

ASSOCIATION



Niger Zinder, June 2019

**Full of 50° sunshine in Zinder, with smiles and love from the children at the Centre!**



It was just under 50° that several dozen children from the Centre had fun forming this heart, as beautiful as Life, as enticing as Hope and as colourful as so many Smiles and expressions of Love!

THANK YOU for your precious support year after year, month after month, which makes it possible for 285 magnificent orphans, albinos and child-mothers can benefit from quality supervision, schooling and education at the *Après-demain* Centre!

## New laterite road leading to the Centre and children



Our dedicated, dynamic and very efficient committee technical member, Frédéric Chobaz, came to experience Zinder's 46°-50° on a laterite road! He worked from morning to evening on the 200m2 solar installation, the local vision of the school complex with the company, overseeing maintenance of all Centre buildings and furthering work on the laterite road leading to the *Après-demain* Centre, which had been built in 2012 during construction. At that time, we were the only ones building on that street, just outside Zinder. No buildings were yet present. As soon as our laterite road was built, the owners of the surrounding land took the opportunity to build their beautiful houses, sometimes two-stories, because of the coming and going of these many trucks filled with sand or stones. The violent rain that often comes with the seasons damaged the laterite road, and we have had to think about rebuilding it for the safety of our children at the Centre and the staff.

I had previously organized meetings with our neighbours to ask for their financial participation in this new road, which they use every day. The association had already participated fully in its construction in 2012 and we felt it was normal to ask for their

participation this year, given the beautiful and large houses they were able to build. They are not huts in traditional *banko*, where poor families live. The first two meetings were difficult, many were reluctant to participate financially. They felt that they did not have to pay. Fortunately, our national psychopedagogue was present at the meetings, and had a better platform than I had as a woman. Since then, some have made a contribution in various degrees of solidarity, sharing and overall sense of responsibility.

The work could finally begin, starting with the collection of garbage and plastic, which is definitely a problem across the entire Planet. Frederic set about directing the workers, waiting, running up and down the road, and calling up the workers while chasing down the machines that didn't make it! Welcome to Zinder!

The machines that were ordered by 7am were not there. They could not start the laterite road until 3pm, after hunting down the motor grader hidden somewhere in Zinder. After 20 minutes of work, the pressure pump broke and the machine remained immobilized for several days. Fortunately, the trucks coming from the Zinder gravel pit could still pass. Frederic had to search for another grader, which could arrive at dawn the next day. From that moment on, the work could well have continued on the 250 metres of the road. But the road roller did not arrive on site in time. Frédéric had to return (three flights from Zinder to Geneva), leaving the site to the good (or non-existent) will of the workers and managers. Now, it is a question of checking the invoices and fuel expenses for trucks and machines, as well as the amounts that have been paid by the neighbours.

25 m<sup>3</sup> of plastic waste was disposed of at the beginning of the construction site. The low walls and empty plots are currently garbage dumps and open toilets. As soon as it rains, all this waste and excrement creates outbreaks of various epidemics, in addition to the mosquitoes that arrive with the rainy season. The lack of hygiene and education remain a huge problem in this country.

## **2nd meeting with the Minister of the Interior of Niger**

On my return to the capital Niamey, the Minister of the Interior of Niger, Mr. Bazoum, granted me an audience in his ministerial office. His Chief of Staff had been kind enough to send me his driver, which saved me from suffering in the heat and traffic of the capital! This 2nd contact with the Minister of the Interior was exceptional and very encouraging! In front of me, the Minister called Mayors from important regions of Niger, including Agadez, Maradi and Gouré, among others. He asked them to find land of 6,000m<sup>2</sup> to 10,000m<sup>2</sup> to make it available and build Centres like the one we built in Zinder! Back in Switzerland, I will have the valuable help and political support that will enable me to intercede with the Swiss SDC in Bern. This is an extraordinary opportunity to be able to replicate this concept in several regions of Niger, which we should not miss. I hope that the will of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation will go in the same direction and support these new constructions in a country that they finance with more than 25 million Swiss francs per year.

## The school year-end celebration at the Centre - June 2019



The school year-end celebration is a time when children and young girls organize and prepare themselves meticulously! The young couture girls cut the festive fabric chosen and bought at the local market, take the measurements of all the students at the Centre and have fun in the making and creativity of each dress, each tunic, each pair of pants, so that each one is the most unique and creative in this festive moment!

They choose one or two goats from the pen for a delicious, festive meal, accompanied by good rice and a very sticky and nutritious sauce!

The 10 primary and secondary school classes at the Association Centre accommodate 15 to 30 students each. Many children deserve a small prize for their attendance, efforts and good results!

96 girls and boys received prizes for being among the top five best students in their class, as well as special prizes for their behaviour, smiles, good mood, cleanliness and hygiene, camaraderie, solidarity, the most ambitious, for learning Braille, etc.

Together with our staff and the psychopedagogue of the State of Niger, prizes were awarded to the students, under the proud gaze of their teachers.

Safia, Ouma, Moutari, Ouméra, Djafar, Soufiano, Mariama, Charifa, Salissou, Mariama, Rabiou, Youssouf, Fatma Zara, Jasmina, Nabila, Ibrahim, Abdoul Rachid, Amina, Faïza, Mahamadou, Fatma, Karima, Fassouma, Aïchatou, Kadija, Ayouba, Oumarou, Abdoul Karim, Aïcha, Farida, Aïchatou, Chamsia, Aïchatou, Absatou, Rahina, Mariama, Ousseina, Absatou, Gaïcha, Zeinabou, Ouma, Fatma, Mariam, Aïchatou, Ouma, Aïcha, Balkissa, Iman, Aboubacar, Ibrahim.

Award for the most hard-working and disciplined girl:	Fatma Zara Nanzir Aïchatou Nanzir
Award for the most hard-working and disciplined boy:	Ibrahim Moussa
Award for the most helpful and dedicated student housekeeping:	Fatouma Clement – Fassouma Moussa – Soueba Amadou – Hadiza Yahaya
Award for the most encouraging:	Zeinabou Kaila
Award for the most smiles:	Fatma Zara - Charifa Sidi
Award for the best demeanour:	Ibrahim (garçon albinos de 4 ans)
Award for cleanliness and personal hygiene:	Safia Amadou
Award for the best dressed and coiffed:	Haouaou Hassan - Fatma Maman Nanzir
Award for the most ambitious:	Mariama Nasser Fatouma Clement Oumarou Lawali
Award for solidarity and congeniality:	Falila Mahamadou
Award for Braille learning:	Farida (fille albinos, 9 ans)
Award for goat care:	Bassira Nassirou
Award for kitchen assistance:	Hadjara Saïdou - Nafissa Harouna Fatma Zara Ibrahim
Award for best artist:	Aïchatou Lawali (fille albinos) Soupera - Charifa Sidi Firdaoussi Lawali - Faïza Issia
Award for the least well-behaved: (a piece of coal!)	Zeitouna - Rabi - Mariama - Farida Aïchatou
Award for best sewing:	Rayana
Award for best IT:	Ayouba – Oumarou Moussa Ousmane Ibrahim - Aïcha Oumarou Karima Maman Nafiou
Award for best French:	Ismaël Lawali - Ayouba - Oumarou Moussa - Ousmane Ibrahim Abdoul Karim - Zeinabou Hamidou

Award for kindergarten:

Balkissa Amadou - Ouma Kaltoum  
Iman Isabelle - Aboubacar - Ibrahim

Award for best class:

CE2

### **Daily life in Zinder**

Mothers always come to the Centre gate with children. More and more false documents, with the complicity of some people who officially sign these documents in exchange for a small sum of money or some advantage.

The sending of the nanny and the secretary of the Centre as effective and daring investigators has had its full effect. As soon as they return to the Centre, the confrontation with the alleged widowed mothers can take place and reveal their lies.

Disappointing, but I know this is part of this daily life in Zinder. Everyone tries their luck, knowing that they have so little and that they have nothing to lose. Even those who have something try their luck, even if they get caught.

As long as these populations remain at a level of extreme poverty and ignorance, they will seek by any means to take advantage of the ignorance of others. These populations must be able to acquire a more decent and respectable standard of living, they must be able to benefit from an effective educational and school system so that they no longer have these temptations to lie, cheat, steal, and get away with it.

A young mother, Amina, presents herself at the gate with her children. She is 25 years old and already has five children, the oldest of whom is almost 11 years old. Amina was married at the age of 14 and her husband died from a kabu-kabu (motorcycle) accident, leaving three co-wives, including Amina. She is alone, so young, her face and body already worn and bruised by the difficulties and roughness of her life.

Another mother, Aïcha, deaf and dumb from birth, arrived at the Centre with her older sister who is trying to take care of her despite her small means and the difficulty in managing her. Aïcha has five children, all from unknown fathers.

Men take advantage of Aïcha when she begs in the sandy streets of Zinder to feed and provide for her children. She no longer has any respect for herself or her female body, wounded by life and by men.

There is only one sound that comes out of her throat when she wants to express her emotions, her distress, her daily life. She cries a few tears without noise, full of modesty and gratitude, when the nanny takes three of her youngest children inside the Centre, so that they can be educated, supervised, fed, cared for and loved.

### **50° and rats.....**

50° and not a grey or white cloud on the horizon to announce a little freshness to help us sleep and recover. This is the harsh daily life in Zinder and other places in Niger - and the

world! People sleep when they can, day and night, and it becomes difficult to make a small life for themselves and be sustainable economically. When it gets a little cooler at night, they take the opportunity to party or chat and prevent others from sleeping.

Through these burning weeks, which are like hell, beautiful big rats proliferate and enjoy settling everywhere! Admiring the magnificent 30° sky one night, I barely see a kind of "cat" with a long tail running in front of me on the terrace of the house. Not making a single sound, this animal passes in front of me again and passes away. It is a very plump rat, about 30 cm long! I quickly close the door of the house to avoid an unpleasant meeting inside! The next day, I shared the night meeting with the housekeeper. After that, I never saw or heard from this rat again. Would it have served as a good and tasty meal...?



At the bend of the main road Niamey-Zinder, which crosses Zinder, we sometimes encounter improbable convoys tilting from side to side, overtaking the entire width of the road, sometimes tearing off electric wires and poles, knocking over cyclists or "kabou-kabou" motorcycles on the way.

Impossible to pass, it is sometimes necessary to wait several tens of kilometres behind, at a very good distance!

Our dear graphic designer Séverine has put a new "Boutique" page on our website [www.aucoeurduniger.ch](http://www.aucoeurduniger.ch) that offers the artisanal products of Niger as well as those made by the girls at the Centre: natural heart-shaped soaps, chilli pepper, peanut paste, peanut powder, *Au Cœur du Niger* pendants, fabric greeting cards, leather key rings, Touareg jewellery, the illustrated colouring book *Words to Grow By* and the first two documentary films by Jean-Philippe Rapp, *Le rêve d'Isabelle* (2012) and *Le rêve accompli d'Isabelle* (2015). In the meantime, the 3rd documentary film *Isabelle's dream - A future for children in*

*Niger* will be officially released during the charity evening on December 3, 2019 at La Tour-de-Trême!

**Events:**

**Friday, 26 July 2019**

**La P'tite Librairie, Château-d'Oex**

Signing of the illustrated colouring book

*Words to Grow By.* – 2pm – 4pm

During the Festival des Enfants week.

**Saturday 28 September 2019**

**Autumn market Ursy**

10am – 4pm – Town square

**Tuesday 3 December 2019**

**Charity evening in support of the 10-year anniversary of the Association**

7 :30pm CO2 La Tour-de-Trême

**With comedians YANN LAMBIEL & MARC DONNET-MONAY**

**Broadcasting of the 3rd documentary film by Jean-Philippe Rapp and Ian Jaquier, "Isabelle's dream fulfilled - A future for children in Niger" (2018)**

**2009 – 2019**

This year 2019, the Association *Au Coeur du Niger* is celebrating its 10th anniversary of activities in Niger for the poorest children in Zinder!

THANK YOU for your precious and generous participation, contribution, friendship, encouragement, fidelity, kindness, which touch me deeply and allow me to bring concrete and direct help to the field, together with my wonderful and dynamic committee in Switzerland!

With my warmest and most grateful thoughts, and the smiles of 285 children at the *Second Chance* school!

Have a great summer and rest well!





NAGODE !

Isabelle Macheret  
Founder  
*Au Cœur du Niger* Association

Zinder Niger, June 2019

[www.aucoeurduniger.ch](http://www.aucoeurduniger.ch)