

NEWSLETTER

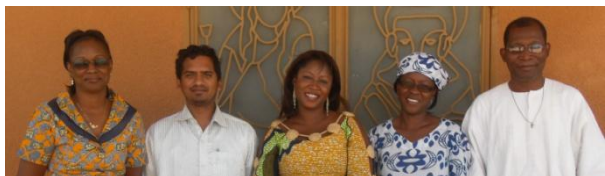
September 2010



Dear friends and supporters of Les Amis,

We are delighted to be writing to you again with all our latest news. We 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.

In Ouagadougou



Carine, Br Vianney, Pélagie, Clarisse (the sister of Pélagie) and François

The **Yoann Foundation** for disabled women and children continues to play a crucial role in the lives of 20 women and 15 children. Our work there, for some of the most vulnerable members of society, continues unabated thanks to the committed and selfless work of those who work on our behalf. We particularly want to thank Brother Vianney, Pélagie Kabré, François Compaoré, Carine Compaoré and the many members of the Secular Franciscan Order in Ouagadougou who work so hard for us.

You may recall from our last newsletter that, during her February trip, Gillie had met young Narcisse, a boy who had been very badly burned on his left hand and, more seriously, on his left leg. The burns to his leg were of sufficient seriousness as to render his leg impossible to straighten. We were very grateful indeed for the advice given to us by the French doctor whom Gillie met in the town of Fada, completely by chance, during the trip and who turned out to be a specialist in leg surgery! Narcisse is currently in the middle of ongoing treatment for his burns and we are hopeful of a good outcome. Unfortunately, one of the boys on our list, Hendrix, is suffering from a very serious kidney complaint and is currently obliged to take medication on a daily basis in order to keep him alive. This medication is extremely expensive, at a cost of £189 per month. We are being helped with the cost of this by a French charity called *Graines de Joie*. The work of Les Amis in terms of The Yoann Foundation came to the attention of this French charity last year. Since then, they have sent out a team of volunteers to explore ways in which they can be of help. Helping us with the cost of Hendrix's medication is one such way in which they are able to help us.

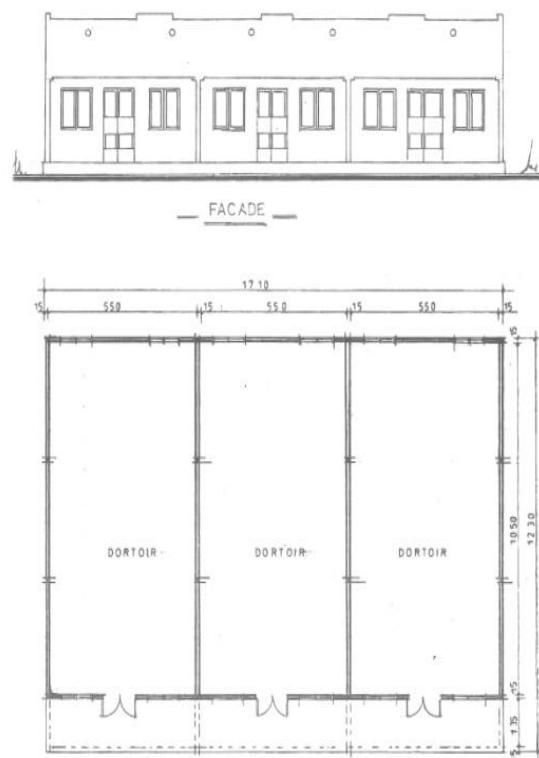
Moving on to Koupéla ...

The work which the Diocese of Koupéla undertakes for us in nearby Baskouré and Gounghin concerns, primarily, **assisting girls**.

In our last newsletter we mentioned to you that we were planning to take on more fully the financial costs of the running of the refuge in Baskouré for girls who have run away from home, more often than not due to a forced and unwanted early marriage. Since then, we have learnt that the annual cost of housing, feeding, educating and training all 27 girls comes to just £5,000 per year. This seems to us to be a remarkably low sum for not only rescuing vulnerable girls but also giving them some training and therefore the opportunity to be self-sufficient.

Since taking our decision to support the refuge more fully, it occurred to us that there are currently only two small dormitories for 27 girls. We therefore asked Fr Paul to approach the Sisters who run the refuge to find out if there is anything the refuge needs in terms of their accommodation. As it turned out, the 27 girls have been forced to sleep in just one of the dorms because the other is in a very bad state of repair and leaks during the rainy season (April to September). Further to that, given the shortage of floor space, they have to sleep on mats on the hard concrete floor. Therefore, we have made the decision to press ahead with:-

- ❖ the construction of three brand new dormitories
- ❖ the repair of the existing dormitories
- ❖ the purchase of enough beds to enable every girl to have a bed of her own



Plans for the new dorms

It seems to us that this is the very least we can do for them and we are really excited at the prospect of making a start on this important project which will transform the day-to-day lives of each and every one of the girls.

In Gounghin we continue to put 10 orphaned girls through secondary school and 20 through primary school at a total cost to Les Amis of £2,500 per year. This continues to cover everything: fees, uniform, educational material, meals, etc. You will find a great deal more information about the personal background of some of these girls in the enclosed booklet.

Cows, donkeys and a thousand other things ...

Also in the enclosed booklet you will be able to read how we have got on with buying livestock in this, the first year of this aspect of the work of Les Amis. We are delighted to say that Fr Paul has given away sufficient funds for the purchase of eight cows, that is to say, a pair of cows each to four families.



One of the chief difficulties experienced by children and young students, particularly from the outlying and more remote villages is that, without electricity, they are completely unable to do their homework in the evening once the sun has gone down. Six months ago we wrote to you to tell you that plans were underway to look at the construction in one such village of an outdoor shelter, lit using solar panels. We are absolutely delighted to report that the shelter has now been built and you can read all about it in the report which Fr Paul has written for us in the enclosed booklet.

The village shelter, well on the way to being ready for use

As you will see from his report, Fr Paul gives Les Amis money away to a wide variety of people for a myriad of excellent reasons. We are so grateful to him for keeping alive the Gospel spirit of Les Amis which is to reach out, in an immediate and effective way, to people in great need who have nowhere else to turn. The lives of the individuals which are touched, even by small amounts of Les Amis money, are as important to us as the larger projects we have at the moment. We also want to thank Fr Paul for always making himself available to us not just in practical terms but in an advisory capacity. He gives of himself freely, despite having a very busy personal schedule as a teacher in a seminary and the other demands upon his time which being a priest necessitates.

Money Matters!

Thank you, again, to everyone who has donated to this charity. We are relieved to be able to say that, despite the ongoing recession and the financial concerns people have, we have been able to maintain the good work which, with your help, we began three years ago. We are deeply grateful to you all for the donations you have felt able to make to us. We would very particularly like to thank all those who have set up regular Standing Order payments into our Les Amis account. At the moment, donations made in this way are worth just over £500 per month to us. We cannot stress enough how valuable these regular gifts are. On top of that, we have been able to claim, in Gift Aid, an amount which really does make a big difference to how much we give. Indeed, the last Gift Aid claim raised enough funds to guarantee the Yoann Foundation for the next year. Therefore, if you are a tax payer and making a donation, we would be very grateful if you would consider completing a Gift Aid declaration form. If you need one then you can either visit our website (see below) or contact us and it can be sent by post.

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We are always pleased to have opportunities to give illustrated talks about our work, so do 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 every penny given to Les Amis goes directly to individuals.

*The Trustees of Les Amis-Burkina Faso
Gillie & David Nicholls and Adrian Godfrey*

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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)