

## Fraternite Notre Dame's Action in Niger, Africa Working in the Field with United Nations Agencies and Other Entities

**In 2013, as an active member of the CONIDE, (*Niger Coalition for the Rights of Children*)** Fraternité Notre Dame - Niger has participated in numerous activities organized by the international institutions involved particularly within the framework of the Rights of Children, as defined by the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) and the African Charter for the Rights and Well Being of Children (CADBE).

The Conide includes a hundred NGOs distributed over the whole territory of Niger whose aim is promoting the rights of children with the state and regional authorities, the private economic sector, the local communities and religious leaders, in order to improve the situation of children in Niger. This promotion is done through advocacy, training on children's rights, intervention in the media, but also organizing thematic days, more particularly during the events set up for the African Child Day.

**Fraternité Notre Dame** is a

member of the national executive board of CONIDE, as Secretary General for Communication.

Fraternité Notre Dame is also part of the Protection sub-group at the level of Unicef. The Protection sub-group brings together local, national and international NGOs involved in the protection of children. Within this framework, Fraternité Notre Dame has been responsible

for ensuring the lead for the relations between the sub-group and the parliamentarians of Niger, more particularly, it has been empowered to meet with the presidents of the Commission on Laws and the Commission for Social Affairs, so they can play a role within the legislative framework in favor of the Rights of Children.

She also attends all the monthly meetings of the Protection sub group.

**During the year 2013,** Fraternité Notre Dame has participated in several activities:

**January 6th, 2013:** children from Fraternité Notre Dame



have participated in a day in favor of children with HIV, organized by the program that deals with HIV/AIDS, the Global Fund and the Health Department. On this occasion, Fraternité Notre Dame offered toys for the children afflicted with HIV/AIDS.

**February 26th - 28th , 2013:** Fraternité Notre Dame has participated in the Forum on the Protection of the Child organized by the department in charge of the Population, the Promotion of Women and the Protection of Children and UNICEF. In the weeks preceding the forum, Fraternité Notre Dame has participated in the meetings to prepare the forum.

The children supported by Fraternité Notre Dame have presented a song and a play during the official opening of the forum.

**April 20th 2013:** Fraternité Notre Dame has taken part in the founding of the RECODE (*Network of Communicators on the Rights of Children*) initiated by the Conide and journalists of Niger. Its aim is the training of journalists when it comes to the rights of children in order to ensure the promotion, respect and defense of the rights of children and for the commitment to comply with the professional ethics related to the children.

**May 2nd and 03rd 2013:** Fraternité Notre Dame participated in a

training on the psychosocial and social support of children in situations of emergency organized by UNICEF and the Regional Department in charge of the Protection of Children.

**June 9th - 15th 2013:** Fraternité Notre Dame has participated in the week of mobilization of bond holders organized by the Conide towards the African Child Day. In the course of that week, several activities were organized, including:

**June 10th 2013:** The launch of the week of mobilization organized on the site of Fraternité Notre Dame in the presence of State authorities, international entities including UNICEF and diplomatic representations. More than 350 children have participated on this day.

**June 11th 2013:** a day of training meant for the journalists of the Recode.

**June 12th 2013:** a day of communication to tackle the trafficking of children and early marriage.

**June 13th 2013:** a visit to the various private television news media.

**June 15th 2013:** a press luncheon in favor of the Rights of Children.

**June 16th 2013:** in honor of the African Child Day, a conference



about the Rights of Children was organized by CONIDE with the participation of several parliamentarians and representatives from the Justice Department.

**In July of 2013:** by order of the Minister of Justice, Sister Brigitte Marie, Fraternite Notre Dame has been appointed as a member of the drafting committee on the judicial policy for the youth. This committee is organized by the Department of Justice and by Unicef and is responsible for developing and drafting the judicial policy for the youth in Niger.

**August 8th - 9th 2013 and August 12th - 14th 2013:** Fraternité Notre Dame has taken part in a training on the judicial policy for the youth.

**September 22nd and 23rd 2013:** Fraternite Notre Dame has participated in the social dialog organized by the Conide on traditional and cultural practices harmful to children: begging and early marriage. The challenge of these two days was to highlight the traditional practices harmful to children and to put in place solutions to prompt the people to abandon these practices.

**October 18th 2013,** Fraternité Notre Dame participatd in

a workshop organized by the Department of Population, the Promotion of Women and the Protection of Children; this workshop dealt with the recommendation of the Committee of the Experts about the African Chart of the Rights and Wellbeing of Children.



**October 21st 2013:** Fraternite Notre Dame, as a member of the Conide, took part in an appointment with Brigitte Langlois, chief of the sector Protection of Children at UNICEF-Niger, to submit to her a plan of action of the Conide for the coming five years.

**October 24th 2013:** Fraternité Notre Dame took part in a workshop organized by UNICEF and the Department of Population for the Promotion of Women and Protection of Children, on the collaboration between UNICEF and the Ministry for the next five years.

**November 26th - 28th 2013:** Fraternite Notre Dame has participated in a national workshop organized by the Conide, Save the Children, UNICEF, the Protection sub-group of Unicef and the Ministry of the Protection of Children on the harmonization of texts in the field of Children's Rights.

**During the year 2013**, Fraternite Notre Dame has continued its activities in favor of poor segments of the population, in accordance with the spirit of Most Re-verend Bishop Jean Marie Roger Kozik, Founder of Fraternite Notre Dame, particularly in the following sectors:

- Support for children in situation of vulnerability;
- Education;
- Health,
- Nutritional and medical support to families and single mothers.

### **1- Support for children in situation of vulnerability is made at two levels: internal support and external support**

The internal support means welcoming children in situation of vulnerability (*orphans, abandoned children, children of mentally ill or unmarried mothers*) at the “Saint Damien’s Orphanage” located in Niamey. These children are essentially new born babies that need urgent care. Currently, 43 children between one month and 17 years of age benefit from this support.

In keeping with the Convention on the Rights of Children, Fraternite Notre Dame attempts to strengthen the family relationship and for that reason offers a follow up, whenever possible, to 200 orphaned children. These children who remain in their family environment re-

ceive a nutritional help, along with clothes, school and medical support.

For instance in 2013, a child of only 15 months suffering from an eye cancer and his family were supported extensively by Fraternite Notre Dame.



Similar support has been provided to children afflicted with HIV/AIDS.

25 children age 2 to 16 have benefited from wheelchairs, walkers or crutches.

A nutritional and medical help has been put into place to benefit young single mothers in order to prevent child abandonment or infanticide, and strengthen the mother-to-child bond. If necessary, Fraternite Notre Dame leads them to the social or judicial

services available, for them to receive the assistance they need.

### **2- Education:**

An ardent defender of the Rights of Women and Children, Most Reverend Bishop Jean Marie Roger Kozik insisted on the importance of education for all, but also on the education of little girls in particular. In Niger, Fraternite Notre Dame realized the opening of a school complex in 2002, including a kindergarten and a primary school, and then in 2010, a secondary school was added. The year 2013 has just witnessed the opening of a high school.

The Myriam of Nazareth school complex welcomes more than 720 pupils, in order to give a chance to disadvantaged children, as some students are orphans or from very poor families.

Even if the percentage of children who are given an education is in progress, the challenge is the quality of education which is still far from adequate. It is in such efforts that Fraternite Notre Dame is involved in Niger, with 100% of the children who successfully graduated at their end-of-year examinations. This can be achieved through more targeted support for children experiencing difficulties.

### 3- Health:

The desire of Bishop Jean Marie - to be at the service of all and more particularly those in dire need - is realized also through the medical services provided by the clinic of Fraternite Notre Dame in Niamey. The clinic offers quality health care to any person.

The clinic is open for consultations in general medicine, gynecology, pediatrics, prenatal and surgical care, ultrasound, and vaccinations, quality laboratory analysis and testing, nursing, minor surgery and we even offer some hospitalization possibilities. Destitute persons receive medical care free of charge. In 2012, the overall number of patients who came to the clinic for treatment was 13,085.

To meet the demand in 2013, Fraternite Notre Dame has built a reference maternity with the financial support from the Embassy of Japan. This project responds to needs in:

- Fighting maternal mortality; Niger has the highest maternal mortality rate in the world, so every hour, two women die from the consequences of delivery.
- Tackling neonatal mortality.
- Providing a safe alternative to child deliveries at home, be

cause of their consequences: fistula, infections...

- Giving hope to every woman, to give birth in safe conditions.

Fraternite Notre Dame conducts its activities in Niamey but intervenes through donations of clothes, medicine, medical equipment and supplies, school books in the rural commune of Banibangou, about 120 miles from Niamey.

Fraternité Notre Dame also brings help to a community of lepers located in Koara Tegui, 10 miles from Niamey (*medical and food assistance*).



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