Newsletter May-October 2026
Family Gaïtou, Niger

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Bene Koytara Goyterey

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



Dear friends

Thankfulness

First and foremost: While finishing this newsletter the wonderful news came that our colleague, brother and friend who had been kidnapped in October 2025, has been released. We praise God!

How are things?
It's high time for an update on our life here in the Netherlands and the progress of our work in Niger. In April you received the 2025 annual overview from me. In that letter, you read about our unexpected and rather abrupt departure from Niger at the end of 2025. I also wrote at the time that the work would continue, even though I myself was no longer in Niger. We are now already in the second half of 2026.
Therefore this Newsletter has two parts.

Part 1: How are we doing?

Housing in the Netherlands
Looking back, our first months in the Netherlands felt somewhat unreal. Since we intended to stay, I immediately had to begin navigating the Dutch administrative system. One of our first discoveries was that Phoebe and I needed permission to move in with my dad because he rents from a housing corporation. Thankfully, his apartment officially has three bedrooms, making this possible.
I found this requirement somewhat ironic given the severe housing shortage, especially for affordable housing. In practice, Phoebe and I had few alternatives. While I understand such rules exist within a broader system, encountering them firsthand often felt contradictory and unnecessarily complicated.

Phoebe's education
That said, the system also has its strengths. Once we were registered, the authorities quickly noticed that Phoebe was not enrolled in school and helped place her in a nearby transition program for children with limited Dutch language skills. She spent about four months there and will move on after the summer break. Although the academic level is still introductory, it will help

her to continue to work on her Dutch and provide a smooth pathway into the next levels within the regular school system.

Looking for a job
Because our support structure for life and work in Niger could not continue once we relocated to the Netherlands, I applied for government assistance and began looking for work. The challenge was figuring out where my unique combination of skills and experience might fit. With the help of friends and some useful tools, I narrowed my search and found a position with the Salvation Army's Programme Management Office in The Hague. I started on June 15 and am greatly enjoying both the team and the work, which focuses on supporting people living on the margins of society. Starting a completely new job has kept me busy, and it has definitely been one of the main reasons for the delay in getting this newsletter out.

Debriefing after leaving Niger



At the beginning of this year, SIM organized debriefing gatherings for missionaries and associates who had to leave Niger following the events of October 2025. Phoebe and I attended one in northwestern France. It was a valuable opportunity to reconnect with friends and colleagues, share experiences, process our sense of loss, and begin looking ahead. I am deeply grateful we were able to participate. Phoebe also had the chance to spend time with a friend from Sahel Academy, which was an unexpected blessing.

Our role in Niger
Together with Blaise, we always intended that the ministries we were involved in would never become dependent on us. Recently, it just really struck me that this goal has largely been achieved. Apart from some continuing involvement in financial administration and occasional online contact, the work of Training Centre Caleb, Fabricants de Joie, and Sowing Seeds of Change in the Sahel continues under the leadership and ownership of others. And the AECM school is completely independent.

In part 2 you'll read about the progress of the work in Niger.



Progress in Niger
What has become of Franck's youth work; the women training to become tailors; the Christian school in Maradi; and the agricultural and health education initiatives? Here is a brief update on each project.

Fabricants de Joie – continuation and celebration
Frank continues to faithfully organize the weekly FJ meetings, and it has been exciting to see the group's involvement grow. Over the past few months, the FJ were invited to participate in three different concerts, giving them opportunities to share their talents with new audiences. They regularly practiced choreographies in preparation for these events and also presented mimes during the concerts.
Frank sent me several short videos from the performances, and it was a real joy to watch. The audience responded enthusiastically, and Frank shared that many people were genuinely touched by what they saw. It is encouraging to see how God can use creative gifts to impact hearts and lives.



Another exciting development is the launch of **Quartier Libre (Kids Club)** activities in a village near Niamey. This new outreach is already creating opportunities to connect with children and families in the community. Looking ahead, Frank is planning a Quartier Libre training in Maradi in September to help equip others for this ministry, and so that the activities will restart there too.
This year also marks a very special occasion: the **50th anniversary of the FJ worldwide**. Celebrations are taking place across many countries, providing opportunities to reflect on God's faithfulness throughout the years. One such celebration was held in Ivory Coast, and Frank had the privilege of attending. Reports from the event spoke of a joyful time of fellowship, remembrance, and gratitude, as participants celebrated the past, gave thanks for the present, and looked forward with hope to what God has in store for the future.

Training Centre Caleb - A Story of Perseverance



In his July report, Sunday gave thanks to God for sustaining both staff and participants throughout the school year. Of the 82 women who began their second year of training, some were unable to continue due to marriage, relocation, or other personal circumstances. By June, 71 remained, although nine were unable to sit their end-of-year exams because of illness or bereavement.
Despite these challenges, the year was marked by determination and perseverance. Sunday was encouraged by the participants' progress, noting, *"Personally, I noticed that most of them have really performed well, based on their results and their teachers' testimonies."*
Even more encouraging is that most of these women hope to continue into the third and final year of training. Their commitment, together with the faithful support of staff and teachers, is helping them gain valuable skills, confidence, and new opportunities for the future. Behind each success story is a woman who chose to persevere, and people who invested in helping her reach her potential.





The AECM school in Maradi - A Year of Growth and Achievement
As the 2025-2026 school year came to a close, there was much to celebrate. Student enrolment grew from 273 (in 2024-2025) to 387, an impressive 42% increase, with 53 children in kindergarten, 247 in primary school, and 87 in the collège. This growth reflects the trust that families place in the school and the value they see in the education it provides.
Alongside this growth came excellent academic results at the primary level. Every CM2 student

passed the end-of-primary examination, a wonderful reward for the hard work of both students and teachers.
At the collège, the results were more mixed, with 10 of the 19 students who sat their examinations passing. While there is room for improvement, each success marks an important step forward for a young person pursuing their education.
We thank God for a year marked by growth, learning, and achievement, and we pray that the school will continue to provide high-quality education as it serves an increasing number of students in the years ahead.



SSCS: agriculture and health education
As usual, with the arrival of the rainy season, crops were planted at the research and demonstration farm. The start of the season was challenging due to very low rainfall, but conditions improved as the rains picked up during July. We therefore hope that the harvest will be sufficient, not only on our farm but also more broadly across the region.
An important milestone was recently reached with the submission of the paperwork required to obtain permission to continue our work in nearby villages. The application is currently under review, and we are awaiting a response.
Meanwhile, Abou continues to play a vital role in the community health teaching programme. Working online with our colleague Ruth, they are continuing to strengthen and improve the health lessons so that they can have an even greater impact. In addition, Abou has taken on several administrative responsibilities previously handled by team members who have since left, helping to ensure that various ministries continue to run smoothly.
Ruth has now officially retired, but she remains keen to continue working online with Abou to complete the remaining revisions, albeit at a more relaxed pace. As we await a positive decision on permission to work in the villages, we look forward to seeing the benefits of the improved teaching materials in the community.

I would like to conclude this newsletter with some prayer requests and sincerely thank you all for your commitment.

With love,

Jeannette

To thank for

- Kevin's release
- the way in which the people I/we worked with in Niger have taken ownership of the work and are now continuing it on their own
- the good job I found
- the educational opportunities and new friends for Phoebe

To pray for

- wisdom for the government of Niger to guide the country despite the challenging circumstances
- perseverance and wisdom for the churches and their involvement in society
- those from Youth With a Mission and the SIM who are continuing the work on the ground with fewer staff
- a good start to the new school year in October
- strength and perseverance for Franck and those he works with as they continue to shape the children's and youth ministry
- that the necessary paperwork allowing SSCS to work in the villages will be issued soon

Jeannette, Caleb and Phoebé Gaïtou

WhattsApp : [00 227] 96 257 222
Email:
jemmaradi@gmail.com
jeannettegaitou@gmail.com

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