



BENIN

Benin – When family traditions go bad, sisters act.

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A GIRL GETTING HER HEAD LOADED WITH A BIG BOX AT THE DANTOKPA MARKET IN COTONOU. THE HARD JOB AND CARRYING CONTINUOUSLY HEAVY LOADS ON THEIR HEADS CREATES MANY PROBLEMS TO GIRLS' SPINE.



BENIN – WHEN FAMILY TRADITIONS GO BAD, SISTERS ACT.

THE DANTOKPA MARKET, IN COTONOU, IS THE PULSING HEART OF BENIN'S ECONOMICAL CAPITAL. IT'S THE RIGHT PLACE FOR COMMERCIAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES, OFTEN FLAGGED BY TRAVEL GUIDES AS MUST-SEE. THIS HUGE MARKET IS ALSO A MAJOR CENTRE OF A TRAGIC BUSINESS: THE TRAFFICKING OF UNDERAGE PERSONS, ESPECIALLY GIRLS. THIS TRAFFICKING HAS ROOTS IN A TRADITION, CALLED 'VIDOMEGÒN' IN FON LANGUAGE, THAT SEE THE POOREST FAMILIES ENTRUSTING THEIR CHILDREN TO SOME RELATIVES OR OTHER FAMILIES TO ALLOW THEM RECEIVE AN EDUCATION IN THE CITY. NOWADAYS, UNLUCKILY, THOSE KIDS ARE IN THE END JUST EXPLOITED, WHEN NOT ABUSED, BY THEIR "TUTORS". AMONG PEOPLE FIGHTING AGAINST THIS TRAFFICKING THERE ARE THE SALESIAN SISTERS OF DON BOSCO, CATHOLIC SISTERS CHECKING THE DANTOKPA MARKET DAILY AND TRYING TO GIVE A DIFFERENT CHANCE TO THE THOUSANDS OF GIRLS SELLING ALL KIND OF THINGS FROM A GREAT BASKET THEY CARRY ON THEIR HEADS. THE SALESIAN SISTERS GOAL IS TO REINTEGRATE THESE GIRLS IN THE SOCIETY, AND THEIR WORK IS WIDESPREAD. THEY STARTED A HUGE NUMBER OF PROJECTS: FROM A COUNSELING CENTRE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DANTOKPA MARKET TO THE FOYER WHERE THEY CAN SLEEP, FROM THE ALPHABETIZATION CLASSES TO THE MAISON DE L'ESPÉRANCE (HOUSE OF HOPE), A REAL PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL.



Le réseau n°1
au Bénin

Orabank
A chacun son compte courant



YOUNG 'VIDOMEGÒN' SELLING FOOD AT THE DANTOKPA MARKET. THE NAME 'VIDOMEGÒN' INDICATES THE GIRLS FROM POOR FARMING FAMILIES ENTRUSTED TO OTHER FAMILIES LIVING IN TOWN TO RECEIVE AN EDUCATION. QUITE OFTEN, UNLUCKILY, THE ENTRUSTED GIRLS ARE ONLY KEPT IN AN ALMOST SLAVE STATE, AND FORCED TO WORK IN THE MARKET FROM DAWN TILL DUSK.



A VERY YOUNG GIRL CARRYING A BUCKET FILLED WITH GOODS ON HER HEAD AT THE DANTOKPA MARKET IN COTONOU. THE HARD JOB AND CARRYING CONTINUOUSLY HEAVY LOADS ON THEIR HEADS CREATES MANY PROBLEMS TO GIRLS' SPINE.

YOUNG 'VIDOMEGÒN' SELLING FOOD AT THE DANTOKPA MARKET. THE NAME 'VIDOMEGÒN' INDICATES THE GIRLS FROM POOR FARMING FAMILIES ENTRUSTED TO OTHER FAMILIES LIVING IN TOWN TO RECEIVE AN EDUCATION. QUITE OFTEN, UNLUCKILY, THE ENTRUSTED GIRLS ARE ONLY KEPT IN AN ALMOST SLAVE STATE, AND FORCED TO WORK IN THE MARKET FROM DAWN TILL DUSK.



A SHANTY TOWN ON COTONOU'S LAGOON. HERE IS LOCATED THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL
'MAISON DE L'ESPÉRANCE' (HOUSE OF HOPE), ESTABLISHED BY THE SALESIAN SISTERS
TO GIVE AN EDUCATION TO THE CHILDREN IN NEED.





YOUNG 'VIDOMEGÒN' GIRLS IN THE COUNSELING CENTRE ESTABLISHED FOR THEM IN THE DANTOKPA MARKET BY THE SALESIAN SISTERS. THE NAME 'VIDOMEGÒN' INDICATES THE GIRLS FROM POOR FARMING FAMILIES ENTRUSTED TO OTHER FAMILIES LIVING IN TOWN TO RECEIVE AN EDUCATION. QUITE OFTEN, UNLUCKILY, THE ENTRUSTED GIRLS ARE ONLY KEPT IN AN ALMOST SLAVE STATE AND FORCED TO WORK IN THE MARKET FROM DAWN TILL DUSK.

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A BOY SLEEPING IN A CORRIDOR OF DANTOKPA'S MARKET WAREHOUSES IN COTONOU. THIS AREA IS USED AS A NIGHT SHELTER BY HUNDREDS OF KIDS.



SISTER TIZIANA BORSANI WITH SOME OF THE GUYS FREQUENTING THE SALESIAN CENTRE IN THE DANTOKPA MARKET OF COTONOU.

THE COUNSELING CENTRE ESTABLISHED IN THE DANTOKPA MARKET BY THE SALESIAN SISTERS FOR THE 'VIDOMEGÒN' GIRLS. THIS NAME INDICATES THE GIRLS FROM POOR FARMING FAMILIES ENTRUSTED TO OTHER FAMILIES LIVING IN TOWN TO RECEIVE AN EDUCATION. QUITE OFTEN, UNLUCKILY, THE ENTRUSTED GIRLS ARE ONLY KEPT IN AN ALMOST SLAVE STATE, AND FORCED TO WORK IN THE MARKET FROM DAWN TILL DUSK.





A GIRL RESTING IN THE COUNSELING CENTRE ESTABLISHED IN THE DANTOKPA MARKET BY THE SALESIAN SISTERS FOR THE 'VIDOMEGÒN' GIRLS. THE NAME 'VIDOMEGÒN' INDICATES THE GIRLS FROM POOR FARMING FAMILIES ENTRUSTED TO OTHER FAMILIES LIVING IN TOWN TO RECEIVE AN EDUCATION. QUITE OFTEN, UNLUCKILY, THE ENTRUSTED GIRLS ARE ONLY KEPT IN AN ALMOST SLAVE STATE, AND FORCED TO WORK IN THE MARKET FROM DAWN TILL DUSK.



THE GREAT DANTOKPA MARKET IN COTONOU.

GIRLMOTHERS BREASTFEEDING THEIR CHILDREN AT THE 'MAISON DU SOLEIL', CREATED BY THE SALESIAN SISTERS OF COTONOU TO HELP THE 'VIDOMEGÒN' GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN. THIS NAME INDICATES THE GIRLS FROM POOR FARMING FAMILIES ENTRUSTED TO OTHER FAMILIES LIVING IN TOWN TO RECEIVE AN EDUCATION. QUITE OFTEN, UNLUCKILY, THE ENTRUSTED GIRLS ARE ONLY KEPT IN AN ALMOST SLAVE STATE, AND FORCED TO WORK IN THE MARKET FROM DAWN TILL DUSK.



A HOUSE SOON TO BE DEMOLISHED IN A SHANTY TOWN ON COTONOU'S LAGOON. HERE IS LOCATED THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL 'MAISON DE L'ESPÉRANCE' (HOUSE OF HOPE), ESTABLISHED BY THE SALESIAN SISTERS TO GIVE AN EDUCATION TO THE CHILDREN IN NEED.





BOYS AND GIRLS OF THE BAKERY AND PASTRY COURSE MANAGED BY SALESIAN SISTERS AT THEIR 'MAISON DE L'ESPÉRANCE' (HOUSE OF HOPE) IN COTONOU.

A GIRL IN AN ALPHABETIZATION CLASS HELD IN THE COUNSELING CENTRE ESTABLISHED FOR 'VIDOMÉGÒN' GIRLS, IN THE DANTOKPA MARKET BY THE SALESIAN SISTERS. THE NAME 'VIDOMÉGÒN' INDICATES THE GIRLS FROM POOR FARMING FAMILIES ENTRUSTED TO OTHER FAMILIES LIVING IN TOWN TO RECEIVE AN EDUCATION. QUITE OFTEN, UNLUCKILY, THE ENTRUSTED GIRLS ARE ONLY KEPT IN AN ALMOST SLAVE STATE, AND FORCED TO WORK IN THE MARKET FROM DAWN TILL DUSK.



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A VOLUNTEER AT WORK IN THE 'MAISON DE L'ESPÉRANCE' (HOUSE OF HOPE), ESTABLISHED BY THE SALESIAN SISTERS TO GIVE AN EDUCATION TO THE CHILDREN IN NEED IN A SHANTY TOWN OF COTONOU.



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