

Report on project tour (Sep. 23 - Oct. 14, 2016) and annual report 2017

2017 was another very successful year – not just financially, but also because we were able to complete every single project we had announced, and even a few more on top.

A school garden irrigated with a solar pump and its tower in Guénon: In January, a generous donation from the parish of Zurich-Fluntern financed an exploratory drilling for a solar pump at the grammar school in Guénon. The aim was to provide the 400-odd students with drinking water and to irrigate a school garden. Luckily, the first drilling hit an abundant water source, which can even supply the nearby houses with drinking water.



Students at the drilling site

A roof for the yard of our facility in Bobo: In February, the yard of our facility received a roof. We can now work in the shade and are protected from the rain.



A new roof for better working conditions

We also had sufficient financial reserves to initiate the next stage of the irrigation project in Guénon. We purchased the fences, bricks, cement and other material that the inhabitants could not finance, while they took care of all construction work free of charge.



Finally done – pump shelter and school garden

Training in tunnel-type dryers for Mr. Asso in Bénin: In April, Mr. Asso spent a few days in Bénin with Heini Roth, who has been running a large vocational workshop there for several years. He attended a training course on tunnel-type dryers, which he intends to manufacture in our facility in Bobo. Our sister association Notre Soleil Burkina intends to market assorted dried vegetables to finance tree-planting projects.



Tunnel-type dryer training in Bénin

Solar pump repair at a reintegration center:

Again in April, Mr. Asso gave a further proof of his technical skills when he successfully repaired the solar pump of the Juvenile Reintegration Center we had visited In late 2016.



Repair work on a solar pump

Solar power for the Widows and Orphans Association AVOH:

The association operates a rather large mango drying facility and produces fruit juices. The facility's electric fans consume a lot of expensive electric power and thus eat up a major share of potential profit. Mr. Asso installed a solar power unit for the ventilation, refrigeration, packaging and lighting equipment. As a result, the monthly electricity bill was reduced from 120'000 to only 15'000 CFA. This was one of the rare projects which required no financial support from Switzerland.



AVOH's president at her mango drying facility.

Several training courses in photovoltaics:

In the first half of 2017, Mr. Asso offered several courses in basic photovoltaics, one of them for HELVETAS Switzerland: In the Cascades region near Banfora, over 2 weeks, 16 young men and women, became familiar with the installation and maintenance of photovoltaic equipment, and also learned how to recognize highly reliable components. The course was complemented with excursions to the local markets.



Students on a rooftop at Bobo university

First Crowdfunding project, a cooperation between „notre soleil suisse“ and SSES Zürich (Société Suisse Energie Solaire) :

Our very first crowdfunding project was for the benefit of the maternity ward of the Health Center (CSPS) in Guénon, and was a full success, achieving its financial target of 9'800 CHF. By August, Mr. Asso could install solar lighting, medical refrigerators and ceiling fans. SSES even volunteered to match all private contributions to the project for an extended period. Thanks to their generosity, a second part of the project could also be implemented. Our very best thanks go to Mrs. Luzia Schwegler, and Mrs. Diana Hornung for their enthusiasm and efforts.

Projektbesuch 23. Sept.- 14. Okt. 2017:

On this annual trip, I was accompanied by Markus Groner, Daniel Lott, Ulli Schüpbach, and Ramon Schellenbaum. The last three are professional electricians, and all of them had, from the start, made it clear that they intended not only to be tourists, but also to perform real work, install equipment and generally make themselves useful. For this reason, we left Ouagadougou shortly after our arrival.

Installations in and near Bobo-Dioulasso: Solar lighting for the elementary school

Samandeni C, Bama: We first drove to Bama's city hall to introduce ourselves and state our purpose, as the local custom wants it. Upon arrival at the school, Mr. Asso briefed us on the work to be performed. Within 2 hours, the panels and control modules were installed on the roof and the battery cables were in place. By 4:30 pm, the lamps were on. We had a short inaugural ceremony and the school's headmaster and the head of the parents' association offered us two live roosters.



The mayor of Bama

Lighting and fans for a kindergarten in

Tarfila/Banfora: This installation was sponsored by the Swiss association „Teriasira“ (www.teriasira.org). In addition to several ceiling fans and plenty of lamps for inside and outside lighting, we also installed a power inverter, so that the kindergarten teachers now can play music as part of the teaching. In Burkina Faso, children should attend kindergarten by age four, and an attractive

kindergarten is an effective measure for boosting school attendance.



Solafrique at work at the kindergarten

Solar oven workshop with 10 lady members of

Notre Soleil BF: For the first time, it was possible to run a workshop with construction kits we had manufactured 100% on site at our facility in Bobo. My four companions Daniel, Ulli, Ramon and Markus spent 3 days making all individual parts for 10 solar ovens. Of course, they were fully familiar with the electric power tools (drills, jigsaws, screwdrivers etc.) we had brought to the facility last year in a container. At the same time, it was a great know-how transfer for Mr. Asso and his 3 helpers; until then, the electric tools had not left their boxes, as no one felt confident enough to use them for production. Ten women members of our local sister association could thus complete the assembly of their solar oven within one day, while a lady instructor also showed them how to bake bread in their ovens and demonstrated a parabolic cooker and a tunnel-type dryer.



Notre Soleil members build their own ovens

Meetings in Ouagadougou:

Our first Meeting was in Gampéla, not far from the capital, on the premises of **Tipaalga/New Tree/Nouvel Arbre**, where Franziska Kaguebega – Müller runs a training center for biological farming. Our purpose was to receive practical advice on biological gardening and farming for the school garden of the Lycée in Guénon. Director Francois Braxa provided useful information on composting, tree planting and hay production.

A further meeting was with the ONG **FEM (Fond Environnement Mondial)**. Its new director, Mrs. Clotylde Ky was very cooperative, and intends to support our project of a solar energy kiosk. At a follow-up meeting, we decided on a memorandum of understanding to be signed by FEM, Solafrique and Notre Soleil Suisse. FEM will finance the construction and Solafrique will provide the solar equipment for lighting, recharging PC and mobile phones, and TV sets. We also agreed that once completed, the kiosks will be operated as self-financing businesses. We plan on running five pilot projects in different types of locations: villages in Burkina Faso often consist in widely scattered groups of dwellings, so we look for convenient locations close to markets, clinics or schools.

Right at the end of our stay, we had the opportunity to meet Mr. **Signare Lora**, the technical director of **Helvetas**. We agreed to continue our cooperation.

A trip south to Guénon

A meeting with the village chief of Guénon: A four-hour drive took us through Po to Tiébélé, where we intended to stay at the „Auberge Jean Viard“. Upon arrival, we met with the village chief of Guénon. A long-standing quarrel between two family clans has a bad impact on local politics, and the village chief hopes that Guénon, with its population of 25000 and its 18 boroughs. („sous-villages“) will be granted the full status of a commune,

with an official mayor, a budget for development projects, a proper administration and a police station to ensure public safety.



The village chief of Guénon

Project check at the clinic (CSPS) of Guénon:

Our next task was to visit the clinic in Guénon which had been the beneficiary of our crowdfunding project. The solar lighting worked very well (in the meantime, Mr. Asso has finished implementing the next stage last November, with additional lighting and ventilation.) We were welcomed by a highly motivated and professional team (a doctor, a male nurse with an additional training in obstetrics and two further nurses).



Nurses and doctor at the CSPS in Guénon

However, the working conditions were truly appalling: no shower facilities for the mothers, no kitchen, no cabinets to store medical equipment, no way to sterilize medical instruments or to dispose of contaminated waste. Worst of all was a total lack of medicine. It is hard to imagine the staff's constant frustration – they can only make their diagnoses, fill out prescriptions and send the patients home.

Party at the Lycée in Guénon: Our last stop was at the Lycée in Guénon where we could celebrate the completion of the solar irrigation and the school garden. We were welcomed by a chorus of singing and dancing women from a local organization, and took part in the opening ceremony in the school building where we had installed solar lighting. We handed out the gardening equipment we had taken along and received a couple of live roosters in return.



Dancers at the party at the Lycée in Guénon

Visit of the „Cour royale de Tiébélé“: Before returning to Ouaga, we had the opportunity to visit the royal palace in Tiébélé and to learn about the culture of the Kasena. Let us hope that this wonderful palace, with its beautifully painted houses, will be inscribed to the Unesco cultural heritage and will receive enough funding to prevent it from being destroyed by termites and decay.



The palace of Tiébélé

Mr. Asso’s targets for 2018

- basic training in photovoltaics for young men and women in all 13 regions of the country
- a workshop where women can build their own solar ovens and dryers and be taught its use in all 5 zonal areas of the country
- one social project (lighting for a school building, for a CSPS, for a church or mosque) in all 5 zonal areas of the country
- major progress towards developing a solar mill and a solar energy kiosk

Our heart-felt thanks: As you can see, our association notre soleil suisse has done a lot of useful work in Burkina Faso in a good number of different projects, and contributed towards improving the daily living conditions of many people. One key to our success has to do with Solafrique’s professionalism. A maybe even greater part is with the generosity of our members and sponsors.

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