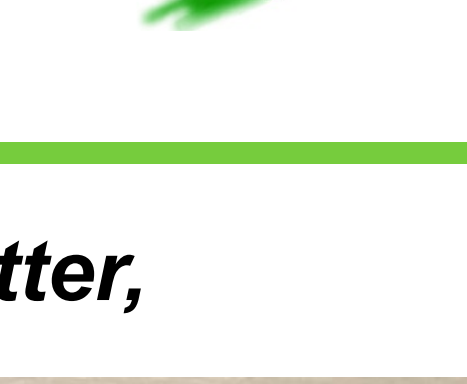


Bene Koytara Goyterey

Those who work for God's Kingdom (translated from Zarma)



Dear readers of our Newsletter,



The months of October and November have been quite busy. During the first week of October Blaise returned home after two months in Port Harcourt (Nigeria) and in this newsletter Joëlle Zeller shares about how she saw his impact on the training programme. About a week after Blaise got back, I went to Maradi for 10 days. During those 10 days I worked through 6 months worth of project admin and bookkeeping paperwork. I was very grateful to my colleague Abou for having kept these papers organized by month. That made my work a lot easier. I also accompanied Abou (community health teacher) and Ayoubba (farm manager) to the villages where they teach and accompany people in farming, health care and savings activities on a bi-weekly or monthly basis. Quite beside the fact that I greatly enjoy the opportunity to get out of the city, it is also good to keep in touch with the realities of the daily lives of farming communities.

A few days after I got back from Maradi we received a visitor. His name is Conner Haines and he got our contact via people we know and who are based with YWAM in Uganda. He spent a week with us and it was really good to have that time with him. He was a fun and interesting visitor. Conner just loves people and has taken it upon himself to visit every single country in the world to see how God is at work all over the world. There are different ways of defining countries, but he is going by the definition that counts a total of 197 countries. Niger was his 154th country. Before coming to Niger he was in Chad and before that in the Central African Republic and several other countries. When he left Niger he travelled to Burkina Faso, next onto Ghana, etc. We heard some fun and interesting stories! If you want to you can read about his adventures on: www.HeyPlanet.Earth.

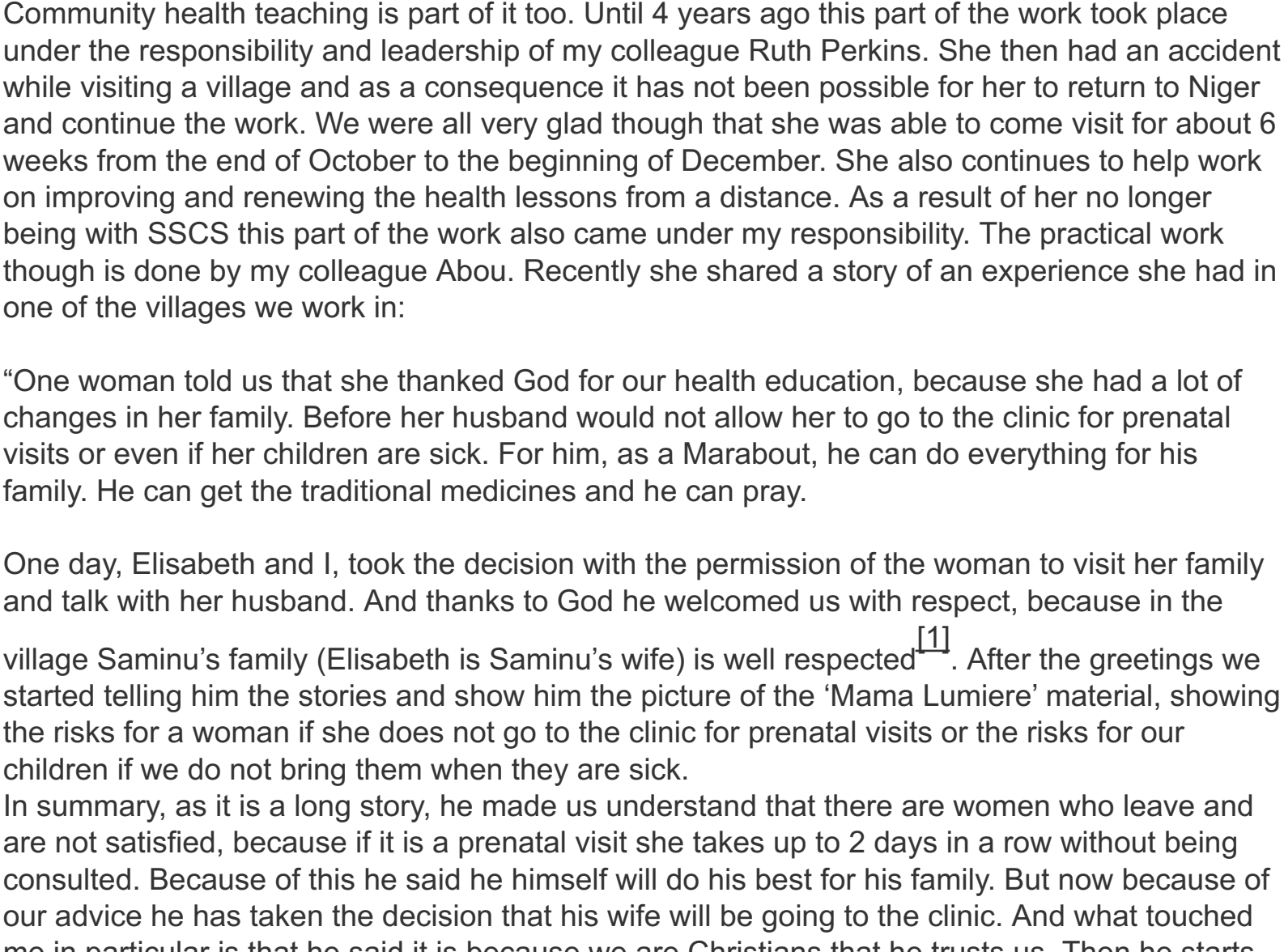
A few days after Conner left, Blaise travelled to Tahoua with Franck, Florence and Zacharie. Franck and Florence are part of the King's Kids team in Niger, and Zacharie participated in the recent training for child and youth work in Port Harcourt, Nigeria and went along for practice. Tahoua is a town at 524 km from Niamey to the North-East, and it takes 8 to 9 hours to get there. They went there at the request of one of the local pastors to do the Quartier Libre (Kids club) training with Sunday-school teachers. They had been wanting this training for quite a while to be able to start the program in a neighbourhood in Tahoua.

The day after Blaise came back from Tahoua I left to go to Maradi again. A week full of meetings was awaiting me. Very special during this week was the presence of Ruth Perkins. In what follows you can read more about this and there is also a story from Abou about one of her experiences in relation to the health teaching she does.

I returned to Niamey and the next day Blaise left for Maradi, to work there for several days and from there continue to Port Harcourt again. This time he went there to teach a subject at a Discipleship Training School for a group of widows (many of their husbands died because of violent conflicts in Nigeria).

It was early December when Blaise returned from Nigeria and we're glad that at least for the rest of December no further trips are scheduled.

We hope you'll enjoy the stories we share in what follows in this newsletter as well as some Christmas musings.



A story from Abou



The Sowing Seed of Change in the Sahel project is not solely concerned with agriculture. Community health teaching is part of it too. Until 4 years ago this part of the work took place under the responsibility and leadership of my colleague Ruth Perkins. She then had an accident while visiting a village and as a consequence it has not been possible for her to return to Niger and continue the work. We were all very glad though that she was able to come visit for about 6 weeks from the end of October to the beginning of December. She also continues to help work on improving and renewing the health lessons from a distance. As a result of her no longer being with SSCS this part of the work also came under my responsibility. The practical work though is done by my colleague Abou. Recently she shared a story of an experience she had in one of the villages we work in:

"One woman told us that she thanked God for our health education, because she had a lot of changes in her family. Before her husband would not allow her to go to the clinic for prenatal visits or even if their children are sick. For him, as a Marabout, he can do everything for his family. He can get the traditional medicines and he can pray.

One day, Elisabeth and I, took the decision with the permission of the woman to visit her family and talk with her husband. And thanks to God he welcomed us with respect, because in the village Saminu's family (Elisabeth is Saminu's wife) is well respected^[1]. After the greetings we started telling him the stories and show him the picture of the 'Mama Lumiere' material, showing the risks for a woman if she does not go to the clinic for prenatal visits or the risks for our children if we do not bring them when they are sick. In summary, as it is a long story, he made us understand that there are women who leave and are not satisfied, because if it is a prenatal visit she takes up to 2 days in a row without being consulted. Because of this he said he himself will do his best for his family. But now because of our advice he has taken the decision that his wife will be going to the clinic. And what touched me in particular is that he said it is because we are Christians that he trusts us. Then he starts quoting us Christians from the past that he knew and who have done him good. This is why he is willing to accept our advice now. Hallelujah, thank God! The woman now is free to go."

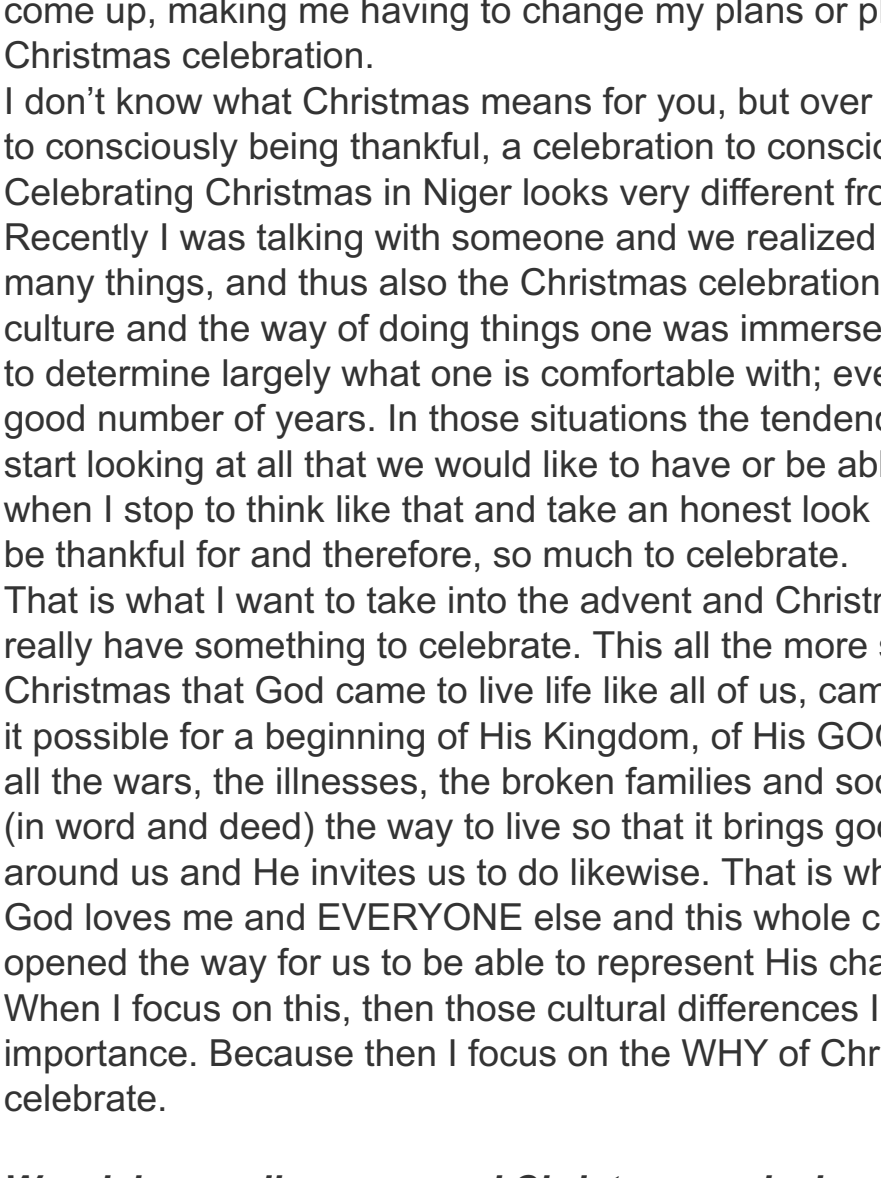
[1] Saminu is one of the former SSCS workers who moved back to the village his family is from and become an independent farmer.

Blaise for two months in Nigeria



Joëlle Zeller shares about Blaise:

"This year, from June to September, a training school for work among youth, children and families was held in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. A joyful team of 55 people, 15 staff, 32 students, 8 children, 14 English speakers, 18 French speakers from 14 African nationalities plus France and Switzerland lived 3 intense months of relationships and deep teachings on a daily basis. It is in this stimulating environment that Blaise came to serve for the months of August and September. There was no lack of challenges. Blaise was a solid support in the staff team. He was very involved in prayer and intercession, spent many hours listening to one and the other and giving wise counsel both spiritually and culturally to the staff and students of the school and the YWAM base where we were. He also served in a practical way in accounting, transportation and purchasing, which took up a lot of his time. All this despite health challenges (severe malaria, etc.) and many other responsibilities in Niger and elsewhere in Africa that did not cease during the time he offered us. We are very grateful to him and his family for all the sacrifices made, his presence made a difference. In addition, it made complete sense for him to come because Blaise has been involved in the implementation of King's Kids (KK) in Nigeria for 4 years now. This training school is part of a strategy for the development and multiplication of KK not only in Nigeria but in the whole African continent and we are already seeing things being put in place. All glory to God!"

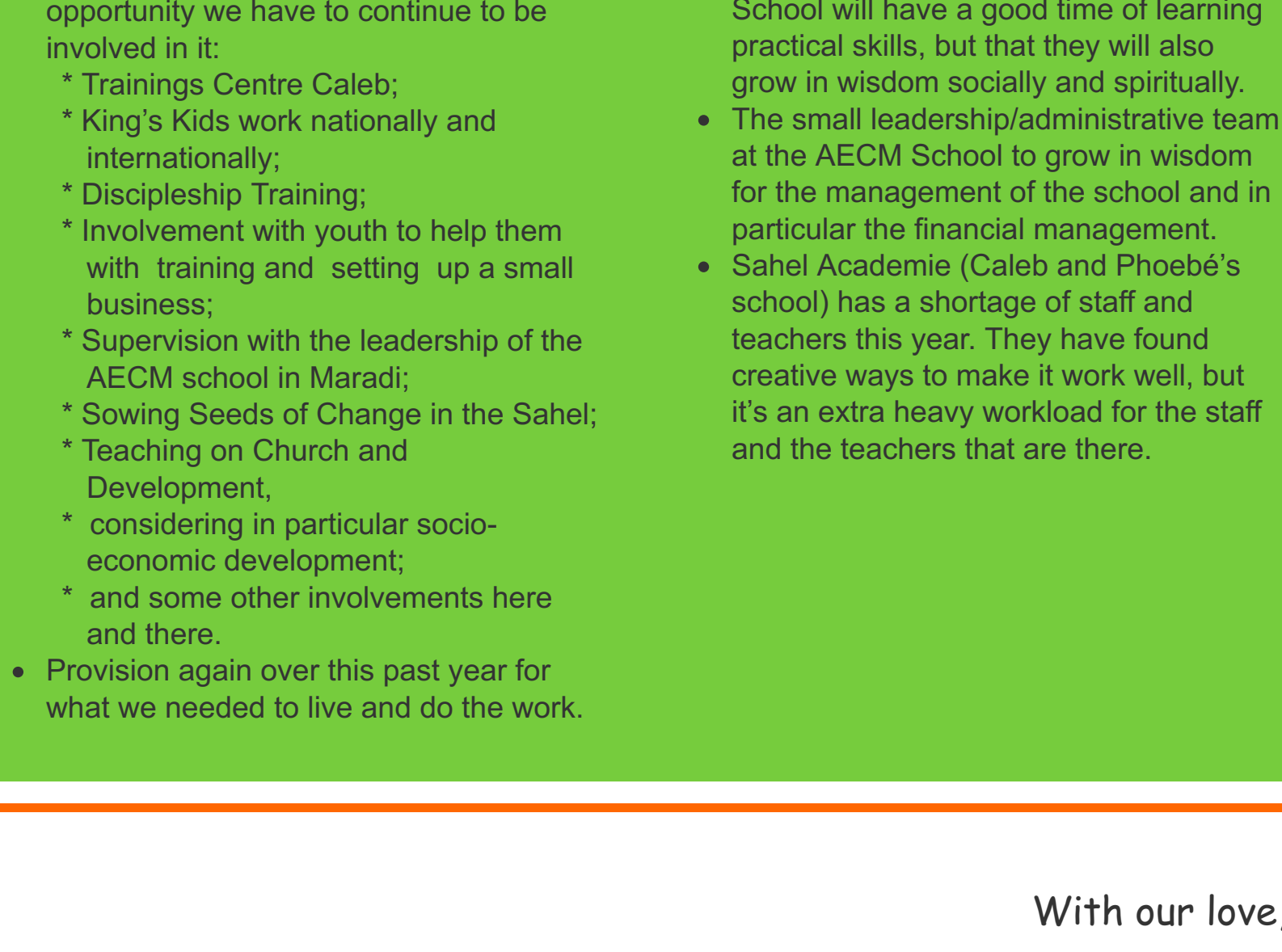


The above is what Joëlle Zeller wrote to describe Blaise's particular role and input during the training school he went off to 5 days after our return to Niger. Joëlle was one of the other staff members at the school and member of YWAM's international team for the King's Kids. Blaise himself adds to this: "it was really funny in a way; I basically went straight from the Netherlands to Nigeria. During the time in the Netherlands I felt like people were treating me with respect, but at the same time as part of the younger generation. When I arrived in Nigeria people considered me the "old" man and therefore came to me for advice and counsel. It was quite an interesting transition."

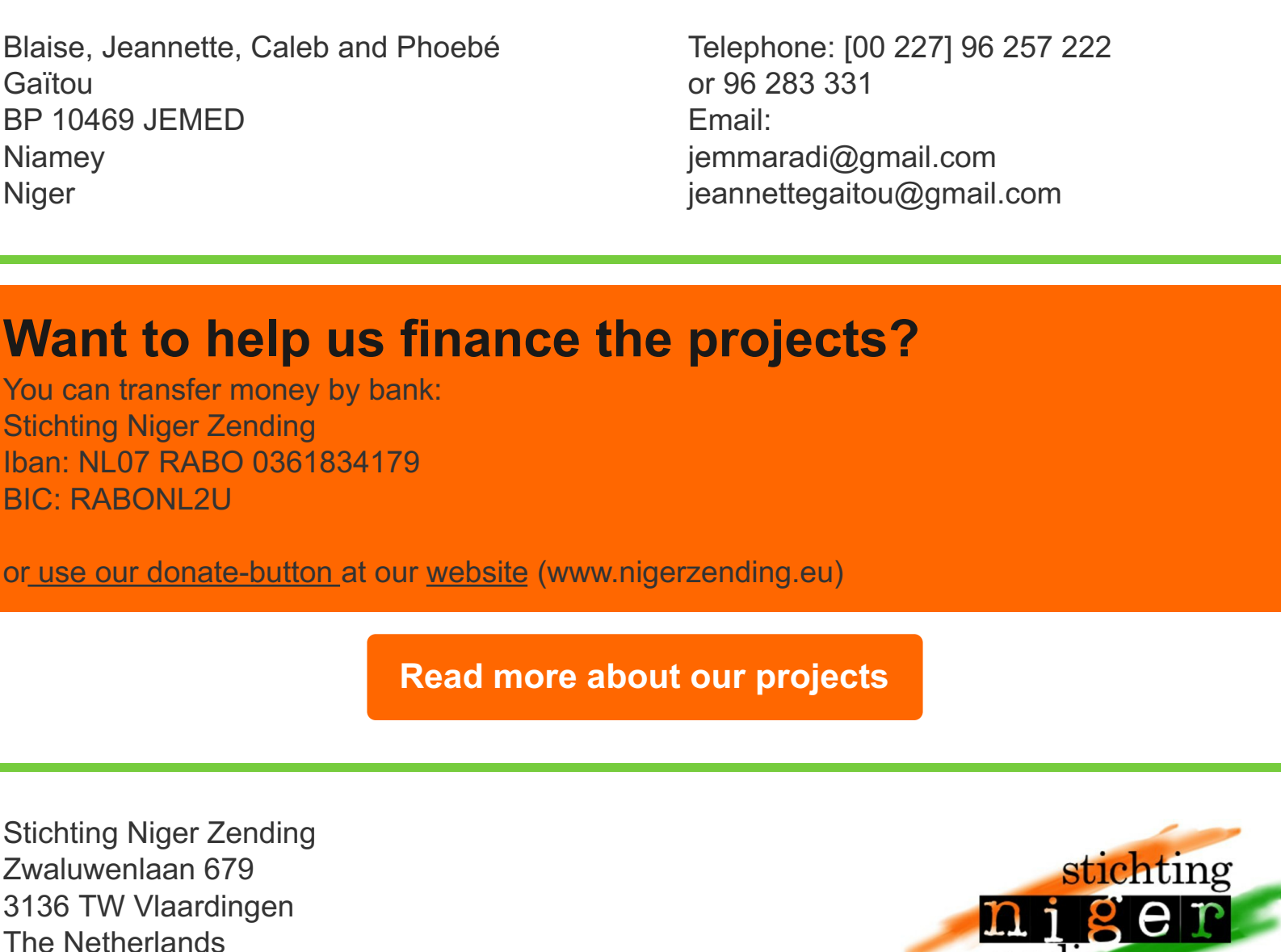
(note: the average age in Nigeria is 18,1 years and life expectancy is 61 years).

King's Kids= christian youth work from a broad perspective and works on spiritual and social well being.

YWAM= Youth With a Mission



Christmas and New Year's greetings



Jeannette's Christmas musings...

It's that time of year again where, albeit in different ways, around the world people are starting to prepare for Christmas. I am writing these greetings sitting outside at the former Sahel Campus where members of the missionary community organized a Christmas market and a celebration to kick-off the advent season. The church calendar tells us that tomorrow, 27 November, is the first Sunday of advent. I must admit that I'm usually not too good at consciously living toward Christmas. Decorating the house typically only happens in the week before Christmas and even planning the Christmas celebration itself often happens just before the actual date. Partly that is because I'm often reluctant to plan something ahead when I know something else may well come up, making me having to change my plans or planning. Even so, I do look forward to the Christmas celebration.

I don't know what Christmas means for you, but over the years for me it has become a moment to consciously being thankful, a celebration to consciously consider what I do have.

Celebrating Christmas in Niger looks very different from the type of celebration I grew up with. Recently I was talking with someone and we realized once again that the way we experience many things, and thus also the Christmas celebrations, is to a large extent determined by the culture and the way of doing things one was immersed in while young. These feelings continue to determine largely what one is comfortable with; even after having lived in another culture for a good number of years. In those situations the tendency to look at what we don't have and to start looking at all that we would like to have or be able to do easily takes the forefront. But, when I stop to think like that and take an honest look at my life, I realize that there is so much to be thankful for and therefore, so much to celebrate.

That is what I want to take into the advent and Christmas season this year, the realization that I really have something to celebrate. This all the more so because as Christians we remember at Christmas that God came to live life like all of us, came to be God with us. In this way He made it possible for a beginning of His Kingdom, of His GOOD life, to come on earth in the middle of (all the wars, the illnesses, the broken families and societies, death and darkness. He showed us in word and deed) the way to live so that it brings good to us and the people and the world around us and He invites us to do likewise. That is what I mostly celebrate at Christmas – that God loves me and EVERYONE else and this whole creation so much that He Himself came and opened the way for us to be able to represent His character and presence in this world.

When I focus on this, then those cultural differences I wrote about above lose much of their importance. Because then I focus on the WHY of Christmas and not the HOW, and I can simply celebrate.

We wish you all a very good Christmas and a happy New Year!

With our love,
Blaise, Jeannette, Caleb and Phoebé

[Donate now](#)

Blaise, Jeannette, Caleb and Phoebé
Gaitou
BP 10469 JEMED
Niamey
Niger

Telephone: [00 227] 96 257 222
or 96 283 331
Email:
jemmaradi@gmail.com
jeannettegaitou@gmail.com

Want to help us finance the projects?
You can transfer money by bank:
Stichting Niger Zending
Iban: NL07 RABO 0361834179
BIC: RABONL2U
or [use our donate-button](#) at our [website](http://www.nigerzending.eu) (www.nigerzending.eu)

[Read more about our projects](#)

Stichting Niger Zending
Zwaluwenlaan 679
3136 TW Vlaardingen
The Netherlands

Email: nigerzending@gmail.com



This email has been sent to [\[email\]](#). • If you no longer want to receive this newsletter, you can [unsubscribe here](#). • You can also [view and edit your subscription](#). • Please add nigerzending@gmail.com to your address book to ensure our emails continue to reach your inbox.

