



2021 GRANTS REPORT

Introduction: Our process for supporting projects has undergone some major renovations in 2021, moving from a continuous proposal submission and review process to a more predictable two grant cycles per calendar year. This new process, approved by the Board in April 2021, includes a call for applications using a clear format, a transparent criteria-based review, the engagement of more FON members in project review, and increased emphasis on monitoring and evaluation. To better reflect these changes in the role FON plays in supporting development activity, the Projects Committee has recently been renamed the Grants Management Committee. Board members Mary Abrams and Alix Fedoruk now serve as co-chairs, several new members have joined the Committee and more FON members are engaged as proposal reviewers.

The following principles guide our grant-making and management work:

- FON aims to link resources to opportunities in Niger through a transparent, fair and accountable grant process.
- Capacity building is a key component of all aspects of our process.
- We strengthen our grant process through evaluation of applications and project results and we stress monitoring and evaluation of funded activities.
- We fund only strong proposals and carry over any unallocated funds for future needs.
- We provide grants AND support professional growth of applicants.

The new process has had an excellent start. The first call for applications issued in May 2021 elicited 22 proposals. Based on the review and recommendations from a dozen FON members who served as reviewers, the Board approved funding for four proposals with the roughly \$15,000 budgeted. Successful applicants were notified in July, and all applicants received feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their proposals. Summaries of the funded projects are found below, along with information on projects funded in 2020 that continued in the current year. We learned a good deal from implementing the first round of the new process, and received constructive feedback from proposal reviewers and applicants. As a result, we have fine-tuned and streamlined the process for the Fall 2021 call for applications.

Situation in Niger: FON seeks through its grant-making to respond to the ongoing challenges and needs of communities throughout Niger within the limits of available funding. Adding to the chronic challenges in a country that ranks near the bottom of the UN development scale, numerous crises over the past few years have worsened the situation in many communities. Extremist groups have targeted schools, hospitals, community organizations, and individual citizens in outlying communities like Diffa, Tillaberi, and Tahoua. Terrorist activities in the neighboring countries, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Mali, have resulted in thousands of refugees seeking safety and services in Niger, increasing the burden on health care facilities, schools, and other public services. Over the past few rainy seasons, unprecedented flooding has occurred in many parts of Niger, destroying crops, housing and other infrastructure, and leaving standing water where malaria-carrying mosquitoes breed. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Niger's borders were closed for several months, limiting the importation of critical supplies, and schools were closed as well. Several of the FON-supported projects described in the following paragraphs respond to these challenges.

PROJECT RESULTS & UPDATES



Tchizamene Clinic Solar Batteries & Beds

This 2021 grant of \$3,175 enabled the NGO Organisation Vie et Développement to replace four older solar batteries providing electricity for a remote clinic in the Agadez Region. The old batteries were no longer able to provide the power needed to maintain cold storage for medicines and vaccines. The grant also funded the purchase of 10 beds and mattresses. The Clinic, staffed by two nurses, a midwife and an assistant, serves a population of around 10,000. With these upgrades, the Clinic is able to provide 24/7 care with good lighting, cold storage for medicines, and improved accommodations for persons requiring inpatient care.

Biocontrol of Millet Borers

Millet, the staple grain that feeds an estimated 97% of Niger’s population, is under attack by an infestation of ‘millet borer’ larvae, reducing yields in some areas by up to 60%. FON is providing \$4,855 to the NGO Potentiel Terre to introduce a biological control for this devastating pest in the severely affected Mokko Commune, Dosso Region. The project targets 12,394 agricultural households in 102 villages cross the Commune. The wide effort will re-introduce an indigenous wasp that attacks the millet borer larvae and train heads of households and village youth to apply and manage the re-introduction and management of the process. The goal is to increase the millet yield by up to 80% in the affected areas. The project will be piloted in 25 villages, and gradually scaled up over three years to all targeted villages by 2023. To date, Potentiel Terre has conducted outreach to villages and authorities, and provided training to youth who will play an active role in raising, multiplying and releasing the wasps during the growing season.



Bangiya Elementary School Desks

Last winter a group of FON members independently funded the construction of an elementary school classroom in Bangiya, a village in the Zinder Region. A grant of \$1,401 to the Bangiya Village Cooperative funded the purchase and installation of 30 desks for the classroom, benefitting 90 children.



Vocational Training for School Dropouts, Incarcerated and Unemployed Youth

Rapid population growth in the Maradi Region has resulted in growing problems among youth, with high rates of school dropout, unemployment, and often, incarceration. The Maradi Centre de Formation des Artisans has been awarded a \$5,000 grant to provide viable alternatives through technical skill development. The project will work with the local judiciary, social services and prison officials to select 20 youth (10 boys, 10 girls), providing skills training including sewing, auto mechanics, electrical work, construction, building maintenance, and woodworking. The skills training will extend over a 13-month period. Participants will also be trained in literacy, report-writing, and basic accounting. The goal is to increase the employability of participants and for those who are incarcerated, to reduce the period of incarceration and improve options for their integration into society upon release.

Solar Facilities Rehabilitation

In 2020, FON provided funding totaling \$15,452 to upgrade solar electrification installations and train local community members in their maintenance at six health centers (CSI) in the Maradi Region. The initial installations previously funded by FON and individual FON members provided electricity that enabled 24/7 medical care and other advantages, such as cold storage of vaccines and other medicines. After the installation we learned many of the solar panels and storage batteries were no longer functioning properly. We provided funding for upgrades that are projected to extend the life of these systems for up to five years when maintained correctly. The work was done by BENALYA Group, a Niamey-based solar power company, with oversight provided by Moustapha Harou, a long-time FON collaborator. A detailed report of the work completed was received in August 2021.

Medicines for Niger

The Nigerien NGO Kirker Foundation/Niger works with the Niger Ministry of Health to provide medicines, medical supplies, nutrition packets and other essential supplies to hospitals, health centers and schools throughout Niger. A FON grant of \$10,000 in late 2020 funded the in-country clearance, storage and transport for two shipments of critical medicines and medical supplies donated by MAP International and prioritized by the Ministry of Health.

The first shipment contained antibiotics, hydroxychloroquine for malaria prevention and treatment, prenatal vitamins, nutritional supplements, surgical masks and other products valued at \$7,368,784. The shipment arrived in April 2021 and was distributed to 21 hospitals and health centers in Niamey, Zinder, Tillaberi, and the Diffa Region. The second shipment valued at \$15,182,230 arrived in Niamey in late August and is currently being distributed in consultation with the Ministry of Health. Several hundred thousand Nigeriens benefit from each shipment of these medicines and supplies. Kirker Foundation/Niger has recently partnered with the University of Niamey Medical School to involve medical students in the distribution and oversight of medicine usage. A final report will be provided to FON once distribution of the supplies is completed.

LEVERAGE
FON investment of \$10,000 facilitated delivery of medical supplies valued at over \$22,500,000

Health Kits for COVID Prevention

With Covid-19 spreading throughout Niger, the Nigerien NGO OURZP received a FON grant of \$2,682 to fund prevention activities in seven villages in the Tchintabaraden Commune, Tahoua Region. The villages are located along migration routes and thus at high risk for transmission of the virus. The FON grant supported prevention education sessions and distribution of kits containing soap, disinfectant gels, face coverings and hand-washing instructions to households and public locations in these communities. A final report was received in October 2021.

NEXT STEPS:

Incorporating a few changes to the process from lessons learned in the spring cycle, the Grants Management Committee issued a second call for proposals at the end of September 2021. Applications are due October 31 and will be reviewed during November, with funding recommendations made to the FON Board of Directors in mid-December, and grantees notified of awards and funds disbursed by mid-January 2022. As with the previous cycle, all applicants will receive feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their proposals, and will be requested to give feedback on the process. We look forward to continued expansion of potential grantees, and to the increased involvement of FON members in reviewing applications, supporting the grants process, and possibly participating in the evaluation of projects that are implemented.

This work is made possible through donations. Go to www.friendsofniger.org or write a check payable to Friends of Niger and mail to: PO Box 452 Haverford PA 19041. THANK YOU!