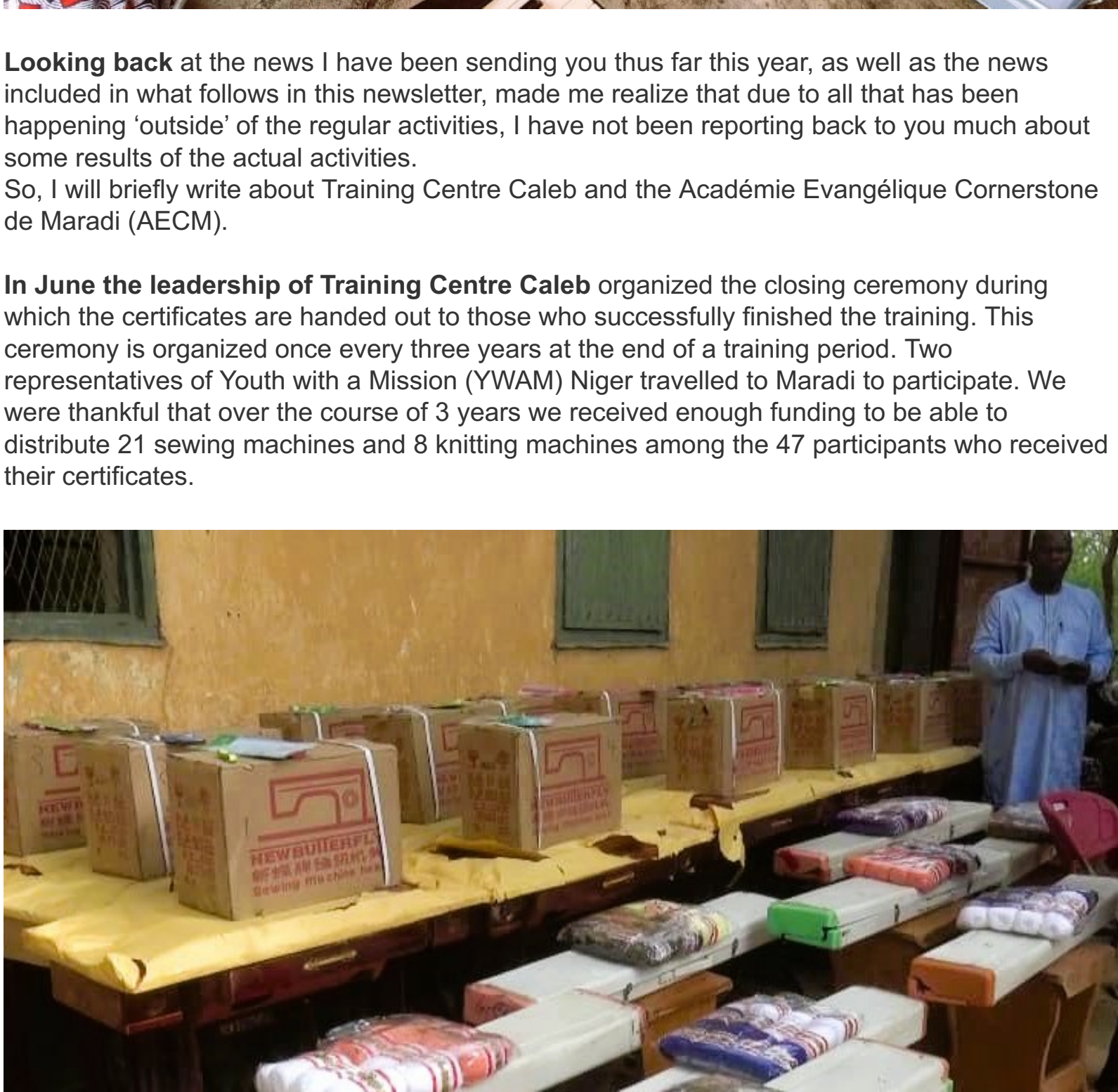


Bene Koytara Goyterey

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

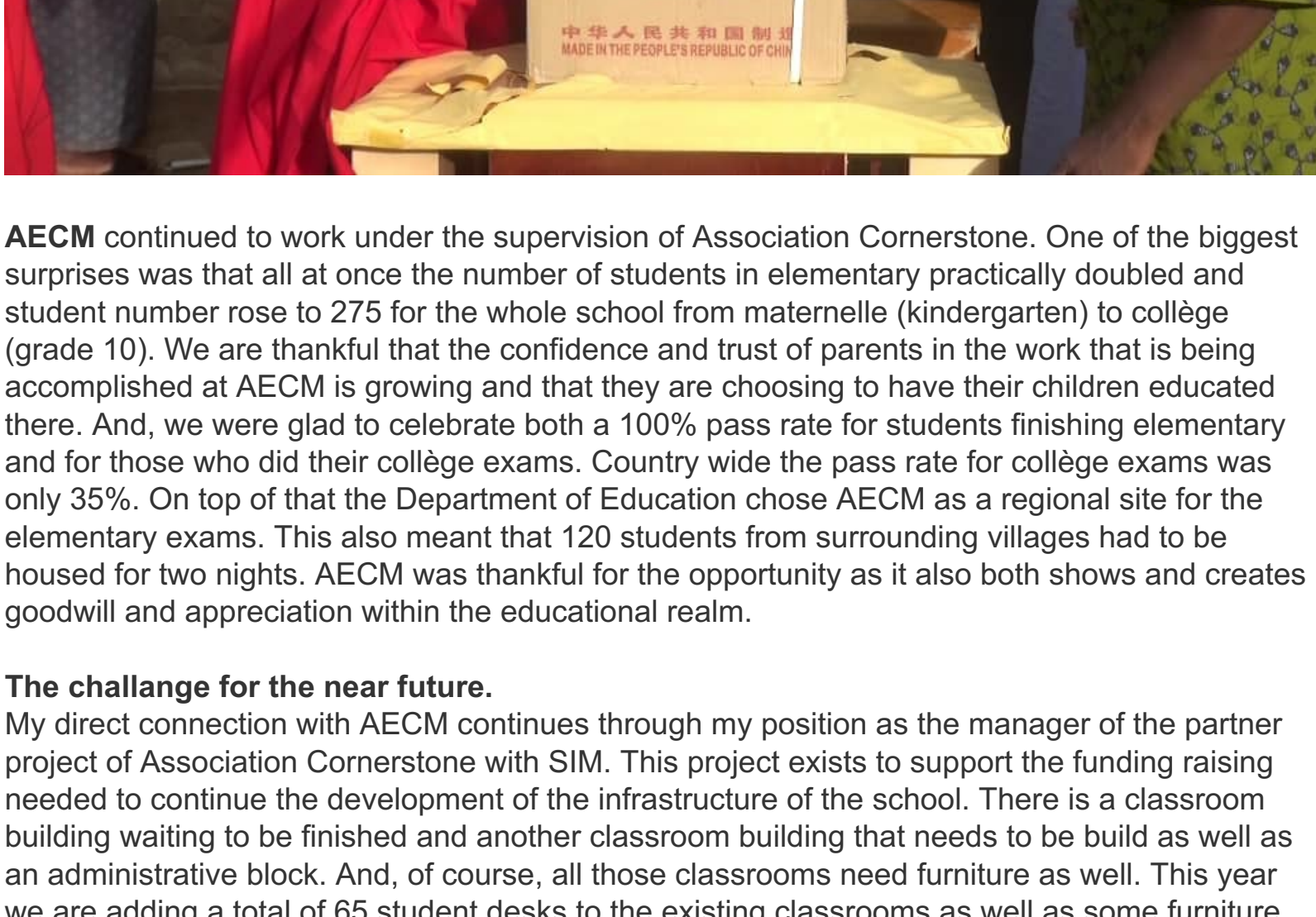


Dear friends and readers of our Newsletter,



Looking back at the news I have been sending you thus far this year, as well as the news included in what follows in this newsletter, made me realize that due to all that has been happening 'outside' of the regular activities, I have not been reporting back to you much about some results of the actual activities. So, I will briefly write about Training Centre Caleb and the Académie Evangélique Cornerstone de Maradi (AECM).

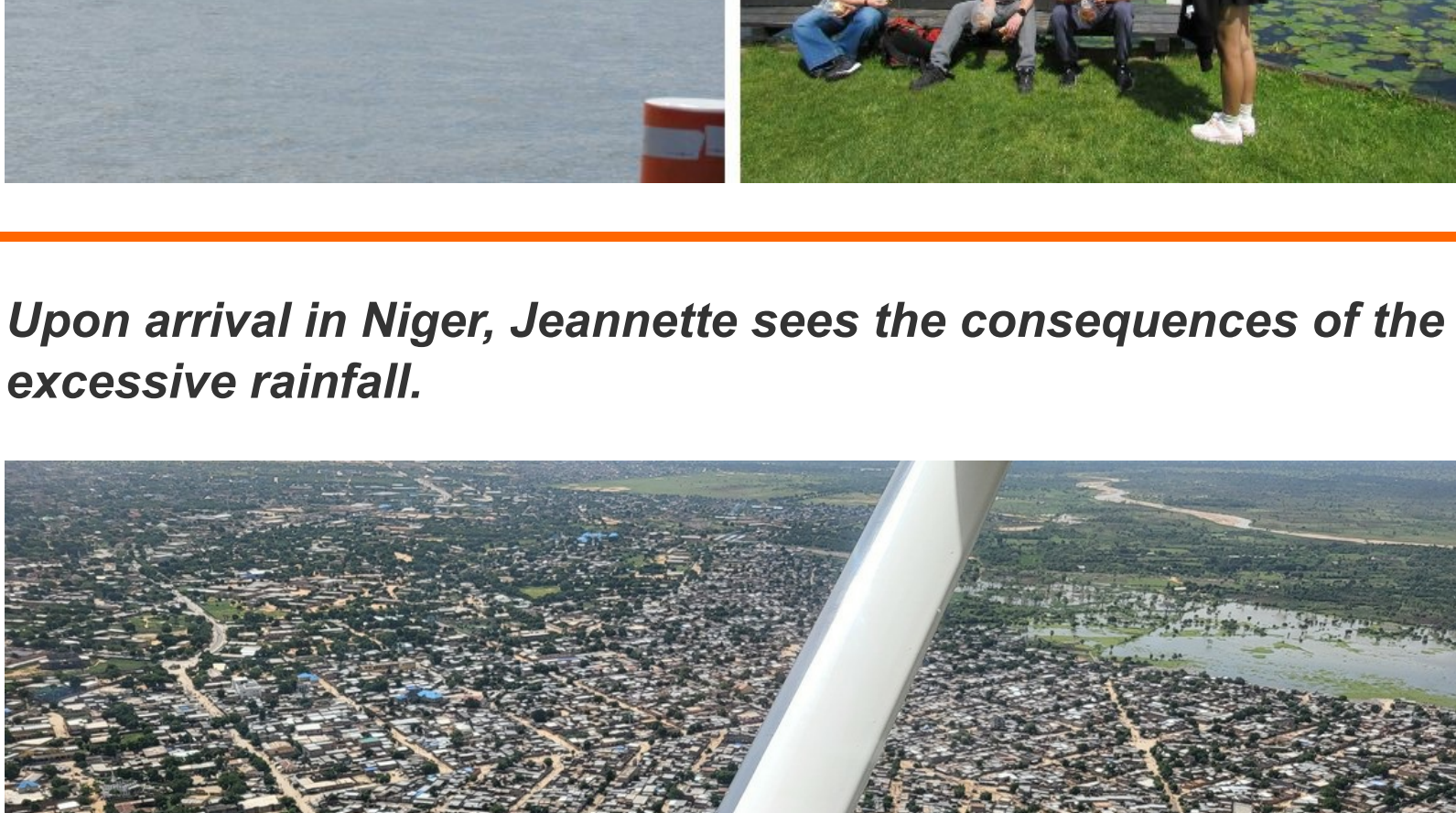
In June the leadership of Training Centre Caleb organized the closing ceremony during which the certificates are handed out to those who successfully finished the training. This ceremony is organized once every three years at the end of a training period. Two representatives of Youth with a Mission (YWAM) Niger travelled to Maradi to participate. We were thankful that over the course of 3 years we received enough funding to be able to distribute 21 sewing machines and 8 knitting machines among the 47 participants who received their certificates.



AECM continued to work under the supervision of Association Cornerstone. One of the biggest surprises was that all at once the number of students in elementary practically doubled and student number rose to 275 for the whole school from maternelle (kindergarten) to collège (grade 10). We are thankful that the confidence and trust of parents in the work that is being accomplished at AECM is growing and that they are choosing to have their children educated there. And, we were glad to celebrate both a 100% pass rate for students finishing elementary and for those who did their college exams. Country wide the pass rate for college exams was only 35%. On top of that the Department of Education chose AECM as a regional site for the elementary exams. This also meant that 120 students from surrounding villages had to be housed for two nights. AECM was thankful for the opportunity as it also both shows and creates goodwill and appreciation within the educational realm.

The challenge for the near future.

My direct connection with AECM continues through my position as the manager of the partner project of Association Cornerstone with SIM. This project exists to support the funding raising needed to continue the development of the infrastructure of the school. There is a classroom building waiting to be finished and another classroom building that needs to be build as well as an administrative block. And, of course, all those classrooms need furniture as well. This year we are adding a total of 65 student desks to the existing classrooms as well as some furniture for the maternelle section.



In what follows in this letter you can read about our time in the Netherlands and extreme rainfall in Niger.

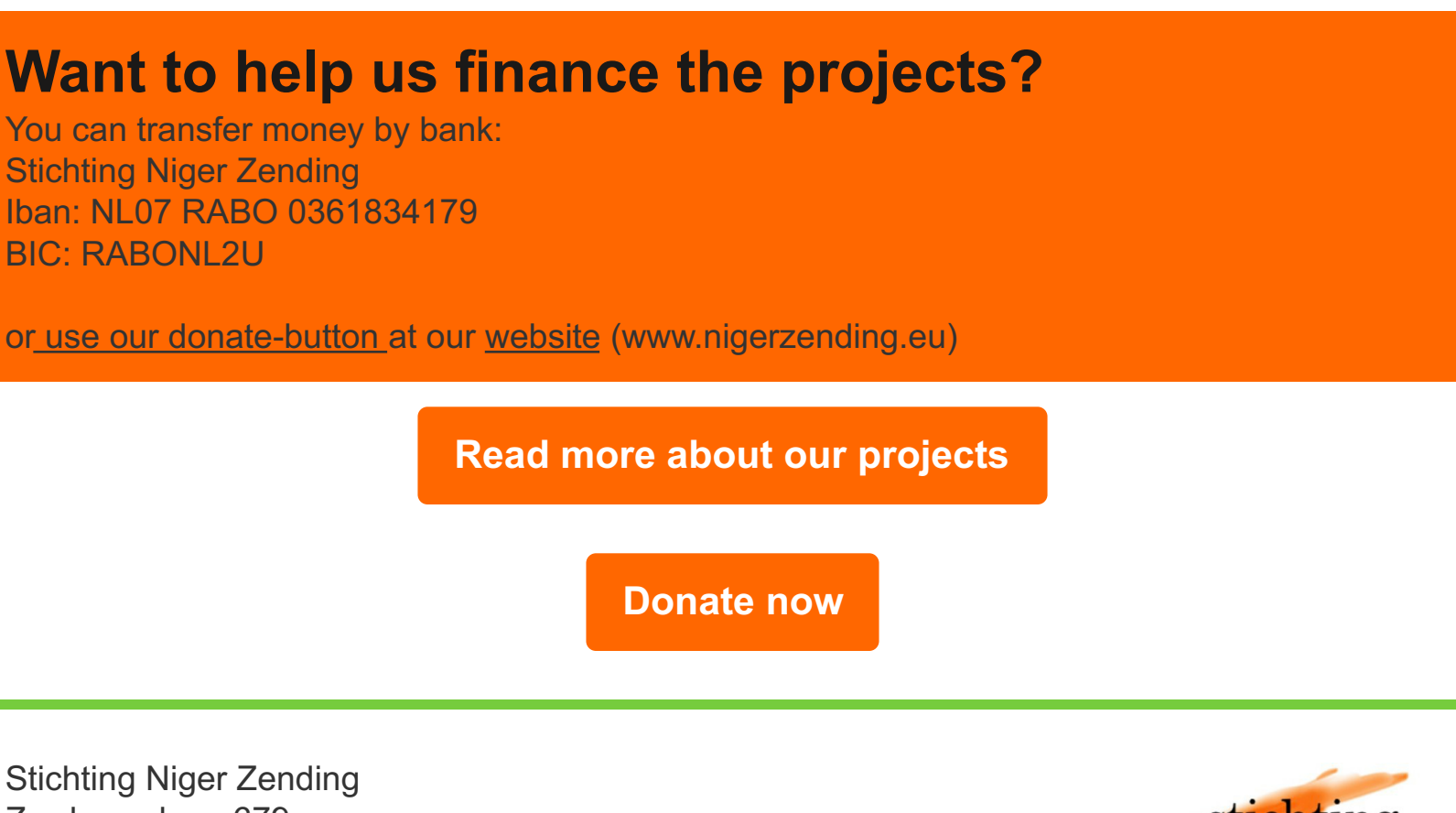
About the matters that Jeannette had to arrange regarding Caleb's move to the Netherlands.



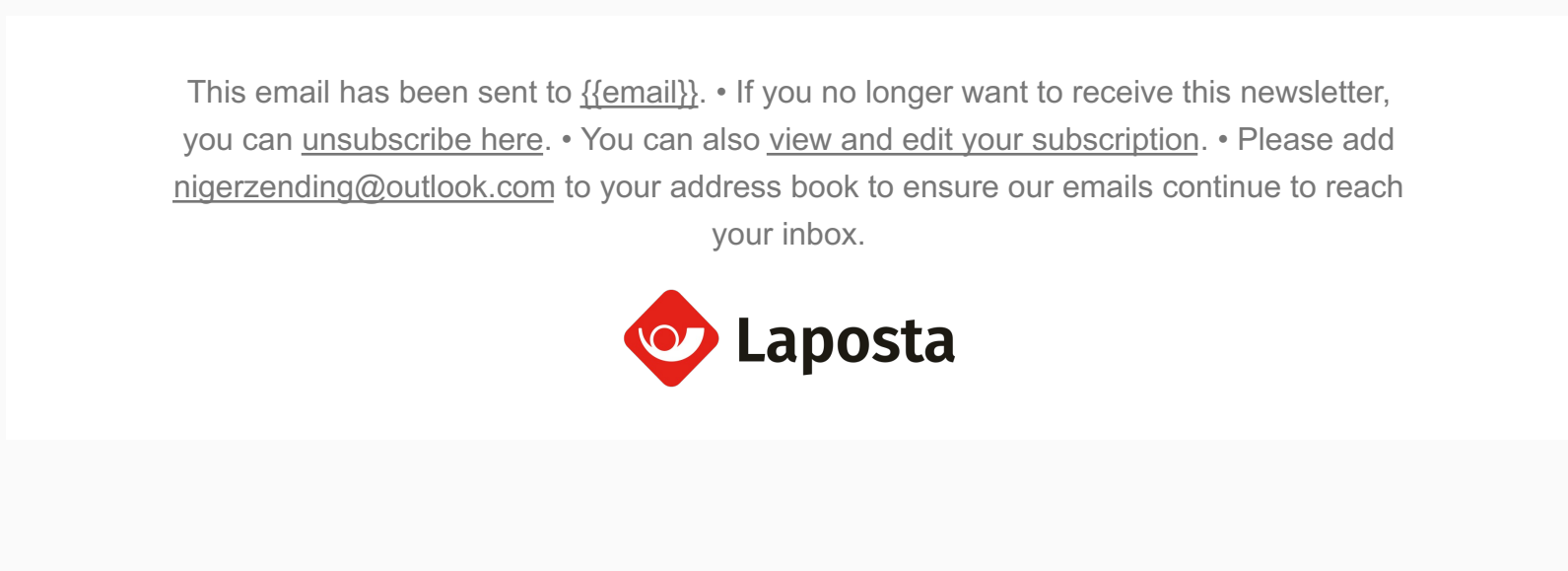
This weekend (7-8 September) it has been 4 weeks since Phoebé and I came back to Niger after 8 weeks in the Netherlands. It seems longer. Probably because we dived right back into the business of life and school/work. Phoebé started school again that same week after we returned and adapting to the increased workload now that she has started the high school level. She is the only girl in her class of 4 students. But she has several girl friends in the grades above hers. And for Caleb it has now been basically 4 weeks since he started a whole new chapter in his life based in the Netherlands. I am very grateful for the home where he was offered a place. Since the host parents were just returning from their vacation when Phoebé and I were leaving, Caleb was brought to his new home by his grandparents. Helping Caleb to arrange everything for him to be able to stay in the Netherlands, was one of the two objectives of our time in the Netherlands. Because even though he already was a Dutch citizen, moving to the Netherlands from abroad plunges one into the Dutch system of rules and regulations. That can be rather overwhelming when you come from the Niger-system. I was glad I could be there for him to help him, discovered along the way that it would even have been rather challenging to arrange things had I not been there with him, but all went well and even much more smoothly than I had dared to hope. For now he is working and will be looking into which studies at which school he would like to start next school year.

The second objective of our time in the Netherlands was simply to rest, recover, spend time with family and friends, enjoy all the green and the cleanliness, the possibility to go grocery shopping by bike, dutch bread, cheese and milk, etc. Especially since arranging Caleb's situation went smoothly, I truly felt that it was a restful time and a time that helped in the process of recovery of losing Blaise so suddenly and tragically. It was a restful time that we were able to stay for almost 3 weeks in the home of one of my cousins in the beautiful city of Gouda while she and her husband were on vacation. An extra bonus there was a nearby farm selling their own cheese. We were also offered a midweek stay in a lovely little house at the YWAM base Heidebeek, which is located in one of the beautiful parts of the Netherlands. And the rest of the time we enjoyed the hospitality of my parents in Vlaardingen. Of course we also spend time with my brother and sister-in-law. They took us on a visit to Kinderdijk (a UNESCO World Heritage site of a series of historical windmills) and the city of Dordrecht, while using the waterbus to get there. The waterbus is a public transport system on the rivers in the area between Rotterdam and Dordrecht. It was fun to have done that and to be able spend the day together like that. Besides time with family we also visited with some of my close friends; visits that I have experienced as very special, enjoyable and uplifting.

And so, at the end of those 8 weeks in the Netherlands I felt well rested and ready to return to Niger, face and start a new chapter of my life here with Phoebé and put my shoulders to the wheel again.



Upon arrival in Niger, Jeannette sees the consequences of the excessive rainfall.



One thing that struck us on our arrival back in Niger was that rainfall seemed to be abundant. We arrived in the middle of the night, but from what we felt in the car driving on the dirt roads in our neighbourhood it was obvious that these had been enduring some serious rainstorms. While August is the month with the highest rainfall, this year precipitation has been exceptionally high. And it has been continuing into the month of September with unusual frequency and quantity. As in other places in the world, the weather in Niger this year seems to be disturbed. Average rainfall in and around Maradi is about 550 mm. This year it is over 1000 mm.

You may think that it is good thing for a country like Niger to receive more rain. But many people live in houses made out of hand pressed and sun dried clay bricks. When walls made from these bricks get too wet, they collapse. This is something that happens every year during the rainy season to a certain number of houses, but this year has been extreme. On top of that, in certain places there were huge rainstorms with a lot of water at once, causing flash floods and terrible destruction. Moreover, many people lost their life either due to drowning or collapsing houses. National reports talk about 300 recorded deaths and 800,000 people affected by the floods. The picture is from such a flash flood in Maradi.

It happened early September when there was a rainstorm of 145 mm. Nearby villages were also touched by this rainstorm. In two of those villages we're also involved with the Sowing Seeds of Change in the Sahel project. Our contact person in one village, who is also the village pastor, told me that he is housing 80 women (and their children, certainly) whose house collapsed in the church. It's just a village church – I cannot imagine what it looks like to have 80 women plus children all in there during the night! He also said that beside these 80 there were many more in the village who lost their house. We are in the process of looking into possibilities do something to come alongside the people affected and bring some alleviation to their situation. Due to the challenges caused by the extreme rainfall (a.o. schools being occupied by people who lost their houses) the government has decided to delay the start of the school year from October 2 to October 28. The leadership at Training Centre Caleb has decided to go along with this too. Part of the roads in the village of Soura, where the Centre is located, are still flooded and especially since this is the start of a new cycle of three years with a new group, it's better to start when people have been able to deal with the major challenges of this rainy season. One new activity that I've accepted to become involved in, is to be a member at the board of Sahel Academy (the school Phoebe attends). We meet once a month to pray for school staff, students and school related issues, to discuss and make decisions about the big picture matters concerning the running of the school as well as a few other bits and pieces. One thing I had to get used to again, was doing the school runs to take Phoebe to school and pick her up again. Last year Caleb could drive himself and his sister to and from school – that was luxury!

With love,
Jeannette

To thank for

- Good leadership at AECM, the work with the children and the good results obtained as well as the favor the school is receiving from parents and government officials.
- For a good and safe trip back and forth to Maradi for me (more on that in a next newsletter).
- That Caleb has a good place to live and a good job to be able to provide for himself.

To pray for

- Wisdom for Sunday and Hama as they supervise the work at Training Centre Caleb.
- Continued good leadership and management at AECM for this new upcoming school year with very likely more students again.
- A director for Sahel Academy and wisdom for the board to provide good general management in the absence of a director; wisdom and strength for the elementary and secondary principals who also are managing more in the present situation.
- Continued good health for Phoebé and myself.

Jeannette, Caleb and Phoebé Gaïtou
BP 10469 JEMED
Niamey
Niger

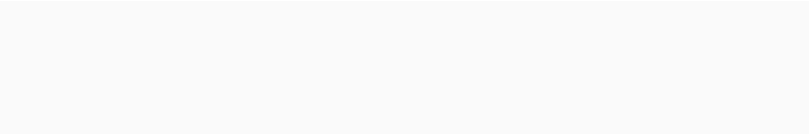
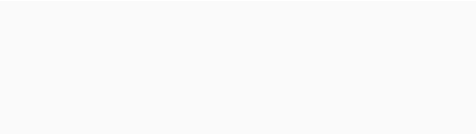
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