

## From Mali to Madrid

Level 2 | Intermediate

### 1 Key words

Fill the gaps using these key words from the text:

emigrate  
compass

migrant  
deportation

people smuggler  
self-sufficient

skipper  
mainland

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a small instrument with a needle that always points to the north.
2. If you \_\_\_\_\_, you leave your country to live and work in another country.
3. A \_\_\_\_\_ person is one who can provide everything for himself or herself without the help of other people.
4. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a person who earns money by taking people illegally from one country to another.
5. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a person who travels to another country to work.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ is an informal word for the captain of a boat.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ is the process of removing a person from a country and sending them home.
8. The \_\_\_\_\_ is the large mass of land that forms the biggest part of a country but does not include any islands.

### 2 Find the information

Look in the text and find this information as quickly as possible:

1. Where is Mali? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where is Fuerteventura? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the only crop grown in southwest Mali? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the capital of Mali? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the capital of Western Sahara? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How much did the two migrants pay for the boat trip to Spain?  
\_\_\_\_\_

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*It's a long way from Mali to Madrid / Cécile Chambraud meets two African migrants whose journey to Europe has taken them five years*

In a few hours one of them will be leaving for Valencia, the other for the province of Huelva, in Andalusia in the south of Spain. A friend, who has been in Spain for two years, told them they might find work on farms there. It will be the last stage of a five-year journey they made together, from the cotton fields of the poor West African country of Mali to the European mainland, after a boat trip from the coast of Western Sahara to Fuerteventura, in the Canary Islands.

Mady Tounkara, 25, and Yaouba Kone, 26, both come from villages near Kayes, in southwest Mali. Their families grow cotton and everyone helps - there are 10 children in the Tounkara family and 15 in Kone's. Cotton is the only crop in the region and they cannot live on the \$0.40 a kilo they get for selling it. They do not have enough money for all the children to get married. Three of Mady's brothers and sisters are older than Mady, but only two have been able to start a family. When the rain failed and the crop was poor, Mady and Yaouba each travelled to the capital, Bamako, to try and find work, hoping to earn enough to buy food for the whole family. They met in Bamako and decided to emigrate to Europe together.

'A lot of young people in Mali are considering emigration,' says Mady. 'We started out on May 15, 2001. I had 100,000 CFA francs (\$180),' recalls Yaouba. It wasn't of course enough to pay for the journey to Europe. So the two men took the northern road, hoping to earn some more on the way. They worked in the fields of the Djanet oasis, in southeast Algeria, then returned to Mali. Then they tried Libya. From there they went to Morocco, stopping in Rabat and Casablanca, and finally ended up in El-Aaiun, the capital of Western Sahara, in March. Somehow they managed to save some money during the five years they were on the road.

'I earned \$1,800 in Algeria and Libya,' says Yaouba. They had enough money to persuade a Moroccan in El-Aaiun to sell them two seats on a boat that was about to leave. 'We paid \$1,300 each. Apart from the boat's skipper, there were 34 of us on board and we all paid the same,' says Yaouba. Just before the boat left, the people smuggler made them take their clothes off, and searched them for mobile phones and hidden cash. 'He felt everything, even the seams of our clothes,' says Mady. 'He found the \$180 I had hidden in the heel of one of my shoes and the collar of my shirt.' The smuggler also stole their clothes and shoes, leaving them just a pair of trousers and a T-shirt to protect them from the ocean wind.

After an 11-hour crossing, with just a compass to guide them, they reached Fuerteventura, the Canary island nearest to the African mainland and the most closely guarded island. The Spanish coastguards picked up the 34

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passengers and took them to dry land, handing them over to the Red Cross, which gave them a check-up, a change of clothes and food.

Within 72 hours a court issued a deportation order. However, it is very difficult for the authorities to deport migrants because they do not usually carry any identity papers. While they were waiting to be deported, Mady and Yaouba were imprisoned by the local police (migrants may be held for up to 40 days). 'We were well treated,' they say. Then, on May 18, the police took the two men to the island's airport and put them on a plane. 'We had no idea where we were going,' they recall. When the number of migrants reaching the Canary Islands started to rise, in 2000, the Spanish authorities started to transfer most of them to various parts of mainland Spain, particularly Madrid, Catalonia and Valencia. Mady and Yaouba were flown to Madrid and handed over to the Red Cross.

'When they first arrive,' says Nuria Baz, the head of the organisation's immigration programme, 'we interview them to find out what they need. If they know someone, and they usually do, we do our best to put them in contact. We give them meals, teach them Spanish, sometimes even how to read and write. We also help them find their way around. If necessary, we can put them up for three months. The most important thing is to make them self-sufficient.' In 2005 the Madrid branch of the Red Cross handled 1,572 migrants from sub-Saharan Africa. Without official papers Mady and Yaouba cannot work legally, but they are free. In a few hours they will be going their separate ways, eager to get on with their lives. The Red Cross gave them EUR60 each when they left.

The authorities have stopped boats carrying more than 7,500 sub-Saharan Africans off the coast of the Canary Islands since January. This has led the Spanish prime minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, to ask Europe and the African countries from which the migrants come, to help to solve the problem.

The European Union is responding by sending more patrol boats and planes to patrol the waters off the Canary Islands, while European money will help to build two temporary reception centres for deported migrants, in Mauritania and Senegal. Meanwhile Mr Zapatero has sent his secretary of state for foreign affairs on a tour of eight African countries to encourage them to take illegal immigrants back.

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### 3 Comprehension check

Decide whether these statements are TRUE or FALSE according to the text:

1. Mady and Yaouba left their country for political reasons. \_\_\_\_\_
2. It has taken 5 years for Mady and Yaouba to reach Spain. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The Spanish government wants illegal immigrants to go home. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The Red Cross believes the most important thing is for immigrants to earn money to support themselves. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The Spanish authorities cannot deport illegal immigrants because they have no identity papers. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Mady and Yaouba want to work in factories. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Migrants can stay with the Red Cross for up to six months. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Mady and Yaouba can work legally without official papers. \_\_\_\_\_

### 4 Vocabulary 1: Collocations

Match the verbs with the nouns:

- |          |                   |
|----------|-------------------|
| 1. find  | a identity papers |
| 2. issue | a family          |
| 3. grow  | one's way around  |
| 4. start | d money           |
| 5. save  | e work            |
| 6. carry | a problem         |
| 7. find  | g an order        |
| 8. solve | cotton            |

### 5 Vocabulary 2: Chunks

Rearrange these words to make phrases from the text. Check your answers in the text:

1. year journey five a \_\_\_\_\_
2. crossing eleven an hour \_\_\_\_\_
3. seventy within hours two \_\_\_\_\_
4. days up forty to \_\_\_\_\_
5. way find around their \_\_\_\_\_
6. boat before the left just \_\_\_\_\_

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### 6 Vocabulary 3: Word families

Fill the gaps using words from the text that are based on the verb *migrate*:

1. Illegal \_\_\_\_\_ is becoming a major problem in Spain.
2. Illegal \_\_\_\_\_ are usually held in temporary centres.
3. Poor people often have to \_\_\_\_\_ in order to earn money to feed their families.
4. Many \_\_\_\_\_ travel for months to reach Europe.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ of people around the world has contributed greatly to ethnic diversity.

### 7 Discussion

What is the solution to the problems that may be caused by thousands of people leaving Africa to try and reach Europe?