



## Carina Saarloos in Mali

### Newsletter October 2010

#### Dear colleagues, friends and supporters,

Finally, you are looking at my delayed newsletter. I would like to start with the words of a song by Reni and Elisa Krijgsman. It is a Dutch song but I will translate the words for you. These words have touched me deeply for the past 2 months;

1. *When life hurts and the storm rages, in a time of pain and sorrow*

*It is like the sun will never rise again and it will remain dark for ever on, like the morning that will never see daylight again*

*CHORUS: Right at these moments, when I can no longer go on, let me know, let me feel that You are real. That your arms are around me and your love surrounds me. That I will see, when looking back, that You were carrying me.*

2. *When I come with all my questions, my doubts, my pain, with my fears and unsafety, it feels like the heavens are made of copper; my prayers can't get through and I am suffocating in my insecurity.*

*CHORUS*

*Bridge: Lord, will You help me, when I'm tired or confused. That the faith will live in my mind as well as in my heart.*

You can listen to this song through following link: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a28PKiZ\\_WbU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a28PKiZ_WbU)

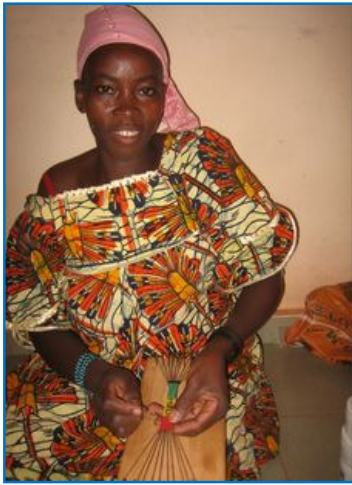
These past months have been pretty rough. There have been quite a few moments that the work here in Mali was tough and the storm was indeed raging. On those specific moments when I sat down in despair, I received those most needed encouragements. A friend called, or I received a package with something nice. But the most beautiful encouragement of them all came from the Lord Himself. God is faithful and He carries you and me through those heavy times.

### RAHAB CENTRE

Since the departure of Sara on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August, our centre functions as a day care centre only and no longer as a shelter for day and night. The women will come from Monday to Friday for the various training courses. The problems between the Seke family and the rest of the team made it impossible to continue. After a couple of difficult months the Seke family left the centre on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October. We wanted to help them by getting them tickets for their return to Congo, their homeland. Unfortunately they only wanted to have cash and a lot of it. Ultimately we parted without the intervention of court or police. Of course this whole situation has left its mark on all the women. Not only the team but the women of the training program as well have felt the pressure these past few months. As you might have noticed by the choice of the song on top of this newsletter, I myself was truly baffled. For those of you who do not follow my weblog because it is also in Dutch, I want to share my most beautiful encouragement with you. I posted the following on my weblog of October 2<sup>nd</sup>:

*The past few weeks here in Mali were far from easy. We had meeting after meeting to address the problems that were rising in our Rahab Centre with the normal work continuing as well. There were days that I literally had to talk and pray myself out of bed. I did not want to address the same subject and the same problem over and over again. More than once I asked myself what the added value of the Rahab Centre is. On top of that, I was wrestling with cultural differences. It even made me wonder if my time here in Africa might have come to an end.*

*This morning I was completely overwhelmed by an encouragement of the Lord himself, one that made it clear to me that I should not give up and just needed to keep on sowing. It was around noon that my doorbell rang. Lea, one of the Rahab team members, was at the gate together with a lady I did not know.*



*I asked Lea who her companion was and she told me that this was Louise Dao's older sister. Louise Dao had stayed in the Rahab Centre for 10 months and had followed the training program. I invited the ladies in and in my mind I went back to the day at the end of 2007 when Louise had walked into our centre.*

*Louise was not a prostitute but her story was so sad that I wanted to help her and give her a spot in our training centre. Louise gave birth to four children but all of them died before reaching the age of five. For this reason her husband and the rest of her family assumed she was possessed and made her an outcast. Louise was the sunshine in our centre and learned to make bead bracelets like no one else (see picture). In August 2008 she said goodbye. By that time she was a true and devoted Christian with her own place to live. She often came by in our centre on Friday to pray together and play the djembe, something she could do like no other. Last June she stayed with us for a week to follow the training of how to make juices and syrups. You will find her*

*picture on my weblog of the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June.*

*At the beginning of August Louise left Bamako to visit her family in Sikasso. She was ready to face them again. This is what her sister told me: "In Sikasso, Louise got sick. During September she declined very badly. It looked like she knew she was dying because she said goodbye to everyone. On the 26th of September Louise dictated a letter and told her sister to give it to Nyagali (which is Carina) in Bamako. She died peacefully on the 28th of September, and went to her Lord and Saviour." From a plastic bag filled with bracelets and other things Louise had made, the sister gave me the letter. Louise thanked me and the Rahab Centre warmly. The love she had received in the centre had changed her life. The prayers had given her new strength. "If it had not been for Nyagali I would have been long gone from this planet, without having known the Lord!" Wow, the Lord really knows what his children need. I was completely swept away. My heavenly Dad knew exactly that I needed an encouragement. The timing was divine! Quit? No way Satan!*

- ***Thank with me for the peace and quite that has set again in the Rahab Centre***
- ***Pray for healing, renewed vision and leadership and strength for the Rahab team***
- ***Pray for the Seke family, that God will do a great work in their hearts***
- ***Pray for 14 year old Jelika who lives with Dorcas and her family at the moment***
- ***Pray that we will find a new couple or two widows who want to live in our centre and can direct the young girls***

## **MALI 50 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE**

On September 22<sup>nd</sup> Mali celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> independent anniversary. Impression of the big celebration:



## **PRISON WORK AND PHILEMON CENTRE**

The prison work is going steady. The team visits different prisons every week, accompanied by a doctor and a preacher. On a Tuesday in July we brought brand new sneakers to the Kati prison. With the help of Malian Sita we creatively made pairs of the different shoes. We had organised a day of sports and games in the boys prison. It was fascinating to see the smiling faces of the boys and take them out of their prison routine for a day. The day ended with a meal.

On a spiritual level great things are happening in the women's prison. A group of young girls made the choice to give their hearts to Jesus. Every Friday afternoon they attend the bible study and they love to sing

Christian songs in Bambara and recite bible verses. Unfortunately the many Muslim girls give them quite a hard time. Of course it is a good test of their tender faith, but it gets pretty tiring as well.

In my previous newsletter I wrote that the boys of the Philemon centre had left to go to Remar, a shelter in Burkina Faso. Unfortunately Amadou and Bakar did not do so well there. They were declared “unmanageable” and sent back to Bamako. Only Jean Claude was doing fine. He enjoys the training and attention in the Remar centre.

Roofs have been fixed in our own Philemon centre, and a Romanian specialist in wells paid us a visit. Equipped with a GPS he gave us new hope for a new well in the other corner of our centre.



- ***Pray for persistence and growth in the tender faith of Ramatou, Salimata, Nene and Naminim in the women's prison***
- ***Thank and pray for Jean Claude in Burkina Faso***
- ***Pray for the funds that are necessary for the digging of a new well***

## **Expected visitors and on leave in the Netherlands**

In the months to come I am expecting visitors from the Netherlands twice! I feel privileged to welcome Rinus and Ingelien Visser and their daughter Marije to Mali from the 18<sup>th</sup> unto the 29<sup>th</sup> of November. The Visser family is from my home church. We have spent several years in the same house study group. There is mutual respect and joy when we are in each others company, and I am looking forward to their visit. Lambrecht and Margriet Buskop will visit me from the 1<sup>st</sup> until the 5<sup>th</sup> of December. It will be the second time I will welcome them in my house in Bamako. I have known the family through the S.V.I.K in Dirksland. They regularly organise bingo evenings and wish the work in Mali well. They will stay in Mali for one month and hope to visit different projects.

My furlough will start at the end of March 2011 and will last for three months. I will be available for lectures in April and May but only in the Netherlands so far. I would love to meet many of you! Of course I also would love to be invited to house evenings, prayer-meetings, women gatherings, youth evenings and all those kinds of events to show and tell something about my work here in Mali. You can book me by sending me an e-mail. Don't wait too long with claiming a date!



Dear friends, all in all I wrote you a long story. I want to thank you for your loyal financial gifts. Several donations come from the US and I thank you all for that. The job can't be done without it! A special “thank you” for everyone who keeps on praying for me and my work. I saw myself that prayer is essential, it is the motive of all the work. Please continue with your support in every way!

***Warm regards of your Carina!***

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