

Brian and Jackie Chilvers

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The seasons here change just as they do in England, and just like us the Chadians blame all the colds, flu and tiredness on the 'changement de saison' in the Autumn leading into winter. Meanwhile, we are quite enjoying the need to wear a pair of socks or a jumper for a couple of hours in the morning! Change is definitely tiring, added to which Brian had Covid during the first half December, and is just back to normal, Jackie also had a virus which left her pretty washed out. People mostly said it was just the time of year!

The community needs assessment planned by Jackie and BMS colleagues Mel and Bethan is finally underway – we are visiting two villages each week, to ask questions to women and men about their health and that of their families. We have a theatre group & musician who bring laughter and performances in Chadian Arabic each time. The drama & music contain messages about the use of traditional healers, exclusive breast feeding, the need to seek ante-natal care and to have a safe delivery in hospital. We have noticed that although the villages are not far apart, and are just a few kilometers away, each has a very different feel. Some villages are very isolated with no school or health centre easily accessible. We have also observed just how hard it can be to get to the hospital – there are no roads, some tracks are hard to follow and often people don't even have transport. Even if you have the money for a taxi or a klando (motorbike-taxi), they are not waiting in the villages, so it would be necessary to call one. Most people have a phone for the household but not necessarily 'credit' to call. Even before we have collected all the data we have seen some of the challenges first hand.

Despite the language barrier, Jackie has felt very much at home sitting with families and especially enjoying the company of the young girls, who probably don't have much to do outside the home during the day.

It has also been a privilege to be invited into some homes to meet people who are too ill to come outside and talk with them, though it's hard to hear about their longstanding illnesses for which they have received insufficient treatment or don't have the money to seek further help.



We've just celebrated our first Christmas in Chad. We were a bit disappointed that we couldn't make it to church on Christmas Eve – for once not due to work pressures, but due to the fact that traffic in the town was at a complete standstill. We later heard that the President had been moving around in the town (locally known as a 'Tapis Rouge') which causes many road closures for long periods of time and the presence of many police and military personnel. We did share a Christmas Eve supper with neighbours on the compound and on Christmas Day itself we shared a meal with another BMS family here at G2 as well as with a new Chadian Christian, who, coming from a Muslim background was experiencing his first Christmas. Later on, the whole compound got together for deserts so although it was a strange day it was a good day.



The rhythm of the day has changed recently, with Chadian patients who don't like the 'cold' mornings generally arriving later in the day! Nevertheless, Urgences remains busy for Brian. Recently he has not only seen a lot of Chadians but also quite a few of our friends from the wider missionary community – some come with their own illness or injuries and some have brought Chadian friends for treatment. Our friends have not only seen the challenges we face here at Guinebor 2 with resources compared to the west, but also, they have seen that their friends have conditions that cannot be easily treated (eg cancer) or that their friend's baby is constantly ill due to being malnourished. We are so grateful for those people who were supported to come here, because we know that the messages we give about prevention, treatment or follow up will be reinforced by our missionary friends.

Brian is grateful to work with his colleague Francis on a daily basis. It's an invaluable help with language (French to Chadian Arabic). Francis has also helped with cultural understanding – for example how deeply beliefs about feeding babies water (which is a key cause of malnutrition here) runs in the Chadian culture, or for example cultural separation of men and women's roles impacting on the decision making of the mothers in relation to the treatment their children might receive.



- We both feel pretty tired, please pray for renewed energy and strength.
- Please give thanks for the safe and successful roll out of the community needs assessment so far, and the analysis of the data in the new year to inform our work in the future.
- Please continue to pray for Brian's work in 'Urgences' (emergency department) and that some plans for next year will take shape.

As we near the end of 2021 we want to thank you for your continued support during this turbulent year –for prayers and support even when we could not leave for Chad, when we had to return to the UK and since our eventual return here. Thank you for your prayers and encouragement and for giving to BMS, to enable the work of the hospital and the good news of the gospel to continue.

If you would like to support Brian and Jackie Chilvers by prayer and committed regular giving, visit bmsworldmission.org/partners or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.

