

NEWSLETTER



SPRING 2020

Dear friends and supporters of Les Amis,

We have been watching, with increasing concern, the news coming out of Burkina Faso this year. In the last year there have been many truly terrible Jihadist attacks resulting in the deaths of 1,800 innocent men, women and children. It is clear that the problems the country has with Jihadist terrorists operating out of Mali and Niger is not going to go away any time soon.

Casualties from 2015 to 2019

Number of deaths from armed violence in Burkina Faso



Source: acleddata.com



We are greatly consoled that, despite the security difficulties, our many projects remain unaffected. That is to say, we continue to provide funds for ...

- ◆ the refuge for runaway girls in Baskouré
- ◆ the St Monique home for orphaned girls in Gounghin
- ◆ ex-St Monique girls who have gone on to further education
- ◆ training orphans/runaways as seamstresses
- ◆ mothers of handicapped children and women in difficulty via our Yoann Foundation (see [right](#))

In addition to these, we are seeing ways in which we can bring help and relief to increasing numbers of those who need it; to be even more helpful to the people of Burkina Faso.

EMERGENCY AID AND FR LAMBERT



In the last year an estimated 760,000 people have been forced to flee their homes in the north of the country.

Thanks to our friendship with Fr Lambert Sawadogo, who lives towards the north, we have been able to give very directly to some of the refugees who have settled in towns such as Kaya. Kaya, like many towns around the country, is struggling to cope with the influx of such numbers. After making a special appeal local to Godalming, we were able to send money to Fr Lambert to enable him to buy really practical things which are needed by the refugees, such as buckets, mats on which to sit, shoes and clothes. It is equally important to be able to give the refugees cash.

We have committed ourselves to helping specific individuals who have been affected by the killings, such as this young girl ([right](#)), whose father was killed whilst at church one Sunday last year. Fr Lambert has given her family the necessary funds to ensure that she continues with her education.



Some of the items you have bought to help the refugees, and some of the grateful refugees in the town of Kaya

The Yoann Foundation in Ouagadougou

This was where all our work began. Named after the late Yoann, a sufferer of cerebral palsy, this foundation serves the needs of disabled children, their mothers and other women in real need. They get together regularly at the Franciscan Friary in Ouagadougou where they are given money, sacks of rice and a meal.

In our last newsletter we reported on Lorraine, a widow with four boys, and how hard she was finding it to make ends meet and to educate her sons. One of our readers, a father of three boys ([above](#)), was greatly touched by this story and has committed to helping Lorraine and her sons, very particularly to ensuring that the boys continue with their education. Lorraine, who lives with her family in a one-roomed hut, wrote directly to her benefactor:



Dear Benefactor, I have four boys and I along with all my boys, rejoice at hearing this wonderful news and for the kind note that you have sent us. We are extremely happy. I am so deeply touched that I do not find words to express my emotions. I don't know if you could really understand how much this means to me. My husband, while he was alive, was a good man and he worked hard to take care of us all. We had so many dreams for our children; but when he died in 2007, all of our dreams were shattered. This year, I was absolutely sure that I could not send my children to school, as I could not afford their school fees. That was when Br Albert in the name of the Yoann Foundation came to our aid. And now we have received this note from you which is a news of great consolation for me. So, I hope you understand when I say that words cannot express enough my gratitude. There is a great sense of relief or peace that I find in my heart now, I don't know how to describe it; it's as though a great load has been lifted off my shoulders. God Bless you and your family.



Since then we have received photographs of a new hut which we are building for her so that the two older sons can have a room of their own.



TRAINING OF GIRLS

A large part of our work is to give young girls, who have run away from forced marriages or who are orphaned, training in skills which will give them the means to earn a living.

.... in Fada N’Gourma



It is amazing to think how our support of the St Joseph’s Training Centre, which trains young girls as seamstresses, began with the support of just one girl, (Felicia, pictured **left** in 2014), but has gone from strength to strength. We have not only supported many more girls in their training,



but have provided them with all sorts of improvements to their lives, such as a bed for each girl, repairs to the roof of their dormitory, the building of a toilet and a piggery. The big project was the construction of a workshop. All of this has been achieved thanks to YOU and to your support over the years. Felicia is now a confident adult (**right**), married with a child and another on the way. Since her training at St Joseph’s she has used her skills to run her own couturier and her future is entirely secure.



.... in Baskouré

We have heard that there are a number of items urgently needed by the refuge for runaway girls in Baskouré. Most pressingly, they need to make two repairs, one to their dormitory roof (especially as it is now the rainy season) and the other to their solar panels. Further, they would dearly love a couple of blackboards, one outside and one indoors, to help them with their studies. They would also welcome a couple of tables and some chairs so that they can eat their meals sitting down at a table. Last, but not least, they’d like a fridge.



Please can you help with these?

Fr Lambert, **left**, with some of the girls of the refuge.

REACHING OUT TO INDIVIDUALS & COMMUNITIES

We love to give financial help directly to individuals whose situation in life is difficult. The help we give is genuinely life-changing. It is also great to buy something small, but which benefits lots of people.

Last year we were alerted to the need to help a lady who had a workshop next to a road. The local council’s project to widen the road meant that her workshop, the single source of her income, was requisitioned and destroyed, without any compensation being given to her.



She got in touch with one of our key contacts, Fr Paul Nazotin, who then approached us. We are delighted to be able to report that her new workshop has been built (**left**). This small but really important project cost us just £1,300—not much to ensure the livelihood of a young woman working hard to secure her future.

Grinding grain such as millet or maize is a job which falls to the women. Gillie, who was set to work in a village some years ago (**right**), under the watchful eye of a couple of the villages ladies (plus the little one!), can testify to the really backbreaking nature of this job. Some communities of women now use a grinding machine in order to increase efficiency and thereby serve the wider community. From time to time, something small can go wrong which then affects many people. One such event was the breaking down, irreparably, of the grinder used by the women of a training



centre in Tougouri. In December an urgent appeal was made to us to cover the cost of replacing it. We were happy to be able to help and, in February, received the news that the new grinder had arrived, been successfully assembled and was working (**left**). Well, at least, there were no parts left over after its assembly!



LOTS OF GRATITUDE

We say this in every newsletter, but it is sincerely meant: **without you and your help, none of our work or the great things we do would be possible.** Thank you, everyone, for all that you have given to us over the years. A particular thank-you to those who have set up regular payments—these are crucial to the success of our work. Please spread the word about what we do, and particularly that we use 100% of donations on those in need.



WANT US TO COME AND GIVE A TALK?



Without doubt giving talks is the best way of telling people about our work. Our experience has shown that it really doesn’t matter how big or small the group is – talks always attract the help and support we need. **Therefore, we’d really love to give more talks.** Even if you don’t belong to a group yourself, but could host a talk for a group of your friends, then please let us know.

A personal message from Gillie ...

It is very hard for me, personally, not to be able to go to Burkina Faso in order to visit all our projects and friends. All those wonderful girls and women who live such hard lives and who are much encouraged by my visits. I have written to everyone to tell them that, though out of sight, they are none of them out of mind; that our



commitment to helping them is even greater because of the difficulties they are suffering.



As I type this, communities in the north of Burkina Faso are on the move, with women and children forced to walk hundreds of miles through the roaring heat to places of safety. We pray that, with help from the international community, this wonderful country can be restored to the safe and peaceful country it once was. In the meantime, thank you for helping us to help them.

Thank you for continuing to help us to change lives.

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

Les Amis – Burkina Faso

11 Mare Lane • Hascombe • Godalming • GU8 4JH
01483 208432

www.les-amis-bf.org.uk

lesamis@btinternet.com

Registered Charity number 1120772

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

100% of money given is passed on to the needy. Yes, 100%!