

September 2015

Dear Supporters, Partners, Families, Sponsors and Friends of SHAHICA,

Greetings from the SHAHICA team, particularly from the team who took the trip to Fouban (Cameroon) this summer. Raphia Noumbissi our Co-Founder and Abia Noumbissi one of our starting team members travelled to Cameroon from July 24th until August 27th. There they joined forces with 8 other young team members and volunteers including one of our orphans Arouna, who is now 18 years of age and has become one of Shahica's counselors. Working with our team were our Coordinator in Cameroon Ismael Ranedoumoun, cook Adidja Njapdounke and of course Raphia's mom Aminatou Nzeket providing housing and some supervision and last but not least Raphia's dad Monfon Mamadou providing overall counseling and support.



The SHAHICA team this year

Starting from the left: Bijou Nsangou, Rabia Nsangou, Laura Nchere, Hussien Fifen. Aicha Mfounjou, Kadiji Nsangou, Hassan Mouliom, Abia Noumbissi

This year's work focused on three areas.

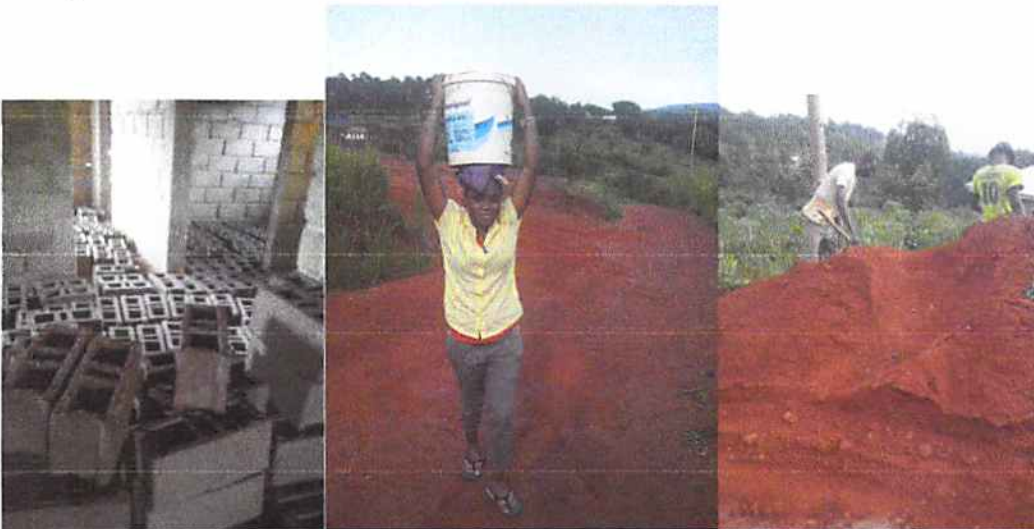
1. The return of Sodetou Mefire one of our orphans who has been in Philadelphia through the generosity of *Shriners Childrens Hospital*, her Sponsor Catherine Wesemann and her church family as well as numerous others who supported her financially, spiritually and physically,
2. The continuation of the Community Day Center building,
3. The orphan outreach including the camp, schooling registration and medical follow up.

Immediately after arriving in Fouban, Raphia began work by reaching out to Sodetou's family. Raphia and others from the team met with Sodetou's father and some of her family members including her oldest sister and one of her brothers to give them a full report about Sodetou's care and overall stay in Philadelphia and how we could prepare for her return to her family in Cameroon. The meeting was very emotional as the family were seeing some of Sodetou's treatment pictures for the first time. Only little progress was made during this time of planning Sodetou's return. While in Fouban, Raphia continued a weekly phone conference with Shriners as well as SHAHICA team in the US. Raphia, Abia, and two other members of SHAHICA travelled to Yaoundé to welcome Sodetou on July 9th. Her two-day trip with Air France was a smooth one. She was well cared for, "like a diva" Sodetou later explained. After being picked up from the airport, she was then returned to her family later that night. A bittersweet moment.



Sodetou has a long recovery and tough life ahead of her; please keep her in your thoughts and prayers.

While working on a return plan for Sodetou, Raphia also started the work at the community day center. In the meantime Abia and Hussein started planning for a weeklong day camp with our orphans. Even though Sharing Health and Hope in Cameroon Africa was recognized by the Cameroonian official as a Non Profit Organization providing medical and social care to the less fortunate a few years ago, we still have yet to get the authorization to actually operate as a community day center for children. As the construction of the building advances we will need to obtain that authorization. Raphia started the paperwork and the laborious work of meeting with government officials both in Fouban and in Yaoundé. That work is still in progress and was passed to our SHAHICA Coordinator in Cameroon for follow up. Much was learned during this early process as far as the building size requirements, safety requirements, paperwork requirement, playground requirement and who can or cannot open and operate a day center. We were forced to begin a small room on the site of the existing building so that we can meet the government requirements. We were also forced to legally obtain an official act of land donation from my father which was signed by the Mayor and the state officials. The construction crew started the work on the other building immediately after our findings.



The Day Center as of now.

The week long Orphan Camp was primarily held in the existing building headed up by Abia Noubissi assisted by Hussein Fifen and seven other young volunteers. The uniqueness of this year's camp was not only that all the counselors were under 18 but also the fact that one of our orphans became a counselor instead of participating as a camper. Please note that this year was also our first year doing all the work in the new building. The team had fun putting up decorations and making sure that the building was safe and welcoming. A few people were hired and worked very hard cleaning the surroundings outside of the building. The main topic of this year's outreach was bullying and social pressure. In addition, each day involved a theme such as:

- Healthy food and eating habits
- the importance of water, along with washing everyday before eating lunch
- the importance of having a clean body, brushing your teeth and washing your face
- the importance of preserving the culture.

Crafts, science experiments, traditional dances, different food every day for lunch, poems, songs, writing a letter to their sponsors and a field trip to the local museum and palace are examples of what we did everyday to illustrate and emphasize each theme. Sixteen children attended this year's camp and every day they were eager to get there. The week ended Friday, August 21st with an amazing finale. The children and counselors had the opportunity to showcase what they had done and learned the week through Poems, singing, dancing, and a fashion show.

All the caretakers and other organizations and associations came to the presentation. Lots could be read in the eyes of the caretakers, sadness, joy, and wondering. One thing I could say for sure we were all able put our worries on the side for few hours and enjoy the show. At the end of the program each child was presented with a little care package put together by counselors during the week. In addition, some were presented gifts sent by their sponsors. Each caretaker received money to start the school registration for his or her child.



In addition, Raphia continued fostering some of our established relationship in the town. Meetings were conducted at the school of nursing in Fouban as well as the *King and Government hospitals*. Although they were disappointed thinking that the medical aspect of the outreach was neglected this year they are indeed looking forward to Shahica's medical outreach plans for 2016.

New partnerships were formed with the Mayor of Foumban as well as with a long term Elder of a church outside of Foumban. Both the Mayor and this Elder were very happy by the meeting they each had with Raphia and both expressed strong interest about working together in the future.

The group caretakers which met monthly remains very committed and involved in all aspects of the orphans care as well as supporting the development of the Community Day Center.

The Social Worker at the *Government Hospital* sent five new HIV orphans to Raphia for a meeting and to be considered for sponsorship. Raphia's meeting with the caretakers of the children and brief assessment was done. The cases will be presented to the team for consideration.

We will like to finish this brief summary by thanking all those who helped make the outreach possible this year. There is no way we could have traveled and done this our own, From people who have prayed, donated, provided care to Sodetou, to our volunteers and partners in Cameroon. Thank you also to those who have given toward the building of the Community Day Center. And of course a big thanks to all of our sponsors. Your sponsorship and love for the children go a long way in helping them. My admiration goes out to the caretakers for all the care they are providing the children. There's still many needs. SHAHICA will continue to follow God's lead and guidance as we reach out to the most needed and vulnerable population in Foumban. We would definitely appreciate your prayers and financial support as we continue developing our orphan program, Community Day Center building, and start planning for a medical and orphan outreach in 2016.

Blessings,

Raphia and Abia Noubissi