

A photograph of a two-story school building with a green roof and light-colored walls. The building features a long balcony with a decorative metal railing. Several people are visible on the balcony and walking on the dirt path in front of the building. There are green bushes in the foreground.

Saint-Damien Secondary School

Garango, Burkina Faso

Sisters of Holy Cross
Diocese of Tenkodogo

In 2020, we received donations from donors who wanted to support the work being done at the Lycée Saint-Damien. These donations allowed us to make two major achievements: the construction of pergolas and the completion of the cafeteria.

CONSTRUCTION OF PERGOLAS

Mrs Florentine wanted to help the marginalized youth of her hometown, Garango, by building the Lycée Saint-Damien on the large plot of land she had obtained from the diocese. Before the school, she had built and opened a computer school to meet the needs of the school and the people of the small town. This was the only thing on this large piece of land.



These photos show the size of the land and the constructions made by Mrs. Florentine and handed over to the Diocese of Tenkodogo in 2015.

By a combination of circumstances, the management of Saint-Damien high school was entrusted to us by the Bishop of the Diocese of Tenkodogo, Mgr Kontiébo. So, in September 2015, we started the mission in Garango. Over the next two years, we added to the constructions made by Florentine (who never stopped contributing to the needs and making contributions).

As for us, two needs became clear and with the help received especially from Sister Sylvia Landry from Western Canada and her friends, we were able to build the girls' toilet and organize the school library. If you look at the picture below, you will see the cafeteria built with the help of Sister Norma McDonald's brother Douglas from Western Canada. The building built by Florentine, a two-story building, provides 4 classrooms on the second floor; the first floor houses the administration offices, the teachers' room, a projection room and the library. With the help of the Generalate and a contribution from the diocese, we have added 5 more classrooms which you can see in the background. In the same picture you can see the cafeteria, the girls' toilet and the five classrooms.



In this picture you can see, on the left, the water tower she had built, so we don't pay any money for the water used for the school.



There were, however, several problems to be solved in connection with the expansion of the school and the needs of the students: the installation of fountains to quench their thirst in the hot sun. In addition, there was the need to provide shelter for the students. Fountains had to be built to bring water from the water tower within the reach of the students.

There were no benches in the shade where the students could sit to study and work in groups. To escape the sun, the pupils stayed on the gallery near the classrooms or rushed into the classrooms, disturbing the order of the rooms. With the donations received, the fountains were built.

The fountains allow students to wash after sports classes, to quench their thirst.

The problem with the fountains is the dust. We are close to sandy areas. In some months, the hot Harmattan wind covers us with dust. At the fountains, expenses are incurred in maintaining the water channels, replacing taps, cleaning the waste pit.

Each class takes its turn to clean up these common areas, but it is not always easy. The pupils appreciate having water within their reach. But awareness-raising work must be done so that young people avoid wasting water in a country where water is scarce.



As mentioned earlier, outside of school hours, the pupils find themselves on a completely sunny and partly deforested field.





The space used for the construction of the pergolas.



It became urgent to build sheds to protect from the sun. Thus, the project to build shelters for the students was born.

The space by the computer school is suitable for these constructions. Florence had planted mango trees, which can be seen on the right. Some of the following photos show very well the space that lends itself to the construction of what will become the pergolas.



Pergola construction

Construction of the first pergola.




A pergola seen from close up. It looks very pretty between mango trees and bougainvillea.

In total we built 6 pergolas along the fence that separates us from the main street, between mango trees and bougainvillea. The photo on the bottom, if enlarged, gives a view of all six pergolas.

The most recent completion was to install electricity so that the students can study or work in groups in the evening without us having to open the classrooms.

So, in the evening, instead of opening the classrooms, the pupils meet under the pergolas. In each pergola there is light and a blackboard. There are no doors to open or close. In recognition of all the people who have made it possible for us to create these shaded areas for the students, we have given the pergolas their names. Each pergola will bear a sign with the name of the benefactors: Pergola les Amies de Saint-Damien - Pergola Florentina et Ami(e)s - Pergola K. Occident - Pergola R. Maisonneuve et Famille - Pergola S. Landry and Friends - Pergola T. Wilson and Friends.



Cette photo, à gauche, montre des élèves qui profitent de l'ombre des pergolas.





Les enseignes qui seront suspendues à la cafeteria et à la bibliothèque.



This is the kind of sign that will be hung on each pergola. What will be changed is the name of the benefactor. We are waiting for the signs prepared by the artist. You will receive another photo of the pergolas once the names are posted.

We have spent a little more than the amount of other donations received.

In terms of the pergolas, the following work needs to be continued Increasing the number of shaded areas. We need to create more shaded areas; given the number of pupils 310, more areas are needed. The final finishing of the already built pergolas (painting the pergolas) can really wait.



PROGRESS IN FINISHING THE CAFETERIA

An amount of the donations went to the cafeteria. The finishing is slow. We were able to do some work: put the mosaics in the kitchen, on the pillars. The chairs that will go in the cafeteria have been made.

