

Allocution of the Margarete Golding Award to Inner Wheel member Christiane Koeune-Nickels handed over by Edith Van Molhem, Past President & Imm.Past National Representative

in the Inner Wheel Club Diekirch-Ettelbruck Belgium-Luxembourg District 163 on the 5th of June 2021

Testimony by Christiane about the humanitarian work in Benin:

Since my first stay in Benin in 2005, I felt the need to get involved in improving the quality of life, mainly of the women and the children in Benin.

I was struck by the extreme poverty, the absence of clean water, of food and of infrastructures for education.

Together with my husband we first completed some small projects on our own, then friends started to join us and finally, in 2010, we founded a non-profit organisation.

In 2012 we got approved as an NGO, called „Aide au Bénin“. The board, of which I am president, consist of 10 people.

One of our main objectives is still digging wells in order to increase the quality of life of the inhabitants and mainly to relieve the women and children of their heavy tasks to find some water.

Unfortunately, an inadequate purification system causes the propagation of a lot of diseases.

Our second objective is the education for children and mainly for girls...often there are no rooms for the school, children are instructed in hovels or huts...they do not have notebooks, no pens or pencils.

We finance the buildings of schools with toilets and we furnish khaki uniforms, which are mandatory, and material and equipment required to attend school.

Women and children in Benin are in a very precarious situation, a lot of women die while giving birth, 1 of 5 children die before the age of 4.

It is sometimes very hard to see all of this misery and sufferings, but on the other hand we cannot stand by and watch and do nothing.

All of our humanitarian journeys have provided us a lot of joy and satisfaction, we got the opportunity to know the country of Benin, its a rich culture coming from many ethnic groups, its friendly and welcoming population, the look of these grateful women, who will stay in our hearts forever.

This is why I dedicate the Margarete Golding Award to all women in Benin, these brave women who fight every day to provide for the needs of their families.

Thank you for honoring me with this award.

Christiane Koeune-Nickels