

The Friendly Haven

2015 annual report



1. Togo : successfully addressing challenges with perseverance
2. DR Congo : new partners, new projects
3. Rwanda : supporting human rights defenders
4. Montessori educational methods helping children in need

For the Friendly Haven, 2015 has been an active and challenging year, filled with joy and success. Steadfastly at the service of children and victims of sexual abuse, the Friendly Haven has clearly and firmly asserted its principles vis-à-vis its partners, being demanding and insisting on transparency.

In Togo, this implied taking up challenges to strengthen and steady our relationship with our partner since the beginning: the R.A.G.C. (Reflexion and Action Group for Cohesion). In Congo, we have terminated our relationship with our previous partners, and developed new relationships, always at the service of babies, children and women, a project which fills us with enthusiasm. Also, as part of our efforts to support human rights defenders, we have decided to bring our backing in Rwanda to the famous activist and in the same time musician and singer, Kizito Mihigo, who has been in jail for one year and a half.

1. Togo : addressing challenges steadfastly brings success

In Atakpamé, Togo, the Friendly Haven was particularly active in 2015. We mobilized our energies on our Hope Foster Home orphanage opened in December 2013, on our sponsorship program benefiting over 300 children and our new agricultural and breeding project.

In order to act locally in a consistent and efficient way, we have sent four missions to Atakpamé :

- From January 2nd to April 1st 2015 : **Mr. Bruno Floret, co-manager of the orphanage**, was seconded to Togo to help the local team from the R.A.C.G. to reorganize following local disputes. He also contributed to put strict accounting methods in place and, in this context, he trained the local accountant, who has now taken over successfully.
- From October 2nd 2015 until March 30th 2016 : **Mr. Moussa Jazi, agricultural engineer**, has got an assignment to assess the feasibility of our agricultural and breeding project, make a detailed budget and ensure the follow up. Following three months of field investigations and assessments, involving many local trips, Mr. Jazi has now started the implementation of the program.
- From October 21st to November 30th 2015 : **Mr. Bruno Floret, co-manager of the orphanage also acting as the person in charge of administration and finance** continued his work regarding accounting, administration and of assessment of the needs.
- From November 20th to December 13th 2015 : **Mrs. Juliette Mouquet, storyteller and singer**, founder of the ‘wandering poetry’ concept, came to the orphanage as an unpaid volunteer to organize educational, creative, and playful activities for the children, which were very highly appreciated.

In terms of rooms, our **orphanage** has an accommodation capacity of 30 children currently, to be extended in the near future to 40. From January to August 2015, 30 children (15 boys and 15 girls) aged between 6 and 15 were welcomed and accommodated in the orphanage. We give priority to those children who have lost their two parents, but we also welcome children with only one parent remaining however not able at all to support the child.

We realized that our field staff sometimes has problems in terms of discipline and authority with the eldest children. From September 2015 we have partly modified the composition of the group of children that we are welcoming to focus on children of between 6 and 12 years of age. The older children will be taken care through our sponsorship program.

We are now working in closer cooperation with the Social Services of the Atakpamé area, which are making proposals to us regarding children in need that we could welcome in our orphanage. In this context, our orphanage welcomes 24 children, details of them being attached to this report. At the beginning of 2016, the Social Services will propose to us six additional children; we have requested that priority be given to girls who represented a minority in the headcount since September 2015.

In our orphanage, our objectives remain unchanged, namely:

- cover the basic needs of children, accommodate them in the best possible conditions that our resources allow, feed them, provide them with clothing, ensure them good hygiene and, when needed, healthcare.

- monitor school work : « homework » assistance, support for the preparation of exams,
- propose sports, cultural, and creative activities which contribute to their psychological resilience after the traumas they have experienced,
- organize festive activities, with music and gifts, on the occasion of Christmas, Easter, and the start of school year.

We have to emphasize that, during the year 2015, new needs appeared in the orphanage. We did our best to meet them:

- need to dig our two wells further; they are currently 14 and 16 m deep respectively, and they were beginning to dry up. We have done the job.
- need to consolidate the central straw hut of the orphanage to avoid the risk of collapse. We have done it.
- need to install solar panels or a generator to remedy the very frequent power cuts. It would be desirable to do it in 2016.



The central straw hut now consolidated and wells successfully made deeper

And this is a list of some of our other needs: one refrigerator and freezer (we have none now), food storage place, kitchen utensils, new mattresses, pillows, blankets, TV and DVD player.

Moreover, **our large school bus**, which was successfully repaired at the beginning of 2015, has again experienced technical problems. This led us to create a mobile canteen to help the children at lunch time. With the agreement of the schools where our children go, our cooks go by car every day at noon time from the orphanage to the schools to prepare their lunch. Unfortunately, the kids must go on foot to school in the morning and return in the evening. This is tiresome for them but, above all, it exposes them to the risk of snake bites. In 2016, we plan to have the big bus repaired as a prelude to its sale in order to acquire a vehicle better adapted to the local road conditions, such as a large 4-wheel drive vehicle. With such a vehicle, we will be able to bring the children to school without problem. It will also allow us to materialize one of our dreams: to pick up distressed children in the streets of Atakpamé and bring them to our daytime care service so that they can wash themselves, change clothes, and eat. We always had this project in mind and wish to make it a daily reality.

We hope that our donors and sponsors will continue to support us to help us take care of the children's needs as much as possible and make their life better.

As regards the **orphanage staff**, we are satisfied to highlight that at the end of 2015, many new necessary rules have been established with positive effect:

- detailed job description for each staff member,
- new rules for the operations of the orphanage have been established and are now being fine-tuned,
- salary scales reviewed with Mr. Floret during his assignments in Togo.

In 2014 and at the beginning of 2015, there were still lingering conflicts between the orphanage staff members. That is now over. We can look at the future with confidence.

Also, in order to make legal matters as clear as possible, **we, together with our partner, the R.A.C.G., have registered a legal document with a notary to protect our rights on the land where the orphanage is built, so that it always remains earmarked for the orphanage and the children.** You can find a translation of the document in appendix. It makes us happy and proud, and we thank our partner association, the R.A.C.G., for this most useful procedure. It has unfortunately involved significant administrative costs, but all that was necessary to protect this place and its allocation to the benefit of children.

In our activity of **sponsoring** orphans, we supported over 300 children at the beginning of the school year. At Christmas time, we brought support to, and organized entertainment for 100 children that we formally sponsor, and a further hundred destitute youngsters.

Beyond such achievements, our aim would be to provide support to the children we sponsor on a regular, ideally monthly basis rather than on special occasions as we do now.

To make this possible would imply larger financial resources and we hope that over time, we will be progressively able to have them. In the financial report attached to this annual report, we are providing details on the corresponding budgets, depending on the different age categories.

Let's keep in mind that the sponsorships are the basis of our activities which we developed right from the start, even before our orphanage was built. We wish long life to our children sponsorship programme !



Christmas and new school year celebrations for our sponsored children.

Thanks to a generous donor, we have been able to make satisfactory progress on our **agricultural and breeding programme** started in 2014. First we hired an agricultural engineer who has been operating on the basis of a 6-month assignment. He has already been able to properly assess the situation, make a detailed feasibility study to define which

activities would be most relevant. After the first two and a half months of his assignment, we have selected the following for the breeding activities: **a henhouse with 650 hens and the rearing of 75 goats. On the cultivation side, we will be focusing on the production of corn, manioc, beans—all appearing relatively straightforward and not too expensive to undertake—and of potatoes**, which will require a more complicated work, in particular regarding irrigation.

We have already started to build the hen house and the enclosure for the goats. We have to wait until the next wet season to start cultivation.



Start of the building work for the hen house and the enclosure for the goats.

We are very happy with this progress, and we wholeheartedly thank our main donor for this programme. It will not only ensure a secure food supply for the orphanage, but also generate funds which will progressively drive the whole structure towards autonomy. Let's specify that sales will be made through groups of widows that we have supported and trained, which will also bring a contribution to their own autonomy.

The funds earmarked for this programme that are currently available only allow us to undertake the breeding part of it which, however, is the most costly one. We really hope that we will also be able in 2016 to start the agricultural part, which requires comparatively smaller amounts of money. The corresponding budgets are of course included in our financial report.

We can summarize the highlights of our prospects for 2016 as follows :

- **we will dispatch Mr. Olivier Bouron, accompanied by his wife to Atakpamé for one year. He will act as co-manager of the orphanage and as the representative of The Friendly Haven in Togo.** As Mr. Bouron's contract benefits from a State subsidy, the cost of his employment will be moderate for our association, and therefore also for our donors. We are happy that he joins us and we look forward to seeing the progress that his work will make possible.
- **We are also sending Mr. D'Esclaibes, for a short assignment (a few weeks). He will train our field staff to the key bases of the Montessori teaching methods and bring us teaching materials,** which will be of great value for our children. Many thanks to the Athéna Montessori high school (<http://sylviedesclaibes.com/>) for the support that they are providing.
- **In the autumn, we will be most happy to welcome one of our key donors. We are very grateful that he comes to visit us in Togo.** We invite all other donors to Togo if they wish to make the trip and meet our children.

- **We welcome Mr. Mathieu Bonaudo in our board**, and thank him for his participation in the construction of the orphanage and his always kind and conciliatory role in all circumstances.
- **We hope that we will be able to have sufficient resources available to make our orphanage as welcoming and modern as feasible** to offer the children better conditions and make it possible in future to open it to **international adoptions**.
- We wish to be able to officially open our **programme for daytime** care, so that we can welcome children in dire need for a day or just for a meal.
- We also wish to **strengthen the existing children sponsorships** to provide a more regular and steady support, every month, to the children we sponsor.
- We plan to launch not only the breeding part of the agricultural programme for which we already have the financing (thanks to our donor) but also the **cultivation** part which would step by step contribute to some degree of financial autonomy for our orphanage.
- **We also plan to hire Mr. Floret** (who already had two field assignments in Togo in 2015) **to assist us in the headquarters in France for administration and fund raising**. We hope that we will benefit from a State subsidy for his contract. Thanks to Mr. Floret's help and the field work of our new co-manager Mr. Bouron, we wish we will be able to widen the circle of our donors.

2. D.R. Congo : new partners, new projects

We have supported two associations, namely ASD/FSD (Friends of Sister Déborah) and UCPDHO/CUPDHR (Christian Union for the Progress and Defence of Human Rights), for several years. Both are located in **South-Kivu, in the eastern part of Congo. This is an area where conflicts continue to create havoc and where women and children are continuously targeted. There, sexual violence and torture are used every day as a weapon against every civilian**, whatever the age, gender, and health condition. One more time, the Friendly Haven would like to emphasize that it is thoroughly deplorable that such facts are not brought by the media to the attention of the public internationally. Crimes against humanity are perpetrated every day in this area of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

We unfortunately had to stop supporting the above-mentioned two associations, due to the lack of seriousness in their reports of sources and uses of funds.

However, with our continuous intention to pursue our humanitarian action in D.R. Congo, we have screened potential other partners. We were very usefully helped in that respect by **our Swiss partner: the Vivere NGO**. We have selected two new partner associations, on the basis of their deep humanitarian approach and their honesty.

Because of the pleading in support of a human rights activist in nearby Rwanda (see hereafter, page 8), we have to keep the name of these two associations confidential. It is advisable to act in a prudent and discreet way: we have to be careful as some factions in the region may have been antagonized by our approach in Rwanda.

In July 2015, jointly with one of our new partners, we organized discussion and reflection sessions about gender-based violence. Over 60 couples of different ages and ethnic groups met to discuss women's condition and how to promote it. Couples not only

questioned themselves, they also disseminated the ideas debated in these forums into their community.

In addition, we decided to support a centre to welcome and take care of single mothers following rapes, and abandoned children in the North-Kivu province.

The detailed objectives of the centre are the following:

- **To welcome, and fully take care of, single mothers following rapes who are abandoned, or orphans 12 to 23 years old, as well as orphaned children without support or who were abandoned during wars and conflicts, between 0 and 7 years old,**
- **To help quickly get trained for a profession as well as for other income-generating activities,** so as to allow single mothers to completely stand on their own,
- **On a weekly basis, if possible, to provide therapeutic food supplements to the women victims of sexual abuse,** who live in refugee camps, especially for those who need to take antiretroviral medicines when they are affected by HIV-AIDS,
- **To facilitate the healing and recovery in case of severe physical sexual damage (fistula, for instance) by supporting the victims throughout their medical treatment and providing mental care for the most serious cases.**



Children and a young woman with her baby in the welcome centre, © Vivere

Our partner currently welcomes 20 single mothers and 95 children in its centre. The number of children considerably exceeds the capacity of this small centre that we intend to support. **In Congo, this type of initiative must continue to be supported decisively. Considering the geopolitical situation of the country, the sufferings of the civilian population, this is an absolute need in our view.**

3. Rwanda : supporting human rights defenders

As you know it, The Friendly Haven has for many years been involved in the defence of those who courageously put their life in danger in the name of human rights. **In 2015, The Friendly Haven decided to plead the case of Kizito Mihigo, a young survivor of the genocide in Rwanda. He has become one of the most famous composers and singers in**

Rwanda. He has created a foundation for peace and is a tireless spokesman for the hutu-tutsi reconciliation. We know him personally: we met him during various assemblies to promote peace. He is a remarkable young man.

He has been languishing in jail for one year and a half. Despite having in the past been close to the president of Rwanda, he is now targeted as a traitor... the real reason probably being a simple song in which he expressed in a colourful way his attachment to acknowledging the sufferings of the Tutsis (the victims of the genocide), but also of the Hutus.

This is the letter we have addressed to the authorities in Rwanda—more precisely to the judge who will rule on his case in the court of appeal— to support our friend and brother Kizito, whom you can see below, pleading for peace:



[Translated into English from the original in French]

« *Your Honour,*

It is with great humility that we are presenting this missive to your high authority, being convinced that it will find an echo in your wisdom.

Our humanitarian NGO, The Friendly Haven, has been active in Africa since 2008 with the aim of supporting children who suffer, women victims of sexual abuse and, more generally speaking, any person in need. We always work with reliable field associations and people to perform our missions.

It is in this context that we have known Mr. Kizito Mihigo, a man who has touched our heart not only by his seriousness but also by his humanity. He is a committed defender of all people who suffer, and-let us emphasize it—a patriot who loves his country and is proud of her. Each time we had discussions with him, he paid tribute to president Kagamé, and he spoke of him in honest and sincere words of praise. We are convinced that Mr. Kizito Mihigo will still be very helpful to his country, thanks to his incomparable humanitarian work, for which he has already been granted many rewards.

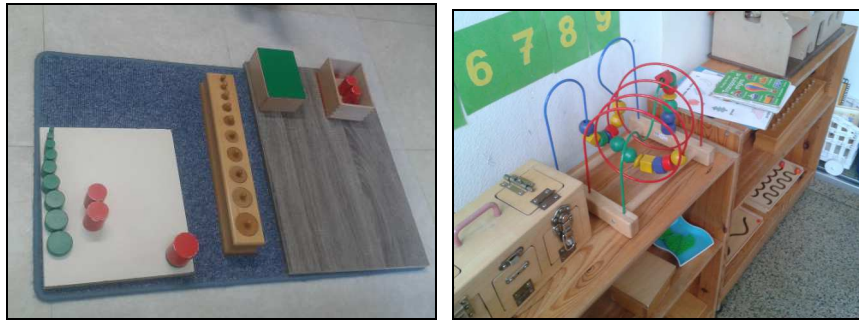
We wish here to bring our testimony in his support; we are conscious of the charges which weigh on him, but we remain convinced that it has been caused by a misunderstanding and that your wisdom will clear it. We are praying for his release and we would like to thank you for the attention you will agree to pay to our letter.

Best regards and sincere thanks.”

We are still waiting for the decision in his trial, and stay hopeful.

4. Montessori educational methods helping children in need

As was foreseen in our previous annual report, **members of the board of The Friendly Haven received a basic training on the Montessori educational methods in January 2015. During this most interesting training we could establish precious links with the headmaster of the Athena Montessori high school in the Paris region, who supported us in 2015. Mr. D'Esclaibes, the headmaster's son, will come to Togo in February to train the field team and bring us Montessori training materials.** We very much look forward to his visit. This soft educational method, adapted to fit each child's own rhythm, focused on autonomy, the five senses and a concrete approach, will surely benefit our children. It will help them in their schooling (reading, writing, maths) ... but it will mostly help them to make progress in building their psychological resilience, which is what we wish.



Examples of teaching materials

Conclusion

When The Friendly Haven started its first children sponsorship programme in Togo less than ten years ago, it was still a very small NGO with limited resources but with great expectations.

Today, our human resources are growing and our actions benefit several hundred children in Togo and Congo.

We could not have achieved that without the confident support of our generous donors. This is why we always endeavour to be worthy of their support and to remain committed to strictness and transparency. Materializing our dreams obviously requires considerable and ceaseless efforts from the field staff and the team of volunteers—including the chairperson—in France

As you can see it in our financial report, we are estimating our expenses in 2016 at Euro 74'735, based on a strict austerity programme, which corresponds to the bare minimum for our activities to continue. As a reference for comparison, the amounts received from our generous donors and sponsors in 2015 amounted to Euro 57'103. To balance our 2016 budget, which is no more than what is required to allow the survival of the programme, would need to see the donations that we receive increase by at least

31% vs. 2015. In advance, we are grateful to our donors and sponsors for their understanding.

Once again, a very big thank you to all of you who give us their confidence and time and share our objectives. Let's not be shy in our hopes and aims: This better world we dream of, let's make it together!

Appendix
(please see next page)

Appendix

[This is a translation from a Togolese notarial document written in French]

Agreement on the purpose of the land of the Hope Foster Home orphanage

We undersigned Mr. Komla Mewonawovo Amewu and Mrs. Bonaudo-Vappereau Bénédicte Fleur confirm that the purpose of the 25-acre land used for a common work of the R.A.G.C. (Reflexion and Action Group for Cohesion) and The Friendly Haven is to be used without greed to only the Hope Foster Home and its related projects aimed at its self-sufficiency, such as the agricultural and breeding programme.

Any related project, in addition to the agricultural and breeding programme, must be validated by both Mrs. Bonaudo-Vappereau Bénédicte Fleur, chairperson of The Friendly Haven, and Mr. Komla Mewonawovo Amewu, chairman of the R.A.G.C. Any other activity which would not be related to the support and care of children, or not validated by Mrs. Bonaudo-Vappereau Bénédicte Fleur and Mr. Komla Mewonawovo Amewu (or their alternates as listed below) is not allowed on this land. It will never and in any case be permitted to be sold for private ends.

We undersigned Mr. Komla Mewonawovo Amewu and Mrs. Bonaudo-Vappereau Bénédicte Fleur confirm that this 25-acre land was acquired through generous donations from Ms. Janine Luke and the late Mr. Melvin R. Seiden—both sponsors of The Friendly Haven—for an amount of CFA 4 million, and that the R.A.G.C. and The Friendly Haven associations have invested important human, material, and financial resources in relation to it. The R.A.G.C. and The Friendly Haven associations have worked hand in hand in solidarity at the service of children, and will continue to do so.

In future, only Mr. Komla Mewonawovo Amewu and Mrs. Bonaudo-Vappereau Bénédicte Fleur will be empowered to take any decision regarding this land, including the management of various programmes already in place or to be put in place.

In case one of the two would be incapacitated (disease or death):

Mrs. Bonaudo-Vappereau Bénédicte Fleur appoints Mrs. Vappereau Françoise, representative of the donors and sponsors, as her alternate for any decision regarding this land, and, in case of her absence, Mrs. Yamina Louarith, treasurer of The Friendly Haven. Contact details:

Mrs. Vappereau Françoise : 00 852 6188 6278 or 00 852 2577 3495;

Email : fanfahk@netvigator.com

Mrs. Yamina Louarith : 00 33 6 63 87 34 80 ; email : yamlayam@yahoo.fr

Mr. Komla Mewonawovo Amewu appoints Reverend Séraphin, co-founder of the R.A.G.C., P.O. Box 425, formerly Secretary-general of Caritas 91 93 46 51 or 99 91 17 95, email: seraboki@gmail.com and, in case of his absence, Mr. Elpidio Cornélius Amewu, son of Mr. Komla Mewonawovo Amewu, in charge of children and youth programmes at the R.A.G.C.: 97 22 38 59; email: corneliuselpidio.amewu@gmail.com

A private agreement protocol will specify the roles and responsibilities of the two associations, and of their representatives and employees.

All members unanimously agree that this protocol, signed as a private agreement in four original copies, will from the moment of their formal signatures engage their responsibilities, bind them, and will be executed as if it were a law.