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Annual Activity Report 2018

Friends of Humanity

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I. President's Message

2018 was an important year for Friends of Humanity as we focused our action on ongoing projects in the areas of education, women empowerment and emergency aid supporting refugees.

Indeed, in recent years, the world has experienced several political and economic crises, resulting in an unprecedented massive refugee crisis. Millions of refugees worldwide live in dramatic vulnerable conditions, which results in dramatic consequences to their social, cultural and economic development and they are considered as burden for their host countries.

For this reason, Friends of Humanity will continue to support refugees in Rwanda and in Uganda, with our partner the international NGO Maison Shalom, to add new activities in the "Elite Center" in Mahama camp, Rwanda as the construction project of the learning and training "Marina Center" in Nakivale settlement, Uganda.

Friends of Humanity intensified as well its action on education, with projects in India and Cameroon. Our main project in India is the Alice Awakening Universal School Project we support since 10 years and our aim is to become the advisors for an ecologic transformation as a model in the field of education and to promote the Methodology Alice in other institutions and countries.

Finally, Friends of Humanity has also supported in Nigeria a women empowerment project based on strengthening their socio-economic capacities to play a greater role in their society.

My heart knows that each of us can plant a seed for a more harmonious world. When we do it together the power of our collective energies will grow these seeds to manifest our highest mission.

In joy, love and gratitude,



Graziella Zanoletti
Founder and President
Friends of Humanity



II. About the organisation

Friends of Humanity (FOH) is a non-profit organization based in Geneva, created by Graziella Zanoletti and Russell Brice in May 2007 with the aim of improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable people.

FOH supports projects adapted to the local culture, which respond to the real needs of the population and promote sustainable development in four key sectors:



Education and Training



Human Rights



Women Empowerment



Healthcare

FOH projects are mainly based in Asia and Africa. We create initiatives, find funding and act as intermediaries supporting humanitarian projects that are consistent with FOH's statutes and objectives. In addition, communication and public awareness are an integral part of FOH's mission.

III. Location of projects supported by FOH in 2018



Total Contribution of FOH in 2018: CHF 91'000

IV. Projects supported by FOH in 2018

1. *Maison Shalom – Rwanda*

Since the end of April 2015, Burundi has been shaken by a major political and security crisis, terrorizing the civilian population every day. This situation has caused a large movement of refugees to neighboring countries, particularly Rwanda, Tanzania and the DRC. As of July 2018, there are more than 68.000 Burundian refugees in Rwanda, and, among them, a very large number of women and children.

Some young people are already involved in delinquency in several forms: excessive consumption of alcohol, drug abuse or prostitution among others. Left to themselves with all these problems, these young people are the perfect prey of armed group. This would further deteriorate the security situation in Burundi which is already tense, with consequences on the whole region. The Mahama "Elite Center" aims to foster socio-cultural development of Burundian refugees.

View of Mahama refugee camp in Rwanda



To improve these difficult conditions, in June 2018, Maison Shalom and Friends of Humanity opened, at the Mahama refugee camp in Rwanda (with more than 60.000 Burundian refugees), a center called "Mahama Elite Centre" to foster socio-cultural development of Burundian refugees, with courses including languages and computer learning, culinary arts, tailoring, painting and soap production among others.

The foundation stone was laid on January 3rd 2018, and for 98 days, a large team of refugees, women and man of all ages, worked together (getting an income for their work) until June 22nd, date of the official opening of "Mahama Elite Centre".

Graziella Zanoletti and Brigitte Burgisser laying down the foundation stone of the Elite Center on January 2018



Graziella Zanoletti, Brigitte Burgisser , Maison Shalom's founder Marguerite Barankitse with Minister De Bonheur of MIDIMAR Rwanda and Paul Kenya UNHCR's representative at the inauguration of the Elite Centre at Mahama Refugee Camp, June 2018



Watch the testimony video on how the Mahama "Elite Center" in Rwanda has positively impacted the life of hundreds of Burundian refugees living in the camp here: <https://youtu.be/gPEAp7GNIYQ>

Inauguration of the Elite Center at Mahama refugee camp last June 2018



Some of the activities of the center that took place in 2018 are:

- Vocational training in sewing and painting: 40 young Burundian refugees from the camp started a 6-month sewing training. 25 young refugees have been enrolled to study art and painting. The training is given by professional artists who are also Burundian refugees living in the camp and receiving a salary for their work.
- Computer sciences courses: 20 young refugees are following computer courses to learn how to better use Microsoft Office
- Language courses (of French conjugation, grammar and vocabulary) for 30 children (18 girls and 12 boys) between 9 and 11 years old.
- Sociocultural and sport events (film screening and football games are organized)
- Library: dozens of refugees from all ages come to the Centre every day to read and borrow books from the growing Elite Center's Library not just to educate themselves but to escape from the hardships of the daily life at the camp.. The Elite Center's Library at Mahama Camp received 625 books from donations.
- Psychosocial support for people victim of violence and torture.
- Socio-economic support for families through micro-credits that allow them to create small economic activities.

The Mahama Elite Center has become a place of hope, joy, and healing for residents of the camp on top of learning and training.

According to Paul Kenya, UNHCR Field Officer at Mahama camp, this Center not only has a unique positive energy hardly seen in a refugee camp, but above all it is an exemplary project of refugee management, assistance and solidarity that needs to be replicated in as many refugee camps as possible in the world.

FOH support to Maison Shalom – Rwanda in 2018 = CHF 50'000

2. Rosy Touch Initiative for Development in Nigeria

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with a population of 158 million. Women make up the bulk of the labor force in the agricultural sector and play a vital role in rural development.

However, Nigerian women, especially in rural areas, are in a position of subordination and discrimination against men because of many religious, cultural and legal factors.

In this delicate context, FOH is supporting the local NGO Rosy Touch Initiative for Development, which is organizing training workshops on women's rights for 300 women in six villages and thus strengthening their socio-economic capacities to make them play a greater role in their society.

In the long-term, this training will promote exchanges on issues relating to the place and role of women in Nigerian society.

FOH support to Rosy Touch Initiative for Development in 2018 = CHF 5'000



3. Cooperation between Mahama Refugee Camp and Rosy Touch

In September 2018, our partner Adeleke Hattrick from Rosy Touch, Nigeria, travelled to Rwanda to offer a workshop to Maison Shalom's staff in the skill of making surface textile design. This training will allow them to teach, train, employ and empower Burundian refugee women in Kigali. Also, Adeleke visited the Mahama Elite Center to teach 23 refugees living at Mahama camp the same techniques of creation and application of colors on fabrics.

Training offered by FOH on creation and application of colors' on fabrics at Mahama Elite Center



FOH support for this project in 2018 = CHF 3'000

4. Primary School for disadvantaged children from North Cameroun

In Cameroon, more than 37% of the population, 8 million people of a total population of 22 million, live below the poverty line (living with less than \$ 1.90 a day).

Since 2013, Cameroon has faced an unprecedented humanitarian and security crisis, with nearly 350,000 refugees and asylum-seekers having fled conflict in the Central African Republic and Nigeria, as well as over 210,000 Cameroonians who were forced to abandon their village and their land because of the abuses of the Boko Haram group.

In northern Cameroon, children are mostly affected by poverty, malnutrition and lack of schools within a radius of 200 km. To cope with this serious situation, in 2018 FOH supported the construction of a free primary school by setting up 3 classrooms that allowed 70 schoolchildren from 4 to 8 years old to be accommodated. In addition to the Cameroonian National Education Program, English and Arabic classes are taught to students from the preparatory class.

This school gives hope for a better future to these children and their families by opening them the doors to education.

FOH support to this project in 2018 = CHF 3'000



5. Alice Project Universal Education Schools – India

Graziella Zanoletti, traveled to India several times in 2017 with the film director Oystein Rakkenes to make a film about the educational methodology of the three schools of the Alice Project in Sarnath, Bodhgaya and Arunachal Pradesh.

In February 2018, this film was released for the presentation of this unique model of education to His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the first Bodhgaya Lecture "Ethics in Education". His Holiness congratulated several times the founder Valentino Giacomini for creating and implementing the educational method based on "who am I", allowing each individual to find his place in a solidarity and compassionate society.

Link to the film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyZewDLWNi8>



Alice Project at Sarnath - Inde

In August 2018 the "Alice Project Universal Education School" was awarded for the third time by the famous Sanskrit University of Benaras for its outstanding work in the field of education. This award acknowledged the value of long, unique and successful search during over thirty years, by the Alice Project, for a new educational model capable of integrating the school curriculum with secular ethics based on a proper vision of reality.



On 24th June, a group of 70 students accompanied by the principal and ten teachers of Alice project, travelled to Dharamsala in the North of India, where they received a private audience of HH Dalai Lama.



HH Dalai Lama received the students in his residence in McLeod Ganj. He told them that their lives, without a good education, culture or respect of traditions are not complete.

FOH support to this project in 2018 = CHF 30'000

IV. Events

His Holiness discussed 'Universal Ethics in Education' in Bodhgaya and met with Valentino Giacomini

In January 2018, the Alice School was chosen to organize an event to present the Alice model of education to His Holiness 14th Dalai Lama. It was an auspicious and meaningful event in which His Holiness discussed 'Universal Ethics in Education'. The students from all three Alice schools, including Sarnath and Deban (Arunachal Pradesh) travelled to Bodhgaya and over 12,000 students attended the event from various schools of Bihar and multiple local dignitaries were present. Valentino Giacomini presented Alice Project, its history, the path and methodology, and then offered HH Dalai Lama the first copy of his new book "Universal Ethics".



After 30 years of practical research and pilot projects in both Italy and India, the Alice Project's method has produced exceptional results both academically and in relation to emotional intelligence and respect his life itself. His Holiness acknowledged the amazing results achieved by Valentino as he was able to implement an educational system that His Holiness dreamed of.

His Holiness spoke about the importance of ancient Indian wisdom which emphasizes morality, interdependence and self-reflection. He expressed the belief that Western education and culture, so sought after in India, does not produce inner peace but strives merely towards materialism. He pointed out that Valentino has transcended his Western education by bringing back the ancient wisdom of India into the methodology of the Alice schools.

After the conclusion of the event with Saraswati prayers, the entire auditorium stood up to thank His Holiness Dalai Lama. Katas (Tibetan scarves) were presented to the founder of the Alice Project, Mr. Valentino Giacomini, the President Mr. Tsewang Tenzin la, the Ambassador of the project, Mrs Graziella Zanoletti and the coordinator, Miss Ilaria Gambino.



Facing his young audience, His Holiness declared that “The future is on your shoulders”. The Alice model encourages students to be happy, compassionate and wise, ready to face the problems of the society today and create a better world.



Watch here the video of HH Dalai Lama's talk to students from Bihar on "Education in Universal Values" at the Kalachakra, Maidan in Bodhgaya, Bihar, India on January 25, 2018 by clicking the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5HzbuBnpaCo>

VI. Projects for 2019

1. *Replicating Elite Center in Uganda*

After the unexpected social positive impact of the Mahama "Elite Center" in Rwanda, Friends of Humanity seeks to replicate the same model in other refugee camps. The next endeavour is planned for 2019 in Uganda.

Uganda since years has opened its borders to become one of the countries hosting the most refugees in the world (the majority from South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Burundi), bringing the total number of refugees in Uganda to an estimated 1.1 million people. Due to the high numbers of refugees in Uganda, humanitarian needs among these groups are significant and in many settlements, refugees live in very difficult conditions.

To improve the living conditions of refugees in Uganda, Friends of Humanity aims to replicate the model case of Mahama Elite Center in Nakivale refugee settlement in the South. This Center would focus on offering not only vocational training, but also would have a school, a library and an e-learning center (to study online language courses, university studies and self-improvement courses on leadership, entrepreneurship or mindfulness). Moreover, psychosocial and health support, meditation and theatre workshops would take place, as well as weekly documentaries and film screening and music performances, among other activities.

The Nakivale vocational training in Uganda will empower refugees by turning them into active participants and competent development actors. The goal of the Center is to train refugees, to inspire creativity and entrepreneurship. A holistic transformative approach in education, inclusive development, culture promotion and leadership will be promoted. The Center will be a point of reference for the multi ethnics' communities in the camp.

The Center cover the following areas of intervention:

- A. Vocational Training and sustainable development* - To teach and develop relevant skills as well as entrepreneurship.
- B. Cultural promotion* – to organize cultural workshops and events of music, theatre and Cinema-Debates
- C. Women Empowerment* – to empower women not only through vocational training but above all through group meetings, workshops and other activities.
- D. Education for peace* - create a space for education on leadership, peace promotion and reconciliation.
- E. Psychosocial and health support* – to help trauma healing of vulnerable people through meditation and social activities.

We undertake to focus on capacity building for young refugees to transform them into competent, and compassionate development actors. The main purpose is to educate and offer tools, to ignite their creativity and entrepreneurship competences in order to prepare them to be skillful key actors of change.

FOH estimated budget = CHF 200'000

2. Multi-purpose Hub in Mahama, Rwanda

The vision is to offer opportunities to refugees and to local people to meet, to prepare good organic food from the organic gardens and bring it to the table for the many organizations at the refugee camp, to offer a place for their meetings, to employ the newly licensed students from the culinary school and with a time to add some unities to host the visitors to the camp. The new project of permaculture will accompany the building of the pizzeria and the bakery that will be the first to be built during 2019 and will promote skill training (waiters, cooks, and restaurant managers) and employment to refugees and locals.

For refugees who have suffered traumatic experiences of war, poverty and had little opportunity for education, this project will offer them integration with the local population, employment, community building, traineeships, and self-confidence while allowing them to become economically self-sufficient.

The profit of the Multi-purpose Hub will be injected into the camp activities to support the elders who have already witnessed three civil wars and the loss of many of their family members.

**FOH estimated budget for Permaculture project: CHF 5000.-
For the Multi-purpose Hub first phase = CHF 130'000**

3. Womer4Women Hygienic Pad Project, Rwanda

To buy, adapt, and use already designed and tested low-cost, high-quality, eco-friendly technology to make hygienic pads for the ten thousands of women and adolescents girls in the refugee camps in Rwanda, to help them meet their monthly health needs in a safe hygienic and efficient way while providing a sustainable, scalable source of labor and income for hundreds of them. The aim is to create a tangible project that can be scalable in other places of the world.

FOH estimated budget = CHF 132'000