

Courier



International Friendship League



Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador with IFL members

IFL Cultural Days in Senegal
Orphans in the Seychelles
Mattresses for a school in Burundi
Piglets in Malawi
Homelessness in Newfoundland
Support for Zambian school

No. 67

September 2024

International Friendship League

Founder: Noel Ede

The IFL is a non-governmental, non-political and non-religious organisation, founded in 1931 to promote a spirit of friendship among the people of the world with a view to peaceful co-operation in international affairs.

www.iflworld.org

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Vice Chairperson:	Marie-Nella Azemia (Seychelles)
Secretary and Assistant Treasurer:	Ted Newhook (Canada)
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In addition to the above, there are Individual Members in many countries.

Consult the IC Secretary: info@iflworld.org

Courier is the journal of the International Committee of the International Friendship League.

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It is emphasised that the opinions expressed in Courier are those of the writers themselves and do not necessarily represent IFL Policy.

Applications for IC funds for IFL projects

Sandra Noel

The International Committee has received 11 applications for the £500 Grant for Special Project, to date, with some other Groups planning a project in the near future. We encourage every Group to avail of this opportunity.



Delivering mattresses in Burundi

The projects are all different yet the same in that each Group is planning an outreach into their community to help the less fortunate by providing food, clothing, basic needs, social interaction, education and more, while promoting peace, friendship and increasing awareness and promoting the IFL.

So far the project has been a big success. It's very encouraging to hear the enthusiasm coming from our members. It has sparked a new interest in the IFL and given the Groups the ability to make a difference in their community.

The following Groups have applied for the Grant:

Seychelles: Capacity Building Program for IFL Youths

Senegal: Library and Multiservices (see page 7)

St. Johns, Canada: Hygiene Donation Project (see page 9)

Avalon, Canada: IFL Friendship Cafe

Bujumbura, Burundi: Donation Of Mattresses (see page 5)

Makungu, Zambia: School/Feeding Programme (see page 10)

Salem, India: Conference On Friendship

Lubumbashi, DR Congo: Purchasing 100 Plastic Chairs to rent out

Timanyane, Malawi: Charity Activities

Kampala, Uganda: Supporting The Community With Tap Water

Kigali, Rwanda: Peace Seminar

“72 hours of IFL Senegal” Cultural Days

The place of books in students' vacation activities

Abdoulaye Ndour

For three days, IFL Senegal organised “72 hours of IFL Senegal” dedicated to reading. This initiative was made with the aim of magnifying the importance of reading in the Blaise Senghor centre where the students were invited.

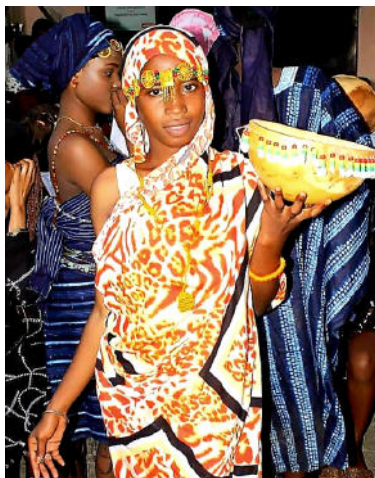


Cultural ceremonies were also organized to make these days more pleasant.

We bought an HP computer and offered it to students in the town of Biscuiterie.

Amongst the cultural activities was a celebration of traditional Senegalese women's clothing that embodies the elegance and richness of African culture, allowing women to stay connected to their roots and

share their cultural pride with the world.



IFL encourages young people to explore topics beyond their academic curriculum. Books are often considered the gateway to knowledge. During vacations, students have the opportunity to broaden their horizons, delve into new topics and strengthen their existing knowledge. Reading stimulates imagination and creativity, allowing students to discover worlds beyond their immediate surroundings.

IFL Senegal wants to create readers for life. When it comes to student holidays in Senegal, books are essential companions.

Our young students and IFL members visited the Palace of the Republic of Senegal accompanied by the new Senegalese President, his Excellency Mr. Diomaye Diakhar Faye. Omar Diop was the spokesperson of the day, sending a message of thanks to the President for the opportunity to grant them a visit to the Palace grounds.

New mattresses for the Muyinga Seminary School

Delivered by the Burundi Friendship League

Severin Baracungana



In September 2023, the Muyinga Seminary School had a fire that caused enormous material damage. Following this incident, the school authorities and the provincial authorities of Muyinga launched an appeal for help.

Burundi Friendship League (BFL) was struck by this misfortune and submitted to IFL a request for mattress assistance to this school. IFL welcomed the project and funded it with £500.

Initially, the mattress donation delivery was scheduled for May 23-24, 2024, but there was a small delay. Finally on June 7, 2024 the delegation of 5 BFL members including the President, Vice President and 3 members visited the Saint Pius X Minor Seminary, which is located in the north of Burundi, in the province of Muyinga. It is a secondary school managed by Catholic priests under the supervision of the Bishop of the diocese of Muyinga. The school has a total of 354 students (from 7th grade to the end of complete humanities).

At the start of the school year in September 2023, the school had an incident and a student dormitory experienced an electrical short circuit which caused a fire. Student materials, mattresses, notebooks, books etc. were burned and damaged following this fire.

Thanks to the support of IFL, a BFL delegation from Bujumbura left on June 7, 2024 with a dozen mattresses for just a little support for this school. The school authorities, including the Abbot Rector, the dean and the President of the school's parents' committee, who is also the economic advisor to the Governor of the

Province, responded to the meeting to welcome the delegation and the donation given by BFL.

The BFL President briefly presented to the community the missions of IFL and BFL to finally explain the origin of the donation and the quantity of mattress we were able to have. He clarified that this is support granted by IFL following a request from BFL.

In their speeches, all these authorities respectively thanked IFL via BFL for this laudable gesture, and prayed to the Good Lord to guard and bless all the activities of IFL and BFL.

The Abbot Rector took the BFL delegation to visit all the school premises which are in dilapidated and critical condition. The delegation noted that the majority of students still do not have sufficient mattresses to sleep on, a situation which was aggravated by this incident of September 2023.



The Abbot Rector and the Advisor for Economic Affairs of the Governor noted that this assistance from IFL has been of great benefit to them and that they cannot find suitable words to say thank you.

The handover ceremonies for this mattress donation ended in a great atmosphere with sharing a drink organized by the school authorities.

Note that some participants, including the Governor's Advisor, would even like to join in BFL.

SOS Children's Village, Chipata, Zambia

Mike Hewett

In 2009, the British Section of the IFL made a substantial donation to the international charity SOS Children, which enabled the charity to build a new Children's Village in Chipata, Zambia. The Villages care for children who, for various reasons, cannot be brought up in their own family. The IFL has a long history of supporting this charity in various countries, and we continue to provide financial assistance.

The charity operates in the best interests of each child. Sometimes children don't have parents or other close relatives to care for them, or families can become unable to care for their children.

SOS Children's Villages always aims to reunite children with their biological

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A new bookstore in Senegal

Helping education for young people

Abdoulaye Ndour

Our bookstore project for which we received 500 pounds from the IFL has started. We rented a medium store for which we bought some books, notebooks, pens, pencils, erasers and all the school materials that the students need. We hired someone to manage the sale and pay each month. The sale we can say is going well, it's working timidly but still we're hanging on to it and we hope it will work better.



Currently classes are closed, the students are on vacation, we are selling out little by little and this is completely normal. For our meetings every Sunday, the bookstore occupies a large part of the agenda.

We started our project, and it's getting there little by little. We are thinking about creating a classroom if the project goes well. And by the way, this is our agenda for our Sunday meetings. This classroom allows us to give reinforcement lessons to our students.

These days, most activities are focused on education. Because if we provide education to young children it is as if we have educated an entire nation. Because young people are the leaders of tomorrow.

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families, when it is safe and possible to do so. The process of reintegration is managed carefully. This work includes preparing children and young people, their families and the wider community, involving sociologists and educators, before reuniting the children, and then supporting them afterwards with ongoing contact and follow-up visits by social workers. Children who can't be reunited with family members continue living happily in their SOS Children's Villages families, but the charity is increasingly looking to integrate these children into the local communities.

A recent report from SOS Children's Villages, published in the British Group newsletter *Friendship News*, gives two examples of children at the Village in Chipata who have successfully rejoined their biological families.

Sometimes it is easy to forget the effect that the IFL's work has on others. Throw a lifeline into water and the ripples will reach another shore.

Helping the Anse Etoile orphanage

Seychelles Group's charity project

Marie-Nella Azemia



On Saturday 6 April, our IFL group voluntarily organized a day of charity work at a Boys Orphanage in the district of Anse Etoile in the northern region of the island.

It was a day of work and fun as the whole place was cleaned, weed in the garden front was taken out and new flowers and other plants were planted to give the garden a new look.

In the afternoon orphans were brought inside to take part in a drawing and art activity. IFL members assisted and taught the orphans to do what they could not do on their own. It was indeed a wonderful art class.

The day ended with sharing of drinks and snacks in the dining room.

The orphans and staff showed a lot of interest in this activity and thanked IFL members for their generosity, compassion and friendship.



Seychelles Group working with the Platform of Civil Society

Following the charity work at two Orphanages, two Homes For the Elderly and also giving of household items to people in need on a daily basis, all reported in the local media, people are now contributing well by making donations of items including books.

From the books received, IFL made a donation of books written by various authors to the Platform of Civil Society in Seychelles (CEPS) that has a library for its members. IFL too is a member of CEPS. We are thankful for this humane gesture.

Addressing Homelessness in St. John's

through Empathy, Action and a Hand of Friendship

Atinuke Tiamiyu Adigun - IFL St. John's Group

When housing was declared a right in 2019, many hoped it would be a turning point in addressing homelessness in Canada. However, the reality today tells a different story, with more people finding themselves without stable, safe, and permanent housing. Homelessness takes many forms: some individuals are "unsheltered," living on the streets or in places not meant for habitation. Others find themselves in "emergency shelters," where they can stay overnight or for short periods. Some are "provisionally accommodated," living in temporary or insecure housing situations, while others are "at risk of homelessness," teetering on the edge due to precarious economic circumstances.

The rise in homelessness across Canada is not a simple issue; it's a web of interconnected factors. The lack of affordable housing, particularly in urban areas, is a significant driver, with skyrocketing property prices and rents making it nearly impossible for many to find a place to call home. Economic instability, low wages, and unemployment further exacerbate the problem, as more and more people struggle to cover basic needs like rent, utilities, and food. Mental health disorders and substance abuse also play a role, making individuals more vulnerable to losing their homes. Additionally, domestic abuse, family conflicts, and violence often force individuals - especially women and children - into unsafe situations, leaving them with no choice but to leave their homes.

Systemic factors, like discrimination and racism, further deepen the crisis. Marginalized groups, particularly Indigenous peoples in Canada, face a higher risk of homelessness due to historical injustices, displacement, and systemic discrimination. Economic crises, like recessions or sudden downturns, can push even more people into housing insecurity. The COVID19 pandemic, in particular, has worsened this situation, leaving many in Canada struggling to keep a roof over their heads.

Before the pandemic, homelessness was primarily seen as a big-city issue, but it has since spread to less populated areas. In St. John's, Newfoundland, the problem became visible in October 2023, when a small group of homeless individuals set up tents outside the Confederation Building. What started as a handful of people quickly grew into a small tent city. As a temporary solution, the city relocated these individuals to emergency shelters. This visible increase in homelessness sparked deep reflection within the International Friendship League (IFL) St. John's. We recognized that homelessness is rarely a choice but often the result of unavoidable circumstances. These experiences are overwhelmingly negative and distressing, pushing us to respond with empathy and care.

This reflection led to the creation of the hygiene project, an initiative designed to support those experiencing homelessness in our community. Through this project, IFL St. John's provided essential hygiene products to individuals in need. We

partnered with two local charitable organizations: the Salvation Army Wiseman Centre and Stella's Circle. Stella's Circle is dedicated to helping adults who face barriers to fully participating in their community and operates a female-only emergency shelter. The Salvation Army Wiseman Centre provides emergency shelter and supportive housing, offering a holistic, client-centred approach to promote independence and well-being for its residents, including both men and women.

We delivered 62 bags filled with hygiene products to these shelters. Each bag contained toothpaste, three-in-one shampoo, conditioner and body wash, deodorant, toothbrushes, combs, soap, and body cream. This project was a small yet significant step in extending a hand of support and dignity to those who need it most in our community.

A Grant was received from IFL IC to partially fund this project. The remainder of the finances were fundraised by members of IFL St. John's.

Supporting education in Zambia

George Siluyele writes about the donation of £500 which the IC granted to the Zambian Group, to support children's education



The 500 pounds we received we bought books, mealie meal, cooking oil, relish beans, soya chunks, dry fish, kapenta, buckets, cooking utensils, like plates and pots. We also bought desks from the same grant we received.

We are really grateful for the gesture and really appreciate the support. It made a difference in the well being of our children, because children are being fed every day.

Pig Farming project in Malawi grows

Victor Makwakwa

We have managed to donate piglets to vulnerable widow women. We hope that these women will be empowered financially with pig farming; hence they'll be able to provide for themselves and grandchildren.

This project was funded by the IFL with the aim of minimizing poverty among local individuals, on the other hand promoting Peace among them. For the fact that we can't talk about Peace to people who lack basic needs, that's why we thought it otherwise that first we need to address their problems and then continue with our mission of making Friendship and promoting Peace around the world.

We have hope that we'll reach many families because now our project has started giving fruits to the seeds we planted.



IFL Seychelles retreat

Marie-Nella Azemia

On 17 August the Seychelles Group organised a successful retreat with the active participation of 6 new youth members. This activity also brought all members together for positive reflection on IFL's way forward. It also gave us a clear indication of our plan of action for next year.

We take this opportunity to thank IC sincerely for granting us the funds for that purpose.

At the time of preparing for the IFL Retreat, the Seychelles National Youth Council (SNYC) was contacted as a partner from whom IFL requested the participation of some young people who may also be interested to join IFL in the future in view that an IFL YOUTH group is being set up. This request was greatly appreciated by the Director of SNYC, who personally and voluntarily contributed to the success of the retreat by making a good presentation on "Advocacy".

We thanked the director for this good work and also for entering into partnership with IFL. We are pleased to note that he is thinking of re-joining IFL as an active member.

The Lieutenant Governor's Garden Party St. John's, NL, Canada

Valerie Parrott



The IFL Groups at the Lieutenant Governor's Party

Her Honour The Honourable Joan Marie J. Aylward, O.N.L., Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador, represents His Majesty King Charles III in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Lieutenant Governor fulfills the roles and functions of the Crown, including granting Royal Assent to provincial laws.

Every year, the Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador invites the general public to the Lieutenant Governor's Garden Party.

For the second year in a row, IFL Avalon and IFL St. John's joined together to represent the International Fellowship League at this prestigious Garden Party on 24 July. The party provided an opportunity to meet Her Honour The Honourable Joan Marie Aylward and His Honour Mr. Aylward. There was local entertainment celebrating the diversity of our Province and Nation while we participated in afternoon tea on the beautiful grounds of Government House.



The Lieutenant Governor's

Garden Party

Wednesday, July 24, 2024
2:00 - 4:30 pm
Government House
50 Military Road, St. John's

Peace Essay 2023

Here is the essay that was awarded second prize in the Peace Essay Writing competition last year.

Second prize won by Ms Daba Seck from Senegal. She is 16 years old.

A poem for peace

If you believe that a smile is more than a weapon,
If you believe in the power of an offered hand,
If you believe that what brings people together is more important than what divides them . . .
If you believe that being different is an asset and not a danger,
If you know how to look at the other with a touch of love,
If you know how to prefer hope to suspicion . . .
If you think it's up to you to take the first step rather than the other,
If the gaze of a child still manages to disarm your heart,
If you can rejoice in your neighbour's joy,
If the injustice that strikes others revolts you as much as the one you suffer,
If for you the stranger is a brother who is offered to you,
If you know how to accept that another does you a favour,
If you share your bread and know how to add a piece of your heart to it,
If you believe forgiveness goes further than revenge . . .
If you know how to sing the happiness of others and dance their joy,
If you can listen to the unfortunate who is wasting your time and keep smiling at him,
If you know how to accept criticism and take advantage of it without dismissing it and defending yourself,
If you know how to welcome and adopt an opinion different from yours,
If you refuse to beat your guilt on the chests of others,
If for you the other is first of all a brother,
If anger is a weakness for you, not a proof of strength,
If you'd rather be wronged than hurt someone,
If you refuse that after you it will be the deluge,
If you side with the poor and oppressed without taking yourself for a hero,
If you believe that love is the only force of persuasion,
If you believe that peace is possible; then peace will come!

IFL activities in Montenegro

Alain Godefroid reports



The Cetinje Group. Alain is the only black man

The two main activities of our group in 2024 are the following :

1. We have been to Ukrainian refugee sites to organize cultural activities for youth and some of us took time to teach them the Montenegrin language to allow them facilities to study in the school because the only language the government uses is Montenegrin, similar to Serbian and Croatian.
2. We have been in a city named TUZI to try to reconcile two communities, one from Albania and a Montenegrin youth band who often fight for no reason when they become drunk. There is a change for now.



Portugal IFL invited to the Council of Europe

At the invitation of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, Isabel da Veiga Cabral, representing the IFL, was invited to a prize-giving at the Assembly of the Republic in Lisbon, on the 21st of May.

Get well wishes

For Ann Godden and Audrey Miller

Ann Godden and Audrey Miller, two people who have played a leading role in the IFL, have been ill. The St John's Group in Newfoundland, Canada, sent "Get well" messages to both of them. Here are the messages from Valerie Parrott.

To Ann Godden:

Dear Ann,

On behalf of IFL St John's, NL, Canada Group, we would like to thank you for the years of service you have provided IFL. We appreciate your dedication to such an important worldwide cause and the legacy you have built on behalf of IFL. You have had an integral role in helping to form IFL St John's through your remarkable recording of IFL events and your duties for so many years as secretary for which we are truly grateful. One thing with IFL is, even though we may not have met personally, you are still our friend and part of the whole IFL family.

Again, we thank you for your many years of service, dear Friend, and look forward to meeting you in person someday.

To Audrey Miller:

Good day Audrey,

On Behalf of the IFL St John's Group from Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, we would all like to take this opportunity to send you this Get Well Soon Card.

We acknowledge the years of support you have provided IFL by editing the Courier which has left a legacy behind for newly formed groups like we are. The Courier not only presents current news for today's events but also provides an historical perspective of IFL as we review previous issues.

You have had an integral role in helping to form IFL St John's through your remarkable recording of IFL events for which we are truly grateful. One thing with IFL is even though we may not have met personally, you are still our friend and part of the whole IFL family.

Final meeting of the British Group

Lack of members has forced IFL to close

Mike Hewett

On 30th May IFL members gathered in Hitchin, a town north of London, for the final Annual Conference of the British Group. Margaret Warry, Chair of the British Group, spoke about the large drop in the number of members, which is mainly due to death or age-related illness. The British Group has not been able to recruit younger members to carry on the work. This is unfortunately typical of the situation in many west European countries.

As a result of this, the final meeting was inevitable, although it was a great shame

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after so many years of being a successful organisation throughout Britain, enabling friends of all races, creeds and backgrounds to meet, travel and welcome others to Britain.

The main item for discussion was the most appropriate way for closing the British Group. The procedure which had been agreed at the Annual Conference in 2023 was put into action. The members also discussed what should be done with the remaining funds held by the Group. It was agreed that some of the money should be retained for members who may wish to travel to future International Assemblies and for ongoing newsletters. Some money could also be passed to the International Committee to help provide financial assistance to Groups who would benefit from help with specific projects.

A donation was also made to the "Friends of Malawi", a centre for women in Malawi which Carol Evans supports. At present, Carol is raising money towards the high cost of a washing machine - previously the women had to do washing by hand in the river.

Finally, it was decided to pay the annual membership fee for 2025 for those British IFL members who would like to continue in the IFL, receiving news from IFL Groups around the world through Courier. Anyone who joins as an International member will be able to attend the 2025 International Assembly in London if they wish.

These decisions brightened the mood of the conference and, after several enjoyable social events, members departed home knowing that their membership of the IFL can continue.

Catherine's new hat



Sandra Noel found this lovely photo among her pictures of the Holiday Week last year - Catherine Wilson visiting Cape Spear and wearing a traditional Newfoundland Fisherman's Sou'western hat which Sandra purchased for her at a craft store - just for fun.

IFL WhatsApp group

Just a reminder - for those of you who use social media, a WhatsApp group has been set up. Many people find this is a very useful way of keeping in touch. If you use WhatsApp and would like to join the group, please contact the Chairperson, Catherine Wilson.