

Report on project tour (Nov. 20 - Dec. 10, 2016) and annual report 2016

In contrast to political developments on the international scene in 2016, it was a very good year for the development of Solafrique and the association Notre Soleil in Burkina Faso. Most of the goals and projects announced in 2015 have been achieved or implemented.

Container transport: Thanks to generous donations from two foundations and many other patrons, I could organize a container transport including our Toyota bus, a lot of solar material, machine tools, etc. Our dream of a “workshop on wheels” («Atelier roulant») has been fulfilled and our workshop in Bobo-Dioulasso is now also well equipped. We now have a demo pump and all necessary material and tools to carry out a photovoltaic installation or a solar oven workshop at any time.

Courses: Ouédiu Asso, our director, was able to train the students, electricians, technicians and engineers interested in photovoltaic installation under much better conditions. By now, more than 100 people have been through courses.



Five of them are now working as trainees at Solafrique. Mr Asso is also paying a lot of attention to the promotion of our company and products to women's associations and ONGs, private universities, institutes, and private individuals, which has already paid off in the form of a few small-scale lighting projects. We hope that more will soon follow.

Foundation of Notre Soleil Suisse: Another milestone this year was the founding of the support organization Notre Soleil Suisse in Zurich, Switzerland on July 12th. Its homepage (www.notresoleilsuisse.ch) is still under construction. We are, of course, happy about every new member.

Notre Soleil Burkina Faso: The association Notre Soleil in Burkina Faso, under the leadership of its president Fatoumata Traoré, was very active. In the first half year, solar oven workshops were held in cooperation with Solafrique. 10 ovens were built with members of a women's organization. In the rainy season, the focus was on planting trees. With the support of Notre Soleil Suisse, 220 trees were planted in different places. During my stay at the end of November, 15 women from Notre Soleil also took part in a workshop to construct "foyers améliorés" (these are easy to build, highly efficient wood

stoves) made of clay; They replace solar ovens on cloudy and rainy days (even in Africa the sun does not shine every day).



The first goal in 2017 will be the construction of table-dryers, so that the millet and the maize no longer have to dry on the ground in the yard, with the chickens running around.



Project Tour: November 20 was arrival day. Together with Diana Hornung, I landed, safely as usual, in Ouagadougou. This year, though, we were picked up by Asso with our company car, the Toyota bus, and chauffeured with our monster luggage to the hotel Amiso. This time again, we had many rewarding encounters with innovative, committed local people during our stay.

Meetings and Encounters: In Ouagadougou

The first meeting took place already over breakfast at the hotel. We met **Dera Salam**; his company makes deep drillings for water pumps, which of course was of great interest to us. At the same time, he also supports a **women's association called ZEMSTAABA**, which means "we understand each other". The 52 women jointly take care of a large garden.



Thanks to Mr. Dera and the pump he organized for them, the women can now produce vegetables even in the dry season, and thus make some money. Unfortunately, the profit was also eaten away by monthly electricity bill and they were longing for a solar pump. On the same day, we visit **Delphine Kohler**. She runs a workshop where some 10 women crochet bags, baskets, and coasters from strips of recycled plastic bags. Delphine distributes the products in France (www.facteurceleste.fr) with the help of her partner Elisa Vanweydeveldt (elisevanwey@facteurceleste.fr).

The next meeting was with **Urs and Idda Niggli**, a Swiss couple, who had lived here for a long time in Ouaga and translate the New Testament into local languages. Unfortunately, they can neither translate nor print our solar oven recipe book in Diula. We received two good tips: The solar ovens can be placed on a metal frame with legs, to keep away the insects. They use a baking grid as a laptop stand - this prevents the engine and battery from overheating.

Towards the end of our trip, I was able to talk with **Patricia Ouedraogo**, the head of the **Girl Scouts of Burkina Faso**. She works for the ONG **WENDPUIRE-APISAVANA**, www.apisavana.com as sales manager. Three or four years ago, we had made a solar workshop with former Swiss Girl Scouts and the Burkina Faso Girl Scouts, making a total of 40 ovens which were distributed in 13 regions. She will let me know what happened with them, and which practical experiences were made.

Helvetas: At Helvetas we were welcomed by **Laurent Sinare**, the technical manager. He told us right away that he was glad to meet us, because Helvetas wants to get involved in solar projects. He wants

to focus on pumps and solar ovens, and possibly on dryers. We have a possibility to also submit a project at Helvetas; my suggestion was to go for solar mills.

At the end of our stay we had a meeting with the boss of **Helvetas Burkina Faso, Mrs. Pascale Angulo Deiros**. Pumping projects are a real possibility for Helvetas. She was also looking for an instructor for a photovoltaic project in Banfora. Of course, we hope Asso will get the assignment. As I could testify, he is a very good instructor, and is also full of enthusiasm. Whether we can make get a solar mill project started with Helvetas is not yet certain (we will possibly contact Signare Laurent as there is the possibility to integrate the project into an agricultural project.)

Meetings and Encounters: In Bobo-Dioulasso

On the trip to Bobo with our "Toyota Trésor" we soon had a problem with a flat tire, but Asso mastered the problem with bravura and without any outside help. Since the Marina Market had its lunch when we arrived, we drove first to our main facility, the Atelier Central, where Asso surprised us with the place's perfect tidiness. It is a pity that we must move out soon, as the schoolroom is just too small for all our activities. He also introduced us to his team: Jonathan, Josiah and Jonas and Kathy the secretary, telephone operator, receptionist and cook. We then made a visit to our new location, two large, modern apartments with a courtyard and gate separated by a wall. We will soon have to add a door to the wall, and the courtyard needs a roof so the craftsmen can work in the shade. I hope we will soon find the necessary funding.

An early encounter upon our arrival was with **Mrs. Somé / Sanou Dô Veronique**. She works for the Direction Régionale de l'Agriculture, but is also **president of the "Siguikadi" association**. She had planned a solar oven workshop with 15 women, with support from Notre Soleil Suisse-, which we could not yet carry out for lack of time. The goal of their association is to process food such as millet or maize for sale. We could take part in an workshop and witness how the millet was, under hygienic conditions, washed, freed of pebbles. dried on table dryers, weighed on electronic scales and finally packaged in sealed plastic bags. Cookies baked in a sun oven are packaged in the same way.

On my inspection of the trees planted by Notre Soleil, I first met **Elisabeth Bado Kanko**, the president of a widow's association in **Darsalami**. The women owned a piece of land and this year they grew hibiscus plants from which they make tea and syrup (bissap). The trees were all doing well, and to our astonishment the club owns a biogas installation financed by the state and by Terre des Hommes, so that the spaghetti which they prepared for us could be cooked without firewood. To secure the supply of dung, they have an agreement with the village. They look after the Zebu cattle and the village gets the fertilizer generated as a by-product of biogas production.

The next visit took us to a **reintegration center for juvenile offenders** of age 13 to 17, opened just a few months ago. Here also, trees have been planted, thanks to the support of Notre Soleil Suisse. The young people can do an apprenticeship in various professions. They attend classes in the morning, but there is also a football field, a garden and even music lessons. Unfortunately, the solar water pump works poorly and Asso will be looking into it.

Finally, we drove to the **Emmaus school**, built by **Notre Soleil's President Fatoumata Traore**. There also, more than 25 trees have been planted. They grow very well, and only one has not survived re-planting. The solar system, which was installed in 2015, operates flawlessly. Ms Traoré's next objectives are a solar water pump for her school, so she can lay a school garden, and a biogas plant for the school canteen.

The next day, we visited the installation of the **Catholic Center of Kuentou**, which had been on our schedule for several years. I could observe how Mr. Asso and his small team of trainees spent a day equipping eight smaller buildings (4 priest houses, 1 refectory, 1 guesthouse, 1 small church and 1 kitchen) with solar lighting for both in- and outdoor. Later, a classroom will get solar lighting so that the children of the village can also work in the evening.



Next day we were then picked up by **Habib Ouattara**, an old friend of mine. To my surprise, he has worked on his education, then established a school: "**Institut de Formation en Elevage et en Santé Animale**" (**IFESA**), ifesaprofessionnel@yahoo.com. We were led into a classroom, where 27 students were present, and where we could enjoy a lecture on beekeeping. A student gave us a welcome speech and I had another opportunity to introduce Solafrique and our solar projects. Mr Ouattara would be very pleased to have contacts with Swiss personalities / experts and institutes in the fields of animal breeding and animal health.

An important goal of my trip had been to find a capable and reliable person to control the accounts of Solafrique and the association Notre Soleil. We found her in the cashier of Habib Ouattara's school, **Aminata Ouedraogo**.

Another very important meeting took place at the **Lycée Professionnel**. We were welcomed by the **Chef des Travaux, Prof. Guel Salif**. We also met **Mr. Nagalo Kakira**, responsible for the solar energy department; both are very dedicated persons. We visited several well-equipped workshops and Mr. Nagalo demonstrated to us a portable welding machine. It was confirmed that the Lycée is very interested in our solar mill project.

Our last meeting before returning to Ouaga was with the **Mayor of Bama, Mr. Gondé Lansina**. I introduced our company and the solar products. He was immediately very interested in solar lighting for his schools and for the CSPS outpatient clinics. That women sometimes have to give birth in torchlight worries him very much. He, too, is a very capable, committed personality.

Next goals: In addition to the projects already mentioned in this report, we would like to promote the production of solar mills, in order to relieve women from the hand-pounding grain. An extended project which we also want to get started concerns so-called energy kiosks - these are bistros in which the people (also the women) can meet and their mobile phones can be recharged, and where a solar TV runs. The energy kiosks are an important project for local social cohesion and against the rural exodus.

The many committed people we met during our trip deserve our support in implementing their projects and achieving their goals.

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How about joining me? In the past 16 years, I have visited the country and made a project tour once a year. In total, some twenty persons accompanied me - the youngest was 17 years, the oldest over 70. The trip is always very educational and does not cost much. There have never been any health or personal safety problems. If someone would like to accompany me this coming summer, he / she is very welcome to contact me.