

## **VULNERABLE POPULATIONS AND ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY:**

### **The Delwendé Development Association and the Touaregs refugees (1993-1996)**

#### **Abstract:**

The Association for Development Delwendé and the Touaregs refugees (1993-1996)

In 1995, the world officially had 14.4 million refugees; Africa counted almost half of that number, that is to say 6.8 million. The conflicts in the Great Lakes area and in the horn of Africa used to cause most of these forced displacements. West Africa was not spared, especially Burkina Faso that counted about 50,000 of them. The consequence is a high vulnerability of the populations forced to displacement. It is the distress of people who lost the main thing, their residence, and who wanders in the bush, in the villages and the cities in quest of an uncertain refuge. Which answer was given to that situation of population's forced displacement?

Usually, the issue of refugees directly comes under the competence of public authorities, the United Nations' System institutions and of international NGO. Now, the main victims invited a local Non Governmental Organization of Burkina Faso, for a straight out response. What is to be done? That is the subject of this communication, which highlights the logical conditions in which this relief was offered initially in a spontaneous way, and thereafter in a way transformed into a strategy, consisting in setting up a coherent and effective relief program.

The process analysis, which consisted in installing a population in a country or in a foreign area with its usual environment, requires fundamental questionings and which answers build the first part of the research, namely what are the major causes of this situation. Thus, is it necessary to attribute these causes to the absence of permanent accommodation facilities or is it necessary to go up to the deepest origins of tensions caused by the disturbance of an old order? If these two interrogations are right, it would be interesting for better clarifying our judgement, to go back in history to see the remote reasons which caused the tensions that paid the way to an open regional crisis; and also see which were the first reactions - particularly those of the accommodation facility -, which led thereafter to the organization of a massive installation.

The second part tackles the subject itself, namely the organization, the human and material means gathered to accommodate the refugees. That consisted primarily in negotiating means of subsistence for people that have become extremely vulnerable, therefore in finding partners. The relief offering consisted in giving food, infrastructures of accommodation (housing), health and school facilities, implementing income generating activities, etc. At the same time, the analysis of the undertaken actions relates to the consecutive difficulties, that is a draft of the advantages and difficulties both for the refugees and the accommodation site, in this case the village of Sag Niogo.

Finally, the objective of this research is not to exhaustively deal with responses brought to the issues of the refugees in Burkina Faso; it is rather to highlight the effort of a modest local structure, resulting from the civilian society called "Association pour le Développement Delwendé", which officially worked in providing relief to the people moved between 1993-1996. It acted in response to the problems generated by a type of forced displacement: that of Touaregs, native of Mali and Niger which made this migratory wave.

The research is based on the Association files, and especially on actors and witnesses' testimonies.

**Keywords:** Refugees, Touaregs, Relief, HCR, Association for Development Delwendé, Support, History

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**VULNERABLE POPULATIONS AND ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY**

### *Introduction*

The first Touaregs have settled the nowadays Burkina Faso since the pre colonial period (cf. map below). Others joined them after the 1970ies and 1980ies. These settlements were made possible thanks to the ancient welcome mechanism for migrating people based on kinship or simple solidarity. Thus, the Muslim communities were the first support for the relocated or migrant Touaregs, especially in towns. Unfortunately this way of support lost its efficiency with the large migration process caused by the war of 1990 in Mali and in Niger.

It is in 1995, that the High Commission for the Refugees (HCR) estimated the refugees in Burkina Faso at 50 000 in number. This massive character of the migration phenomenon was something new to be considered. The quest for subsistence could no longer be efficient at the individual level and following the ancient mechanism. This situation required an exceptional intervention of an association, which this current study seeks to examine. It is important to note how the first contact was made and how medical and other means were gathered for the Touareg refugees between 1993 and 1996; this period coincides with the implementation of a coherent partnership between the national and international institutions and the refugees themselves.

In other words, our concern is not to deal with the entire responses to the refugees' problem in Burkina Faso, but rather to highlight the endeavors of a modest, local and community organization named "The Delwendé Development Association".

The remarks we will give through this work, arise from our experience as evidence of the actions<sup>1</sup>. A look in the archives of the association also allowed to give more precisions and provide facts for analysing the written evidence. This was not done only for this current study, but also for the general management of the support provided by the association.

The historical context will help us better understand the facts and the welcome mechanism for the Touareg people that have become vulnerable through time.

### **I - Historic context and the beginning of vulnerability.**

The vulnerability of the Touaregs due to their refugee situation during the years 90s arises from a- historical process that needs exploring.

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<sup>1</sup> The author took part at the different sensitization steps, for the concerned people to accept the project of organizing a site. He was responsible for the creation and functioning of a satellite school on the site

## 1- The historical context

During the pre colonial period, the Touaregs were living in the North-Western zone, the current Sahara and Sahel, covering a very large area of about 2.5 millions square kilometers, and which is culturally dominated by the Berbère people.

Popularized by the French, the name Touareg<sup>2</sup> is probably taken from Arabic. It would mean for some “given up by gods” and for other it would derive from the name of the Libyan city Targa (Fezzan, in the southern Libya)<sup>3</sup>. However, they themselves prefer the name “Imajeghen” or “Temust” which refers to nobility and freedom or “Kel Tamasheq” meaning those who speak the Tamasheq<sup>4</sup> language, a language whose writing system is based on the ancient alphabet named Tifinagh.

At the organizational level, the Touaregs had a rather decentralized<sup>5</sup> political system and their society was strongly hierarchical. The social classes were designed from their tribal membership, that is to say the Tawsit. There were the noble tribes (Imajeghen), the vassal tribes (Imrad), the maraboutical tribes (Ineslemen), the black blacksmith tribes (Inadem), the ancient captives (Iraouellan), the black slaves (Iklan), the freed slaves of the Songhaï culture (Bella), the freed slaves of the Haoussa culture (Bouzous)<sup>6</sup> etc.

According to H el ene Claudot-Haward, several tribes can make a confederation called “Ettebel”<sup>7</sup>.

Moderate Islam and the Tamasheq language are the fundamentals of the Touareg people. Pro-slavers, integrator and permanent warriors on quest of rare resources in a wide area, the Touaregs had come to a certain balance in an environment where the factors of vulnerability were mainly physical.

At the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, the colonial impact was the beginning of a new era that of vulnerability, thus, a life style changes for Touaregs. Fragility

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<sup>2</sup> There is no translation that is accepted by all as far as its meaning is. However, we can note that Touareg is the plural of Targui, but the use of the name Touareg (singular) and Touaregs (plural) became common.

<sup>3</sup> [http://tuaregs.free.fr/touareg\\_f/pages/definition/notes./targui..htm](http://tuaregs.free.fr/touareg_f/pages/definition/notes./targui..htm)

<sup>4</sup> [tuaregs.free.fr/touareg\\_f/pages/.../origine.htm](http://tuaregs.free.fr/touareg_f/pages/.../origine.htm)

<sup>5</sup> They had independent kings, and their organisation was referred to as a confederation

<sup>6</sup> [aleph2at.free.fr/hommes/touareg/general.htm](http://aleph2at.free.fr/hommes/touareg/general.htm)

<sup>7</sup> H el ene Claudot-Hawad, « Honneur et politique : les choix strat egiques des Touaregs pendant la colonisation fran aise, in *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la M diterran e*, RE.M.M.M, 57, 1990/3, pp. 11-48. cf. [http : //www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/remmm](http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/remmm).

factor developed with time. Like in all African societies, the Touaregs had to face the challenge of the colonial order.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed from 1875 on, the French explorers who wanted to join the Sudan from Algeria, faced the Touaregs' resistance. That is why Victor Largeau had to give up his colonial project. A mission named Flatters was defeated in 1881 in the Hoggar and the Tassili of Niger. Marshal Joffre came to rescue a French troop defeated at the entrance of Tombouctou. The resistance lead by Koacen in the Air continued till the end of the First World War yet, about the colonial period end, the Touaregs rather had some good relationships with the French, especially because of the project of creating the Common Organization of the Saharan Regions (O CRS)<sup>9</sup>.

A new administration overlapped theirs. The French and Italian colonizers brought a change on the notion of territory. Progressively, five new frontiers were set in the wide Touareg area. They were therefore divided into five territories during the big wave of African decolonization in the 1960ies: Mali, Niger, Upper Volta, Algeria and Libya. With the independences, the Touaregs who were slightly integrated to the colonial system did not benefit from the political and economic power transfer. Their settlement areas were in the peripheries of the newly independent territories<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> The troops of the marshal Joffre had serious troubles with the Touaregs. The resistance continued for more than three decades.

<sup>9</sup> To better explain the attitude of the Touaregs during colonisation, consider the following articles which have inspired the drafting of this current part.

Edmond Bernus, « Claudot-Hawad H.- Epéronner le monde. Nomadisme, cosmos et politique chez les Touaregs » *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 172 / 2003, Cf. <http://www.etudesafricaines.revue.org/index1544.html> (31 juil 2009). Set online on March 2, 2007.

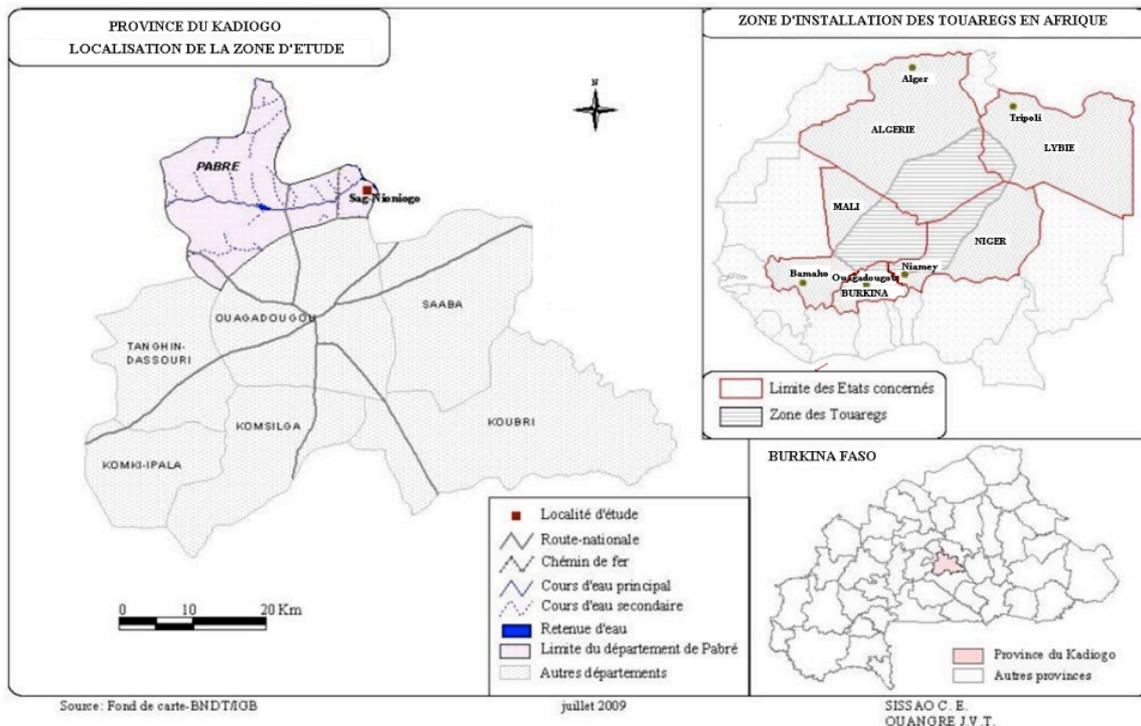
Grégoire Emmanuel, *Touareg du Niger, Le destin d'un mythe*, Paris, Karthala, 2000, 344 p.

André Bourgeot, « Les mouvements de résistance et de collaboration en Ahoggar (Algérie) de 1880 à 1920 », *Annuaire de l'Afrique du nord*, CNRS, Tome XXII, Paris, 1984, pp.481-499.

Pierre Boileau, « L'O CRS, une tentative avortée » in *Nomades et commandant, administration et sociétés nomades dans l'ancienne AOF*, éd. Karthala, Paris, 1993, pp. 215-239.

Hélène Claudot-Hawad, « Honneur et politique : les choix stratégiques des Touaregs pendant la colonisation française, in *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, RE.M.M.M, 57, 1990/3, pp. 11-48. cf. [http : //www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/remmm](http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/remmm).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. the below chart.



Those who wanted to continue with their nomadic life met the difficulty of the new frontiers inherited from colonization. There was a setback compared to the previous period because it used to be but imperial limits. Furthermore, the nomadic life did not favour education for an important number of Touareg children, so that they could integrate the administration of the new state nations. There was also their choice of a centralization policy, which just increased their marginalization and frustration.

Basically nomadic<sup>11</sup>, the Touaregs encountered some perturbations in their traditional economic and social system because the colonial and mainly post colonial order progressively required them to be sedentary. The decay of caravaner trade became real. The Touareg society got economically weakened due to the new transportation system such as lorries that now cross the desert instead of camels' caravans in the trans-Saharan trade. Furthermore, they suffered a lot from the recurrent droughts in the 1970ies and 1980ies, and they were obliged to exile or to move into big cities.

This accumulation of factors paved the way to revolts that were especially visible in the two countries where they were important in number: Niger (10%) and Mali (6%). First in 1962, a

<sup>11</sup> See Voir Bourgeot André, *Les sociétés touaregs. Nomadisme, identité, résistance*, Paris, Karthala, 1995, 544 p.

first revolt was quelled in Mali; in Niger, tension went high during the 1970ies when demonstrations were organized<sup>12</sup>.

However, it was in 1990 that the crisis exacerbated with the demonstrations in Tchintabaraden. The Touaregs organized themselves in armed troops both in Niger and in Mali. They then believed in the power of weapons as a means to get satisfaction for their claims<sup>13</sup>. Attacks and reprisals followed each other in the two countries, leading to trans-frontiers' displacements of many Touaregs. The number of Touaregs censused by the HCR at that time was between 160 000 and 170 000<sup>14</sup>. An important number of displaced Touaregs went to Burkina Faso, where a community of Touaregs already existed.

## **2- From the spontaneous support, to the implementation of a rational support: partnership, statistics and welcome areas.**

The displacements of populations are universal and very old phenomena. The evolution of the historic and institutional contexts, lead to a change of strategy in order to take up the challenges that arose.

The meeting between the displaced Touaregs and their foster organisations was an aspect of this wide quest of solution for a group of people that were obliged to move, in order to find a temporary and relatively peaceful place. The break with the usual environment requires a supportive policy to avoid tensions in the new welcome areas. The situation becomes more complex in cities where public space is designed for a specific function, since the quest of basic needs (food, house, satisfaction of natural needs etc) requires the adoption of an appropriated behavior. The social system is strongly influenced by economical and especially monetary standards.

Populations that came from the forced displacements are a bit lost with all these requirements. That was the case for most of the Touaregs declared refugees in Burkina Faso in 1993. The search for solution was therefore done everywhere. It was sometimes oriented by some relatives that earlier settled. The humanitarian obligation leads to a look for solutions and of

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. [aleph2at.free.fr/hommes/touareg/general.htm](http://aleph2at.free.fr/hommes/touareg/general.htm)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.temoust.org/historique>

<sup>14</sup> Idem

the experience of an organization which aims at helping. This means knowing networks of supports, or being an interface between organizations and people that are in need and that have no self reliance capacities. It is in that context that the NGO Delwendé acted, covering in activities, the coaching of village groupings, the implementation of projects of education, health, agriculture and of food security. It is particularly this last part that drew the migrant touaregs; they invaded the NGO's houses in 1992. Facing this situation, she was obliged to officially act between 1993 and 1996, providing support to the displaced. The statistics at that time showed an increasing number of touareg refugees from Mali and Niger.

Before the signature of its siege agreement in Burkina Faso in 1990, the High Commission of Refugees (HCR) had acted according to circumstances through NGOs, international organizations and through the state local offices<sup>15</sup>.

An efficient intervention in favour of the Touareg refugees required their grouping, since they were disseminated in several districts of Ouagadougou city and in other localities such as the city of Djibo in the north, and that of Boromo, in the western side of the country etc.

The design of such support commanded the creation of a synergy of actions between the partners and the control of statistics in order to plan the distribution of donations. The action lead by "Delwendé" shows three types of partnership that were experienced according the scale of the actions and of the institutional status; these were:

- The government and its dismemberments who fixe the official rules. The issue of the refugees is a sensible domain which creates a relationship between states and which requires a control by the authorities in the welcoming country, especially when it comes to security aspects.
- The specialized international institutions such as the HCR which have been caring for refugees in the world since 1951. It gives an official coverage to the refugees, protecting and taking care of them.
- Embassies and other diplomatic representations which contribute to the protection of the refugees, especially in helping to fund their support. In the current case, the actions of the embassies of German, Switzerland, and of Canada were appreciated.

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<sup>15</sup> The perspective of a coordinated and rational support was thus given to the local NGO "Association for Development Delwendé" which drafted a program settlement and assistance to the refugees that she submitted to HCR.

- The civil society which can also have some important humanitarian actions. This was the case for the international NGOs specialized in the emergency care provision such as “Médécin Sans Frontière” and other of continental scope such as the Prospective and Social Prevention Center (CPPS) which was a field partner, and finally some national NGOs such as the Association for Development Delwendé, which vocation was more restricted. Though it came from the civil society, this NGO had a leadership role in the conception and implementation of the program.

## II- THE PROGRAM IN ACTION: FONCTIONNING, IMPACT AND LESSONS

### - 1- A territory: the content and functioning.

The drafted program was named “Care program for the Touareg refugees from Mali and Niger”. This solidarity was shown through an emergency action which aimed at reducing the human misery and restoring dignity, in providing for the victims, a minimum of commodity.

In September 1993 starting date of the program, the HCR and the Burkinabe state estimated at 6000<sup>16</sup>, the number of refugees. Between 1993 and 1995, the number officially shifted to 50 000<sup>17</sup>. Three main reasons justified this situation:

- The changing definition of the concept of refugees
- The acceleration of migrations during the implementation of the program
- The under estimation of the number of people to be offered this support based on the site localization.

It was quite impossible to accommodate all the refugees scattered in the capital city and in other parts of the country. The activities of the NGO had created some relationships with the populations of a given village located in the department of Pabré at 25kms in the north west

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<sup>16</sup> In the past, the old networks of solidarity had succeeded overcoming the problems linked to frontiers inherited from colonisation. Solidarity was thus based on ethical, religious, cultural etc connections. An important Touareg community from Burkina, allowed supporting the small waves of migration, but with the scale of movement, the traditional welcome capacities were superseded. A kind of rejection progressively took place. This phenomenon was observed elsewhere and reported by specialized institutions. Cf. Institut Panos « Réfugiés en Afrique. Une longue et dramatique errance » in <http://www.panos-ao.org/ipao/spip.php?article3027&lang=fr>, 6 août 2009.

<sup>17</sup> HCR, « les réfugiés dans le monde, Enquête de solutions », éd. La découverte, Paris, 1995

of Ouagadougou. This was an opportunity given to her to choose the host site, which was proposed to the different authorities.

The acquisition of this site implicated many parties: the inhabitants and the customary leaders mainly made by a social class considered through history in the mossi area, as the “masters of land”<sup>18</sup>. The native of this village that settled in Ouagadougou, especially those considered “advanced”, and finally the administration which officially manages the lands of the country in the context of the modern state. This step was first done in an informal environment: discussion with the council of wise men, which extended with time to the entire village for customary acts. Then came the state which legalized the occupation of space, making then official the settlement of the refugees.

According to the HCR criteria, this site had the advantage of being far from the frontiers<sup>19</sup>. Yet it is important to note that in the category of people to be supported, in addition of the refugees, there were also the populations near the welcoming site. The population of Saag-Niogo had then to be considered in the provisions of infrastructures use as well as some in the services offered by the program<sup>20</sup>, since their adhesion and participation would determine the success of this form of intervention which consisted in accommodating refugees on a land already occupied, that is in a village. In order terms, it consisted in creating a territory aiming at giving better living conditions to a group of people made vulnerable.

Apart from the administrative tasks, the NGO also had as role to ensure a good functioning of the site. The refugees indeed had this tendency of gathering on a kinship basis. They were building districts with the names of their last migration step, or of the origin places. There were therefore 22 small districts each having a camp nickname<sup>21</sup> with their chiefs.

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<sup>18</sup> Expression borrowed from Michel Izard, who uses this terminology to refer to a category of people in the Yatenga region before colonial time. *Le Yatenga précolonial. Un ancien royaume du Burkina*, Paris, Karthala, 1985

<sup>19</sup> In the case of the ex Zaïre (current Democratic Republic of Congo), it was requested to get the Rwandan refugees far from the frontiers, so to avoid diplomatic and authority problems.

<sup>20</sup> This does not mean that the welcoming population should receive all the donations for the refugees ; the destination of the international support does have such vocation. Furthermore, there are some specialized institutions which acts in the country and which can provide for the specific needs of peasants. And it is also important to avoid transforming villages into assisted populations; it is not the aim of a program of assistance to refugees. They need a temporary support, since they lost the essential.

<sup>21</sup> Ouaga I, Ouaga II, Arabe 1, Arabe II, Arabe III, Tinariwien, Niger, Hamdalaye, Boromo, El Mougamar, Al Wata, Tanghin, Weggo, Niger-(C-I), Dapoya, Nagime, Djibasso, Boromo arabe, Baskuy, Kelouly, Toughan, Korsimoro

Such organization was giving to the NGO the advantage of having well known speakers and accepted by the grass root, without interfering in their internal organization. She however used to meet some difficulties, especially during the distribution of foodstuffs which could not be done in the open and in hand to hand. The camps chiefs were in charge of the repartition of donations according to the size of the family. Some errors were notified to the camp chiefs, because a strategy of misappropriation of donations existed in the prejudice of other groups less enterprising or more respectful regarding rules in power. Some interpreters (generally some Touaregs that had the formal education) were in charge of setting communication between refugees and the members of the operational team.

Some social workers in charge of sensitization, used to give them the information about the minimum rules to adopt and on the possibilities offered by the site. Some managers supervised the different activities and were reporting to a coordinator recruited for the implementation of the program.

The site was becoming a place of exchanges, where refugees from different regions or countries could interact within themselves or with the natives. Designed to welcome 2500 refugees, the site had more than 10 000 in periods of high affluence. The refugees and the natives of the village had created some stands for selling goods of first necessity (soap, cigarettes, sugar, matches, salt etc.).

The site used to become a place for economic and human interactions between refugees themselves from different regions or countries, and between Touaregs and the native populations. There were also some connections with Europeans and Americans that used to come in group on the site, to show their solidarity to the refugees and establish friendships with them<sup>22</sup>.

The site also played the role of facilitator of dialogue between the displaced people and the authorities of their home countries. This was materialized by an official visit of high level<sup>23</sup>; the organization and the reference role of the site made it possible, though some rancours against the home authority persisted.

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<sup>22</sup> A collaboration between pupils and their teachers from the locality of Cozes in France was established. It was materialized by a visit on the site of the French pupils. The RAGE (Raid des Grandes Ecoles/ Raid of Big Schools) also came on the site. Some young Canadians also showed their solidarity to the refugees in initiating some sensitization and fund-raise campaigns in their countries.

<sup>23</sup> This delegation was lead by the Chairman of the National Assembly of Mali, Dr Barry Nouhoun.

## **2- Impacts and lessons from a humanitarian action.**

The assistance to the refugees being a humanitarian imperative, many actions should be taken in order to contribute to the collective support. These actions impacted their foster site, the refugees themselves and the local population.

A small road of about 7kms<sup>24</sup> was created to facilitate the access to the site, a space of about 22 500m<sup>2</sup> developed with the support of local manpower, namely the villagers of Saag-Niogo. Health was of high importance, since the displaced people were under conditions favouring the development of some diseases. A medical center was therefore built, including the maternity function. Drinking water was not forgotten, water being life as we are used to saying. Seven boreholes built contributed to improve hygiene and therefore the health of the refugees. Thus, the diarrheic diseases that used to act severely especially among the vulnerable population (infants, children, senior people etc) stopped.

On housing level, the Touaregs tried to rebuild their traditional environment. In the emergency, many were not able to take with them their tents. Furthermore, some lived in the urban or semi urban areas, and had lost this habit. Their accommodation therefore required the building of 98 ninety eight houses in clay on a area of 10m<sup>2</sup> each. About one hundred modern tents were distributed. Some made themselves their own houses with traditional straw. The construction of collective latrines and toilets allowed the improvement of hygienic conditions.

A satellite school<sup>25</sup> insured the education of more than 200 pupils. The focus was made on the sensitization of parents in order to reach a maximum schooling rate. In the emergency situation, some cabins first stood for classrooms, and then some hangars better built came with a building out of improved banco. Quite all children were concerned by education (girls and boys) from (5) five to (17) seventeen years old. The program looked like assistance for development, since education includes a long term vision and aims at equipping children to face future. In the same perspective, some actions tending to promote breeding, farming,

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<sup>24</sup> A secondary road from Ouagadougou, came at a few kilometers from the site. Then one should take a village road to access the site.

<sup>25</sup> In his book published in 1990, Pr Joseph Ki Zerbo said on education that, social breaks were creating extra difficulties. The refugees, especially children are the main victims. At that period however, about 50% of refugees in the world were Africans. considering this situation, it was compulsory to focus the education program. Joseph KI-Zerbo, sous dir. *éduquer ou périr. On ne naît pas tout fait*. Paris, UNICEF-UNESCO/l'Harmattan, 1990, p 51

market gardening and craft industry was promoted.

The foster site enabled scattered families to come together or to communicate at distance. Some trainings and some jobs encouraged some enhancing vocations<sup>26</sup>. The economy of the foster territory was stimulated by the injection of the money earned through the small exchanges: sale of hens, small ruminants, eggs, wood and straw<sup>27</sup> (...) and the little paid jobs

Some immediate advantages could however be transformed into source of problems. The green space was damaged because some fitting up required the intensive use of trees for the construction of shelters and for cooking food. Some reforestation actions were undertaken, but they could not compensate for the damage caused on vegetation. In a context where traditional practices are real through the solicitation of nature for the satisfaction of first necessity needs: wood work, houses building and medicinal plants.

Furthermore, the local and poor populations were frustrated when they saw the equipment offered to the refugees by the international institutions. This was a source of tension, because even if they had access to some facilities such as boreholes, they could not benefit from all the donations.

The program scale and its success before the vulnerable persons, as well as the partnership that resulted from it, lead to its recuperation by state organizations, namely those of the foreign affairs' department through a specific office set for that.

Finally, the drawn lessons are many. It is important to understand the mechanisms that caused the conflicts, and to therefore look for solving them. As far as the Touareg issue is concerned, one needs to go back in the past and link it to globalization. In the post colonial organization, the Touaregs were scattered in several countries with the disadvantage of being far from the decision making centers. The creation of a territory dominated by Touaregs before colonization would have may be allowed the implementation of a policy centered on their interests, but it was not the case. If the attempt of the OCR<sup>28</sup> (Common Organisation of Saharan Regions) had been successful, this would have allowed an action in that perspective.

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<sup>26</sup> Some Touareg refugees benefited from a training and got a job in the program (teacher, medical assistant, social worker etc.), others learnt a job that can help them in the future (market gardening).

<sup>27</sup> Wood and straw were strongly needed for building hangars, shelters and cabins, mainly at the beginning of the accommodation. Furthermore, the Touaregs have a great preference for such housing.

<sup>28</sup> See Pierre Boileau, « L'OCR, une tentative avortée » in *Nomades et commandant, administration et sociétés nomades dans l'ancienne AOF*, éd. Karthala, Paris, 1993, pp. 215-239.

If indeed the Touaregs had claimed an independent territory at that time, would they have been listened to? Their condition in territories which fell under the colonial domination from Italia (Libya), from France (Algeria and west French Africa) made this claim difficult for satisfaction, at the risk of creating troubles. The French West Africa AOF had that possibility, in creating a 9<sup>th</sup> territory<sup>29</sup>.

The remoteness of Touareg territories compared to the decision making centers exacerbated the difficulties. In a context globally affected by poverty, the respective authorities of their dependent countries are more sensitive to the problems of territories close to the capital cities or important cities beneficiaries of communication concepts. However, territories ex centered as well as their populations are not able to harmoniously integrate the modern economical circuits; therefore investments hardly reach there.

Their chance resides then in the discovery and hypothetical exploitation of natural resources. The benefits of this exploitation on the local populations are low, because laws identify the state as single owner of the subsoil wealth from its territory. Yet the state properties do not match with the localities from where the wealth comes. If a form of redistribution taking into account the production zones is not made, the local wealth managed by departments at the national level, is not really controlled by local populations; this causes some frustrations which can lead with time to conflicts. Some wars between groups and the central state in some countries are justified by this situation. That is the case of petroleum in Nigeria, especially the one of uranium in Niger exploited in the zones of the Touaregs<sup>30</sup> traditional habitation. Considered poorer than in the past, due to the national policies of development to which was grafted the globalization of the liberal economy, the Touaregs expressed the need of having a territory in order to be master of their resources so to get integrated in the road of modern development.

Practically within state nations, wherever the wealth is, the benefit of its exploitation is normally returned to the entire country through the state. Consequently the resident populations from territories where these wealth are do not profit from it in priority. The

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<sup>29</sup> A.O.F had eight territories: Guinea, Ivory Coast, Sudan, Dahomey, Upper Volta, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal till 1958. But the crisis happened in Mali (ancient Sudan) and in Niger. Within the AOF, these two territories were inside lands, so the already ex centered regarding the wealthier territories which were in the coastwise regions.

<sup>30</sup> The discovery of uranium and its exploitation certainly had no direct and interesting consequence on the Touareg populations of Niger. It is not certain that the arrival of AREVA created some share dividends for the local populations.

famous statement of national unity is an obstacle to the allocation of resources in priority to the populations of the concerned territories.

The emergence or the building of a local governance is the solution starting point for this problem. Thus at the world wide level, we could set a kind of tax on the multinationals that exploit the natural resources, in order to support the ex centered territories, especially those which natural wealth are internationally exploited. It is a way of acting on the remote causes of some conflicts, and also a way of giving a human face to the globalization of the economy.

## **CONCLUSION**

Economy is one of the causes of populations forced displacements. Yet, it is the poorest regions that less benefits from the support offered in the distress situations caused by massive displacements of populations, which crumbles the legendary tradition of hospitable populations previously inherent to this continent. It is because the world wide economy imposes its rules to populations, even to those in the periphery. The aim is not to link poverty and tensions causes, which cause forced migrations, but it is to measure the consequences that become more serious in such a context. The experience exposé shows a certain features of characters that can be generalized.

The assistance to persons who lost all, that is to say, their habitual residency per force, should have a collective adhesion as sign of solidarity.

Africa should better grow the virtue of solidarity and fraternity. She must encourage like the famous international institutions do, the local organization able to efficiently respond to these crises. The material support is but a complement to the mental click which leads the individual to be condescending towards the other.

Finally it is important to prevent the causes of tensions; this will help reduce human misery and devote strengths for combating poverty.

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Sissao Claude Etienne, head of the education section

Kaboré Rasmané, 1<sup>st</sup> Coordinator of the program

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Dima Minté Najim, refugee

Mohamed Ali Elmehdi Ansary, refugee

Sidati Alhadi, refugee

Hamalla Ag Almahi, refugee

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