

# FRATERNITE NOTRE DAME ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 2020 - NIGER, AFRICA



Fraternite Notre Dame NGO in Niger is an organization which was created by Fraternite Notre Dame, a Catholic Religious Order, based in Chicago, USA.

It was born from the vision of its Founder, His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie, to bring about a fairer world, offering charitable services, namely in Niger, in order to reach sustainable development goals.

Our religious nuns, friars and priests do not receive any salary and they all work as volunteers, at the service of the poorest of the poor.

For this reason, the organization has been operating its activities in Niger for many years, near the poorest of the poor.

Fraternite Notre Dame NGO intervenes in four strategic directions, which are health, education, help to abandoned children, and access to potable water.

The NGO Fraternite Notre Dame in Niger carried out several activities during this year 2020 with various partners such as, among others, the Embassy of the United States of America, the Niger Water Company (SEEN), the NGO Hilfsaktion Noma, the National Hospital of Niamey, the Governorate of Niamey, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Child Protection, the Ministry of Regional Planning and Community Development and the NGO SOS.



**Fraternite Notre Dame  
at the service of the youth  
through education:**

Knowing that the development of a country requires access to quality education for the greatest number, since 2002, the Fraternite Notre Dame has managed a school complex called Myriam de Nazareth which gradually over the years has welcomed students in kindergarten, primary, middle and high school cycle.



Our school being acknowledged for the quality of its education, this year, 100% of the students taking the BEPC (Undergraduate Study Certificate) have successfully passed it.

**New achievements:**

- Construction of five new classes in response to damages caused by the floods.
- Insertion of the Spanish language for kindergarten
- Creation of a child care center.
- Pastry Cooking Class for students who are interested.
- Opening of the High School.

The goal of this school complex is to provide all children in Niger with access to quality education. This is why the school welcomes many poor, disabled and orphaned children who cannot go to school due to lack of funds and takes care of their tuition fees.



Fraternite Notre Dame provides quality education for children in vulnerable situations:

In 2020, close to 600 children have received quality education at Fraternite Notre Dame's school. As a result, the children are educated and the country's schooling rate is raised. A huge work has been done with these children, who would otherwise not receive any education. About 40 professors are teaching at this educational center; which also means a job for these educators and teachers.



### **Fraternite Notre Dame and potable water for all.**

In this year particularly affected by drought, Fraternite Notre Dame is facilitating access to drinking water to all the needy near our Niamey Mission.

Families can draw water from the mission's well free of charge and greatly appreciate this source of drinking water close to their homes. It should be noted that due to lack of sources, Nigeriens often have to walk kilometers

to find the water they need for their families.

### **Fraternite Notre Dame and health: Health care for people in vulnerable situations**

For the majority of the Nigerien population, access to health or health care remains a challenge today. Nigeriens have the choice between overcrowded and deficient public health services and private establishments where the rates for services are very high and are therefore not accessible to middle-class Nigeriens.

Access to health remains a luxury for some social strata in Niger. In hospitals in particular, given the country's extreme poverty, sanitary conditions are deplorable: not enough beds, the patients lay down on the floor, unattended, waiting for death. Gradually, they lose consciousness and pass away, very often without anyone to take care of them.





Fraternite Notre Dame's dispensary facilitates access to a health service for people without means and improves health indicators in Niger. Our dispensary also offers a job to physicians, nurses and other medical personnel, thus helping additional families.

Many poor patients came to our medical facility with health complications which very often could lead to death. About 400 people were treated per month: treatment for malaria, typhoid, anemia and other conditions, along with childbirths.

However, each year during the rainy season, a large increase in patients can be observed, due to malaria which alarmingly wreaks havoc in the country. Some patients have come to us with parasite levels so high that nothing could be done, but many have been cured thanks to our treatments.

Whenever possible, they bring a very small amount as compared to what is asked elsewhere. But we take care of many, free of charge. No one is refused at the Mission of Fraternité Notre Dame because, as the Sisters say: "Life cannot be purchased!"

Here is the tragic case of Habiba, a young woman of 30, who was pregnant. She was abandoned in the street and felt her baby die inside her. She went to the Hospital and was rejected because of her humiliating poverty. No one wanted to help her and she was going to die. Thank God, she presented herself to the NGO Fraternite Notre Dame. We welcomed her, looked after her, fed her and we transferred her again to the Hospital which then agreed to operate to remove her child who had died in her womb, two months earlier! She was well after the operation and currently, she leads a normal life. It was a real miracle!

All these beautiful charitable activities require many sacrifices and self-denial from the Religious of Fraternite Notre Dame, who receive no salary and give their time without sparing any effort.



## Fraternite Notre Dame and help for abandoned children

Fraternite Notre Dame ensures complete care for internal and external orphans, abandoned children and the elderly.

More than 3,200 patients hospitalized at the national hospital and referral hospital in Niamey benefited from distributions of hot food, Christmas gifts, soaps, diapers and disinfectants items.

300 single mothers benefited with their children from food, clothing and health assistance from pediatricians free of charge.



Nearly 2,000 people benefited from donations of prescription drugs and 600 students and staff were taken care of at the clinic free of charge.

Including clinic and a maternity unit, this year it was naturally affected by the covid-19 pandemic. It had to suspend its activities for a period of time, to prepare the workforce and medical staff, as have other hospitals and clinics in the country.

Following strong demand from the poor people we were assisting, we had to reopen our doors while respecting the barrier measures set by the government. Not to mention the devastation caused by malaria, which necessitated





a redevelopment of the premises to meet everyone's demand.

**Support for abandoned or orphaned children in our orphanage and entrusted by the Ministries of Justice and the Protection of Children, to take care of them and provide for their education.**

Since 2001, Fraternite Notre Dame has created a center for orphaned, abandoned or extremely vulnerable children, to offer them full care until they come of age. Currently, the center accommodates around 30 children, girls and boys, whose ages vary from 0 to 18 years old.



A complete education is offered to them by the religious of Fraternite Notre Dame to ensure their future with a job or higher studies.

The older children between the ages of 18 and 24 have returned into their biological families.

Several of the children raised at Fraternite Notre Dame are now part of different NGOs aiming to help their Nigerien brothers and sisters, following the example of the members of Fraternite Notre Dame, from whom, during their childhood, they appreciated the help and support.

Thanks to the education acquired within Fraternite Notre Dame, they were able to obtain diplomas and complete their professional education. They are now independent, responsible for themselves and have a secure future. They in turn do good to people around them.

In 2020, Fraternite Notre Dame welcomed all these children who benefited from its center where they flourished from a moral, educational and physical point of view. This work contributes to the achievement of objectives relating to children's rights in Niger.

The police often bring in babies who have been abandoned by their mothers, who are usually unknown. What we know is that dire poverty has led to this terrible situation. They arrive in critical condition, premature, starving to death. The Sisters often succeed in saving them, watching over them night and day.

When they are in good health, the children go to the nursery or to the "Myriam



of Nazareth” school of Fraternite Notre Dame. Otherwise, they have many activities at the orphanage: cooking lessons, sewing, gardening, soccer, games, drawing and choir. They even sang in front of the US Ambassador, who came in person to our Mission on May 27, 2020. The children were so happy!

### **Fraternite Notre Dame’s Other Achievements in 2020:**

- Frequent free distributions of food kits and NFI kits (non-food items) were made to the populations of the neighborhoods surrounding Niamey



airport, who were victims of flooding.

This year 2020 has been exceptional in terms of rainfall, and in such circumstances the consequences are disastrous for the populations bordering the Niger River. In fact, due to the silting up of the Niger River and the lack of a rainwater drainage system in the city of Niamey, excess rainfall is putting thousands of families on the streets; these families find themselves in fortunes camps set up by the government or in schools. And generally, these families lack everything.

It is in this context that Fraternite Notre Dame initiated a free distribution of food items (rice, meat) and hygiene kits (buckets and soaps) to 500 people relocated to the site of the airport schools I and II. This was repeated many times during the year.

The living conditions are very difficult for these relocated families. They have no running water or electricity, in unbearable heat; they have nothing left. Their homes were already very dilapidated: frequently, huts of earth and straw with clay walls, which under the torrential rains, collapsed, sometimes burying the inhabitants under their burden. Also the families that we visit are very grateful for our help. The Nigerien Government acknowledges all the help of Fraternite Notre Dame and thanks her for it.

- Free distributions of hot meals at the Niamey National Hospital in Pavilions A and B were carried out on a regular basis. Each time, more than 200 patients

in vulnerable situations have benefited from free food kits. Fraternite Notre Dame also distributed water, juice, sheets, diapers and even toys for children. We also provided assistance to emergency personnel.



- Distribution of food to lepers in Koira Tégui: this segment of the marginalized population of the city of Niamey has benefited from the free distribution of food kits: rice, oil, corn and millet. For feast days, Fraternite Notre Dame brings them some goats or sheep, that together, they may celebrate at the lepers' village.

About fifty families benefited from these food kits and were very grateful because they receive very little help and find themselves rejected by society. New cases are detected ever year, including among the young population.

Fraternite Notre Dame provides the same kind of support to widows, abandoned women, women with fistula,

who fell victims to early marriage, and who by force of circumstances have become heads of families. Note that Niger registered 756 women with fistula in June 2019 by the UNFPA.



On the occasion of the various religious feasts, the Fraternite Notre Dame organized the distribution of food to the poor in the area. 1 ton of rice, 2 tons of millet, oil, sugar and pasta could be distributed to more than 100 vulnerable families. For the feast of Tabaski, 100 people were able to receive meat through our institution.

Similarly, refugees were referred to us by churches in Niamey, being, for the most part, refugees, receive support in multiple ways. It should also be noted that around our area, one hundred families get food boxes (rice, beans, soap, oil, etc...)





## **Fraternite Notre Dame's Projects**

We have a project to build classrooms to increase the study space of students. These classrooms are due to open shortly.



We thank all the people who helped us and in particular, we would like to thank our Founder, His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie for founding this Mission of Niger and for the constant support that he gives us through his advice and prayers and for the example of dedication that he shows to all who suffer in their heart or in their body, regardless of race, class, gender or creed, and without receiving a salary.

Niger is a poor country and 2020 was a year particularly difficult due to the pandemic, but our work has helped many single people, families, neglected children and sick people, where no one would dare come near to bring them support.

We encounter so many serious cases, people with elephantiasis or other diseases, living in poverty, deprived of everything. Our presence brings comfort and we are glad to do this work at the service of those most in need.

We are also committed to working with NGOs and various organizations so that together we may come to the aid of the population and restore their inspiration to do the same at their own level.

Despite the pandemic, the members of the Our Religious Order mobilized to feed the poor and children, to help families in distress. This assistance has brought hope and strength to fight the scourge of the virus.

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