



# FONDATION SEMAFO NEWS

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- ◆ Donations
- ◆ Volunteers Needed
- ◆ Next Shipment to Africa - April 2010

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Written by  
Chantal Guérin

## Celebrating One Year...

One year ago *Fondation SEMAFO* delivered its first shipment of donations to West Africa. Since then, we have sent 13 containers filled with items given to us by our generous donors. As at December 1, 2009, we delivered 155,660 various items including: 49,186 books, 11,667 articles of clothing and footwear, 83,600 school and office supplies, 7,095 games and 4,112 miscellaneous household items.

We built 5 schools and a health hut. We initiated a school lunch program in 2 schools, repaired a well, purchased and donated 2 tractor trailers and 2 water pumps, fences, textbooks, school supplies (12,156 items in total) and medication, and also provided access to electricity to the village of Bossey Bangou, Niger.

We provided financial support to the village of Dangouna, Burkina Faso to build the infrastructures for a health center and the establishment of a multifunctional platform, which helped reduce time spent on household chores such as farming and cooking by 2 to 6 hours per day.

In partnership with Plan Canada, we provided much needed financial and moral support to the victims of the September 2009 devastating floods in Burkina Faso and Niger.



Inauguration of Wona B School, Burkina Faso



Fondation SEMAFO's President, Benoit La Salle and General Director, Chantal Guérin at Wona B School in Burkina Faso



President of the Women's Group in Bossey Bangou, Niger

# Burkina Faso

The contents of our June and August shipments were delivered from October 26 to 31 and November 31 to December 7, 2009. We made a lot of people very happy. We distributed donated articles to 11 schools, 4 CEGs, 2 colleges, a university, 2 prefectures, 2 town halls, 5 health centers, the DPEBA (department for basic education and literacy), 4 women's groups and 5 villages. We distributed 672 boxes containing 78,222 various items such as books, clothes, school uniforms and supplies, toys, fabric, etc. We inaugurated the Wona B School, as well as a lunch program at the Wona A and B Schools.

During my visit, I had the opportunity to meet with several organizations including the RAMA Foundation. This organization helps women afflicted by obstetric fistulas. Statistics indicate that as many as two million women worldwide suffer from this medical condition. As a woman and a human being, I was particularly moved by this encounter. I met women aged 12 to 68 years, who had been evicted from their homes. Some were raped, some experienced a difficult childbirth and others were victims of female genital mutilation. They lost their children, their husbands... their families... and must find a way to rebuild their lives... I cannot begin to explain, in this short article, all of help/assistance that they need. Madame Kabré, President of the RAMA Foundation, does her best to help these young girls and women regain their will to live, albeit with limited resources. At any given time, there are as many as 80 women sleeping in a room measuring approximately 150 ft<sup>2</sup>. The women are awaiting surgery and are looking for a place to call home. Often, a woman must undergo 2, 3, 4 or even 5 operations. *Fondation SEMAFO* made arrangements for 7 women to travel to Boromo in order to meet with doctors from Quebec who can help them and restore their sense of hope.



Child at Wona B School

"They lose their children, their husbands..., their families..."



Donated Articles Ready for Distribution



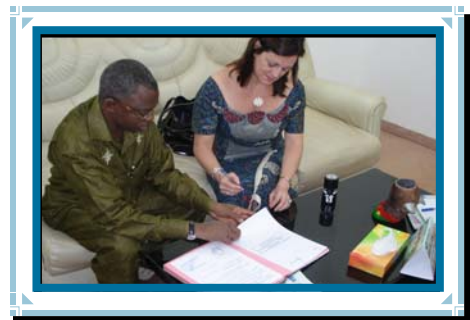
Children at Wona B School



Children at Wona B school



Women at the RAMA Foundation



Signature Ceremony at MEBA (Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy)

# Distribution in Burkina Faso



Preparation of Donated Items with Volunteers

We began by preparing the distribution with the help of our volunteers: Carmen, Catherine, Sonia and Sylvie.

Despite the heat and insects, I am pleased to say that we managed to get everything organized and ready for distribution, scheduled for the following day.



Distribution at CEG in Bana

I would have to write a book to adequately explain and express everything that I experienced during my last 2 trips. Here is a brief summary of some of the distributions. I would like to assure readers that all donations distributed are greatly appreciated. Books provide supplementary reading material that the children do not normally have. Reading enables the children to discover different cultures and new horizons. It piques their interest,



Distribution at school in Dangouana

stimulated their curiosity and incites them to read more. Games and toys bring smiles to their faces and makes them wonder about how people live elsewhere in the world. At the Yona School, for example, I made a hand puppet "talk". The children were in awe. The puppet was speaking to them! When I asked a child to put his hand inside the puppet to make it speak, there was a sense of euphoria. It was all very new to them. We can not begin to understand the cultural differences until we experience them.



Distribution at the Yona School

On this trip, I also visited regional health centers. I distributed some clothes, games, books, baby supplies,



Distribution at Wona B School

blankets, etc. The people are in desperate need of these items. In these places, people are faced with life and death issues on a daily basis.



Distribution at the CSPS in Bana

During one of the distributions at a health center in Bana, I witnessed the birth of a child. I saw another child who needed a blood transfusion in order to save his life. Sadly, when I visited again I learned that the child had passed away.



Newborn at CSPS in Bana

At a health center in Kona, I was pleased to learn that a vaccination program had been established for all children (DPT, polio, measles, yellow fever, tetanus).



Distribution at CEG in Safane

In Somona, the women anxiously await my return so we can spend some "girl time" together....



Distribution in the Village of Somona

*"...people are faced with life and death issues on a daily basis."*

# Inauguration of Wona B School



Children at Wona B School

October 31, 2009, marked the inauguration of Wona B School. In attendance were: the High Commissioner of Balé, the Inspector, the DEPBA, the Mayor, the SEMAFO's President & CEO and National Director, Burkina Faso, Messrs Benoit La Salle and Elie Ouedraogo, the Mana Mine Manager, Mr. Michel Labonté, as well as the local population. The three-classroom school can accommodate between 240 and 300 students. Thanks to the generosity of our Quebec donors, the classrooms have been furnished with desks for the students as well as for the Director.

Mr. Justin Zongo, Director, Wona B School was very excited about the new school. During the past two years, he was teaching students at the youth center, which had been made available by the village leaders.



"For many of these children, it is the only meal of the day."

## Launch of Lunch Program at Wona A and Wona B Schools in Burkina Faso



Child at the Canteen



Cooks at Wona A School

The *Fondation SEMAFO*, in partnership with the Paul Gérin-Lajoie Foundation, inaugurated school lunch programs for 2 schools, Wona A and Wona B. These canteens serve one meal a day, during 180 days to some 600 children. For many children, it is the only meal of the day. It usually consists of "fat rice", rice with sauce, or beans or cow peas with rice, or

couscous or tô with sauce. The AMEs (Association of Mothers for Education) and APEs (Parents' Association) are in charge of the project, under the supervision of a monitor and a Paul Gérin-Lajoie Foundation coordinator. The two associations and the cooking staff received training about the benefits of a healthy balanced diet and the repercussions on health and the environment. Training was also provided in relation to the day-to-day management of the canteens.

We constructed 2 buildings to house the kitchens and purchased sufficient equipment to enable 6 cooks to prepare the meals.

Each parent contributes 6 kilograms of food to the program. The primary objective of this lunch program is to provide incentive to the poorest children to return to school after they had been forced to drop out due to a lack of financial resources.



Students at the Wona A School Canteen

Our objective was to increase attendance by 10%. We surpassed our goal, achieving a 28% increase in attendance.



Students at Wona B School Canteen

# Let's Start with the Basics...



**Mana Advisory Committee**

In order to ensure that the foundation's actions are truly aligned with the real needs of the population, we created the Mana Advisory Committee. The committee members include the High Commissioner of the Province of Balé (Chairman), the Bana and Kona Prefects, the Mayor of Bana, a youth representative, women, traditional authorities and religious leaders (imam, priest, pastor) of each village, Bana's Chairman, CVD (Village Develop-

ment Council), the Mana Mine Manager and the General Director, *Fondation SEMAFO*. The committee's objective is to provide a forum to promote candid interaction between the foundation and representatives of various communities around the mine. The committee meets twice a year. During the first meeting, the *Fondation SEMAFO*'s General Director reiterated the foundation's role as a "facilitator" and its desire to support the people in their sustainable development programs. The foundation's priorities for 2010 were also tabled.

*Fondation SEMAFO* has become a member of SPONG, an umbrella organization for NGOs registered with the Government of Burkina Faso and active in the country. The foundation has also signed agreements with MEBA (Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy) and the Ministry of Health. In a partnership with

these organizations, the foundation will participate to the advancement of these two important sectors as well as to fight against poverty.



**Chantal, the High Commissioner of Balé and Elie Ouedraogo, Fondation SEMAFO Representative, Burkina**

"To ensure that the foundation's actions are truly aligned with the real needs of the population..."

## 2010 Objectives - Burkina Faso

In 2010, our focus on education continues via our participation in the construction of schools, including latrines and fresh water wells. We also plan to provide school furnishings, equipment and supplies.

We will advocate revenue-generating projects as well as skill development by supporting the training of local trades.

Recently, *Fondation SEMAFO* entered into a partnership with the Common Fund for Commodities. In January, the General Director in the company of Mrs. Salamita Somé Traoré, Governor of the Burkina Faso Fund, visited various villages to present a sesame production and processing project. The Burkina population is accustomed to sesame cultivation. Sesame is the second largest cash crop in Burkina Faso, however the harvest quality must improve in order to be viable for sale on European Union organic and conventional sesame markets. In fact, this project, which will cover some 50 hectares initially, will provide agricultural training and best practices to the population, including tips on how to best use farming equipment. Quality seeds will be provided and the purchase of their produce will be guaranteed. Training for the first harvest will begin in April 2010. This project will commence in the villages of Bana, Dangouna, Kona, Pompoi and Wona.

A wonder joint project is also underway with TFO Canada. In the past, I made reference to the foundation's desire to help the women of Yona to build a soap factory for the production of shea butter-based soaps. In this regard, we are pleased to announce that in collaboration with TFO Canada, arrangements have been made to provide the women with fabrication and export requirements training. As well, visits to Canada and the United States will be organized in order to identify distributors and determine requirements for the marketing and sale of the soaps in North America.



**Mrs. Somé and the Mayor of Pompoi**



**Shea Soap Made by the Women of Yona**

# Niger



A Proud Volunteer

On November 1-7, 2009, the General Director was in Niger for the inauguration of the Bossey Bangou health hut and for the distribution of July and August shipments of donated goods. The distribution consisted of 256 boxes containing 23,027 articles: 5,227 books, 865 pieces of clothing and footwear, 13,823 school and office supplies, 3,112 sewing items and 110 desks. Donations were distributed to 6 schools, 1 kindergarten,

1 youth group, 2 CEGs, 1 university, 1 CES, 3 women's groups, 2 documentation centers and 2 prefectures.

The President of the Bossey Bangou Women's Association was particularly pleased with the donations of various fabrics, sewing materials and machines. A special thank you goes out to Mrs. Neeracher for her important contribution to this wonderful gift.



Distribution to the Women of Bossey Bangou, Niger

"... the health huts are in need of medical equipment, medicines, beds, mattresses and blankets..."

## Inauguration of a Health Hut in Bossey Bangou



Health Hut, Bossey Bangou

On November 4, 2009, we braved the rising waters of the Sirba in order to proceed with the inauguration of a health hut in Bossey Bangou. The construction was carried out in partnership with the Rotary Club of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and SML (SEMAFO Niger). The health hut provides the population with access to primary health care, including vaccinations and childbirth facilities. In order to provide these services, a health worker was recruited by the state, with supplementary compensation provided by SML.

In addition, SML's physician will make regular visits to the health hut to ensure efficient and effective operations. In attendance at the inauguration were the Prefect of Say, the village Chief, the physician, the local population and a television crew. The imam of the village recited a prayer and blessed the health hut.



Health Hut Treatment Room, Bossey Bangou

## Medical Donations



Donated Medicines at the Health Hut, Boukagou

While on site, *Fondation SEMAFO* donated some much needed medicines to health huts in Bossey Bangou and Boukagou. All of the health centers that we visited were greatly in need of medical equipment, medicines, beds, mattresses and blankets, in order to be able to provide fundamental and vital care to the population.



Unveiling of the Plaque

# Distribution of Supplies in Niger



**Boxes Ready for Distribution**

The 256 boxes of goods were selected according to the region's particular needs, then labelled and grouped according to the destination. We began our distribution with women's groups in Bossey Bangou and Torodi after crossing the Sirba... we almost had to take a canoe... As the old adage says, a picture is worth 1,000 words.



**Crossing the Sirba**

The women present were very happy, particularly about the sewing machines and materials. The following photo depicts some of the items that they had already proudly crafted.



**Seamstresses in Bossey Bangou**

The distribution of goods for the regions of Téra and Gothèye took place in the SML warehouse in the presence of the Prefect, the Téra's Secretary General, the DEPBA, the Inspector and the

Gothèye commune representative. The boxes were subsequently redistributed by the inspector to ensure an equitable allocation to select schools.



**Distribution for Téra and Gothèye**

The Garbey Kourou School was presented with 110 desks. Several other villages also benefitted from distributions including Tiawa and Boulkagou.



**Desks for Garbey Kourou School**

As we approached the school in Tiawa, the children came running out of class to admire the stuffed toys. For some, it was the first time they had ever seen such things.



**Distribution in Tiawa**

We distributed books and school supplies. We also distributed teacher's guides that we purchased locally for

schools in Boulkagou, Bossey Bangou, Boulon Djounga I and II, Libiri, Mandou, Nabombori, Tiawa and the CEGs of Bossey Bangou and Larba Birno. Our sincere thanks to out to our volunteers in Niger, François and Chaibou.



**Chaibou (Middle) Distributes Text-books in Nabombori**

In Boulkagou, it was market day. The village was bustling with people. At the school, the children anxiously awaited our arrival. Several boxes were distributed to the school and to the women.

*"We almost had to take a canoe" to cross the Sirba River*



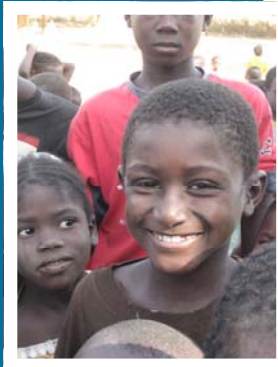
**Distribution in Boulkagou**

The children themselves carried the boxes into the school. The boxes were very heavy... and the children, very strong!



**Children in Boulkagou**

# Construction of Schools in Niger



Children in Boulkagou

The needs in education are colossal. The foundation has helped by building a classroom and a latrine at the mini CEG of Larba Birno and 3 elementary classrooms in the villages of Boulkagou, Niafourou and Nabombori in the rural commune of Gothèye. All the schools were provided with the necessary teaching material.



School in Nabombori



School in Niafourou



CEG of Larba Birno



Kindergarten in Boulkagou

*“All the schools were provided with the necessary teaching material.”*

## Agriculture

To assist with agriculture, *Fondation SEMAFO* donated 2 water-pumps and 2 tractor trailers to the villages of Boulkagou and Bossey Bangou. The trailers greatly facilitate the transportation of produce. Residents set up an underground piping system for irrigation purposes and we fenced off parcels of land which were already prepared and planted.



## Medical Clinic

I met the doctor and nurse at SEMAFO's Samira Hill Mine. They told me about their important work with the people.

While I was on the site, they came to get me because a young man came to the clinic for treatment. He had an open fracture of his shinbone. He fell into a prospector's hole in

his village. The doctor treated the patient and evacuated him to Niamey for medical attention.

There are many similar stories from the region. The clinic treats some 10,000 patients per year and 50% of them are local inhabitants.



Djibrilla Younoussa, Clinic Physician, Samira Hill Mine



Djibrilla Younoussa, Chantal Guérin and Fatimatou Issifi Traoré at the Samira Hill Mine Medical Clinic

# 2010 Objectives - Niger

In Niger, like Burkina Faso, our priority for 2010 is education. We want to build elementary and secondary schools and latrines. The schools will be furnished with cabinets, shelves, etc., in order to properly store the documentation that we provided.

We plan to drill 2 fresh water wells, one in each of the villages of Libiri and Tiawa.

We are currently working on new sustainable development projects, the details of which will be communicated shortly.

Of course, we continue to deliver your donated items, which are greatly appreciated.



Children Receive School Supplies



Boxes Ready for Distribution

## The School in Longue-Rive Rallies for Africa

*"...It was beautiful to see the students..."*

A BIG THANK YOU goes out to the Notre-Dame-du-Bon-Conseil School in Longue-Rive, and particularly to the grade 3 and 4 students and their teacher Suzanne Tremblay. Together they collected clothes and other articles for Africa as part of the Quebec Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge. Special thanks to the project masterminds, students Maude and Laurence Tremblay and their mother Nadine Gagné. Mrs Gagné said, "It was beautiful to see the students; they were just like brave, hard working little ants. In just thirty minutes they were classifying items, sorting school supplies, separating clothing by size and gender as well as packing and labelling boxes. They even chose to continue the activity instead of going to recess." Plastic bins were also placed at city hall and at Garage Crevier to facilitate donations from local residents. Many thanks to Robert Lemay who was kind enough to provide transportation the 300 boxes of donated items.

We would also like to congratulate the students for initiating a pen pal project with Wona A School. I personally delivered their letters to the principal of Wona A School, who confided that he had long wanted undertake such a project. The Longue-Rive students now eagerly await their comeback letters from West Africa.

SEMAFO's Manager, Finance, Burkina Faso, Eric Gratton, also initiated a pen pal program with Wona B School and a grade 2 class at the Jacques-Rochelleau School in St-Basile. Having been witness to a pen pal program, I can honestly tell you that it is a rewarding and enlightening experience for students on both continents.



Grade 3 and 4 Students Longue-Rive School



Grade 3 and 4 Students in Action

# Guinea



Patrick Moryoussef, Fondation SEMAFO Representative for Guinea

Fondation SEMAFO is very concerned about the sociopolitical situation in the Guinea. The political instability, inflation, food crisis and the withdrawal of financial support by other countries leave little hope for the population. The Kiniero region is the poorest in the country. Mining companies are the only source of support that these people have to survive, and the foundation is eager to help. They need medical equipment, medicines, blankets, mattresses, clothing, baby items...essentially, they need everything.

On November 16, 2009, a Fondation SEMAFO representative for Guinea, Mr. Patrick Moryoussef and a team of volunteers completed the distribution of donations at Kiniero in the presence of the SEMAFO's Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer and Vice President, Human Resources of SEMAFO Inc., Messrs Benoit Desormeaux and Alain Mélanon.

This first official distribution in Guinea was made possible by the volunteer Haphy Fofana and his team. Our sincere thanks goes out to all of them. In addition, local authorities worked closely with Fondation SEMAFO to ensure a successful event. Accordingly, we would like to extend our thanks to the Sub-Prefect and the National Director of Education.



Donation Delivery at Kiniero

We delivered 164 boxes to representatives of the population to ensure equitable distribution to nearby villages. The boxes contained: 3,208 books, 2,970 office and school supplies, 217 household items, and 881 articles of clothing and shoes.

"Mining companies are the only source of support that these people have..."

## Distribution of Supplies in Guinea



Donation Distribution at Kiniero



Donation Distribution at Kiniero



Official Distribution at Kiniero



Donation Distribution at Kiniero



Villagers Celebrate Receipt of Donations

# Thanks to Our Volunteers



**Oumar, Sonia, Catherine, Carmen, Chantal and Sylvie**



**Adboulaye, Assouman, Hassane, Bernadette, Guylaine and Chantal**



**Émile, Sylvie, Gilles and André**

Here are just a few of our invaluable volunteers.

In Montreal, I would like to underscore the tremendous support of Liliane, Martine, Nathalie and Normand for sorting the donations, as well as Michel for transporting the material.

I would also like to thank Oumar and François and their assistants Mamadou and Chaibou, who oversee the implementation of all of our projects in Africa.

Without all these volunteers, the foundation's work would not be possible.  
**THANK YOU SO MUCH!**



**Michel with a Donor**

*Our volunteers need help!*

*Please contact us if you have time; it's for a good cause!*

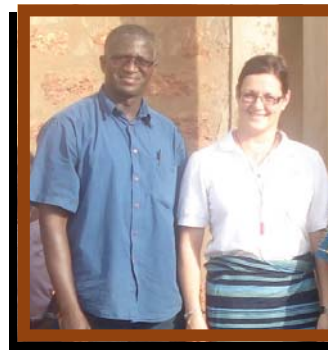
## The *Fondation SEMAFO* Team



**Elie Ouedraogo**  
Representative, Burkina Faso



**Harouna Moussa**  
Representative, Niger



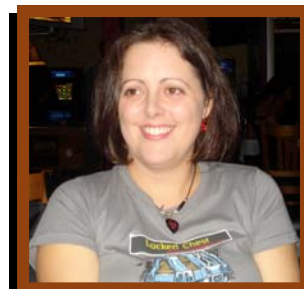
**Oumar Traoré**  
Local Activities Coordinator, Burkina Faso

Here are some of the people who ensure that projects are carried out in Africa as well as in Montreal.

They take the real issues and needs of the West African people to heart.



**François Gay**  
Local Activities Coordinator, Niger



**Valérie Parisé**  
Activities Coordinator, Montréal

Children at Wona  
Village, Burkina Faso



Child at Kiniero  
Village, Guinea

Children on the Banks of the Sirba River, Niger

## PLEASE HELP US TO HELP THEM

We are preparing a delivery for the next school year. The shipment is scheduled for June 2010. We need pens (blue, red and black), notebooks, erasers, rulers, desks, art supplies, etc., as well as jerseys, trophies and soccer equipment. During my visits, I witnessed the needs of the population firsthand: health related items such as medicines, mattresses, beds, small surgical instruments, and blankets. The women need sewing machines, fabrics, typewriters, clothing, hygiene products, diapers, etc.

As well, with regard to our many projects already underway such as canteens, schools, latrines, wells, installing solar panels for schools, sewing projects, etc. we need your donations. If any of our projects speaks to you, please do not hesitate to contact us to play a part in our important work. Please donate to *Fondation SEMAFO*.

### GOOD NEWS...

You can now make financial donations to *Fondation SEMAFO* on-line! Charitable donation receipts will be issued for income tax purposes. We have several projects underway that may be of interest... Please visit our website regularly for up to more information and the latest news.



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