

# ASSOCIATION



[www.AuCoeurDuNiger.ch](http://www.AuCoeurDuNiger.ch)

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Isabelle and Association  
students in Zinder  
(August 2016)



### **Association founded by Isabelle Macheret after numerous humanitarian trips to Niger.**

The *Au Cœur du Niger* Association is an independent, non-profit charity governed by a voluntary nine-member board of directors, a president and two ambassadors. Association headquarters are located in Romont.

Our mission is to offer street children and child-mothers in Zinder, Niger, a **scholastic education with vocational training in sewing and farming, and to provide them with regular meals and shelter**. We ultimately seek autonomy and a better future for the people.

**Bachir**, a young orphan boy who suffers from an acute fungal infection of the scalp, was **treated and healed** through a skin graft in May 2011; Today, he is independent, married and grows tomatoes and lettuce.

**Construction of the *Après-demain* Education and Development Centre** for Zinder's street girls and child-mothers was completed in September 2013.

More than 330 students have been studying here since October 2018.  
A new 2-storey school complex was built in 2018 at the existing Centre.

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## Association Objectives

### Street Children and Child-Mothers

While travelling through Niger on humanitarian endeavours, Isabelle was struck by how many children are left to wander the streets in Zinder. The child-mothers who had been thrust into mother-hood despite themselves as early as the age of twelve moved her deeply.

And that is what sparked her desire to protect Zinder's children and help them forge a better life for themselves.

The Association seeks donors and sponsors with a heart for these children; people who are willing to cover the financial costs involved with the education of a child or child-mother (for information on sponsorship, see page 8 or visit our website).

### Well Digging and Construction

In July 2011, thanks to the Swiss Cooperation in Niamey's financial assistance, the Association 'Au Cœur du Niger' carried out a drilling operation at a depth of 100 metres with a flow rate of 1,000 litres/h on land provided by the City of Zinder. The 'Après-demain' Reception and Training Centre was completed in autumn 2013. It includes 6 school rooms, 2 dormitories, 2 dining halls, 1 computer room, 1 infirmary, offices, 1 sports ground, 1 vegetable garden, 1 goat pen and 1 henhouse. 80m<sup>2</sup> of solar panels were installed by Soleol SA on one of the Centre's blocks. A rainwater harvesting system is functional.

### Education and training

Senior Association schoolgirls can take an entrance exam for the public College in Zinder. They can study to be teachers or nurses at the Après-demain Education and Development Centre. The Centre also runs a curriculum for secretaries, thanks to a computer lab and personalized courses. Young, married women and child-mothers take French classes in the sewing room, and are paid a salary for making soft and hard soaps, and scrubs.

**According to the latest OMS statistics, 1 billion people worldwide suffer from hunger.**

*"We want to accomplish something at the humanitarian level, and bring concrete relief..."*

- Scholastic Education
- Vocational Training
- Sewing Classes
- Distribution of Regular Meals
- Medical Care
- Dormitory for Street Children





## Albino Children

**Amadou, about 15 years old, came to the gate in August 2015.** A tumour had developed around his eyes; his cheekbones were affected and a blackish crust was beginning to develop on one cheek.

This boy was evidence of how dangerous the Nigerian sun is for albino children. I had not been aware of the situation previously. Together with the Association committee in Switzerland, we decided to incorporate several albino children into the 'Après-demain' Centre.

**To date, 27 young albino children aged 4 to 14 are enrolled in classes and computer courses, physical education, and all other Centre activities! Two children take Braille lessons at the school for the blind in Zinder. Their eyesight is very poor.**



A psychologist was hired to provide awareness courses for the other students, since albino children are nicknamed 'magic children' and hunted for their organs and limbs. The rituals are ancient, founded on an old belief system that encourages the ingesting of albinos in some countries in Africa. They make talismans, amulets, and black magic.

Albino children are very sensitive to the sun, which is why they need sunscreen, long sleeved shirts and pants, sunglasses, and hats to protect them from Niger's cancerous solar rays. Our infirmary takes special care of these children, under the guidance of a dermatologist in Zinder, who visits the Centre weekly.

Amadou was accompanied back to his village and father 112 kilometres from Zinder. No one can help him since his tumour is too far advanced. I bring medication to ease his pain each time I return to Niger, and spend time encouraging him.



How many other albino children are there in Zinder who could come to the Centre? We encourage them strongly to enrol in traditional Nigerian school classes, for their own protection but also so they can enjoy the company of their new classmates!

*Isabelle Macheret*



## Introducing my young friend, Bachir...

Fatherless, Bachir has lived on the streets since infancy. He was born in a small village 200 km from Zinder, a small town about 960 km from the capital Niamey, in Niger. I discovered him during my six-month humanitarian stay with an international NGO in Niger in September 2006. He lived and foraged for food on the street.

As of August 30, 2009, Bachir weighed in at 40 kilograms as a pre-teen.

I was immediately moved by his plight and by the hardship he was forced to endure day after day. He had suffered from a particularly severe fungal infection on his scalp since childhood, and year after year this mark of misery had descended toward his neck and face.

The young man is an adolescent now but does not know his exact date of birth, like the vast majority of Africans in this country, the poorest in the world. The population of Niger is above 15 million, with a 78% illiteracy rate and a desert surface of 80%.



I delivered a medication to Bachir in 2009 that had been prepared for him in a CHUV laboratory in Lausanne. After one year of medical treatment, Bachir still had not been healed of the fungus, which refused to cicatrize and became infected regularly.

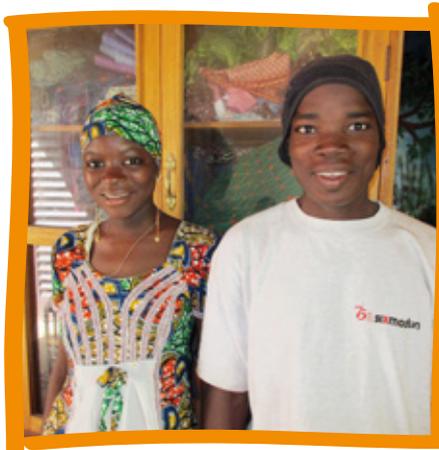
We ultimately decided to send the boy to a hospital in Benin specializing in skin grafting and staffed by Sisters. This was in May 2011.

**Bachir returned to his adoptive village late in July of 2011, completely healed!**

A celebration was held in honour of the successful graft!

Today, Bachir is independent and married to Balkissa. He earns a living growing tomatoes and lettuce, and works at the local market in Zinder. He hopes to have a family one day.

**From the bottom of his heart, Bachir wants to thank you for your support and for the generosity that has made his recovery possible!**



Isabelle Macheret

*"Let the world go by, but let us help it on its way..."*



## Niger

<b>Population</b>	21,000,000 million inhabitants, 63% of which live below the poverty line
<b>Surface</b>	1,267,000 km <sup>2</sup> , 80% of which is desert (Switzerland: 41,290 km <sup>2</sup> )
<b>Capital</b>	Niamey (2,000,000 inhabitants)
<b>Zinder</b>	Over 400,000 inhabitants, Zinder is located 1,000-km from the capital of Niamey.
<b>Currency</b>	Francs CFA (African Financial Community)





## In Niger...

- **People live on 75 cents a day.**
- **1 of 4 children does not reach the age of 5.**
- **In the regions of Zinder and Maradi, 350 of 1,000 children die before the age of 5.**
- **In normal times, malnutrition affects 40% of children under the age of 14.**
- **In the region of Zinder, one woman will give birth to an average of 8 children.**
- **Less than 30% of children are educated in Niger.**

With a population exceeding 21 million, Niger is one of the world's poorest countries. Its history is punctuated with food crises of varying degree, which have caused an already fragile society to fall into severe nutritional adversity.

- Soil erosion – weak irrigation options, ongoing drought
- Difficult access to the land (property division), monocultures
- Unbridled population growth

In theory, Niger enjoys a relatively stable government with infrastructures able to run the country.

Every six seconds a child dies from the complications of malnutrition. Facing near global indifference, this tragedy puts at risk the lives of some 20 million children worldwide. How can we accept the unacceptable?

The hungry period prior to harvest (soudure), June to September, is a critical time. This is when the storehouses are empty and the harvest is long in coming. Every day, the lives of hundreds of children are at risk for a lack of adequate food and care.

An MSF Switzerland nutritional study in southern Zinder showed in 2006 that the current state of food and nutritional security is precarious and that the number of households susceptible to undernutrition has soared from 74% to 81%.

Niger's earliest population cropped up in the northern part of the country, in the Tenere desert and the Air Mountains, which at that time possessed sufficient water reserves. 100 million years ago the region was made up of seas, lakes, marshland and extensive forests. Human life coexisted with fish, crocodile, turtles and an abundance of other dinosaurs.

Located where nomadic and settled life forms overlapped, Niger was a primary commercial crossroads for caravans transporting slaves, salt, gold, ivory, kola nut, cloth, cowry and animal skins.





## Pledge / Sponsorship

### Monthly or one-time pledge:

- CHF 20.- / month  
 CHF 50.- / month  
 CHF 100.- / month  
 Recurring donation of CHF \_\_\_\_\_  
 General donation of CHF \_\_\_\_\_

### Sponsor a street child or child-mother:

- CHF 30.- / month  
 CHF 45.- / month

### Association Member:

- Annual pledge CHF \_\_\_\_\_  
 (minimum amount: CHF 50.-)

### Partners and Sponsors:

**Upward of CHF 3,000:** your logo will appear in 1st position, large format, on the Association's "Our Partners" page with a personalized text and link to your company's website.

**Upward of CHF 1,000:** your logo will appear in 2nd position on the Association's "Our Partners" page with a link to your company's website.

### Bank Coordinates:

Banque Raiffeisen Moléson  
 CH-1680 Romont  
 Titulaire : Association Au Cœur du Niger  
 IBAN : CH60 8080 8007 5471 6269 1



- Please provide payment slips  
 Do not provide payment slips; I will make e-banking payments

Under the January 27, 2010 decision taken by the Fribourg Cantonal Tax Administration, the *Au Cœur du Niger* Association is tax-exempt. Donations are tax deductible as per cantonal law. A donation certificate may be requested for tax deduction purposes.

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_ Date and Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return the signed form to:**  
 Association «Au Cœur du Niger» – Case postale 298 – CH-1680 Romont  
 www.AuCoeurDuNiger.ch

**Thank you for your commitment!**

ASSOCIATION



## Association Committee

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<b>President</b>	Grégoire Piller	1700 Fribourg (FR)
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<b>Events</b>	Anita Clerc	1700 Fribourg (FR)
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### Ambassadors

Ms Anne Carrard, Actrice and presenter  
Jean-Philippe Rapp, Journalist

### Honorary President

† Dr Rolland-Yves Mauvernay

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### **Bank Account Coordinates**

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Titulaire: Association Au Cœur du Niger  
IBAN: CH60 8080 8007 5471 6269 1

The *Au Cœur du Niger* Association is a tax-exempt, non-profit organisation. Donations are tax deductible.

For more information and photos visit our website  
[www.AuCoeurDuNiger.ch](http://www.AuCoeurDuNiger.ch)