



2019 Annual Report

Friends of Niger (FON) is a charitable and educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation formed to initiate and support activities related to Niger and its people and for the benefit of its membership. Any person with a personal or professional interest in Niger is welcome to become a member.

2019 Officers

Pres. John Baird
 VP Phyllis Dichter Forbes
 Treas. Gary Geoghegan
 Sec. Cheryl Turner

Members at large

Tom Corcoran
 Dale Downes
 Larry Koff
 Amy Wilson

CONUSA delegate

Seybou Douma

Niger Diaspora

Rabiou Yari

Organizational Update

The Friends of Niger board organized a weekend retreat in Boston to create more time for in depth planning and to allow us to get to know each other better than our short monthly calls allow. The retreat brought together board members who are dispersed throughout the US and have a wide range of backgrounds and experiences in Niger. FON member Ken Patterson donated his expertise as a group facilitator and board members paid their own travel expenses to the venue where lodging was covered by a generous donor.

During our concentrated time together we fine-tuned our purpose to the following succinct statement:

Friends of Niger will focus on three main purposes:
 1/connecting and engaging people,
 2/supporting development in Niger, and
 3/advocating for and educating about Niger.

At the retreat we also developed Guiding Principles, which appear later in this report. During the year we developed and adopted revised bylaws and established a standing committee for finance to support administrative functions and the Treasurer. The bookkeeping system was reformatted and updated to newer, enhanced software. Seven issues of the Camel Express newsletter were published and distributed via email.

Fiscal Snapshot for 2019

Total Income:		\$66,989
Donations and Interest		
Total Expenses:		\$69,238
Regular Admin/overhead	\$2,307	
Sponsored retreat	\$2,813	
Project Support	\$64,118	
Funds on hand Jan 1, 2020		\$40,194

Project Committee Update

The Project committee led by Phyllis Forbes, continues to evolve and grow as they implement projects. In addition to working with requests for funding that come from Nigerien groups, the committee has completed a new project guide and process for review.

The committee introduced a new kind of project, where a FON member takes the lead in fundraising and coordinating implementation and the FON Board supports as needed through administration, supplementary funding and coordination. We are very pleased by the results of this new initiative and look forward to working with other members who have a passion for specific projects. We continue supporting solar electrification for health clinics and highly nutritious Moringa gardens. We are trying to emphasize projects that promote women's economic advancement. In 2019 we worked in partnership with other organizations to address emergencies and provide some support to refugees in Niger.

Project Support Detail 2019

Medicines in Diffa	4,000	with Kirker Foundation
Village Fire Relief Kolo Dosso	4,300	Special member appeal
School Feeding program Wambouzou	5,625	with Achet 'Akal
Women's Cheese Production Tchintabaraden	5,345	with OURZP
Grain Storage Facility /Program	7,685	with Potential Terre
One-Family / One Garden	4,743	
Solar Energy for Health Clinic- Bande	12,725	Co-Project by Karen Brenner
Solar Energy for Health Clinic- 2 villages	1,615	
Solar Energy for Health Clinic Djirataoua	1,929	Sponsored by John Baird
Albino program / Au Coeur du Niger	6,467	Special Appeal: Niger PCV groups 4, 5, 6
Solar Energy for Health Clinics	4,275	Co-Project lead by Karen Brenner with Rotary Club of Ann Arbor
Wambouzou School Feeding Program	5,409	with Achet 'Akal, Rise Against Hunger
	<u>\$ 64,118</u>	

2019 PROJECTS

Medicines for Nigeriens and refugees

Access to health care remains a critical development issue in Niger. In 2019, FON provided partial funding to the Kirker Foundation, a Nigerien NGO, to support capacity building and to cover some of the costs of transporting and distributing a shipment of antibiotics provided by MAP International. The shipment of life-saving antibiotics valued at US \$20 million arrived in Niamey in early October and was distributed to hospitals and health centers in Niamey, Tillabery, Maine-Soroa, Diffa, and Nguigmi. Those hospitals in border areas are currently serving the citizens of Niger, as well as the large influx of refugees fleeing Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al Qaeda in Mali.

The FON grant of \$4,000 was combined with contributions from a number of RPCVs and leveraged funds from other international donors to cover shipping this large volume of pharmaceuticals from the US to Niamey.



2019 PROJECTS

Solar Electrification of Health Clinics

In 2018 FON provided \$2100 to Moustapha Harou, Infirmiere D'Etat in the Dakoro Region to purchase and install solar electrification in 2 rural health clinics. Medical care could be provided round the clock and at low energy cost. We expanded this project through a new mechanism that allowed for co-funding by a FON member and FON itself. John Baird was the first person to try this experiment in Djirataoua



Lights in the health clinic of Djirataoua in Niger When John Baird heard he could provide a solar installation for the village he served in for around \$1,600 he jumped at the chance! Moustapha Harou managed the installation and took videos of the excited villagers the first night the lights were switched on. We heard “mun gode Jean (John)” many times as various people were interviewed. Health delivery in Djirataoua is now much improved. That's a great feeling for John and for all of us.

John's ongoing communication and involvement with his friends in the village helped us learn that the project could be improved by using higher quality batteries. That lesson is being applied to future projects, demonstrating the value of the personal connections and involvement of our members in project implementation.

Targeted fund raising for rural Zinder-area clinic electrification Karen (Swimmer) Brenner served in Bande, in the Zinder department from 1987 to 1990. In early 2019, she hosted three fund raising parties to raise money to install solar panels at clinics in that area where she served. At the parties, she and her husband showed a video they made describing Niger and the value of having electricity in medical clinics. They raised \$12,000 which was sufficient to provide solar panels for four medical clinics. One of the clinics was in Bande itself, now a bigger clinic than when she worked there more than 3 decades ago. The clinic was getting electricity from Nigelec but it was expensive and not always available. The installed solar panels offset the cost of electricity and made it available at all times. The funds she raised also provided refrigerators to store vaccines in all of these clinics. We have since heard back that in the village of Gabi the vaccination rates went up from 70% to 95% after the project. Karen has been in contact with nurses and midwives in the area who say that deliveries have been safer with more reliable electricity.

Karen worked with Moustapha Harou who helped the Bande medical staff determine where to place the solar installations as well as how to do them. Karen and her husband have since received a grant from the local Rotary club in Ann Arbor, Michigan. They contributed over \$3,000 which will be used to install solar power and refrigerators in two village clinics in the Zinder region, Wacha and Kwaya. Karen is also working with Moustapha and possible other Nigerien NGO's on securing a larger grant to install solar panels and refrigerators in other health centers to improve the vaccination campaigns.

The solar co-project model The key to success in these efforts has been a locally identified need and partner matched with enthusiastic and supportive FON members. Moustapha Harou, Infirmiere D'Etat, has developed an inventory of clinics that would benefit from solar electrification and he is eager to help make this happen. He is developing contacts, skills and expertise and has the go-ahead and support from the Health Department to pursue this work in his official capacity. FON members have taken the lead on fund-raising and ensure success through active ongoing communication with their friends and contacts in Niger. So far these solar electrification projects have improved clinics that serve over 150,000 rural people.



2019 PROJECTS

Fire Relief, School Nutrition and Grain Storage

Emergency funding after village fire in Dosso region

In February, 2019, a disastrous fire destroyed over half of the village of Koli Koir Tegui (Koli), displacing 72 families, including 345 children. Potentiel Terre, a FON project partner, appealed to us for funds to help with immediate support and repair needs estimated to be on the order of \$10,000. Many of the girls and young women in the Potentiel Terre training programs we have supported came from the affected village, Koli. The FON board pledged \$1,000 from general funds and a special appeal to our generous members yielded an additional \$3,000!



Zakari Hassane of Potentiel Terre, has done a remarkable job providing support to the program participants and their affected families after the fire. He arranged delivery of over 2 tons of maize to the village for immediate food needs and housed and fed many of the families of his trainees at the training center.



Emergency School Feeding Program for Students in Tchín-Tabaraden

Children in remote areas, especially schools in nomadic communities where children are traveling long distance to school suffer because they are not provided with food while they are in school. The students study under difficult conditions and often drop out to follow their parents in their transhumance. Leaving school early limits their potential to get find more reliable employment, to contribute to society and to get out of poverty. For girls, dropping out of school can push them toward early marriage and lack of opportunity. FON partnered with Achet Akal to provide a school canteen and meals for 78 students for 5 months of the 2019 school year. This 5 month period was the period of transhumance during which the parents usually leave the children in the village to fend for themselves. A previous project with Achet Akal supported a women's cooperative tent fabricating project.

Grain Storage Warehouse

In the Dosso Region, Friends of Niger has collaborated with the Nigerien NGO Potentiel Terre to fund a warehouse for storage of grain. This project helps small agricultural producers get an advance on their future harvest at a good price which they pay back once the harvest is in. It helps them break out of the circle of poverty by enabling farmers to wait and have their produce sold at the most opportune time when the market is at its peak.



Cheese Making in Tchintabaraden Area

The Nigerien NGO OURZP is conducting “Operation goat cheese” with some funding from the Friends of Niger. The project targets the most vulnerable groups of women in an effort to improve their socio-economic status through revenue-generating activities. In a previous FON-funded project OURZP trained women how to operate as a collective known as groupements. The two groupements, 60 women in all, were then provided with 120 goats from which they will manufacture goats’ milk cheese. The groupements were provided with materials needed for the production, protection and preservation of cheese, and for transportation to the weekly markets in the Tchintabaraden area. The goal of the project is to put the women's group on the path to self-sufficiency. The grant of \$6,000 will let them purchase the basic equipment required to launch this goat cheese production industry in Tchintabaraden.



Moringa One Family One Garden

Healthworker Moustapha Harou had a vision to improve the nutrition of the needy population in his rural area. With funding from Friends of Niger he initially established several Moringa plantations and launched community gardens near Dakoro. The Moringa tree offers enormous quantities of nutrients and vitamins, which were made available to the neediest women and children in the villages. We saw that the Moringa tree had a lot to offer, yet experience was showing that the plantations might not be the best model in this region where water tables are deep. Friends of Niger financed an evaluation of the project to help steer next steps which concluded that childhood malnutrition declined where there were gardens, but few viable options were available to address the water needs of a plantation. The Moringa, called windi bundu or tree of the household in Zarma, is well suited to being grown in individual compounds with regular watering from household grey water. Moustapha proposed this method of individual household plantings as an alternative to a plantation and FON is funding household plantings in 4 villages.





Board retreat Boston April 2019
L to R: Dale Downes, Amy Wilson,
Ken Patterson, Cheryl Turner, John
Baird, Phyllis Forbes, Larry Koff.

Guiding principles

These are the values that are important to us and guide the way we achieve our mission. We would like our activity to conform to these values as much as possible and we will use them as a reference point in future when making decisions.

- ◆ We will operate within our means; and strive for maintaining a low overhead.
- ◆ We will function with a high degree of integrity and practice good accounting and reporting.
- ◆ Our efforts will help Nigeriens.
- ◆ We will promote member engagement and leverage the assets of volunteers and optimize volunteerism to accomplish our mission.
- ◆ We will work together as a team.
- ◆ We will strengthen our own organization and those we work with by supporting and building connections and networking
- ◆ We will demonstrate respect for Board members, FON members and Nigeriens, and assume good motives
- ◆ We will be results oriented.
- ◆ We will be open-minded and idea-friendly.
- ◆ We will focus on projects and activities that add value and avoid duplication.
- ◆ We will have fun while achieving our mission.

Donations Fuel This Work

Donations are accepted at any time. To donate you can either go to www.friendsofniger.org to use PayPal, or write a check payable to Friends of Niger and mail to:

Friends of Niger PO Box 452 Haverford, PA 19041

For more about Friends of Niger:

- Our website: <http://www.friendsofniger.org/>
- Join & follow us at: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfNiger/>
- Submit news topics and articles: camelexpressnewsletter@gmail.com
- Contact the President, president@friendsofniger.org

“There is no way to peace; peace is the way.”