

#### **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD - 2016**

#### THEME:

#### TEENAGE GIRLS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

# **VALUES TRANSMITTED** BY AFRICAN GRAND-MOTHERS



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**"When I leave this hospital, I will sing up to the day I die".**This determination was kept alive, including on Cameroon Independence Day (January 1st., 1960), when she sang at the Presidential Palace with other famous Cameroonian singers such as Ebanda Manfred, Nelle Eyoum, Manu Dibango and Jean Bikoko Aladin, the King of Assiko.

#### INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD - 2016

# TEENAGE GIRLS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: VALUES TRANSMITTED BY AFRICAN GRAND-MOTHERS

We live in a global world that pushes us today, more than before, to rely on values that we culturally relate to thus helping us to play a more active, authentic role not only within our communities and countries, but in the world! It is the surest way to the sustainable development that we all dream of. In order to succeed, we have decided to summon the rich and solid experience of our grand-mothers.

Based on their active daily lives, our grand-mothers have a lot to teach us including:

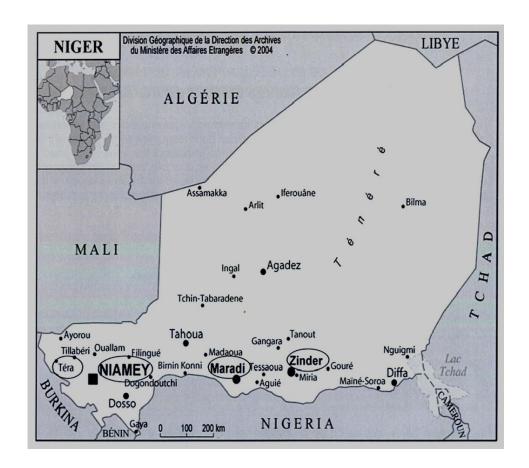
- The sense of family
- Mutual respect
- Politeness
- Mutual tolerance
- Respect of elders and authorities
- Sense of a job well done

- Perseverance
- Generosity
- Courage
- Sense of justice

For the celebration of the 2016 International Day of the Girl Child, AAA girls were lucky to learn more about the two grand-mothers who just departed from us: Grand-Ma Fatou Djibo and Grand-Ma Anne-Marie Nzie. Both were celebrated in their respective countries (Niger & Cameroon) and honored with the title of "National Grand-Mother" and Irreplaceable libraries!

Apart from the above-mentioned values, our two late grand-mothers add the following:

- Determination
- Strong will
- Love for their job even when they did not earn much
- Openness to the world
- Constancy in their engagements





GRAND-MA FATOU DJIBO

#### **BIRTH**

Fadima Hassane Diallo at birth, Grand-ma Fatou Djibo was born on 27th April, 1927 in Tera.

#### CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

Daughter of Chief Djagourou, Grand-ma Fatou Djibo was a privileged child. She was excessively spoilt by her father who was unable to say no to any of her caprices.

"I was a very happy child as my parents had a great love for me, specially my father who spoilt me. He even used to take me out for horse-rides throughout the district".

In a context where Chiefs used to send their servants' children to "White man's school" in the place of their own, Fatou's father, in the contrary, decided that his children sons and daughters included would go to school!

Grand-ma Fatou Djibo was therefore one of the first girls from Niger to go to school. "The year the primary school of Tera first opened its doors to girls, as the district Chief's daughter, I was the first to register. My father explained that he wanted to show an example which was to be followed by lower Chiefs".

#### **EDUCATION**

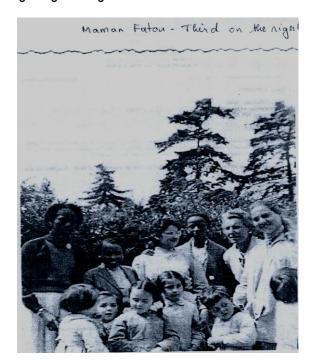
Grand –ma Fatou therefore entered Tera primary school when she was 7 years old and got the "Certificat d'Etudes primaries" there. She pursued her studies in "Ecole Primaire Superieure " of Niamey. Three years later she joined the Rufisque (Senegal) "Ecole Normale "where four years later, she got her diploma in 1946 with honors. According to Grand-ma Fatou," Thanks to Ecole Normale de Rufisque "I acquired knowledge and experience through new contacts, Beliefs, and mentalities of other African ethnic groups and future African leaders."

All things being equal, be it in Tera her village, Niamey the capital of her country, in Senegal or in Europe, she considered her learning process as a preparation to serve her community.

For her Education was not just a result but a real Way!

#### PROFESSIONNAL AND SOCIAL LIFE

The very year she graduated, Fatou Diallo married Yacouba Djibo. She gave birth to eight children. Her husband started as a primary school teacher, and then later on he became a school director with the opportunity to teach with his wife in the same school. Their first work station was Fada N'Gourma in 1946 where life was not easy as she will recall later: "Our life in Fada N'Gourma was not easy. We stayed in "paillottes". Our classes were overloaded. I had up to 60 children between 6 and 7 years old. I was feeling bad and wondering how to manage it better. Thank God I succeeded in getting some good results.



.Our other work stations were: Maradi, Zinder, Tilaberi, Niamey. "

Grandma Fatou Djibo worked as a primary school teacher from 1946 to 1966, the year she left to follow her husband who was appointed Niger's Ambassador not only to the Kingdom of Belgium but also to the European Economic Community. In 1968, Grandma Fatou unfortunately lost her husband in a car accident while he was back to Niamey for a short visit. She courageously returned to Niamey and renewed with professional life. This time she became the bursar of "Lycee Kasai de Niamey", a challenging job that she kept for 15 years.



#### **ENGAGEMENT IN COMMUNITY LIFE**

Grandma Fatou Djibo worked as a teacher for 20 years and later as a bursar. She retired in 1983 but remained very active in the community as a social and economic adviser in many associations, including the trade union movement. She later said: "I gave my life to the Red-Cross because in Africa, it is believed that elders must set examples. So I tried to be useful to my people, convinced as I was that community service was a way to give back what I received in order to push our country ahead. "At the end, she spent most of her time reading and writing her memoirs.

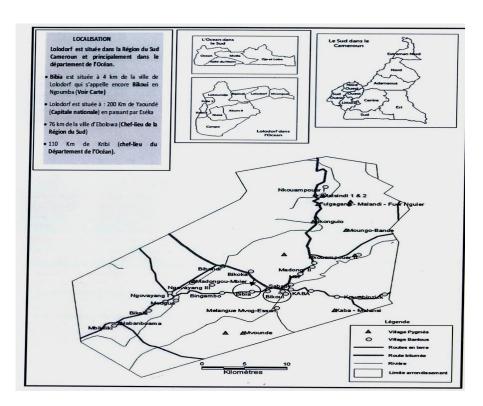
#### **CONCLUSION**

Finally, Grandma Fatou Djibo is a true example of commitment and active involvement to struggles leading to the recognition of women's rights. Beyond Niger her home country, she is a shining example to all girls and women of Africa. Indeed, Grandma Fatou occupies a special place in the history of women in Niger as:

- One of the first girls from Niger to go to school
- First girl to obtain the Rufisque diploma (Senegal)
- First woman to drive a car in 1954
- Founder and first President of Union des Femmes du Niger

Grandma Fatou Djibo died in Niamey on April 6th 2016







Grandma Anne-Marie

### **BIRTH**

The girl with a golden Guitar, Grandma Anne-Marie was born in 1932 in Bibia, a small village situated 4 km away from Lolodorf that is also known as Bikui in Ngoumba (see the map).

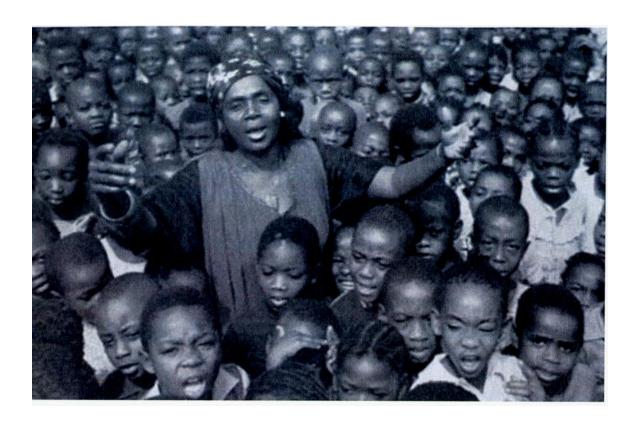
#### CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

Grandma Anne-Marie was one of the 6 children of catechist Nzie Nzhiougma and Melingui Minanga his wife. Music and singing were part of her childhood. Her parents called her "Mvunga Nzie Anne-Marie". Her father used to play "Mvett" a local stringed-instrument. In her childhood and while playing with her friends, Anne-Marie was victim of a serious accident, which made her first years miserable, forcing her to spend part of her adolescent years in a hospital. Her brother Cromwell Nzie, the famous Cameroonian guitar player, took advantage of her illness to introduce her to Hawaiian music. She then started writing her first songs and decided that when she finally leaves the hospital bed, "I will sing until I die".

#### **EDUCATION:** ON THE JOB TRAINING

Because of the persistent wound that kept her in bed, she experienced loneliness and rejection for a long time. When she was 12 years old, late Pastor Akoa Abomo of the Presbyterian Church discovered her hiding at the back of the church, but singing marvelously a song he was trying to teach the Adults Choir. He considered her as a God sent gift and she was integrated in the church choir! Later on, she joined her brother's group as a chorister.





In 1984, her famous song on "LIBERTY" that called for freedom, not only for Cameroonians but for the whole black world definitely boosted her career. The whole country sang with her!

#### PROFESSIONNAL AND SOCIAL LIFE

"Queen Mother", "the Golden Voice", "Mama Anne-Marie" are some of the nicknames expressing people's love and appreciation for Grandma Anne-Marie Nzie exceptional talent. She was their Icon for more than 50 years! Grandma Anne-Marie was a strong woman with a clear vision of her career. In 1954, she launched her first record, "Mabanze".

After her marriage with Franck Denis Nziou also a musician, "Malundi" became her first global success as she performed all over the African continent including: Libreville, Algier, Lagos, Dakar inspiring many a generation of African musicians.

She was equally present on international stages like Paris, where she collaborated in 1958 with Gilbert Becaud and got a contract with Pathé Marconi Records. This opened the doors of "Olympia" to her.

On Cameroon Independence Day (January 1<sup>st,</sup> 1960), she sang at the Presidential Palace with other famous Cameroonian singers such as Ebanda Manfred, Nelle Eyoum, Manu Dibango and Jean Bikoko Aladin, the King of Assiko.

A member of the National orchestra, she was the God-Mother of many young musicians. She definitely inspired many people and she loved her work even when she did not earn much.





#### **CONCLUSION**

The story of Grandma Anne-Marie is the story of a forward looking African woman who conquered her local traditions in order to answer her Call for Music and Singing. She occupies a special place in the history of Cameroon culture as:

- One of the first women to sing with a guitar
- One of the first women in the National orchestra
- One of the first African women to sing in the Olympia, Paris
- The second African woman to be made "Chevalier de la legion Française".

Grandma Anne-Marie Nzie died on May 24th, 2016 in Yaoundé Central Hospital following an illness.



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