



Niamey Niger Africa 2015

FRATERNITE NOTRE DAME IN NIGER - ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015 -

Since 2011, Fraternite Notre Dame is a member of CONIDE, the Nigerien Coalition of Nigerien NGOs for Children's Rights. Since 2011, Fraternite Notre Dame seats at CONIDE National Executive Bureau, as General Secretary for Communication. Worth adding that Fraternite Notre Dame works with other NGOs, including:

SOS Village for Children, Niger

EPAD (*School, Sponsoring, Action & Development*)

As a founding member of CONIDE, Fraternite Notre Dame is considered by its national and international counterparts, as a partner committed towards the defense of Human Rights, especially when it comes to defending and promoting Children's Rights in Niger. As a member of CONIDE,

in 2015, Fraternite Notre Dame played a key role in various activities.

And with the tenderness and very special protection from this kind Mother Immaculate, we were the beneficiaries of and witnesses to tragic events that unfolded in Niamey, Niger, **this past 17th of January, 2015**, when the churches, schools, religious residences and Christian institutions of the Catholic and Evangelical denominations were set ablaze and destroyed by uncontrollable fanatics.

In total, 40 churches were destroyed. At the mission, we were warned and had taken the necessary measures for safety, but these things could have been done while hundreds of people watched, had we not implored divine protection and prayed.

As more news would reach us, anxiety increased and the prayer of all ascended in renewed supplication, when suddenly, a shouting mob gathered in front of the mission, with clubs and stones striking at the gate to bring the gate down; then our calling to Our Lady became constant and entreating, asking Her to safeguard Her family and Her mission.

Then, while all things seemed lost, silence fell upon the grounds of the mission and not a single sound could be heard. Then Ada, who was watching the mission with the neighbors, explained that suddenly, the assailants had backed off and left without a sound, like sheep.

This is a miracle of powerful protection from our tender Mother, Who is watching over Her children with so much love. But many testimonies of solidarity have since been received from our Muslim brethren, who came to ask for forgiveness on behalf of the others, for the deeds that were committed.

February 25-26, 2015: Fraternite Notre Dame participated in a workshop organized by CONIDE and the NGO called Save the Children, towards securing financing for several projects in favor of Children's Rights, initiated by Save the Children. Such financing shall extend over a period of five years and cover activities related to the promotion and defense of

Children's Rights in Niger.

March 5-6, 2015: Fraternite Notre Dame participated in the Local Committee meeting. The Local Committee brings together various representatives from Unicef, justice for minors, the Brigade of Minors, and social workers active in the field of courts and penitentiary services, along with NGOs involved in the protection of children.

The committee is chaired by a judge for minors. The meeting's aim was to reactivate the committee and set up new work patterns towards improved efficiency. The committee intervenes to manage cases of children brought to their attention, in which the said children experience

a situation of vulnerability, and its task is to find solutions tailored to the specific situations and life experiences of these children.

March 20th, 2015: Fraternite Notre Dame School was chosen as venue to host activities organized within the framework of World Day of Oral and Dental Health. On the occasion of that day, dentists made rounds in the various school classes, to educate the children regarding the importance of brushing their teeth, with tips on how to properly do so. The children were rewarded with toothpaste and



toothbrushes.

The children took great interest in the initiative.

April 23rd – June 12th, 2015: Fraternite Notre Dame participated in meetings in preparation for Africa's Children Day 2015, whose theme was:

"Twenty three years after the ratification of the African Charter on Children's Rights and Welfare, let us boost our efforts to eliminate the marriage of children in Africa".

Taking part in the meeting were: the Managing Executives for the Promotion of Children's Rights, Unicef and several NGOs active in the field of children's protection.

April 28th, 2015: Fraternite Notre Dame

participated in the first meeting towards the creation of a new network, called IRI ZANKAI (We the Children).

The network will more especially regroup the welcome centers and orphanages whose aims and needs are specific.

During the meeting, Fraternite Notre Dame was elected to the position of vice-president of IRI ZANKAI network. During the following few weeks, several other meetings took place to draft its statuses, internal rules and regulations, along with the manual of administrative procedures. Fraternite Notre Dame is very experimented in the field and therefore, can testify to its work and provide an opinion on the measures taken to help children.



June 16th, 2015: Fraternite Notre Dame and the children at the orphanage participated in the official ceremony of Africa's Children Day. During the ceremony, the children from the orphanage performed a sketch on the negative consequences of children's marriage.

The ceremony took place in the presence of the Ministry of Population, Women's Promotion and Children's Protection, Unicef representative, several partners and numerous children. Our children from the orphanage were congratulated for

their participation, along with Fraternite Notre Dame's Religious people.

October 30th, 2015: Within the framework of Conide, Fraternite Notre Dame participated in a meeting orga-

nized by Unicef and the ministry in charge of children's protection. The meeting's aim was to welcome comments from the various participants, regarding the creation of centers for children, in the urban outskirts of Niamey. Such centers would be places where children could benefit from educational and recreational activities, under proper monitoring.

November 6th, 2015: Fraternite Notre Dame participated in a meeting held in the premises of Unicef, to set up a project regarding the planned children's centers. Worth mentioning here that Fraternite Notre Dame's extended experience in the

field was properly recorded by Unicef's consultant, towards the implementation of the said centers.

About twenty years ago, when he founded a Mission in Niamey, Niger, country which numbers among the world's poorest, His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie, Founder and Superior General of Fraternite Notre Dame, showed how much he takes to heart the fight against poverty, promotion of human dignity and tolerance for others, regardless of their age, gender, race or creed, as these elements are indispensable when it comes to the aid and development of less-advanced countries.

Thus, in a country where numerous social and economic challenges must be met, the Religious friars and nuns of Fraternite Notre Dame want to emulate the example of their Father Founder and Superior General, making themselves available through humanitarian and development initiatives.

Fraternite Notre Dame does not receive any salary, but donate all her time and efforts towards serving the poorest of the poor and families in need. Fraternite Notre Dame comes to the help of all those who suffer in their heart or in their body, with no distinction of race, social status, gender or creed.



The main areas of Fraternite Notre Dame's intervention are as follow:

- Protecting children who are in vulnerable situations;
- Promoting quality education for all; and
- Promoting quality health for all.

To these three important fields are also added initiatives to assist most destitute families, migrants and handicapped persons.

1- Protecting Children in Vulnerable Situations

Opened in 1997, Saint Damien's

Orphanage welcomes children involved in vulnerable family or social situations. The children are welcomed in a boarding facility and completely taken care of by Fraternite Notre Dame. Currently, 48 children, whose age ranges from 3 months to 18 years, of whom 21 are girls and 27, boys; they live at Saint Damien's orphanage. The legal foster placement of these children occurred following an emergency aid response, tailored to the situation of each child in particular.

Indeed, most of the children welcomed are newborns or infants:

Orphans who lost their mothers at birth; let us recall that Niger's maternal mortality rate is among the highest in the

world.

Unfortunately, economic conditions or certain misconceptions and sociocultural traditions still prevail, making it quasi impossible to keep the children in the bosom of the family.

Children born to mothers with mental illnesses, representing a risk for their survival. Important to know that a good number of women with mental illnesses live in the street and have no family ties. Worth noting as well that these children again fell victims to ancestral prejudice, and families often refuse to keep them in their midst.

Children born to minor mothers who have no means to ensure the protection of their children. In such cases, Fraternite Notre Dame also commits to follow up with these mi-

nor mothers, having in mind to keep alive some family ties between the mother and her children.

New born babies abandoned in the street from birth. These children are referred to Saint Damien's orphanage by hospitals, the Department of Justice for Minors and the Brigade of Minors.

In January 2015, this was the case for an infant, aged about 4 months, abandoned in one of Niamey markets, and brought to the orphanage by the police of minors, to be taken in and cared for. Orphans ill-treated and neglected by their

family. In 2015, a 15-month-old child, victim of ill-treatment by her parents was placed in our orphanage by the brigade of minors. A six-year-old child was also referred to the orphanage, following the negligence of his parents, who would sent him to beg in the street.

Besides this in-house care, Fraternite Notre Dame also provides external assistance in favor of orphaned children who have remained with some family member. These orphans from very deprived families then benefit from nutritional aid,

in the form of infant formula, food supplements and various other goods.

Some children who are of age to go to school also find assistance in the bosom of our Myriam of Nazareth school center.



In all, 225 orphaned children who do not live at the center, benefit from free medical aid.

Within the framework of children's protection, Fraternite Notre Dame works in close relationship with the Direction of Children's Protection, the legal services and the brigade for minors. Thus, in 2015, three children were involved in a case of temporary transfer by the brigade of minors, and one of them suffered from gender-based violence, but was able to benefit from a family reunification.

2- Promoting Education For All

His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie works tirelessly so that each person may live in dignity and have access to education, which certainly constitutes an effective means to restore the dignity of every human being.

Within this context, in 2002, Most Reverend Bishop Jean Marie founded the Myriam of Nazareth School, which over the years, has become the private educational center Myriam of Nazareth, featuring:

- in 2003, opening of a Day Care for little children;

- in 2009, opening of a Primary and Middle School; and

- in 2013, the addition of a High School.

- In 2015, an annex was opened to house the Day Care.

The total number of pupils schooled at the private educational center Myriam of Nazareth has now reached 913 students in all grades. Worth mentioning here that certain orphaned children are schooled in this Myriam of Nazareth educational center, which is quite significant for their families, who are very often unable to send their children to the public schools.

To avoid any discrimination, some children who are afflicted with a handicap are also schooled at Myriam of Nazareth Educa-

tional Center. Namely, some students with hearing impairment, psychomotor disabilities or dwarfism.

One of Myriam of Nazareth Educational Center's aims is, first of all, to provide quality education adapted to each one in particular. One of Niger's current challenges is reliable training for teachers, and the quality of education in general.

3- Promoting Quality Health For All:

To relieve the sick, forsaken because they cannot afford any medical care, but also to meet the deep aspirations of the population:

- that they may have access to quality medical care; and

- be properly respected by medical and paramedical personnel, regardless of their social status.

His excellency Bishop Jean Marie has wanted to open a dispensary to relieve the physical ailments of those who are rejected because of their social status. Thus, in 2001, Fraternite Notre Dame's clinic opened its doors, and in 2014, it was enlarged to include a maternity. It is located in the outskirts of Niamey, where large sections of the population live, often in very precarious conditions,



unable to afford access to quality medical care.

The clinic offers services in general medicine, but also some specific care, such as gynecology, pediatrics, audiometry, ultrasound scanning, medical testing, nursing care, minor surgery, deliveries, immunization, medical follow up and hospitalization.

Fraternite Notre Dame's clinic provides for audiometry testing for the students of Niamey school for the deaf, and thanks to some support from her partners, she is in a position to fit the children in need with analog or digital auditive devices, depending on the level of deafness detected.

The hearing aids are provided free of charge and represent a great help for these children and their families, who certainly cannot afford it. The children fitted in this way are then able to follow some speech therapy and in a position to express themselves.

In 2015, thirty five children benefited from the donation of a hearing aid device. Numerous persons in need, handicapped and lepers who have no way to get medical care are treated free of charge.

Worth mentioning here that opening a maternity represents an important flow

of fresh air for women in the area, who no longer need to travel to other neighborhoods to be attended medically when delivery time comes; thus, they are now able to come for prenatal consultations and safely give birth, monitored by some personnel who listen to them. This is also part of a campaign that aims to tackle maternal and infant mortality.



In 2015, about 45 % of the sick that came for treatment were attended free of charge. Here is a breakdown of the care administered in 2015:

- Number of patients attended:

over 7,541.

- Healthy infant consultations: about 4,500.

- Prenatal consultations: about 1,300.

- Ultrasound scans: about 2,650.

- Patients under follow up: about 9,100.

4- Other Humanitarian Activities

To follow the example of His Excellency, Bishop Jean Marie who is very involved in the service of the poorest of the poor, the religious Priests, Friars and Nuns of Fraternite Notre Dame provide food, clothing

and medical aid to about 150 very impoverished families.

They are dealing with:

Lepers, regrouped in a village located some 15 kilometers from Niamey.

Mothers who have become the head of their family when their husbands left them, and who must provide for their children's needs: Fraternite Notre Dame brings them support in the form of clothing, food and medical care.



Abandoned to their plight by the smugglers, these people find themselves without any type of means to ensure their survival, and are reduced to begging. Suffering from various ailments, they are taken care of medically by Fraternite Notre Dame,

which also offers them assistance in their various other needs.

Some female inmates at the Niamey Civil Prison also benefit from medical aid when they need it.

Many among them were never able to attend school, and because they never had a job, they end up with no resources, living in the street with their children. Unfortunately, such cases have become increasingly common. In agreement with some of her partners, Fraternite Notre Dame attempts to find them housing and some income generating activities.

Migrants referred by local parishes and churches, in need of medical and food support.



Medicine, clothing and school supply assistance was provided as well to residents of Banibangou and Makalondi Villages, respectively located 250 and 150 kilometers from Niamey.

Wheelchairs, crutches and walkers were donated to about 70 disabled persons, including children.

All these activities were brought to completion thanks to the example and action of His Excellency, Bishop Jean Marie, an ardent defender of the poorest of the poor.