**BUILDING HOPE AND A FUTURE FOR LAYE, BURKINA FASO**

SUMMARY

The Project consists of the construction and equipping of a school designed to provide primary education to 450 children, aged between 6 and 13 years old, who live in extreme poverty. There is only one public school in this department of the country, and it has insufficient resources to provide education for the entire child population. For this reason it is planned to build a school centre with 8 classrooms, so that all these children can enjoy their right to an education. This project has the merit of associating the fight against illiteracy with the fight against poverty, and of favouring gender equality. Since the school is free of charge, there is no need to consider the economic factor as a hindrance to school attendance, especially in the case of girls.

It is hoped that the new school will be a very competitive training centre, contributing towards a strengthening of the quality of education through the adoption of methods which encourage regular class attendance, thus reducing the absenteeism and drop-out rates. It is important to mention that this Project is the first step in a more global programme for the construction of a complete village in this area of Laye.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL NGO**

REMAR in BURKINA FASO was constituted on 28th December 1994 and is a non-profit NGDO, with a group of people dedicated full-time to humanitarian aid work: 40 volunteers, the majority of whom have, themselves, received help to come out of precarious circumstances, and who have decided they want to care for others who find themselves in a crisis situation.

At present we are working in the following programmes:

* Educational Programme
* Child Care Programme
* Programme for Young People
* Child Sponsorship Programme
* Refuge and Care Home Programme for Mothers
* Programme for Detox, Rehabilitation, Treatment and Social Reinsertion of Drug Addicts
* Free Meals Programme
* Volunteers Programme
* The Creation of Small Supportive Businesses

The NGDO Remar has existed in Burkina Faso for 19 years now. Ever since its beginnings in this country, Remar Burkina has been a driving force for social change, through its fight against inequality and especially through its programmes of social reinsertion and the restoration of dignity and self-respect to marginalized groups (alcoholics, drug addicts, prisoners, prostitutes, etc.). Remar Burkina is fully involved in the social life of several municipalities in Ouagadougou, Bobo Dioulasso, Ouahigouya, Koudougou and Reo, with varied activities within more than 30 development projects in support of the underprivileged. The principal areas of intervention are those of education, professional training, health, care and protection for women and children, the fight against poverty in general and, more specifically, against poverty amongst women, social reinsertion and job placement for young people and women, the rehabilitation of prisoners, drug addicts, alcoholics and prostitutes, and the feeding of many needy people at free meals centres. The main programmes run by Remar Burkina include the following:

► Educational Programme: The right to an education, one of the fundamental rights of any human being, is a priority for Remar Burkina, particularly in relation to needy families. 3 mixed-sex schools have been built, and they are completely free of charge for children from poor backgrounds. However, the free of charge element does not mean that the schools are lax or inefficient; indeed, the training provided by the Remar schools is amongst the best in the country. The teachers are fully qualified and are very well aware of the importance of their role as educators, and they exercise their profession with skill and dedication. In the Remar schools there are already more than 800 children and young people, both male and female, who follow courses in primary and secondary education. Thanks to the efforts of Remar, these children have the opportunity to enjoy their right to an education, and this, in turn, gives them the opportunity to form part of the human capital that will be responsible for the future development of their country.

► Refuge and Care Home Programme for Mothers: One of the missions of Remar Burkina is to offer help and assistance to those who have lost all hope. 15 homes have been built, especially for women, to help face this challenge. They provide accommodation for a total of 160 women in financial difficulties who come to the centres with problems of drug addiction, abuse, domestic violence or desertion by their relatives. In these centres, they are given training in a specific work skill so that they can get along in life and earn a living in order to be able to support themselves and the children under their care. As to date, some 5,500 women have been rescued through the efforts of Remar Burkina.

► Programme for Detox, Rehabilitation, Treatment and Social Reinsertion of Drug Addicts: One of the fundamental activities of the NGO Remar is the rehabilitation and social reinsertion of socially-marginalized people. In Remar Burkina Faso there are 7 specialized centres with capacity for a total of 180 people. The assistance offered to the drug addicts, alcoholics, prostitutes and other marginalized people comes in 2 or 3 phases, depending upon each individual case:

1- DETOXIFICATION

2- REHABILITATION AND TRAINING

3- SOCIAL REINSERTION

The total length of the period of restoration depends upon the learning capacity and the personal adaptation of each individual. Approximately 2,500 people have already benefited from this programme.

► Free Meals Programme: Through the free meals programmes, both on the streets and in prisons, Remar Burkina provides food to thousands of needy people. In the most run-down areas of the cities of Burkina Faso, Remar runs 8 free meals centres which are attended daily by some 1,800 people, mostly children, mothers and elderly people. Remar Burkina also serves meals in the prisons of 6 towns, to prevent the prisoners from dying of starvation. More than 3,000,000 plates of food have been served without charge since the opening of these free meals centres.

► The Creation of Small Supportive Businesses: Remar Burkina has built 3 care centres for young people and 18 workshops which are able to provide professional training to 310 young people. Thanks to their training, and with the help of Remar, these young people are able to create and run small businesses, in which they can offer work to other young people in difficulties. So far, more than 1,500 young people have attended the professional training workshops of Remar Burkina.

► Health Programme: As a solution to the problem of access to the health centres, Remar Burkina has a bus fully equipped with medical materials. In this way, if someone is unable to travel to the hospital, the hospital travels to them. Thanks to this mobile hospital, more than 100,000 people to date have been able to receive medical care and more than 13,500 children have been rescued from certain death.

**SOCIAL CONTEXT**

Burkina Faso is a country in Western Africa, bordered on the north-west by Mali, on the north-east by Niger, and on the south by Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo and Benin. With Ouagadougou as its capital city, the country covers a total area of 274,000 km² and has a population of almost 15,000,000 inhabitants. The urban population of Burkina Faso has a majority of young people. Those who are below 20 years old represent 57% of the population. Those who are of working age (15 to 65 years old) represent 59.5% of the urban population. The incumbent president, Blaise Compaoré, came to power in 1987 through a coup d’état, and since then has won every presidential election that has been held. Previously known as Upper Volta Republic, the country was renamed “Burkina Faso” on 4th August 1984 by its then president, Thomas Sankara. The name means “*Land of the Man of Integrity*” in the local Mossi language.

Burkina Faso gained its independence from France on 5th August, 1960. The period of governmental instability during the 70s and 80s was followed by multi-party elections at the beginning of the 90s.

The high density of population and the limited natural resources of Burkina Faso were the cause of the bad economic perspectives for the majority of its citizens. According to the most recent HDI report, Burkina is one of the five poorest countries in the world, with a ranking of 183.

The economy of the country depends upon livestock and subsistence farming. Agriculture accounts for 32% of the national GDP and involves 80% of the working population. The principal products include millet, sorghum, sugar cane, corn, cotton, peanuts, potatoes, sesame, nuts, livestock (cattle and sheep) and poultry. There are also some mineral resources but they are very poorly exploited. These minerals include manganese, limestone, marble, gold, antimony, copper, nickel, bauxite, lead, phosphate, silver and zinc. The three rivers which cross the country (the Mouhoun, the Nakambé and the Nazinon) produce a reasonable catch of fish.

The labour market is similar to that of most countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The offer is very inferior to the demand and salaries tend to be very low. The number of young people who fail to obtain a proper education is also increasing. Many of this group launch out into different commercial activities in the big towns of the country, such as street vending, carpentry, construction work, car mechanics, etc., even though many of them have never entered a school in their life. The level of unemployment is very high, particularly amongst the female population, which tends to be involved in domestic work, street vending or market stalls.

The Project is located in Laye, in the province of Kourwéogo, one of the poorest regions of the country. Laye has a population of approximately 13,000 inhabitants, and the majority of its income comes from agricultural and livestock farming and from fishing.

The farming activities include the cultivation of cereals (sorghum, millet, corn and rice), other food crops (black-eyed peas, potatoes and groundnuts) and cash crops (peanuts, cotton, sesame and soya). The cereals are grown mainly in collective family plantations and they are produced for local consumption, whilst the cash crops are commercialized. During the last few years there has been an increase in the number of large, modern, agribusiness farms in the region. A large percentage of the working population are involved in vegetable farming. This takes place outside the dry season and consists principally in the growing of onions, cabbages, garlic, tomatoes, aubergines and other green vegetables.

In this region the livestock farming is characterized by the predominance of the traditional roaming system (cyclical migration in search of pastures and water points) and the equally traditional sedentary system, with fields and farm buildings. The livestock includes cattle, other small herbivores, pigs, horses and poultry.

The fishing resources are to be found chiefly in the river Nazinon and its tributaries, and in some reservoirs and ponds. The seasonal nature of the rivers limits the development of these fishing resources. The business activity in the central-western region depends mainly upon the commercialization of agricultural produce, livestock, handmade articles and other manufactured produce. The existence of many local markets and the proximity of the capital city favours commerce. Families tend to be large, with a minimum of four or five children. When the husband is without work, the responsibility for caring for the family falls upon the wife.

In terms of educational facilities, Laye has only one public school, “ECOLE DE LAYE CENTRE”. It has 6 classes and a total of approximately 450 pupils. The poverty of the families makes it difficult for them to find schooling for their children, particularly for the girls, and so many children are deprived of their right to an education due to a lack of financial resources.

The Constitution of Burkina Faso, in article 18, acknowledges the right to education, teaching and training for the citizens of the country. This constitutional ruling has led to the adoption of the Guidance for Education Act Nº 013/96 ADP by the Assembly of Members of Parliament of the Nations (ADP) on 19th May 1996. This organic law establishes educational and vocational guidance, and determines the structure of the educational system and the different levels of education. It also establishes the regulations and standards to be followed in the running of the various schemes, and specifies the general content of the school curricula and the professional, medical and ethical requirements needed to be able to exercise the profession of teacher. In addition to this law, there exists a series of legislative texts which govern the sector. The responsibility for education in Burkina Faso is shared by two different ministries: MENA (Ministry for National Education and Literacy) and MESS (Ministry for Secondary and Higher Education).

The educational system in Burkina Faso is divided into two systems, one conventional and the other non-conventional. Conventional education is composed of basic primary teaching, secondary training and higher training, whilst the non-conventional system includes pre-school education (nurseries, Bisongo schools, etc.), teaching in literacy and evening classes for adults.

In April 2012 MENA presented its public statistics for primary education during the 2011-12 course. These statistics showed that, on a national level and in both spheres (urban and rural), during the school year 2011-2012 there existed a total of 11,575 schools, 9,266 of which were public and 2,279 of which were private. 43,661 classes were registered: 35,568 in public education and 8,093 in private education. In these schools there were 2,344,031 pupils enrolled, 47.7% of whom were girls i.e. 1,118,399 girls, between 6 and 11 years old. The pupils were distributed in the following manner: 1,979,044 pupils in public education and 364,987 pupils in private education. These pupils were attended by a total of 43,330 teachers (35,308 in public education and 8,022 in private education). The ratio pupil/teacher was calculated at 54.1 pupils per teacher.

The national rate of schooling for children between 6 and 11 years old is 79.6% (Boys 81.1%, Girls 78.1%) Paradoxically, the greater part of the child population with schooling is to be found in the rural sphere. Indeed, of the 2,344,031 pupils enrolled, 1,726,020 are from the rural sphere and only 618,011 come from the urban sphere. The admission percentages for higher education are as follows: total 88.3% (boys 89.3% and girls 87.3%). 55.1% of the pupils successfully complete their primary education (boys 56.6%and girls 53.7%).

**Project Rationale**

Nowadays, education is the main challenge in the development of a nation. There is always considerable investment in the construction of good quality systems of education. The developed countries of Europe and North America have demonstrated, over the period of many years, that educational productivity contributes towards the progress of human beings and of individual countries.

Indeed, since the year 2000 the European Union has adopted the Lisbon plan to improve its educational system. Asia is emerging as a new educational power, and other developing countries are showing significant progress. However, Africa is not showing very strong signs of change in this respect.

An examination of the world map will show a marked relationship between the quality of the educational and research systems and the degree of economic and human development.

The current project is registered as part of the process of fighting against illiteracy and of the training of an intellectual élite.

The aim is to establish a community school to help address the high demand for education in this region whose demographic growth is more rapid than that of its infrastructures. Indeed, there is only one school, at present, in Laye, and it is functioning with much reduced means. The construction of the new school is also the logical continuation of Remar´s building programme for private community schools throughout the country. As to date, Remar Burkina has built 5 schools in different towns for children from poor backgrounds.

In order to initiate the development of a nation, one of the fundamental factors is the human capital: the availability of well-trained, enterprising and competitive individuals. For this reason, the project plans to establish a school with quality infrastructures possessing the following characteristics:

**A peaceful environment:** The school area is especially designed to provide an atmosphere of happiness and well-being for the pupils. Its location, away from the contamination of noise and rubbish, etc., is one of the determining factors in creating a suitable learning environment. In this same dynamic, the school will be a peaceful and harmonious place dedicated entirely to quality training.

**The neighbouring environment:** The school is very strategically located. It is easily accessible and the children do not need to rely upon any kind of transport to reach it. They can walk to the school from their homes. The plan in building the school specifically for the children of this region is precisely in order to avoid the parents having to pay any transport costs, bearing in mind their very low financial means.

**Economic accessibility:** Following the principles of the NGO Remar, the social welfare nature of the schools already built will be adopted for the new school also. Even before committing itself to working in Burkina Faso, Remar was well aware of the low level of income and the living conditions of the population. At no time has the Association failed to take into account this element when planning the various projects already undertaken within the country. Attendance at the school will continue to be completely free of charge and will be principally for girls since they form the great majority of Burkina’s illiterate population. Our hope is that, in this way, the parents will be encouraged to send their children to school.

**Quality training:** The fact that the schools are free of charge does not mean, in any way, a lowering in the standards of teaching; on the contrary, the teachers will give lessons to the children that respect the programmes and demands of the Ministry for National Education and Literacy (MENA). The teachers, fully aware of the importance of their vocation, will carry out their work with complete dedication.

**Goal:** To provide access to formal education for the children of poor families in Laye, through the establishment of a high-quality educational centre which is completely free of charge.

**Result 1:** The construction and equipping with teaching materials and modern computer labs of a school for primary education, of a large capacity, in the region of Laye.

**Result 2:** After the completion and equipping of the school building, an increase in the number of children in the Laye region who are receiving schooling.

**Activities:**

**R1:**

**A1-** **Measuring up of the plot of land in accordance with the building plan:** Following the school building plan, a team of workers, headed up by an architect, will measure up the plot of land where the school is to be built, and will carry out the excavation work necessary prior to placing the foundations.

**A2-** **Construction of the school and annexes:** Once the measuring up and excavation work has been completed, building work for the school will commence, always in accordance with the master plan and under the supervision of the architect and the project coordinator.

**A3-** **Equipping of the school:** Once the building work has been completed, a team of workers will proceed to install the teaching and computer materials which have been acquired within the framework of the project, so that the new school can become operative.

**R2:**

**A1- Awareness campaign amongst the local population for the schooling of their children:** Every three months, a team of volunteers will take on the responsibility of making the parents aware of the importance of sending their children to school, assuring them, at the same time, of the completely free-of-charge nature of the schooling offered.

**A2- Identification and Enrolment of future pupils in the school:** After running the awareness campaign, the teaching team will identify and officially enrol the children according to their age and level of education.

**A3- Employment of teaching staff:** Immediately prior to the official opening of the school, Remar Burkina will sign contracts with qualified teaching staff, in accordance with the selection and employment criteria established by the MENA (Ministry of National Education and Literacy).

**Material Resources available as to date**

In support of the implementation of this Project, Remar Burkina Faso can count on the following local resources:

Ever since 1994 Remar Burkina Faso, has been working in the search for equality and social justice as a means to achieve a fairer world. In order to do this, it has begun various initiatives which favour the integral and sustainable development of individuals with the purpose of achieving structural changes. These interventions have taken place in the towns of Ouagadougou, Ouahiagouya, Bobo Dioulasso, Koudougou, Reo, and Laye.

Remar España and Remar Burkina Faso both possess the infrastructure and experience needed for the carrying out of a Project of this kind. The mother organization provides a guarantee, and the local Association has a solid functioning infrastructure in the area (headquarters offices, means of transport, communications media, and central staff) which facilitates the project´s direction and execution. As far as work experience is concerned, it is important to make mention of the care homes, the rehabilitation centres, the reception centres, the homes for married couples and children, the free meals centres, the schools, the supportive businesses, the professional training workshops, etc.

Remar Burkina Faso also contributes other resources such as an office already operative in the town, its own furniture, computer equipment, photocopying machines and a vehicle, all of which will be made available for use by the Project, to complement the additional equipment which will be purchased within the limits of the financial budget which has been drawn up to cover the various needs that arise during the setting up of the Project. Local communications equipment and volunteer staff are also available to help in the coordination, follow-up, monitoring and evaluation of the Project, as well as in support for book-keeping and administration work.

Remar Burkina Faso makes its installations available for the Project. They provide suitable areas for women’s awareness workshops, accommodation for participants from the neighbouring community, and also a nursery area for the children which will help the women to be able to take part in the awareness activities.

This consolidation in the area has generated the donation of land in LAYE, where the School is to be installed. There is also support from its own human resources, such as the central volunteer staff for the direction and coordination of the Project, as well as financial resources to cover the running costs of the centre once the building work has been completed.

Everything that has been acquired for the Project is managed and administered by the local NGO Remar Burkina Faso. It is this same organization that will carry out the Project, and so there is no need for any transfer procedures. Any funds received will be sent to a bank account belonging to the organization within the country.

The sources of funding available to REMAR-BURKINA FASO come, chiefly, from the income obtained from the products which are made and from the services which are generated in the small businesses and/or professional training workshops: the manufacture of cleaning products, the second-hand clothing shops, the sewing, vehicle mechanics and upholstery workshops… Another source of funding comes from external donations received for the NGO, the child-sponsoring programme, help in the form of food and other in-kind donations from small local businesses.

The local NGO has the capacity to administer the Project itself, and has available the experienced staff needed for running social projects. Each one of the centres and workshops that are at present active has been set up thanks to local initiatives, and is supported by REMAR ESPAÑA with financial, material and staffing help.

REMAR has made available the entire infrastructure necessary for the carrying out of this Project, and also covers all the indirect costs involved: administration, communication, transport, local contracted staff, etc. The direct costs of human resources will also be absorbed by the local Association and the applying Entity. These include the full-time volunteer staff who work as monitors in the management of the homes, and whose living and accommodation costs whilst in the country are covered by Remar, and they also include the salaries of the staff who are on contract.

Remar BURKINA FASO has 19 years of experience in the management and development of social projects such as refuge homes, free meals centres, professional training workshops and free-of-charge schools. Every project undertaken becomes, eventually, self-supporting.

Remar BURKINA FASO has land of its own available for the present project, with sufficient space to accommodate the school.

REMAR ESPAÑA has shared in the financing needed in order to buy properties in Burkina Faso, and the work now has a structure which, at present, is attending to the needs of more than 8,000 vulnerable people. REMAR ESPAÑA also sends monthly support to its counterpart in Burkina Faso, through a small investment fund and also through the fleeting of humanitarian aid containers packed with material for the maintenance and equipping of the homes and workshops.