

NEWSLETTER



Autumn 2021

Dear friends and supporters of Les Amis,



Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter! We hope that you will make yourself a cup of tea or coffee and enjoy a quiet moment reading about all our projects. We cannot overstate the good work that you do for some of the poorest people in the world, people whose lives are not only blighted by poverty, but also by terrorism. Charlotte's account, on page 5, of her escape from terrorists, brings home to us how important our work is. Thousands of people continue to flee the north and northeast of Burkina Faso and are living in tents in towns such as Kaya. Thanks to our friends on the ground, we can reach out and help many of them. But let us now hand you over to those very friends who will tell you, in their own words, how you have helped

How are your donations used?

THE YOANN FOUNDATION IN OUAGADOUGOU

Written by Brother Apsalom OFM Cap ([right](#)) a Franciscan Capuchin friar of the parish of St Pio in Ouagadougou

Please accept our sincere thanks for your generous help and continuous support even at this time of the pandemic. Your contribution matters a lot to us because we rely on the providence of God. And this year, as ever, we never ceased to serve the poor widows, of whom there are twenty. We regularly buy them a sack of rice or maize, oil and soap. And further, your contribution reaches out to around twenty-three handicapped children. In their smiles we can see the Lord.



Your help means a lot to their mothers. Thank you so much for your generosity.



We are helped in all our work by Pélagie ([left](#)), after whose late son, Yoann, the foundation is named. She is key to the success of assembling the people and distributing the rations

We use a part of your contribution for the medical treatment of two children who suffer from cerebral problems. After the consultation with the specialists, we were told that they need to be on continuous medication, as an operation at this time may risk their lives.



We thank Gillie for her special concern for our tailoring work



and training. Over many years she has been a source of grace for a number of girls who, in the final year and upon leaving their training, are given the gift of a

sewing machine. For some years now, not a single girl has left empty handed. After all their training, lives become miserable if there is no machine with which to achieve their dream. This year 23 girls were trained and gifted with their own sewing machine. And that's all, my dear friends, for now. We are enormously grateful to you who remain anonymous, but the transformation you bring to the lives of our people is beautiful.

FR PAUL NAZOTIN (right)

In recent decades, a good number of farmers have gone to look for more in-depth arable land to the east of my village, Salembaoré. This area, which is more wooded, is drained by the Koulpélogo, the river that gave its name to the province of which Ouargaye is the centre. The jihadists have invested in this wooded area; they grant permission to stay there only to those who agree to reside there permanently, without ever leaving their village for years. Except for the breeders who live in this area, those who come in search of arable land go home in the dry season, once the harvests are done. The jihadists'



proposal is simply unacceptable to them. They were therefore forced to leave the area, losing the land on which they lived. This is why greater financial aid from Les Amis has been given to some living in Salembaoré and was used for food and health care.



Also in Salembaoré, help went to a disabled woman (left). Les Amis bought her a bike for the disabled. She was very pleasantly surprised. A disabled person like her has no financial autonomy and obviously depends on the generosity of those around her.

Larue (right) has been blind from birth. He works as much as he can, despite his disability. But he is especially dependent on the help that is given to him from time to time. Recently, he bumped into an ox tied up on the side

of the road which subsequently attacked him and knocked him down. He was injured, but is recovering. In the future I hope to be able to find him a bed/mattress and, who knows, perhaps a decent roof over his head.



In last year's report, I said that I was waiting to be back in Burkina Faso to submit a project by two young men (left) who had the courage to start a project of breeding hens on the outskirts of Ouagadougou. Help has already been given to them this year to help with the purchase of a motorcycle to facilitate the flow of their livestock.



The rest of the aid went to regular beneficiaries with chronic health problems or going through difficult times. A sincere thank you to Les Amis without whom this small but vital help would not have been possible. My gratitude to Gillie for what she suffers on our behalf, and my thanks to all those whose generosity helps others. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

FR LAMBERT SAWADOGO (right)

This year, again, you have done your best to help us. Thank you for putting your trust in Gillie through whom we receive the help you give. This year Les Amis was very helpful on four levels: education, a school kitchen, help for individuals and groups, and 'give-away' money.

Education: many girls, whose parents are very poor, were helped with the paying of their school fees. When money is short, the education of boys is prioritised, and girls miss out. Thank you for the positive discrimination in favour of girls. As a result of your generosity, for example, **Gaëlle** passed her degree in Biomedicine. She worked on malaria and received a very good mark for her presentation. She is waiting to complete a Masters next year.

School Kitchen: over the last two years, much of the population was on the move due to terrorist activity.

2 Many schools had to take in extra children. Whilst there were organisations helping the families, no help was given to schools to support the extra children, especially those who live too far from school to enable them to go home at lunchtime to eat – they had to stay at school all day, without food. Les



Amis responded to our appeal to help us feed the children. You sponsored the setting up of a kitchen at a school where there are 324 displaced children (**right**), and also in three other schools. It was a great relief for parents and teachers but an immense joy for the pupils.



Individuals and groups: **Manette** is a widow with children and grandchildren. She was helped by Les Amis to learn weaving and spinning. But her learning almost came to an end when her fellow students found out that she is HIV-positive. Despite the problems, she was able to complete her training. Les Amis subsequently helped her acquire weaving equipment. **Lina** is also a widow and faces daily difficulties to afford food. She sells water on building sites and also works as a cleaner. She refused to be remarried to her husband's young brother and, since then, has been bringing up her three children alone. **Mathieu and Madelon** are a couple, both of whom are handicapped: Mathieu is blind, and Madelon cannot walk. They have adolescent children who are doing well at school. Mathieu learned to weave wire netting and Madelon learned to make bags from recovered plastic. Every year, the **women of the Centre of Catechists Training in Tougouri** receive help in the form of training in a variety of skills. These women are very happy because, with this training, they are better able to help and support their families. I left Tougouri last year, but am still grateful to be able to help the training centre thanks to Les Amis.



I have also used Les Amis funds to help feed the children who attend a local school for the blind (**left**).

Give Away: whenever Gillie stays with us, she has a special envelope full of cash which we give to people we happen to meet as we go about. It is a very nice experience. These last few years, despite not being able to visit, she continued to send me money to keep up with this practice of giving money away to those in immediate need. I have had wonderful experiences of using the money in this way. I always have a bit of cash in my car for this purpose. With the numerous refugees in Kaya, there are many women begging around the roundabouts and traffic lights. The beneficiaries tend to be elderly people and mothers of young children. **Lambert (right)** doing what he loves best – giving money away to needy strangers.



PROTECTING AND EDUCATING GIRLS IN THE KOUPELA DIOCESE

Written by Fr Jacob (**below**)



This academic year we welcomed 125 children to our **nursery school**. We had a Christmas party in December, during which each of the children received a gift. The meal was special that day. The diocese had also organized cultural and sports competitions for all schools, from kindergarten to high school. Our nursery school participated and won First Prize.

Many of the parents of the children are poor or have died. Thanks to your donations, the full fees of many are covered along with most of the fees for others. It is wonderful that children can access an education (**right**) despite their parents' difficulties.



I would like to take this opportunity to tell you that, at the moment, what the school needs most is a kitchen to enable us to feed the children at lunchtime.



At our **St Monique Home** for secondary school orphans, **(left)**, it hasn't been that good a year academically, and we have taken steps with the committee to address some of the problems. We believe that next year will be much better. Thank you so much for giving us the money to keep them safe, to provide them with somewhere to live and food to eat.



Ex-Saint Monique girls and boys, now university students

Written by Fr Pascal Silga (right)



Firstly, I join with all the beneficiaries of Les Amis in honouring the memory of those who have died of Covid in both Burkina Faso and England. We wish a speedy recovery to those who are currently ill.

Les Amis has once again committed itself to promoting the education of underprivileged children. Here are some brief details of what you have achieved this year.

Alain (left) has just graduated! His father has been away in Ivory Coast for a long time, leaving Alain the responsibility of looking after his mother, a poor woman without resources. With the help of Les Amis at least one of her sons has been able to get ahead. Thank you.

Jarelle (right) came to education late. She found it hard to study with much younger colleagues. After having missed two school years and being so behind, she chose to train in tailoring. This was made possible thanks to Les Amis. She obtained her Professional Qualification Certificate in June. Long live Les Amis!



Rosine (left) is orphaned of her father; her mother is illiterate. Les Amis has been an invaluable help to Rosine. Financial assistance allows her not only to pay for her studies but also to take care of her health (Rosine is undergoing treatment for Hepatitis B, a condition which means that she often suffers from malaria).



Berthe (right) has a serious health problem, notably with her eyes. With the support of Les Amis she has accessed professional medical help and has thereby been able to keep up with her university studies. She presented her Bachelor's thesis on Saturday July 31, achieving a mark of 17/20.



Thank you very much for this very precious help.

The Refuge for Girls in Baskouré

Written by Sister Marguerite Marie ([below](#))



Thanks to your efforts, we have been able to rescue three new girls. We now have 28 girls, 19 of whom have run away from a forced marriage, four were being treated badly by their step-mother and half-brothers, four are from very poor families and one is an orphan.

In last year's report I mentioned some difficulties which were big problems for us. Thanks to the extra funding you gave, we have been able to overcome all of them (repairs to the roof, ceiling, solar panels, shower and the fitting of blackboards).

Thanks to donations from two benefactors, we received sufficient funds to allow us to repair the piggery and also – very importantly! – replace the fencing around our field in which we grow our crops ([right](#)). Another little extra was the purchase of tables where the girls can now eat their meals.

However, we do have one really pressing concern: the increasing lack of water. We currently rely on the supply of water from a nearby junior seminary, but their numbers are growing, and there is often not enough to share with us. Our wish is to have a borehole with a manual pump. We would also like to build a shed in front of the kitchen to improve the cooking conditions for the girls. If you can help us with this, we would be so grateful.



But let me tell you about one of our newest arrivals ...



My name is **Charlotte** and I come from the east where terrorist attacks are very frequent. Sadly, my father and mother were both killed when terrorists attacked our village. I am therefore orphaned of both parents and don't have brothers or sisters. Along with the villagers I was able to run away from the village, none of us knowing where to go. Upon arriving in the town of Fada, I asked for someone to show me where the Sisters live, and someone very kindly led me there. Those Sisters then took me to Baskouré. Before the terrorist attack I attended school, but schools have been closed because of terrorism. Despite the death of my parents and the loss of their love, I have been able to go to school here in Baskouré. I am doing well and the Sisters are very pleased with me. I pray that God has welcomed my parents into paradise and I will do everything to make them happy, wherever they are. May God convert the hearts of the terrorists.

OCADES (Organisation Catholique pour le Développement et la Solidarité)

Written by Father Gérard Yougbaré ([right](#))

The money which you sent has enabled OCADES not only to support the schooling of needy girls, but also to organize training in making hydroalcoholic gel and bleach. A total of 12 girls benefited from this assistance ([below](#)). The training lasted three days and made it possible to provide sanitary kits for the St Lazare de Koupela home, a centre that

currently accommodates 23 elderly women who are victims of social exclusion. We have also provided health kits to internally displaced people. A total of 42 households received hydroalcoholic gel kits and bleach.



One other girl we have been able to help is Véro, a girl from a very poor family. The help given by Les Amis made it possible to cover her school fees. She has just successfully completed a bachelor's degree in History and can now apply for work. We say our sincere thanks to the friends of Burkina Faso for their help.

PROTECTING AND EDUCATING GIRLS IN THE TENKODOGO DIOCESE

Written by Ab Pascal KYELEM (below)



In the following lines we present our report on how we have used the financial support from Les Amis for the support of girls in the diocese of Tenkodogo. The general aim of the project is to help disadvantaged girls to access education. Help consisted of giving money to the girls to pay for their education. Thanks to the financial support received from Les Amis, the objective of this project has been fully realised.

Rachella (right): I would like to express my gratitude to Les Amis which allows me to continue my studies. Coronavirus and student strikes almost got in the way of my education.

Thank God I was able to work and can move up to the next class. I thank you and pray for you.



Mathilde (left): If it were not for Les Amis I wonder what my fate would be at school level. Les Amis, you are great! You are a creation of God in the service of the poorest that we are. When I think of your efforts for my good and my future, I work hard. This allows me to have grades which give me access to the next class. I pray for you and ask you to thank each of your donors for the good they do.

Olympe (right): At the end of 2020-2021, I would like to thank you for the training and education work you make possible for us. Thanks to you, I was able to access school to continue my training. When I think of those families who save their money for my training life and for my future, I am optimistic. I have the courage to work in school to ensure that their efforts are crowned with success. I'm happy because I am moving up a class.



ST JOSEPH'S TRAINING CENTRE FOR GIRLS IN FADA

Written by Sister Irène (below)



With these few lines, we want to express our sincere gratitude for the help you provide in caring for eight girls (**right**), six of whom have fled forced marriage, and two who come from very poor families.

The assistance provided made it possible to pay for training and the purchase of supplies, materials and equipment. We were also able to pay for medical examinations and prescriptions of those who were ill, especially Véva. You sent us additional funds for her care, and we were able to access good treatment, as a result of which she has improved. As far as her family is concerned, she still may not return home as they have not yet forgiven her for running away [from the forced marriage].



In addition to training and medical care, we were able to ensure that the girls ate well. But on top of that, we are very excited to have been able to develop their living environment by building a shed in front of the kitchen, and repairing their shower.

We have also built a chicken coop and have started breeding chickens (**right**) and also rabbits.



At the end of May, **Sandrine** (**above**) completed her training in weaving and we were able to buy a loom for her. Here is her story ...

"I was born on April 5, 2004, so I am 17 years old. I am with the Sisters because I am a victim of rape. I am the eldest of a family of four children. My mother was no longer with my father, so I was responsible for taking care of my little sisters. One morning, while I was going to the field to help my father, two young people who were on a motorcycle stopped. One got off the bike and took me by force. I was screaming but no one was nearby to rescue me. They took me very far, to their family. One of them told me that he wants to make me his wife. I stayed there for six months. I was beaten every time I refused to surrender to him sexually. Every day I was raped. My father looked for me all this time without news until the day I was able to escape. I didn't know where to go. When I started running, I saw an open church and went in. I found a gentleman inside and it was the pastor. I told him everything while crying. He welcomed me into his home. When the young man knew I had fled he looked for me and found that I was at the pastor's house. He threatened to hit the pastor if I didn't come back to his house. Scared, the pastor took me to another pastor in another village and they tried to contact my dad. Two days later they heard from my dad who met up with us. He filed an unsuccessful complaint against the young person. The young man has vowed to take me away again. My father, not knowing what to do, went through people to ask the Sisters to take me to their home in Fada. After I left for the Sisters' house in Fada my dad got sick and has been unwell since then. The medical tests have revealed nothing, but he is still unwell. When I arrived, the Sisters welcomed me. I learned weaving and finished at the end of May. The sisters bought me a loom and I am very happy. I say thank you very much for your support, which allows the Sisters to help me prepare for my future. From the bottom of my heart, I am very grateful to you."

Spreading the giving

Sister Irène has just written to us to let us know that she has moved from St Joseph's Training Centre in Fada (a town to the east of the country) to Ziniaré, a small community north of Ouagadougou. She has asked if it would be possible for us to support a couple of girls there. We always welcome opportunities to reach out to individuals, and hope to be able to tell you more about this in our next newsletter.

WE WOULD LOVE TO GIVE MORE TALKS



Because of the Covid restrictions, giving talks has not been possible since March 2020. But this is one of our favourite ways of telling you about our work, of sharing our enthusiasm and answering any questions you may have. Therefore, if you are a member of a group, no matter how small or big, do ask us to come and give a talk.

A personal message from Gillie ...

When I read the accounts of Sandrine's and Charlotte's sufferings, it made me all the more determined to do whatever I can to keep the funds coming in. Despite the difficulties and hardships of the last 18 months of Coronavirus you, our benefactors, have never waived in your giving, and I do thank you for this from the bottom of my heart. Without you, our hands are tied.



Please forgive me for the number of times I make an appeal to consider monthly giving via Standing Orders. These are such a help as they give us a good idea of how much is going to come in, and therefore allow us to plan.

Thank you all, so much, for your kindness towards Les Amis. Every penny is greatly appreciated.

Any changes to your circumstances that we should know about?

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Have your circumstances changed since you started making donations to us? If you are no longer able to Gift Aid the donations you make, then please don't forget to let us know.

Our continued and heartfelt thanks to **Headline Design & Print** in Woking for printing this newsletter for us. They do a fantastic job and we are very grateful to them.



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

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 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)

“If your father's family and that of your mother have rejected you, God's family welcomes you with joy. Dry your tears. All will be well.”

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

