

Bene Koytara Goyterey

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



Dear Friends



At present we're in the middle of the hottest season of the year looking forward to the start of the rainy season, hopefully around the middle of June (maybe a bit earlier, but also possibly later). Once the rains start people, animals and plants will all find relief. At the day of writing this introduction our Muslim neighbours and friends are celebrating the end of Ramadan. I cannot begin to imagine the relief that will bring to them. Going through the day from sunrise to sunset with temperatures rising above 40 degrees from about 11 till well in the afternoon and fasting not only on food, but also not being supposed to drink anything (some don't even swallow their saliva!), must be very tiring. And indeed, many sleep through the better part of the afternoon. It's a good thing that the

timing of Ramadan follows the lunar calendar and so next year it will be just before the hottest period.

To keep temperatures in our living room and bedrooms at more comfortable levels, we invested in a few so called swamp coolers or evaporative coolers; basically fans in a box with a water reservoir at the bottom and a pump and distribution system for the water to run through padding from top to bottom. The fan pulls air in from outside the box through the wet padding at the back and the sides, the evaporative effect cools the air down and the fan expels the cooler air through the front. A very simple but effective way to cool the air in a room when the prevailing temperatures are high enough and relative humidity not too high, and they need a lot less power than air-conditioners. This is not only interesting for our power bill, but it also means that they work despite our often capricious power levels.

Beside these snippets of our daily life issues, we are, in this newsletter, sharing with you a testimony of one of the ladies in training at Training Centre Caleb and the continued challenges, but also encouragements, to provide good quality education at the 'Académie Evangélique Cornerstone de Maradi'.

Challenges and encouragement at AECM

The average age of the population in Niger is 15 years. This, rather obviously, means that there are a lot of children. Even if not all of these children are going to school, there are many who do. Therefore, teachers are in high demand. Since at the same time the job market is not very large, many people take the opportunity to find a job as a teacher. The thing is, being a good teacher of children is not something everybody can simply take on. This is an issue we regularly face at the AECM school.



Last school year (2019-2020) we had to take on three new teachers. During the year, while following up on their work, Moustapha (adjunct director) and Judy (director) noted that one of the three was doing really well but that we would have to let go the other two at the end of the year. Thus, for this present (2020-2021) school year we had to look again to replace those two teachers.

The person we found to replace one of those two teachers has a good level of education and several years of experience in working with children, but not as a school teacher. Being a school teacher was completely new to him. At the beginning of the year this was a real struggle. But after some weeks he decided to take up the challenge and has been working hard to understand his job and do it at the same time. During one of the evaluations however, it became obvious that the children in his class were struggling to keep up with certain subjects, because last year they had not been receiving very good teaching and their present teacher had not yet learned how to help them catch up. Moustapha and Judy came up with ideas and the material to help the children to catch up and helped the teacher to understand how to go about it. He really took this to heart and started working with it and more recent evaluations have shown that the kids are indeed catching up and have been able to improve their results a lot. This, of course, has been a great encouragement to the kids and their teacher and also to Moustapha and Judy who saw that their efforts and advice were taken to heart and resulted in some real progress.

What does it main to learn a trade?



At Training Centre Caleb the present group of girls and women are in their third and final year of literacy training, cloths making, knitting and embroidery. Despite the selection process before being accepted for the training, by far not all of those who start in the first year make it till the third year. Various things may intervene. Some get married and subsequently are not given the liberty to continue. For others there may be health issues, and others yet simply find

the programme too challenging. So, of the 100 that started in year 1, 52 are at present continuing and nearing the final stages of the programme. They have started making cloths for clients and thus are earning some money; the possible start of their own business. A good moment to ask how the programme has influenced their lives.

One of the apprentices is Ramatou. She tells us: "Before, I wasn't doing anything. I was simply at home and did not have an activity. One day my friend came to visit me and she is among those who finished the training at Training Centre Caleb. She encouraged me to go and learn to use my hands to help myself. One day I came to apply, and God helped me. I was among those that were selected. I came here without knowledge, but now, I thank God, I also thank those who have assisted us, for helping us to go forward in knowledge, for now I know how to read and write, make cloths, and knitting. I'm feeling happy because my life has changed! God has blessed me with three children and because of the money I am earning now, I can take care of them; I can give them food and also cloths when necessary. My goal is to help those who need to grow in knowledge. Thank you".

We look forward to continue to support many people like Ramatou to get training and improve their living conditions.

With our love,

Blaise, Jeannette, Caleb and Phobé

To thank for:

- The girls and women finishing their three year training at Training Centre Caleb and how they experience the positive impact of the training on their lives.
- For the faithfulness of the women doing the teaching at Training Centre Caleb.
- For the teachers and staff at AECM and their efforts to provide quality education for the kids attending AECM.

To pray for:

- The government of Niger facing many challenges; security issues especially (but not exclusively) in many border areas of the country, food security, and provision of good education for it's young population, to name a few.
- That the girls and women finishing their training at Training Centre Caleb in June will actively use what they have learned to sustain themselves and their families.

[Donate now](#)

Blaise, Jeannette, Caleb and Phobé
Gaïtou

BP 10469 JEMED

Niamey

Niger

Telephone: [00 227] 96 257 222

or 96 283 331

Email:

jemmaradi@gmail.com

jeannettegaitou@gmail.com

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Stichting Niger Zending
Dordogne 11

3831 EJ Leusden
The Netherlands

Email: nigerzending@gmail.com



Website



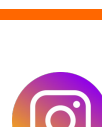
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