

# NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2012



Dear friends and supporters of Les Amis,

We are pleased to be sending you our latest news and are taking this opportunity to enclose a booklet which gives much more information about our work, written by those who work with us in Burkina Faso. We hope that, in reading it for yourselves, you will feel inspired by how your money is being spent.

## FOOD CRISIS IN BURKINA FASO

This year has been different from previous years in that, for the first time, we gave funds for famine relief. Burkina Faso has been experiencing a famine this year due to the poor rainy season last year and the consequent failure of crops. To make matters worse, there have been many refugees coming into Burkina Faso who have fled the war that is being waged in neighbouring Mali. In May we received a plea from Father Lambert Sawadogo, the parish priest of Boulsa: *"The food crisis which has hit Burkina and other Sahel countries is very serious at the moment, made all the worse by the massive number of refugees fleeing the war in Mali. Our cry from the heart is an appeal to all men and women of goodwill to help us come to the aid of those who are hungry, regardless of religion. My dear brothers and sisters, we are counting on your charity"*. Les Amis responded to



this by making a very successful appeal through our local parish and the schools in which Gillie works. Subsequently, Gillie went out in July in order to learn more about the situation and to see for herself how money raised here ends up as food for the hungry in Burkina Faso. In brief, we have bought sufficient maize, millet, rice and oil to feed hundreds of families in Ouagadougou and in Boulsa for the next three months, until the current crops (which are growing well) are ready to be harvested in October.

Fr Lambert, in Boulsa, writes: *"I want to express my gratitude for what you do for us by supporting Les Amis. You have really helped us in our crisis to feed as many as possible. The intercession in the 'Our Father' of 'Give us this day our daily bread' was a deep cry from many in my parish to which you have responded. Thank you all very much, from the bottom of my heart"*



Above and right:  
recipients of food aid

We gave some of the funds we raised to the Franciscan Capuchin friars in Ouagadougou who are under constant pressure to help the poorest families in their parish. They, too, have identified the most vulnerable families whom we have committed to feed for the next three months.



Brother Harry

From Brother Harry: *"The Famine Relief Project consists of the distribution of cereals (rice or maize) and cooking oil, and the beneficiary families have been carefully selected, especially from the slums. We have identified the poorest of the poor - by Burkina standards - to the best of our ability. A good number of them are jobless, widowed, aged, semi-orphaned, sick/handicapped and below the poverty line. There are hundreds and hundreds of poor people in Burkina Faso and, of course, we do not have means to feed them all. Our gesture is but a little drop, yet it makes an ocean of difference for these poor families. It is a noble and prophetic act, carrying a potent message of fraternal sharing and love, and instilling hope in humanity. Jesus said "I was hungry, and you fed me" (Mt 25:35); according to Him, whatsoever we do to the least of our brethren, that we do unto Him"*. Brother Harry



Distribution of food in Ouaga

## The Yoann Foundation and helping the disadvantaged

Our work in supporting women both with disabled children or who have other difficulties continues very successfully. Pélagie and the friars work together to provide really practical help and support and also - very importantly - opportunities to meet socially. Given the food crisis this year we have extended our giving to assist other families who have approached the friars for help. There is more information about this aspect of our work in the enclosed booklet.

## Protecting girls and young women ...

.... in **Boulsa** Gillie was pleased to have the opportunity to take a look at the various items we have funded at the home for girls. Included in these were bunk-beds and cupboards for the girls. There is more information about our work in Boulsa in the enclosed booklet.



Gillie with girls from the Koupéla refuge

.... and in **Koupéla** our work supporting the refuge for young girls who have run away from home is going well. Since our last newsletter they have made two specific requests for help. Firstly, for the funds to buy a freezer to enable the girls to make ice to sell. Secondly, for the funds to buy a moped so that the girls can make necessary trips to the local town of Koupéla. Gillie was pleased to have the opportunity to drop in on them in July, where she found the girls working hard cultivating their field. We count ourselves honoured to be able to help and protect such wonderful girls from the cultural practices that make them so vulnerable. Thank you for what you do to help us help them.



Fr Lambert at the refuge in Boulsa

We recently received a letter from Sister Clarisse Nana, the Sister in charge of the refuge: *"It is with a heart full of thankfulness that we write to you to express our profound gratitude for all that you do. Thank you for building a shop for us where we can sell our things; for the money to pay for the freezer so that the girls can sell frozen water during the hot season. We are very, very grateful. We don't have the words to thank you for your support. God alone will know how to thank you"*.

Given that brewing beer is one of the ways in which these young women can earn a small living, it remains our dream and hope that we will be able to find a British brewery who will feel inspired to take this refuge under its wing by sponsoring it to the tune of £5,000 per year. This figure represents what it takes for us to cover the annual costs of this important facility that provides the girls with a future.

## Helping a school become more independent

In our last newsletter we told you of our plans to build a row of seven shops along the boundary wall of St Benedict's School in Fada. This was the result of an appeal made to us by Fr Jean-Baptiste Yarga, the Diocesan Director of Education in the Diocese of Fada. In July, just five months after we sent the money, Gillie was happy to see that what was no more than a drawing/plan in February had been transformed into shops, all of which have already been hired out. This will bring in a regular income of £300 per month to the diocese, a sum which will make a big difference to its schools.



The shops

## And finally ...

Thank  
you

Thank you to the many of you who have set up a standing order since our last newsletter. This is a very easy way of giving regularly and has the added benefit of helping us to plan ahead for the future. You can set one up by completing the enclosed form and posting it to us.

Thank you to the parish of Haslemere for inviting Gillie to give a talk there in May. We are always pleased to be given opportunities to give illustrated talks about our work, so please let us know if you would like us to deliver a talk to any group to which you may belong, however big or small.

In the meantime, we cannot thank you enough for all that you have personally done to support this charity. We are still proud to be able to say that 100% of donations to Les Amis are used directly to fund our many and varied projects.

*The Trustees of Les Amis-Burkina Faso: Gillie & David Nicholls and Jude O'Mara-Spicer*

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The poor will never cease out of the land;  
therefore I command you to open wide your hand  
to the needy and to the poor. (Deuteronomy 15:11)

In so far as you did this to the least of those brothers of mine,  
you did it to me. (Matthew 25:40-41)