

Briefing Paper 6

The trip. Bill Felstiner, President of Chad Relief Foundation, was in N'Djamena from 9-14 October 2010. He met with officials from ACRA (Association de Coopération Rurale en Afrique et Amérique Latine) (Italian), ACTED (Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development) (French), CSSI (Centre de Support en Santé Internationale) (Chadian), the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Goré and the American Embassy.

ACRA meeting (11 October) with Dino Valva, the Country Coordinator, and Silvia Quarta, Human Resources. ACRA has 4 projects in Chad, including those at Goré and Maro. They work in 3 camps and 15 local schools in the Goré area and 1 camp and 25 local schools in the Maro area. These are all primary schools. The needs and opportunities to accept outside contributions are greater in Maro than Goré. ACRA sponsors teacher training with 1-3 visits a month. They could use help in expanding this program.

LRRD (Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development, an organization of the European Union) provides 80% of their budget in Chad. They need to raise the balance. BF explained CRF's goals -- to do what is needed but would not otherwise be done and that through the vehicle of specific projects. They would like to identify projects that we could do jointly where our contribution would count towards their 20%. We discussed the importance of projects aimed at keeping girls in school. Caveat – We might want to shy away from projects that they are contractually obligated to do.

ACTED meeting (12 October) with Samuel Cumptsy, Country Director. ACTED had applied to CRF for funds to conduct a water/sanitation project in Bebiki district, adjacent to Dosseye camp. A CRF Board member had the following reservations. How did this project fit in with their general program and budget? Would the risk assessment conditions permit ACTED to abandon the project midway with the consequent loss of CRF funds? Since local community involvement was key to the project, what was ACTED's experience in working with local populations?

Cumptsy's responses. (a) ACTED has no funds other than those they receive to execute specific projects. It does not raise any money that is available for projects at their discretion. (b) In Chad, they find it difficult to get funds in aid of local populations despite general agreement on the importance of such efforts. (c) Although they have extensive water/sanitation project experience, the Bebiki area is not part of their current arrangement with the UNHCR in Goré. (d) ACTED has never called off a project and kept a donor's money when conditions prove difficult, but they have asked for time extensions under such circumstances. (e) There are no other prospective partners for this project. If CRF does not do it, it will not be done.

CSSI meeting (12 October) with Dr. Daugla Doumagoum Moto, Director, and Jean Naissengat, Administrator. I explained our history with Johanniter (on again, off again collaboration on installing solar power in Dosseye camp) & invited them to join with us such an effort. They were willing & promised to get alternative cost estimates on using solar or ordinary refrigerators.

US Embassy meeting with Michael Zorick, Regional Coordinator BPRM (Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration). Zorick has a theory about political power in African states. Originally based on the control of finite assets such as land, power has now been monetized & he who controls access to money via oil, other natural resources or corruption controls the state. Lose that access & power, and even life, are lost. This system, according to Zorick, is untenable with democracy and it is naïve in the extreme to believe that honest elections are possible. In Chad, if Deby were to lose control over the oil revenue and/or state corruption, he would be a dead man.

Zorick is cynical about the accepted definition of "refugee." He believes that it is too inclusive covering many people who are just moving around within their traditional space, now dissected by borders drawn by colonial powers. This would include the CAR "refugees." He does not endorse efforts to improve the living standards of "refugees" beyond those of their pre-refugee lives, except at their initiative and under their control. He believes that poverty, misery and suffering are the common experience and cannot be alleviated by central

direction or the distribution of massive resources. He is sympathetic to (willing to tolerate) CRF's efforts because they are modest and conceived (so he thinks) in communication with the folks.

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