

Fraternite Notre Dame in Niger

- Activity Report for 2016 -

Since 1996, when it first established in Niger, Fraternite Notre Dame, founded by His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie Roger Kozik, has been working at the service of the most destitute populations of this country of the Sahel, which for long has been classified by the IDH as the poorest in the world.

The Religious Friars, Nuns and Priests of Fraternite Notre Dame dedicate themselves there in Niger, and perceive no salary, giving their lives and their whole time for their Works of Charity at the service of the poorest of the poor and of all those who suffer in their heart or in their body. Their work is appreciated by the country's highest authorities, who value their constant and enduring dedication to all.

A member of Network for became Conafe in Notre Dame was 2012, the Commu- of CONIDE (Nige- Children's Rights). Fraternite Notre founding members with the following SOS Village for

In Niger, Frater- (founded by Most Jean Marie) is re- partner engaged and defense of the state partners, try in charge of and protecting



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RENE (Nigerien Childhood) which 2008, Fraternite appointed, since nication Secretary rien Coalition for

Dame is one of the of CONIDE, along NGOs: EPAD and Children.

nite Notre Dame Reverend Bishop garded as a reliable in the promotion children's rights by notably the minis- promoting women children.

As a member of Conide, Fraternite Notre Dame, through its Religious Friars, Nuns

and Priests, has participated in several workshops and meetings elaborated by the said coalition.

In March 2016: the Religious of Fraternite Notre Dame have participated in the meetings of UNICEF, regarding the setting up of a recreational center for children. The project was meant to reflect on the means to prepare game and activity areas for children in the Niamey neighborhoods.

The purpose of such initiatives was to prevent children from hanging out in the streets. The discussions rolled on the recruiting and formation of staff, preferably on a voluntary basis, to monitor and organize the specific spaces given by the mayor's offices.



From April to June 2016, Fraternite Notre Dame has played a part in the various preparatory meetings of the JEA 2016 (Day of the African Child) of which the topic was:

*- Conflicts & Crises in Africa -
Protecting the Rights of All Children*

which is a current issue when it comes to Niger, since the south of the country was attacked by the terrorist group Boko Haram. Following such attacks, many children ended up in refugee camps.

On June 16, 2016: the Religious of Fraternite Notre Dame and the children welcomed at Saint Damien Orphanage participated in a conference and debate organized by Conide and the National

Conference on Human Rights. The conference aim was to inform young high school students from Niamey on the origins of the JEA, the Convention on Children's Rights, the African Charter on the Rights and Wellbeing of Children, and the protection of children in conflict situations.

During the year 2016, Fraternite Notre Dame, represented by its Religious Friars, Nuns and Priests, participated in the 3 thematic days organized by Conide on the following topics (*worth reminding that the topics chosen deal more especially with Nigerien children, of whom a segment is marginalized because of their social status*):

The legal status of children abandoned and with no family reference, taken in welcome centers.

Indeed, in absence of any family reference, these children are not entitled to any official certificate or nationality certificate, which constitutes a particular discrimination in the protection of children. Besides, Fraternite Notre Dame demonstrated that:

these children are henceforth considered as second-class citizens, or so called “children from nowhere”; and they are also confronted with various problems when it comes to school and exam registration, given the fact that they have no birth certificate or nationality certificate.

The second topic was dealing with the marriage of children:

Niger is the country where forced marriage of children is the highest in the world, where 77% of women aged 20-24 were married before reaching 18, and 28% before the age of 16. Forced marriage or marriage of children leads to:

- a very high maternal mortality rate; harmful consequences for the health of the mother and children, such as obstetrical fistula;
- foetal pain;
- hypertrophic children;
- infant deaths;
- psychological constraints and violence;
- harmful consequences, in the family as much as in society...



in order to oppose the marriage of children, CONIDE has invited to sign a petition in order to ask national deputies to present a bill that would ban the marriage of children.

The third topic is related to children's labor and the phenomenon of children's begging.

This problem is recurrent in Niger, where the phenomenon never stops and is part of an ancient tradition; indeed, the parents entrust their children to a witchdoctor to learn the Koran, but in fact these children are very often exploited and condemned to beg and bring money back to the witchdoctor. This practice implies:

that children drop out of school;
it fosters illegal practices, such as stealing, prostitution, or the use of prohibited substances...

During these thematic days, the members of Conide, including Fraternite Notre Dame, have decided to address government authorities so that decisions may be made towards the respect of Children's Rights.

On August 12, 2016: the Minister in charge of Promoting Women and Protecting Children, has visited several welcome centers including Saint Damien's orphanage of Fraternite Notre Dame, in order to inquire about the children's life conditions and the respect of their rights in these institutions. We have to note that the minister has congratulated Fraternite Notre Dame for its good order and the support it brings to the populations at risk in Niger.

What Fraternite Notre Dame realized in Niger during the year 2016

In keeping with the example of His Excellency, Bishop Jean Marie, the Religious Friars, Nuns and Priests of Fraternite Notre Dame in Niger are at the service of all, and more especially the



most disfavored, with no distinction of race, social status, gender or creed, in order to:

restore the human dignity of those who feel excluded;

profess a spirit of tolerance and welcome towards all.

In a country which, as a reminder: was ranked last by IDH (Human Development Index), and where a large portion of the population suffers from a very difficult economic situation, the actions of Fraternite Notre Dame tend to fight against chronic poverty and restore self-trust in populations often discriminated against because of their social environment.

The main areas of activity for Fraternite Notre Dame in Niger are:

the protection of children in vulnerable situations;

developing a quality education;

developing quality health care available to all.

1- The Protection of Children in Vulnerable Situations

Within the framework of supporting childhood in difficulty, Fraternite Notre Dame runs Saint Damian Orphanage where 43 children aged 3 months to 18 years are cared for. The children welcomed are often infant orphans who lost their mother or both of their parents, or those whose mother is mentally ill, single mothers who passed away or minor mothers rejected by their family; babies found in the street and brought to Fraternite Notre Dame by public services, such as the judge of minors or the police.

In 2016, Fraternite Notre Dame has welcomed two new born girls, abandoned by their family.

However, the Religious Friars, Nuns and Priests of Fraternite Notre Dame encourage every family bond, and have put together a system of external support for vulnerable children. The idea is to encourage the child to remain in his own environment, all the while supporting him when it comes to hygiene, food and school.

Currently, 146 children benefit from this aid plan.

Another action of Fraternite Notre Dame for children in vulnerable situations is to provide support to young single mothers. The latter are often rejected in one way or another by their family and by society, and at times it prompts them to become infanticide, or abandon their child in the street.

Fraternite Notre Dame offers them moral, affective and material support, with food supplies and a sanitary and social support.

Solicited by the Brigades of Minors, Fraternite Notre Dame had to house several single mothers and their children, before being able to start a mediation with their family, towards family reintegration. 15 young women, of whom a few were citizens of other countries in Western Africa and HIV Positive, have benefited from this support in the course of 2016.

2- Developing a quality education for all:

The second area where Fraternite Notre Dame intervenes in Niger is Education. Having successively opened a primary school in 2002, a kindergarten in 2003, and middle and high schools in 2010 and 2011, His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie insisted with his Religious Friars, Nuns and Priests, on the importance of a quality education that would not only be reserved for a well-to-do social sphere, but also for children that belonged to the middle class and less-favored layers of society.



It is proper to say that in Niger, the situation of schools is completely escheated and some consider that it is actually “dying”. Indeed, the sector of public schools is undermined by strikes, both of the teachers and students, which leads to the forsaking of the school curriculum, delays in the implementation of the same and a significant loss in school attendance.

Such a cheap education results in students with a poor overall instruction. Which does not bid well for their future. The school attendance rate is 63.7% (*source: Unicef*).

The Private Catholic School Complex Myriam of Nazareth (entirely managed by the Religious Friars, Nuns and Priests of Fraternite Notre Dame) thus welcomes children from every social layer, which favors a better social and ethnic integration.

In their courses, the teachers develop the qualities and skills found in each child, whether they be intellectual, manual or artistic. Emphasis is put on supporting children in difficult situations. They also perform a personal follow up for each child, which allows to quickly tackle and remedy certain issues with which some students are confronted.

In keeping with the conditions of the Complex with a Handicap, the school welcomes children who not only present a low intellectual disability but also some disabling illnesses, such as sickle-cell anaemia.

The complex also welcomes orphaned children from very destitute families, which allows them to have access to education, and a decent future, therefore, hope for the future.

For the school year 2016-2017, the number of students is right around 940 individuals.



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3 - Promoting quality health care available to all

Fraternite Notre Dame and its Religious Friars, Nuns and Priests also intervene in the field of health care. In 2001, an outpatient dispensary was opened in one of the outskirts of Niamey, and after a number of years, in 2014, it was officially approved as a clinic by the Ministry of Public Health.

In 2014, a maternity was opened, next to the existing clinic. Opening such a sanitary structure was willed by Most Reverend Bishop Jean Marie Roger Kozik, Founder of Fraternite Notre Dame, in order to allow anyone, but especially the less-favored, to have access:

to quality health care, regardless of their social status;
and benefit from medical treatment, in the respect of the dignity of the human person.

The patients admitted at Fraternite Notre Dame's clinic benefit from medical treatment for the following:

- General medicine;
- Specialized medicine, such as gynecology, pediatrics,
- audiometry;
- Minor surgery
- Audiometry testing
- Obstetrical care, and
- Ultrasounds.

In a partnership with the school for the deaf, the hearing impaired students often undergo some tests and receive a hearing aid or analog device free of charge, according to the level of deafness detected. In 2016, 30 children benefited from this type of device donation.

The patients who are in need, lepers, and orphaned children are given medical care free of charge. During the year 2016, 47% of all patients were treated entirely free of charge.

The number of patients that were attended at Fraternite Notre Dame clinic in 2016 amounts to 13,000, including:

general Medicine, about 5,350;
specialty Medicine, about 2,100;
prenatal Consultations, around 850, and
healthy infant consultations, around 4,550.

In a stagnant economic context, when health care comes second for many families, in a very modest city outskirts where most people find it difficult to make ends meet, the clinic of Fraternite Notre Dame represents hope for many of them.

4- Other Humanitarian Activities of Fraternite Notre Dame

During the year 2016, food and sanitary assistance was provided in favor of the lepers who live in a village located outside of Niamey, for a total of about 150 families.

Clothing, food and sanitary support was also provided to widows, women abandoned by their husband and often heads of large families.

Thus, on the occasion of the feast of Ramadan and Tabaski, these families benefited from food and meat product distributions, for the latter celebration.



In order to answer the appeals of certain parishes, Fraternite Notre Dame has taken charge of the health care needs of migrants and African refugees, who had absolutely no resources to subsist. Close to 130 persons were supported in this regard. These

migrants also benefited from food and clothing assistance.

These are the activities that Fraternite Notre Dame was able to realize in Niger, during 2016.

We very sincerely thank His Excellency, Bishop Jean Marie, Founder of Fraternite Notre Dame -himself indefatigable when it comes to serving all those who suffer in their heart or in their body- for his encouragements, examples and valuable support at the service of the less-favored populations of Niger, together with the tutelage authorities and the members of Conide with whom we collaborate at the service of Niger and its people.