



# The Friendly Haven

Children first



**Annual report : The Friendly Haven**  
**Year 2019**





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## ➔ The Friendly Haven, in short

### Overview

The Friendly Haven orphanage is located in Togo in Amou prefecture, between the villages of Avété and Avedjé, about 10 km from Atakpamé.



The centre has been operational since 2014. Its main objective has been to support children who are orphan or abandoned as well as those whose parents have no resources.

Built on a land of about 25 acres, the orphanage includes two dormitories (one for girls, one for boys for some 30 children in total), a canteen, an office for the management, a bedroom for an educator/assistant and one for the guard, a library/entertainment room, a large hut, a playground, toilets and showers.

**All these amenities have made the Friendly Haven orphanage the best performing orphanage in the highland region, and among the five best in the whole of Togo, according to a report of the ENEIS research unit commissioned by the Ministry of Social action, Family and Literacy promotion as well as UNICEF (April 2016).**

The operation of the orphanage has been made difficult since 2017. Following the malevolent actions of our former local partner—the RAGC association—the orphanage premises have been temporarily closed in August 2017. However, since then, we have continued to support 22 children (6 girls and 16 boys) whom we follow up, providing assistance for food, health and clothing and payment for exceptional major expenses such as eyeglasses or serious diseases. We have also been supporting the kids' foster families, their brothers and sisters and the children near the place we have rented for the children in Atakpamé, pending the reopening of the orphanage.

## Situation in 2019

Despite this difficult context, we managed to support the children on a continuous basis, and also on the occasion of the start of the school year 2019/2020 and of Christmas in organizing a wonderful festive celebration for them.

During the year, we successfully continued our action to develop income-generating activities for the widows to enable them to bounce back economically and take charge of their families.

## ➔ What we achieved in 2019

### ● Highlights of the year—children and foster families

Pending the recovery of our orphanage following judicial procedures, we organized regular meetings in 2019 with the children and foster families in the office of our association. During such meetings, we discuss the problems relating to the orphanage and its reopening, the difficulties of daily life and the urgent needs of the children who in most cases have been put in foster families. This allows us to follow them up and to continue to support them in all respects, including psychological help.



**Christmas celebration:** Christmas is the most magical time of the year for children. Every year, it is the most eagerly awaited and enchanting celebration.

Of course, The Friendly Haven did not fail to make its best one more time in 2019 to create this atmosphere which makes the eyes of the children sparkle. The programme included lunch, gifts, games, songs, and dance.



**Regular meetings with foster families and children:** such meetings take place on a regular basis in the office of the Friendly Haven. It is an opportunity to have discussions and exchange views, and also to have lunch together like a large family.



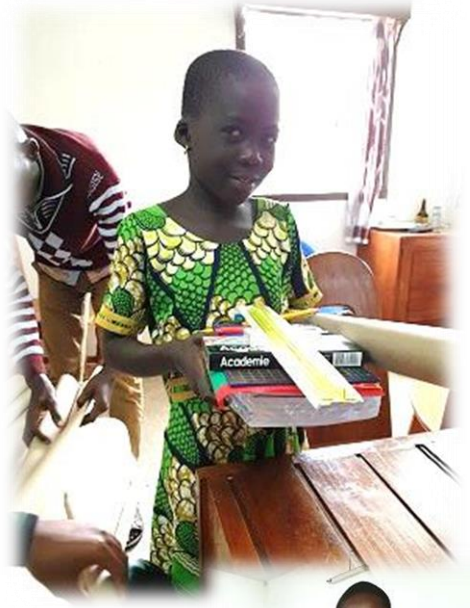


Ever since the orphanage had to close, The Friendly Haven has continued to send money every month, earmarked for the children, making it possible to reduce the impact of the closure for them. These funds allow each child to cover his/her fundamental needs (food, healthcare, clothing).



### Beginning of the school year 2019/2020

Every year, the start of the school year is a very important period for the children as well as for the foster families. It also means expenses. The Friendly Haven spares no effort to prepare and equip the 22 children (formerly in the orphanage) so that they are well equipped at the beginning of the school year (school supplies, registration fees, and school outfits).



## ● Widows, and income-generating activities

Sustainable development in Togo requires that women be integrated in economic activities. This economic promotion to which The Friendly Haven actively contributes through a supportive programme encompasses 26 widows. It helps them develop their own income-generating activities: small retail businesses for the sale of cereals and prepared dishes, sewing, etc.



Our objective is to ensure that the widows get enough income to cover the various needs of their children and corresponding expenses in a dignified way. Our financial support is also a way to allow the widows to get autonomous.

The follow-up in the field allows us to evaluate this programme in terms of relevance, impact, and sustainability. Most of the widows say they can meet the needs of their families and even make some savings that they can invest in other trade activities.



## Projets for the future

- Our absolute priority : To get back our orphanage. We are relentlessly carrying on the legal procedures. We are progressing towards success: we are certain we will prevail in 2020. These legal procedures are necessary to obtain the complete and unconditional recovery of our orphanage. All those who have been convinced of the competence of our operation remain impatient and optimistic regarding the reopening of the orphanage and its agricultural and breeding supporting activities.

At this stage, our legal counsel tells us that we can be quite confident that our orphanage will reopen soon.

- Continue to fully support the 22 orphans by sending money to the foster families to cover the current needs (food, healthcare, clothing), school supplies and school registration fees, and in case of medical urgent needs (e.g. hospitalization, eyeglasses), and for Christmas celebration.

- Promotion of non-violence towards the children: organization of sessions of awareness on non-violence targeting the high schools and colleges of Atakpamé, widows and supported children.

## The Friendly Haven in Rwanda

Music as a way of preventing juvenile delinquency :  
the case of a group of children in the city of Kigali

As they say, better avert the crime than punish it. Juvenile delinquency currently constitutes a very complex social phenomenon in Rwanda. Despite the hard work of the specialists—teachers, social workers, judges, psychologists, psychiatrists—to find



ways to avert and fight juvenile delinquency, all parents and members of the community must participate in this task.

This is why we focus on policies for the prevention of juvenile delinquency to facilitate the socialization and a successful integration of all children and youngsters. By dedicating themselves to lawful activities to the benefit of society within the framework of a humanist perspective, young people can acquire a sane and serene mentality.

## ➔ Music lessons as a way to avert juvenile delinquency

**Teaching** **Kizito Mihigo**, the singer and champion of human rights whom we have ceaselessly supported and who has recently been released after a long detention, has been teaching music to the students of primary and high schools in the city of Kigali since last summer.



During the school holidays, a two-month session of theoretical and practical lessons is organized by this master of Rwandan music aiming at giving the children good bases in piano and electric organ. These lessons are taught in the premises of the



Holy Family parish in Kigali. The purpose is not only to avert juvenile delinquency but also to contribute to the fulfilment of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the youngsters.



**Success and results :** A certificate is given to students subsequent to the session of music lessons. The team in Rwanda conveys its heartfelt thanks to The Friendly Haven for the donations, which have contributed to the implementation

of these activities, including the purchase of the electric organ, which was essential for the teaching.



## **The Friendly Haven in the Democratic Republic of Congo**

In a context of crime and rape : to help women in their legal complaints  
and support them and their children on their path of resilience

Right from the beginning, The Friendly Haven has been strongly committed to defend the rights of women and children against major sexual violence perpetrated in the Democratic Republic of Congo, not only by militiamen but also sometimes by soldiers of regular army corps and by ordinary civilians.

We have worked hand in hand for several years with the Swiss association Vivere ([www.vivere.ch](http://www.vivere.ch)), which has very helpful activities in this region.

Over the last two years, we have been legally supporting the women who, braving scorn, dare to file a complaint and defend their rights in the courts, in most cases local itinerant courts. We support these courageous women financially for their legal costs and also psychologically.

We contribute to their rehabilitation through the activities of the Tulizeni orphanage



and shelter for women and children that we have been financially supporting for many years: literacy programmes, assistance to the development of income-generating activities ... This orphanage also shelters women who became pregnant after being raped and assists them with the specialists of this centre in the education of their baby.



## Overall conclusion

Although we have gone through a difficult time since our orphanage has been temporarily closed, we continue to fight with pugnacity on all fronts.

Children and their defense remain our overriding priority: 95% of our expenses remain allocated to our activities in Togo which are absolutely primordial. We are dealing with the life of children whom we have supported for years and we will not give them up, whatever happens. The same applies to the widows with children that we have always resolutely supported.

We are sure that in 2020 we will recover our orphanage at the end of current legal procedures.

We consider our activities in The African Great Lakes region as equally important, even if we unfortunately do not yet have the necessary financial resources yet. In these countries still weakened by the Rwandan genocide, participating in the support of those who are the most vulnerable should come first.

We wholeheartedly thank our generous donors for their unfailing support. Long live the projects we are carrying out together! Long live the children we are taking care of together!

### **For your donations :**

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