principles and values underlying community based entrepreneurship were explored: starting with the movement between serving humanity and being served by the community; followed by adapting to the entrepreneurial extensions transforming entrepreneurship into a subject of social values and a collective activity; leading to guidelines for community based entrepreneurship and leadership to deepen the understanding of the concept. This chapter provides some stepping stones to move along when starting a community based enterprise. It leads you through the actions to undertake, what to do and with whom.

Four stepping stones

The four stepping stones are part of an approach underlying the Festival sur le Niger called “Mamou’s Method of the Conception and Management of a Cultural Event”⁹. Mamou sums up the route he took in creating the Festival sur le Niger in 4 steps. These steps could be useful in actually building your own community based company. The thing you need to keep in mind along the road is to keep on moving, without forcing it, or speeding things up before the time is right. Most importantly, you need the perseverance to see it through every step of the way.

The main goal of the stepping stones is to point out what actions to take to create a company in cooperation with the community you are doing business with and that surrounds you. It is a practical guide to what to do, bearing the guidelines from previous chapters in mind. The next chapter adds a summary of the guidelines which can be used as a checklist to inspire yourself and the actions you take in the spirit of community based entrepreneurship.

The four stepping stones are:

1. Creating a founding collective
2. Gaining consensus
3. Defining the general principles
4. Effective implementation

9 Produced and edited by Mamou Daffé

Creating a founding collective

At the source of every idea is a person or group that holds the idea that wants to make it happen. People who are dedicated to it, who are willing to make it happen even if it seems to be against all the odds. This initiating team:

- Takes a collective leadership in listening to and interacting with the local inhabitants
- Needs to have an entrepreneurial spirit and a wide range of skills and intellect
- Must be motivated to contribute to cultural and social (local) development
- And should have a strong moral backbone based in social values of the community

Creating a team like that is a precondition for getting a huge project that asks for transformation in many fields (cultural, social and entrepreneurial) off the ground. You cannot get it done without it. In the case of the Festival sur le Niger, this team consisted of Mamou, artists, entrepreneurs and local and international specialists in various fields.

Gaining consensus

The founding group needs to arrive at a vision and mission in order to define the strategic direction for the organization. To do that, you have to go through four stages of obtaining consensus.

First, you need a fundamental consensus with the members of the founding group with regard to your objectives.

The second phase is to include all visible and invisible players in the community in your vision and mission. By including them, the mission and vision will evolve to a richer and more embedded level. In this phase you also invite others to support, to contribute (financially and in kind), and ask for the help you might need as the process proceeds. Third is the continuation of the consensus with the community. During the process of implementation you continuously negotiate with the participants, adjusting your actions to the situation in practice. Make sure everybody is still with you. If you were wrong about something, admit it and make the group aware of that, and of who was right in earlier negotiations.

The fourth phase is about enlarging or broadening the project. This is about reconfirming the existing consensus with the community, without questioning the basis as formulated in the first phase. As a project broadens, the number of communities involved increases. So you have to extend the consenting community.

Defining the general principles

Gaining the consensus of the community adds to your primary ideas, mission and vision. Using all of the information and wisdom you gathered in the process of coming to a consensus, combining it with the vision of the founding group, this group develops a final vision and mission. On that basis, an implementation plan can be built. This plan then contains different strategies for implementation in the following domains:

- Content (what will the festival be like?)
- Marketing and communication (how do we let people know about what is going on?)

- Co-operation in activities and outsourcing activities: with government, tourist organizations, technical and organizational staff
- Finance (how to get and send the money?)
- Administrative aspects (contracts, security, authorization, tax)

Effective implementation and evaluation

Last, but not least, comes the actual implementation. Most important in this step is to make sure everything is in place at the right time and at the correct spot.

Artists must be contracted, stages built, technical equipment set up. To get it right, you need a good feel for details and priority setting, without losing sight of the overview. Checklists can be helpful; so is appointing contact persons for specific issues or activities. Responsibilities must be clear and at the same time everyone must be prepared to go the extra mile to get things right.

Part of an effective implementation process is evaluation. At the end of each day, look back at what went wrong, what could have been done better and what went flawlessly. Learning on the job, using every experience to improve, day by day and festival by festival. It is in doing that you find out what really works and what doesn't. Capturing those insights, experiences and lessons improves the festival year on year.

Evaluation contributes not only to perfecting the execution of the festival but also sharpens the mind in terms of intentions. It deepens and reshapes the underlying entrepreneurial model, by looking back, explaining experiences, identifying the milestones passed on the road to the development of Maaya based entrepreneurship which paved the way for the concept of community based entrepreneurship that actually contributes to social development.

8. Continuing the spirit of community based entrepreneurship

“ Thanks to the festival, I made a tour all over Europe in 2008, playing in Marseilles, Paris and Barcelona. It is the spirit of the festival and of Mamou that makes that possible. To do something in return, I now train 45 children in playing the djembe, some of them street children. This is my contribution to continuing the spirit of the festival.” **Daouda Dembélé, djembe player and teacher**

The Festival sur le Niger is a beautiful example of how an entrepreneurial spirit can in fact contribute to social development. By looking at and understanding how the Festival sur le Niger achieves its success year after year, we can see the entrepreneurial model that has evolved from this experimental way of organizing, combining Maaya values and general entrepreneurial principles. The Festival sur le Niger has broadened the knowledge of community based entrepreneurship based on action and the actual achievement of a social and cultural transformation.

Summary

Community based entrepreneurship evolves from the rational motive of serving humanity and letting the community serve you. This leads to an essential change in the basic principles of entrepreneurship, becoming subject to the values of the society you're part of and collective activity rather than relating solely to trade and the individual company. Entrepreneurship is therefore shifting towards a more ethical system based on the values of the local and global community.

Guidelines

The consequences of working in the spirit of community based entrepreneurship are extensive, and concern all areas of entrepreneurship. Based on the experience of the Festival sur le Niger, the following points can be used as guidelines in community based entrepreneurship:

Regarding the company's relationship with the community

- Interact with and support the community
- Organize the company's structure based on community values
- Gain the community's support for the company

Regarding the entrepreneurial attitude

- Having the will to establish something with others
- Making a contribution to the development of a shared entrepreneurial ethos
- Combining specific community values with general entrepreneurial concepts

Regarding entrepreneurial actions

- Include everyone
- Obtain a Consensus on values
- Share success and pass on work to others

Regarding leadership

- Building trust
- Connecting people and ideas
- Being imaginative

The process of getting things done, moving from idea to implementation, also differs from the ones that entrepreneurs working in the dominant global entrepreneurial ethos work with. The four stepping stones in the implementation process are:

1. Creating a founding collective
2. Gaining consensus
3. Defining the general principles
4. Effective implementation

From here on

The reason for collecting these stories which unveil the entrepreneurial model of the Festival sur le Niger is to share them, to inspire others to use parts of this model as a basis for developing their own solutions. This book aims more to be a launch pad for new ways of entrepreneurship rather than claiming to hold all the answers. This model of community based entrepreneurship can be applied in very many ways. Simply copying it will not do justice to its underlying rationale that entrepreneurship should be connected with the local community and aligned with local values and culture. This book describes how that can be done. By proving it can be done, it aims to encourage everyone to forge their own path in contributing to social, cultural or environmental development.

“ People can experience Maaya through art. On the other hand, art, as an expression of a person and a culture, is a way of getting feedback on society. That reflection in turn is a preparation or initiation for social change. On that basis, a social change can be made. As happened in the case of the Festival sur le Niger”.
Based on the dialogue about being in between.

About this book

“This book, about *Maaya Entrepreneurship: the Entrepreneurial Model of the Festival sur le Niger*, involves a discourse that is enriched by the values of our past societies and the progress of our time. Mamou DAFFE invites us to discover a path of renaissance in entrepreneurship, which bases its organization on meeting the needs of a united, solidary, enterprising community, while incorporating the values of modern management.”

Cheick Oumar SISSOKO

Film-maker and former Malian Minister of Culture



Godelieve Spaas (Netherlands) works as a business consultant, researcher and choreographer of inventive models in the field of socially, culturally and environmentally responsible entrepreneurship. She sees a new economy evolving, where hybrid organisations and new innovative systems are unfolding as part of our learning process of connecting our natural, human and economic

systems. Combining the knowledge and skills of choreography, research and consulting enables her to see through the various dimensions of people and organisations in a way which is essential in order to find this new dynamic balance. Her research is interdisciplinary and includes the subjective as well as the objective. Godelieve Spaas is connected to the University of South Africa (Unisa) where she is undertaking the PhD that incorporates this research.

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“ Mamou DAFÉ nous invite à la lecture d'une voie de renaissance dans l'entrepreneuriat. Sa vision lui a permis de fonder une organisation qui prend en charge les besoins de la communauté unie, solidaire, entreprenante, en y intégrant les valeurs de gestion moderne.” **Cheick Oumar SISSOKO** Cinéaste et ancien Ministre de la Culture du Mali



Godelieve Spaas (Pays-Bas) travaille comme un consultant d'entreprise, chercheuse et chorégraphe de modèles innovants dans le domaine de l'entrepreneuriat social, culturel et environnemental responsable. Elle voit une nouvelle économie en évolution où les organisations

hybrides et de nouveaux systèmes innovants se déroulent dans le cadre de notre processus d'apprentissage de la liaison de nos systèmes naturels, humains et monétaires. Combiner les compétences de la chorégraphie, de la recherche et de la consultation lui permet de voir à travers les différentes dimensions des personnes et des organisations d'une manière qui est essentielle afin de trouver un nouvel équilibre dynamique. Sa recherche est interdisciplinaire et comprend aussi bien le subjectif que l'objectif. Godelieve Spaas est liée à l'Université Sud-Africaine (Unisa) où elle fait son doctorat dont fait cette recherche.

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