
SENTINELLES

TO THE RESCUE OF WOUNDED INNOCENCE

40
Years

N° 271 / August 2020



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BURKINA FASO

Casimir's testimony,
a victim of noma

SWITZERLAND

Exhibitions and concerts
for 40 years of struggle

COLOMBIA

A model
of resilience

Editorial

United, yes, but full time!

We do not all share the same history, even though some have claimed this during the first few months of the Covid-19 pandemic. The most advanced economies were indeed affected, our freedom was hampered, lives were lost all over the world; however, the consequences of this worldwide crisis might be particularly devastating in countries with fragile health systems.

The most alarming WHO scenarios for Africa do not seem to have come true as it was unevenly affected. However, recession and food crisis are menacing the continent. Frontiers were closed for months, raw materials were difficult to sell, the price of staple products increased, adding to structural and climatic challenges.

The populations of many overcrowded cities are forced to choose between braving the health prevention restrictions and hunger. To low income families, losing their day jobs meant hardship and increased health hazards and the risk to the sound development of children.

In Colombia, the numbers of child abuse cases have exponentially increased during lockdown, so much so that today a project aiming at forbidding any type of violence as a mean of correction was handed over to the parliament.

During this unprecedented period, we protected the most vulnerable people, reassessed our priorities, supported the medical staff, our neighbours. We created solidarity chains, here for here, here for elsewhere, in a deeply human and brotherly impetus.

What if we remained sensitive to the suffering of others full time? If we maintained our capability to mobilize? Solidarity is not only a matter of a crisis, but a highly positive feeling that leads us to be moved and to move.



Marlyse Morard
Managing Director

IN BRIEF



I BURKINA FASO

Stricken by severe food insecurity

According to official projections by the Harmonised Framework (an analytical tool for identifying risk zones and population with food and nutrition hazards in Sahel, West Africa and Cameroon), nearly 2 million Burkinabe will experience severe food insecurity during the next few months, a critical lean period between two crops. The next harvest will only take place in September and last year's food stocks are already nearly empty. There are multiple causes which unfortunately do cumulate: climate change and little rain in a number of regions in 2019, as well as the internal displacement of nearly 800,000 people who had to abandon their homes and farming land that have become inaccessible due to insecurity. To these factors added the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in March that immobilised most of the economy.

As of May, our team resumed their bush visits to the families of children affected by noma whom we have accompanied for years to check on their health and on their social and nutritional situation. An assessment of the needs and of the self-care capacity of each family is carried out regularly. Ad hoc food support is provided if need be to face this critical period. We also distributed soap and fabric scarves, preventative barrier measures that are recommended by the health authorities to limit the propagation of the epidemic in the bush.

I SENEGAL

A happy ending of the programme “child guides to the blind”

Our action for children guiding the blind is coming to an end. After more than 30 years of action in favour of many families in Mbour, Fatick and Kaolack, yesterday’s reality doesn’t look like today’s. To our greatest delight, all the supported families have reached autonomy or are in good shape to reach it. As for the new generations of blind parents, it is nowadays very rare that they are in dire need in the regions where we are active. In each family there are now one or several sighted adults able to undertake an income generating activity.

For these reasons, Sentinelles has made the decision to put an end to the programme as early as the beginning of next year.

Our action in Senegal will however not diminish. We shall focus our efforts on fighting child abuse, specifically towards talibe children, and we’ll diversify our activities within this programme. To this end, many projects are being elaborated and we’ll let you know about them in due time.



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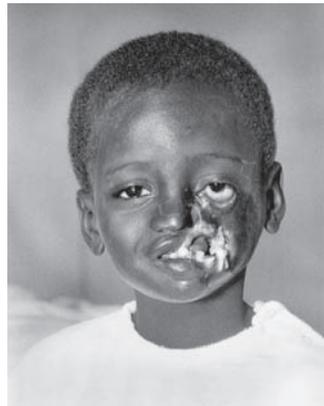
I SWITZERLAND

THANK YOU!

A warm thank you to all of you who, through your donations, your friendship, your spontaneous messages, have surrounded us during these last few months. We are infinitely grateful for your support during this coronavirus-marked year but also for Sentinelles’ 40-year anniversary! And you were many to wish us a happy birthday.

For four decades, you have enabled us to provide often vital support to numerous victims in dire distress, in Colombia, in Niger, in Madagascar, in Burkina Faso, in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Senegal. And among them so many children! Without you nothing would have been possible, and nothing will be possible in the future.

We need you more than ever!



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I BURKINA FASO

Casimir's fight

A victim of noma when he was very young then supported by Sentinelles, Casimir testifies

"My name is Casimir Kolonean. I am from Burkina Faso and I am 28 years old. It is with great pleasure today that I am telling you my story.

First of all, I insist on reiterating from the depths of my heart a big and infinite thank you to this kind and obliging structure known as Sentinelles. It is thanks to them that I am here today, writing my modest story. According to a saying, the daily "life of every man here in the world of the common people is made of highs and lows, so I would like to draw on this formula to deliver my testimony.

When I was very young, I was struck by this terrible disease called "noma". I was one and a half years old when my father died, and a few months later, when I reached the age of two, the disease started. I would not be able to say how the disease caught me because I do not really remember its beginning. One day, when I was at my grandmother's in the village, she knew I was not well. When she proceeded to touch my forehead with her hand to control my temperature, she understood it was too late. She realised that my left cheek was not holding any longer! She took me to a village CSPS (Centre for health and social promotion) and from there I was evacuated because my situation was critical. I spent a month in the Pô hospital (Burkina Faso), and I only had half of my face left. As it happened, nothing further could be done for me. When I got back to the village, everybody was frightened by me. Soon afterwards, my mother died. My uncle became my tutor and my grandmother was taking care of my education.

Victim of this terrible disease, my life turns into a gigantic nightmare that deprives me of everything that is called childhood happiness. Noma got the better of my face, it disfigured the whole left side of my face and this is how my long ordeal started. I

had become a freak and according to some people it was surely a curse. I frighten everybody except my grandmother Abajong. The village children reject me because of my destroyed face. It is really hard to face those despising looks around me and I am appalled by my kin's hostility, both adults and children. I therefore have no friends.

My only hope is my grandmother who protects and defends me, repeating relentlessly that I am a human being and not a monster. Thanks to her endeavours, in time, my lucky hour comes. Thanks to relentless searches, she eventually meets a young ambulance driver named Elie. He tells her there is a structure that could take care of my disease, Sentinelles! An organisation representative makes an appointment with us and takes pictures. A few days later, someone picks me up to treat me.

I am leaving for Switzerland for a long, 2-year stay. In Bern Hospital, I undergo eight reconstructive surgeries by Professor Banic that restore my child's face; like the phoenix, it is as if I was reborn from my burning embers. When I reach the age of 10, in 2002, I come back home. Sentinelles makes sure I enrol in school and gives me a bike to get there because it is far from the village.

Since then, a lot of water has flowed under the bridge and I was fortunate enough to pass my O-levels and my A-levels, and then a history and archaeology degree. My life has changed since my noma was cured.

People are not afraid of me anymore even though it is true that I sometimes must face a few looks that bring me back to my painful past. I am lucid. I know that, despite the improvements I got through the treatment, I remain different but never mind,



this is not a big deal for me. If I survived through such a terrible disease, there must be a reason and I am not the only one living with a handicap. Therefore, I remain self-confident, always, because I have a mission to accomplish, a goal to reach: to have a job (stock breeding, dry-cleaning, teaching, etc.). Today, at 28 years old, after another stay in Switzerland for surgeries in HUG, I am back in Burkina Faso and I dream of being able to bring relief to other people with handicaps.

I conclude my testimony by expressing once more my gratitude and my sincere thanks to Sentinelles for all what they have done and keep doing for me as well as for the other children victims of this dreadful noma. And with my modest believer faith, I pray that God blesses them and supports them in their beautiful work.”

Casimir Kolonean, April 2020 ■



*Open the door of life by
showing them the path and
providing the means*

Edmond Kaiser

Thank you for your support

Accounts of the **Sentinelles** Fondation

From January 1st to December 31st 2019 (in Swiss francs with year on year numbers comparing with 2018 period)

EXPENSES	2019	2018	REVENUE	2019	2018
Burkina Faso	251'479	295'096	Burkina Faso	33'334	51'948
Colombia	128'593	142'461	Colombia	11'411	11'880
Congo	117'511	111'322	Congo	22'746	19'647
Madagascar	415'733	396'179	Madagascar	20'247	51'720
Niger	373'187	330'202	Niger	33'935	30'274
Senegal	228'388	236'621	Senegal	34'383	3'543
Healthcare for children operated in Switzerland	64'551	101'970	Children suffering from noma Found. Winds of Hope	366'435	186'440
Other Supports	4'137	3'840	Association Noma-Hilfe	50'000	30'443
			Fondation Gertrude Hirzel	50'000	20'000
			Ass. to Face Disfigured Friends of Sentinelles (Republic and Canton of Geneva)	150'000	225'000
			LADS (Geneva City)	19'000	19'000
			Loterie Romande (hist.arch.)		40'000
Subtotal	1'583'579	1'617'691	Subtotal	791'491	701'076
COSTS IN SWITZERLAND			OTHER ENTRIES		
Salaries and charges	211'042	217'613	General donations	669'592	688'875
Cost of premises	10'248	10'774	Exceptional donations	147'609	250'000
Sentinelles newsletter	78'364	74'104	Successions	110'340	241'908
Communication media	1'483	9'006	Markets	1'072	1'532
Administrative costs	39'680	39'970	Events	4'012	22'243
Events	1'704	2'876	Sales of Edmond Kaiser books	310	645
Taxes, succession costs	1'258	724	Contributions to medical care	10'528	
Historic records	41'429	29'884	Taxes CO2/comm. Tax at source	817	
Amortisation	17'499	17'500	Interest, sub equities and utilities	39	1'092
Exceptional charges	56		Subtotal	944'319	1'206'295
Exchange rate difference	31'048	21'606	TOTAL REVENUE	1'735'810	1'907'371
Subtotal	433'811	424'057			
TOTAL EXPENSES	2'017'390	2'041'748			
Results of the financial year	-239'875	-134'377			

Sentinelles strives to make sure we function in an efficient, high quality and frugal way. The services that we are granted for free or at a favourable price along with the collaboration of many voluntary workers do represent more than a million francs savings a year (1,471,210 CHF in 2019). If we had to add these gratuities to our spending budget, the Sentinelles expenditures would be CHF 3,488,600 in 2019.

Our accounts were revised according to the audit report of May 19, 2020 by the Fiduciary DRP SA Geneva

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS!

Mark your agendas to celebrate a very special anniversary
During 2020 we are happy to invite you to several events to celebrate
Sentinelles' 40-year anniversary.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 11AM^(*)

LE KIOSQUE À MUSIQUES

The famous RTS La 1ère programme is recognizing this anniversary in its own way. Jean-Marc Richard, a loyal Sentinelles friend, will give us the floor and invite several musicians happy to join their talents to celebrate those 40 years of solidarity and commitment.

Come and join us in large numbers in the Crissier Chisaz concert hall or listen to this show live on RTS La 1ère from 11 am to 12:30 pm.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 5 PM^(*)

GENEVA VICTORIA HALL

Charity concert by the Brass Band of l'Arquebuse, Geneva organised with "Les amis de Sentinelles". Thirty-five musicians under the baton of Jean-Pierre Chevailler will warm your hearts in support of Sentinelles. Entry free, collection in favour of the most wounded.



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 8 PM^(*)

CANDLE-LIT CONCERT IN ST-FRANÇOIS CHURCH IN LAUSANNE

Candlelit concert organised thanks to the Lausanne Conservatory. You will have the pleasure of listening to the Ministrings. These children aged from 6-14 equipped with their string instruments are absolutely amazing. On their part, the children of the Horizon Choir and the Découverte Choir promise you magical moments. Free entry, collection in favour of children in distress.



FROM OCTOBER 14 TO 31

EXHIBITION IN THE CITY HALL FORUM OF LAUSANNE

On the occasion of our 40th anniversary, we have compiled a retrospective for you that we invite you to discover over a period of more than two weeks; it shows how far Sentinelles has come since its creation, by highlighting the key dates of the past 4 decades. There, you will also discover the different programmes carried out today.



An exhibition of beautiful original drawings by our friend Raymond Burki, an amazing, kind and cheeky genius, a welcome ray of sunshine in these days.

20 years ago, Edmond Kaiser passed away in Coimbatore, India. In order to pay tribute to him, we have dedicated a space to him, where you will rediscover texts, photos, records and videos.

You are cordially invited to the opening of this retrospective on Thursday the 15th October, at 6pm, in the walls of the Forum.

() Subject to modifications*



Luz Eliana is still living in the Centre and goes back to her kin at weekends and during vacations. She goes to school and benefits from specific support to overcome her learning difficulties.

For two years now, the mother has been participating in a literacy programme in her neighbourhood and she takes part with her eldest daughter Maria Alejandra in our cooking programmes. Duvan is attending the special education programme developed by the Amaga municipality.

Maria Alejandra is becoming more and more autonomous. She successfully attended accelerated lessons and passed her O-levels last year. She shows real family leadership skills and is highly responsible. She is the one who motivated her mother to invest in our workshops.

Among her family, Maria Alejandra makes sure that everyone should want for nothing. Asked during the lockdown to plan the daily tasks and see that restrictions and any Covid-19 prescriptions be respected, she followed our recommendations and did a wonderful job. Over the course of her weekly visits, our psychologist notices that Maria Alejandra has become the pillar of the family. She implements for everyone the self-protection strategies, she organises the days of tidying and cleaning up in the house, suggests an activity for everyone and acts as a mediator when conflicts arise within the family.

This experience shows that Maria Alejandra acquired self-management, mediation and organisation skills that allow us to consider letting her younger sister Luz Eliana go back home in good conditions. We plan with her to start an income generating activity for the family. ■

I COLOMBIA

Back home after a long journey

In Colombia, Sentinelles offers support to children and their parents with severe psychosocial difficulties. The Covid-19 related lockdown imposed by the government in March has revealed the amazing resilience capacity of the Carmona Arboleda family, one that was once dysfunctional.

In 2012, Maria Alejandra, Luz Eliana and Duvan were welcomed in our Minas Centre. The young Duvan suffers from a moderate cognitive handicap and their mother is going through a deep depression and anxiety episode. Victims of abuse, without access to education, the three chil-

dren are provided a kind mentoring by our workers while keeping a bond with their parents.

Thanks to the work of a multidisciplinary team, Duvan and Maria Alejandra can progressively reunite with their mother.

SENTINELLES

TO THE RESCUE OF WOUNDED INNOCENCE

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