

Briefing Paper 8

Trip to Chad, February 12-24, 2012

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The material in italics was written by Catherine on the spot in Chad.

Feb. 13, 2012. BF met with representatives of **World Vision**. He discussed the provision and distribution of Vitamin A with Justine Nagornga. WV receives, or will receive, Vitamin A from Vitamin Angels. In the first instance they will distribute it in the districts in the south in which they work. They are not involved in Goré, Maro or Haraze districts. They will turn over the balance to the Ministry of Health.

BF then talked to John Sebakwiye, the WV supply chain manager. WV has extensive experience in bringing materials to Chad via ports in Cameroon. They have agents in place to clear customs. They have made an application to Toms Shoes for 33,000 pairs. He suggested that if we were both successful in our applications, the shoes could be shipped in one consignment (in VW's name) and divided up after arrival in Chad. We would share incidental expenses.

BF then talked to Carl Becker, the head of VW in Chad. He said we should certainly continue our Vitamin A program in Goré, Maro and Haraze areas. Even though the MOH might have a large enough supply to cover the country, there is no guarantee that the vitamins would ever reach our areas. Among other matters, Becker noted that MOH fuel problems often limited their distribution of medical supplies. I told him about the Toms Shoes arrangement that Sebakwiye and I had discussed. He approved. The WV representative in Moundou is Beral Zacharie, zacharie@wvi.org (6626 4190).

BF & CS met with Christophe (logistics) and Matthew (technology at headquarters) of **MSF, Suisse**. The bikes they had ordered were in customs and were to be cleared that day. MSF has a stable of 1,500 advanced, reliable vehicles. The bikes are to be used in a community based approach. They will not be used in patient referral which requires a medical attendant, oxygen, an alert system and other medical equipment. Rather they are intended to transport materials only – a driver and a worker.

The bikes are made in South Africa. This is the 10th version. They have been tropicalized. They are basic machines & easy to maintain. They will get full support from the manufacturer. The biggest cost was transportation. 6000 euros for a 20 ft. sq. container containing 6 bikes from Douala to N'Djamena plus 3,500 euros from SA to Douala. The company provides one week training for 6 drivers. The bikes themselves cost 5,333 euros each including manuals (in English but will be translated into French) and spare parts. We were invited to contact Christophe in late April to learn about their experience.

On the way out we ran into Antony, the manufacturers representative. He said that the bikes are used all over Africa for patient transport. Usually there is a driver, a medic or caretaker and a toolkit for medicines. The manufacturer person in the UK is Mike Newman, 01327 300 813.

Monday, February 13

It is 12:48 a.m. on Tuesday, February 14, in N'Djamena., 3:50 p.m. in Santa Barbara. Happy Valentine's Day! I left on Saturday morning at 7:30 a.m. I finally made it. I am lying on the bed at the Meridien. Although I am tired and have to start my day at 7:00 a.m. tomorrow, I cannot sleep. My computer tells me I have internet access but I cannot get on. There is a mosquito buzzing around despite the insect repellent I sprayed all over. Frustrating!

Bill had a star-studded trip; mine was a series of delays. George Clooney was on his plane from L.A. to London, Mia Farrow from Paris to N'Djamena. Both are vocal advocates for the victims of the Darfur conflict

in Sudan. My flight out of L.A. was cancelled because of a water leak. The water had frozen in the cargo space and the mechanics were unable to thaw it. Believe it or not my flight to N'Djamena was delayed two hours because of water leak and ice too! Fortunately, they had a replacement plane.

The security at the airport was stricter than it used to be. They checked our vaccination record and put our luggage through a scanner. Everything went smoothly. Bill was there with the UNHCR driver to bring me to the hotel.

Tomorrow I need to register with the police, get my travel papers and meet with a series of people including Physicians Without Borders and our Chadian partner, CCSI. On Wednesday, we are flying to Am Timan, then driving to Haraze, a new refugee center at the border with the Central Republic of Africa. It is an extremely small outpost in a more desert-like environment. We are going to stay there two days. We will then fly in a three person plane (yuk) to Abeche where we will be spending the night before heading back to N'Djamena. We will meet our partners from Maro there as they are attending a big UN meeting. We will then take a flight to Moundou and drive to Gore where we will spend the rest of our trip.

Feb. 14, 2012. BF & CS met with the new head of ACRA, Frederica Molteni (6618 6308). We recited the long history of trying to organize a project with Baldal (leaving by July) in Maro. She said she would find out what he wanted to do but was unable to do because of a shortage of funds. Alessandra has replaced Elisa in Goré. We received a project proposal the next day asking for funds to buy 60 bench/tables for students otherwise sitting on the ground.

We received a security briefing from Thomas, the senior security adviser for UNHCR in Chad, 6625 7737. Interestingly, we had never before been briefed on security by HCR in N'Djamena.

BF & CS met with Ali Gone Dorgal (our field rep) and Jean Naissengar of CSSI. CSSI is now in charge of water/sanitation as well as health services in the Haraze camps. They are in desperate need of high quality baby scales. They are on board for both the expanded Vitamin A and the Toms Shoes schemes. They asked us to reimburse them for Ali's travels at 20,000 CFA per day (about \$40).

Tuesday, February 14

N'Djamena has changed a lot since I was last here. There is construction everywhere. An entire neighborhood was bulldozed to make place for a huge plaza with a modern dome like structure, a kind of Chadian Champs Elysees. A new luxury hotel is coming up nearby the U.N. headquarters. The company is going to asphalt the streets leading to it. Dozens of women were sweeping the streets with brooms, a daunting task considering the amount of dust in the air. It is necessary though to avoid a layer of dust covering the asphalt. We were told that these changes are occurring because the civil war has receded although just today there was a news item about a rebel group thinking about making a run to N'Djamena.

This morning I went to get my immigration status in order. We are still gathering all the necessary paperwork to travel. Our flight schedule with the World Food Program is in the process of finalization as well. UNHCR has an External Relation Officer, Idriss, taking care of all the details for visitors from abroad, people like us from other NGOs, reporters and the like. He attended college in Dayton, Ohio and speaks perfect English. Today he had an appointment at the French Embassy and was dressed in a perfect pin striped suit. He would have fit right in downtown L.A. with the lawyer crowd. He is extremely efficient and competent.

We also met with Medecins Sans Frontieres – Suisse about the “ambulance” motor bikes. It is basically a side car motorcycle with the most basic engine designed to transport patients to the hospital. MSF ordered 6 of them although not for that purpose. They are going to use them to transport personnel and supplies to different outposts. They made it very clear that MSF does not use that kind of medical transport. Their position is that it does not comply with emergency transport standards as there is no oxygen, monitoring equipment or assisting

medical personnel. They pointed out that they have enough money to have their own vehicles. MSF's mission is providing only emergency medicine services. They set up completely self-sufficient operations which work remarkably well. Unfortunately, as soon as they leave, the standard of care falls back to what it was before because the government does not step up to the plate. I wonder whether it is really a good idea to implement for a short period of time a standard of care which is unsustainable in the long run unless it is in a real conflict situation.

Wednesday, February 15, 2012

5:30 a.m. in the lobby of the Meridien. We are waiting for our driver who will get us to the airport. We are taking a humanitarian flight to Am Timan. There were four people on the plane, the pilot and the copilot. The door to the cockpit was open so you can hear what was going on and see the airstrip ahead. The flight took about 1 ½ hours. There is no airport in Am Timan, just a dirt landing strip, right next to the small town. There is no tower or flight controller, so the vehicles present drive down the airstrip to chase away people, kids, goats and cows before each landing and each take off.

As the door of the plane opened, the heat engulfed the plane. I would say it is around 108. Fortunately, there was some wind. The UN Staff stopped at the market before hitting the road. The main street is a dirt street. There is dust everywhere all the time. Imagine a series of long buildings with three walls, sides and back, open on front selling all kinds of things. We sat in front of the "convenience store," with a fridge with cold drinks and shelves with an assortment of items, a few vegetable cans, a few rolls of toilet paper, toothpaste, etc. Each stall has a few men sitting in front of it, greeting people, talking to each other. We watched the street activity for 2 hours: women with donkeys loaded with merchandise or vegetables, motorbikes, cars, women in colorful clothing with babies on the back coming back from the market.

The loading of the car was interesting: the jeep was full, stuff stacked on the roof, secured by rope and a UN tarp. There was a fridge, vegetables, tomatoes, salad, potatoes, water. We were five in our jeep, three in the back, two up front. Haraze is only 100 miles away, but it took us over 5 hours to get there because the road is so bad. Holes everywhere, sand that is like driving on ice. We were escorted by two police pick-ups. Our driver and the security officer had a bullet-proof jacket and a helmet. We did not, thank goodness because it is so hot.

I am now at the UN compound in Harare. It is extremely rudimentary. I am sitting on screened porch with a concrete floor. The generator is on so we have internet access and cable. My room has a bed and that's it. There is air conditioning but it does not work all night and is not that great. It is dark and the mosquitoes are out. We have not eaten all day so I am hungry!

Tomorrow we will go and inspect our projects. We leave on Friday by plane from Abeche even though how we are going to get there (plane or car) is still up in the air!

Feb. 16, 2012. BF, CS and AGD met with Mr. Djasta, Education Coordinator and Acting chief of the ACRA mission in Haraze. Djasta began by talking about the cultural problems in the camps – essentially lots of young people were upset, 1500 youth with nothing to do. ACRA wanted to respond with a "cultural center" including a theatre program and the availability of movies plus sports opportunities. Delinquency was a problem: some of the youths had been in rebel groups. ACRA appeared to be asking CRF to implement the cultural program as well as fund it. Virtually no secondary education was available. Only 50 refugees attended the secondary school in Haraze, mostly unaccompanied minors (why?). More children do not attend the secondary school because no others are qualified (must be an exaggeration). Even students who are illiterate cannot continue in primary school after age 13. Of the 1,950 students in the Moyo primary school, only 65 are in the highest grade. The figures for Koy are 13 of 300. {BF believes that they need the functional equivalent of a primary school for the 14+ who cannot qualify for secondary school more than movies or a theatre program}. To

recapitulate, there are 2 challenges – how to keep students in primary school & what to do with those who are too old for primary school and unqualified for secondary school.

ACRA's program. (a) sensibilization, work with parents to value education more highly (Salamat, the province in which Haraze is located is a particularly difficult place on this score: less cultural support for education than in other places and isolation from the rest of the country for months at a time during the rainy season). (b) pre-school, but no money for it. (c) PR. Ceremony with authorities in the main square in support of schools to which parents were caravanned, games played, kits provided. ACRA ran out of money before it could do more.

We asked for a breakdown of students in the primary school by grade/level and a proposal to provide school uniforms.

BF, CS and AGD met with the **CSSI** doctor at the Moyo health center. He treats both refugee and local patients. Primary care is provided in the camps. Serious cases go to the hospital in Haraze where he treats them, including performing surgery. They provide mental health services via a visitor from Goré. HIV/AIDS is serious as is malnutrition (3 levels, those requiring supplements, those needing ambulatory care, and more intensive cases treated over 7 days). We showed him the DRI medicines and medical equipment list. He said it was a good list. We described the 2 categories of medical supplies we can provide – those requiring prescriptions and all others. BTW two of his patients were stuck an extra day in Am Timan because we were using the only available HCR vehicle.

CS and the doctor talked about an internship for Sara. Apparently if possible it would be limited to 45 days.

Thursday, February 16, 2012

I was awakened at 4 this morning by the Imman calling the prayer from the mosque next door to our compound. It is quite beautiful and melodic. Slowly the village came to life: the donkey braying, a baby crying, the smell of the fires started to cook breakfast.

The villagers live in little family compounds. The round adobe huts have a cone shaped roof made of long grass. They are surrounded by a fence made of branches. Animals are not restrained or kept in pens. There are tremendous number of donkeys, goats, and cows roaming in the village. Besides the trees there is little vegetation. There are no paved roads or streets. Just dirt ground everywhere and a tremendous amount of dust.

Haraze is in the Salamat region. It is extremely isolated. During the rainy season from May to October, Haraze is cut off from Am Timan and the rest of the region by floods. During that time, a helicopter comes once or twice a week to take UN workers out and to bring provisions in. As a Chadian jurist I met this afternoon told me this is the deep bush. Professionals do not want to come and work here. As a result, there is a severe shortage of judges, doctors and teachers. This is a forgotten place.

There are two refugee camps in Haraze: Moyo with 4,000 refugees and Koy with 2,300. Koy is not built in high ground enough and gets flooded during the rainy season. It will be consolidated with Moyo.

We went to the refugee camp of Moyo today. There are a tremendous number of children and teenagers. The children do not have proper clothes. Many wear oversize t-shirts that are ripped apart and dirty. They are probably the only clothing they own. The health center in the camp is nothing more than a series of temporary buildings made of plastic sheeting. The rooms are stifling hot during the day. Most patients stay outside. The hospital has no electricity. It is lighted at night with lanterns filled with gasoline. The fridge is powered by a generator also operated with fuel. When a patient needs surgery, the doctor, the only one, goes with the patient to the hospital of Haraze. Don't be fooled though. The word hospital here does not have the same meaning as at home. It is not clean. There are no prophylactic measures in place. The patients are in close quarters.

They depend on families to bring food so there are a lot of people around the yard.

Later in the day we attended a ceremony to inaugurate our new soccer field there. CRF financed the construction of three soccer fields: one in each camp and one in Haraze. We also provided jerseys, shorts, socks, shin guards, shoes, balls, and whistles. The refugees with the aid of the villagers cleared an area of the bush for the field. It is not a small task. It is extremely arduous to get rid of the low vegetation, the roots and make the surface flat by hand without heavy equipment. A match was organized between the camp, in blue uniforms, and the village in white uniforms. The match was fun to watch and, despite a controversy about the goal of the village team that some thought was off side, there was no fight and all ended well. And that is what the project is all about: promoting cooperation and integration.

The jurist I met works for a non-profit Chadian human rights organization, l'Association pour la liberte fondamentale au Tchad. Their mission is to make Chad a true democracy by promoting fundamental liberties, defending human rights and better governance. Every month they hold a meeting where they denounce instances of human rights violations. They focus their activities against torture (which is prevalent) and violence such as female genital mutilation. UNHCR has brought them in as their partner in the camp of Moyo to implement a protection project. APLFT will educate the refugees about their rights and responsibilities. They will also monitor arrests and detention of refugees to prevent arbitrariness. The project is subsidized in part by the Chadian state despite APLFT's work in denouncing state abuses. Nothing is ever black and white here!

Time to go to bed. I just noticed that there is a mound of dirt growing against the wall. Upon inspection it appears that ants are building it. Should I worry? I am going to go under my mosquito net; there are no mosquitoes but I do not want a spider to fall from the ceiling on me. Hopefully the ants will stay away.

Feb. 17, 2012. In the morning we flew in a four-seat Aviation Without Borders (Belgian) plane to Abeche where BF & CS conducted a project review with AGD.

(a) Goré football field. AGD reported that the league was unable to provide receipts for all expenditures. Some money may have been diverted to meals for league officials. New people are in charge. In the second phase, girls' shoes etc., AGD bought the materials & turned them over to the league rather than transfer the money to the league.

(b) The APE of Beureuh has not yet been able to access the money in the Moundou bank account.

(c) Girl Guides. The Protection project is finished. AGD says the finances are OK. We need a Final Report.

(d) Tricycles for the local population in Goré. We have no knowledge of their status and no means of effecting repairs. We decided not to get further involved.

(e) Tricycles in the Goré camps. We had no information about the Kemp repair solution of allocating part of HCR subvention to refugee committees to tricycle recipients for maintenance and repair. We decided to raise the issue with HCR.

(f) Medicines & medical equipment. AGD believes that the Goré hospital doctor and pharmacist had profited in some way from the stuff we gave them in May 2011. BF had asked Ali to check with them about the usefulness of these materials. They denied ever having received anything from us. Ali relayed this response by email to BF who sent him pictures of the May transfer. When the doctor and pharmacist were confronted with these, they said yes there were (or they were able to produce) a few things. We decided that henceforth we would only transfer medicines and medical equipment to CSSI (or health centers managed by another NGO) for use in the camps.

(g) Border structures at Bitoye. No refugees cross there now and no one from Goré goes there. The upshot is that we repaired the/a village well, provided the village with a new well, a shed that can, probably is, used for storage, and latrines that are probably not useful because of the lack of chemicals. No further effort will be made to check on the status of this project.

(h) Beureuh school. The latrines have no doors, no chemicals, & no current use. Doors to some classrooms are missing. (We'll discuss the broken desks later). We decided to see to the repairs of the latrines and classrooms with Ali in charge, working with the APE and whatever funds are necessary going to CSSI.

(i) Solar projects. AGD reported that the facilities at Beureuh, Dosseye, Yaroungou and Moula are OK. A tornado damaged 2 of 3 panels at Maro. CSSI replaced them with inferior panels so that power is not available deep into the night.

(j) Vitamin A. We need information about the continuing needs at all 7 camps and the communities in which they are located. AGD recommended Dr. Hramidou who I take to be the CSSI medical coordinator in N'Djamena.

(k) Africare. They propose a football project at Goré and Maro, cost \$13,000. We decided – no more grants for football.

(l) Girl Guides. They have proposed a literacy project involving training 20 teachers, mucho materials and teaching income-generating activities. Cost \$170,000. We will suggest a pilot project.

(m) Dosseye teachers. A project involving a “store” and sensibilization directed at keeping girls busy during the (non-school) summers. We should meet with them.

(n) School. What will reduce girl fall off? How to support girl students?

Friday, February 17, 2012

Bill, Ali and I left Haraze today. Our next stop: Goré. If you look at the map, Goré is about 230 miles from Haraze by crow's flight. It is also on the border with the CAR but farther down south. Of course, there is no way to drive from Haraze to Gore. So, instead, we will fly to Abeche in Eastern Chad and catch a flight to N'Djamena tomorrow. From there we will fly back to the South to Moundou and drive to Goré, about a 2 hour drive. Just imagine a big circle around Chad!

There is no radio tower so we know that the plane has arrived when it starts circling above Haraze. The UN picked us up at the guest house and drove us to the airstrip, a simple dirt track in the middle of a dirt field at the edge of the village. Two or three other vehicles were there to shoo away people and animals by driving up and down the strip at high speed. Once the strip was clear, the signal was given and the plane landed in a cloud of dust. The same routine was followed at take-off.

It was a plane from Aviation Sans Frontieres- Belgique flown by a Belgian pilot. It was tiny: four seats total: the pilot and a passenger up front, two passengers in the back. We could not load more than 300 kilos counting us and our luggage. Ali, who is the biggest of us, sat up front. We stuffed our suitcases in the tail of the plane behind the seats and hoisted ourselves in. No extra room to spare. The pilot started the engine. He explained that he was leaving his door open because, sometimes, the plane is overfilled with gasoline and the engine catches on fire. Mind you that Bill and I were strapped in the back with the door closed. Nobody told us.

The pilot was very good. We took off without any problems even though it was a bit nerve racking. The flight took a little over two hours at about 10,000 feet. The sunshine was out in full force but the dust rising from the hot earth forms a big layer of haze, like the smog in LA. Below it was desert for miles and miles. We could see the outline of roads, brown dust and not red earth like in the South, and of completely dried up rivers. No signs of life with a few exceptions. I saw a herd of cattle close to Haraze. When we got closer to Abeche, I saw one village and a few fields in the bend of the dried-up river.

Abeche is in the East. It is 120 miles from the border with Darfur and the hub for the humanitarian activities in the Darfur refugee camps. From the air, the city looks like a series of fenced squares or rectangles filled with buildings. Since the Darfur crisis the town has grown considerably with the influx of NGOs. The Chinese, who are here for the oil, have installed an asphalt road (which ends at the end of town) with solar powered streetlights. The East is drastically different from the South. The population is mostly Arab and Muslim (95%.) The houses and buildings are made of bricks or solid walls (cement?) and not of adobe and/or plant-

like materials as in the South.

We spent a good two hours with Ali, our part time staff, going over all the projects we already completed determining what follow up, if any, needs to be done. We also discussed potential new projects in the three areas we are working in. Finally, we set our agenda for next week in Gore. Having Ali on our team has improved tremendously our efficiency. He is a former teacher and worked for 5 years in the camps in the East, first for the Chadian government, then for Unicef. He is now working for our partner CSSI (Centre de support en santé international), a Chadian NGO created in 1996 and supported by the Swiss Tropical Institute in Basle. Their specialty is putting together health systems. Right now they are providing health services in the refugee camps in the south.

After work, in the late afternoon, we took a drive around the streets. The city was buzzing with activity. Very few women are walking on the streets compared to what we have seen in other places. There are a lot of tiny yellow or blue motorcycle taxis, a motorcycle up front with a little covered rounded area big enough for two passengers. A lot of veiled women were riding in them. There was a big market made of ramshackle stalls selling a bit of everything from bike parts to cigarettes to meat. It is quite something to see an entire goat cut into big pieces all bloody out on a wooden table in the sun, not covered by anything with flies buzzing around. Yet, meat is much safer to eat than fruits or vegetables because it is always thoroughly cooked.

Tonight the temperature dropped a little and there is a cool breeze. This is a nice relief from the heat of the day. It was about 105 but it feels a lot hotter than that. The combination of the heat, the constant dust, the harsh traveling conditions, a poor diet is taking its toll and, at night, we are exhausted. I also managed to get a cold. It is not surprising; I shook hands with countless people who were sick (it would be very rude not to do so.) We are staying at the UN Guest House. I am writing this under my mosquito net. The room is spacious and fancy compared to the one in Haraze: tiles and painted walls instead of concrete, a table and a chair. We have air conditioning, electricity and internet but no running water. If the water does not come on later, there is water in a big can along with a pitcher. I don't care; I would take internet over water every time, especially the UN satellite system which is fast and secure!

Feb. 18-19. We flew from Abeche to N'Djamena on the 18th and rested in N'Djamena on the 19th, a Sunday.

Feb. 20. We flew from N'Djamena to Moundou on the 20th & spent three hours there waiting for a ride to Goré. In Goré we went over our agenda with Muller Masrabeye of HCR.

Feb. 21. Right off the bat we had a security briefing with Amad Ali Mahamat (6620 1536). Radio Room (6628 7945). The security situation is calm except for occasional attacks on the roads. Humanitarians are not specific objects of attack. Most attacks occur on market days and do not end in violence. The most recent was 17 days ago on the Moundou-Goré road 55 km. from Goré. DIS protection has been operating since 3/11 with the hope that local governments would create gendarme posts on the Moundou/Goré axis.

Since 12/11 the area around Goré has been declared an "operation area," as in eastern Chad. A military unit was stationed in Goré. Because of harassment of civilians by the soldiers, the unit has been moved outside of town. After 5pm there are to be no military in Goré. We were urged to take a low profile when dealing with the military – if bothered, "leave and inform." James, the ex-SAS officer we met in May 2011 who was to provide general direction of security measures, has resigned.

We then met with Angele Djohossou, the chief of HCR operations in south Chad (Goré, Maro & Haraze). She had just returned from a "gap" analysis in Moundou. Serious gaps were discussed. The number of disabled refugees has increased, 200 in the Goré camps. Yaroungou lacks everything except protection, chiefly food security and health measures. There is a need to re-think the entire assistance program. The situation of disabled people is worse, the schools are terrible, water/sanitation (watsan) and education efforts are inadequate. UNHCR in south Chad has suffered a 20% reduction in its budget that already could meet only 50% of its

needs. Because of the floods in Maro, HCR has had to re-introduce care to the refugees in the area, ½ rations to Moula and ½ to the disabled in Yaroungou. New schools and health centers are required in these camps.

In Haraze HCR needs to build proper schools & health centers, but cannot because they do not have the funds. In the Goré camps the program needs continue, only small groups of people are returning to the CAR. In Dosseye the children suffer from malnutrition, in Yaroungou everyone does.

The highest priority for CRF ought to be education in Haraze. This would involve providing schoolbooks and materials, food for students, a pre-school program, empower the committee of parents of students via income generating activities and teacher training. (NB she did not mention school uniforms). ACRA is the partner. We need good contact information. They have no money in their budget for disabled people. They will provide us with concrete instances of what is needed in Maro and Haraze.

There are no resources available for environmental protection efforts in Haraze.

We later met with the Prefect who was accompanied by the chief of police and several other officials. When we were reciting what we had done in the Goré area, the chief said he knew nothing about the Goré football field. Another man said yes it was there, but not in good condition. Despite the fact that we told the Prefect that the Goré field had been requested by one of his predecessors, we were admonished to coordinate with the administration, the eyes and ears of the state.

We then went to look at the field, which we found to be covered with weeds 4-5 ft. high (see notes on 2/23 meeting with football league officials).

In the afternoon, we met with Miryam Youcouri-Navigue, the HCR education officer, and Giacomo Marini of ACRA (giacomomarini@acra.it). ACRA has a small program in the primary schools in the Goré camps aimed at keeping girls in school. This consists of rewards (cosmetic kits), inviting women with careers to speak to students and stressing the importance of education to everyone just before the school year begins. They believe it has had a positive effect. Matters that keep girls out of school are financial & not having proper clothes. The fee in the HCR secondary school is 3,500 CFA (about \$7) (plus the bacc fee); ACRA pays 1,750 for refugee children.

School uniforms as an issue. School uniforms are de rigueur in Chad, but not in the camps. The case for uniforms is that they instill pride, self-esteem and a sense of identity as a student. They would just be worn to school and policed by an association of mothers. Uniforms would be made in the camp(s) rather than bought in stores if the material was furnished. If all that were required could not be made in Haraze, the balance could be manufactured in Goré or Maro (Monique). There are 6 primary schools in the Haraze area of which 2 are in the camps.

After uniforms, the next priorities are pens, pencils, notebooks, chalk, drawing tools, maps and school gardens. The crux is that UNICEF is not present; its attention is directed to the East. All materials ought to be provided through protocols with the prefect, the village chief and the state inspector of schools (apparently to foreclose the staff selling the stuff).

Teacher quality. 70% of the teachers are simply from the community. They do not know how to teach and need to be trained. There are too few training days. UNICEF is needed to provide the training. Teachers receive 30,000 CFA a month (\$60) and have no income during the summer.

Parents are not taught that their children have a right to go to school.

On the same day we met with Dr. Jean Mutenga, of our partner CSSI. We discussed the Vitamin A project, the World Vision program and urged Dr. Jean to provide us with information about the count of children 0-12

months and 1-5 years in all 7 camps and their nearby local populations. Dr. Jean told us that CARE had started a family planning program (using implants) and that we should not concern ourselves with this aspect of health services, at least for now. He did tell us of 2 urgent needs – rapid tests for HIV & iron sulfate/folic acid capsules and a program to encourage blood donations to counter anemia, particularly in Dosseye camp (see his subsequent emails).

Finally we met with Muller to try to disentangle the fate of the wire transfer of \$660 to the Association Parents d'Eleves CEG de Beureuh on November 26, 2010. As best we can tell the account number furnished to BF was wrong in 3 places. As a result, the money was deposited by EchoBank into the wrong account (we think a different APE). Our efforts to have the money transferred to the correct account that afternoon were unsuccessful.

Wednesday, February 22

After we left Abeche last Friday, we flew back to N'Djamena where we arrived Saturday late afternoon. We spent a day there waiting for the flight to Moundou, about 100 km from Gore, which leaves every Monday. I was happy for the break as I caught the flu and was feeling rather miserable!

When I was last in Moundou in 2009, the airport was merely a red dirt landing strip. Since then, the Chinese, who have an arrangement with Chad to exploit oil in the area, have rebuilt the terminal, left from the colonial times, and built a regular runway. It is quite nice. Although we arrived at 10 in the morning we did not make it to Goré until 4 because once again the various partners in the convoy spent hours shopping for various things.

Goré has changed as well. There are streetlights in some of the streets although the houses still do not have electricity (unless there is a generator). The area is safe even though it was designated a few months ago as an operation area for the Chadian army due to the conflict across the border in CAR. A contingent of soldiers moved in town in April last year. The soldiers created problems in town; they can be quite aggressive and arrogant toward the population. Following some fights and a rape, the authorities agreed to relocate them in a camp outside of town. They are prohibited from being in the village after 5 pm.

We are spending our week meeting with UNHCR, our partners, and refugees to check on our old projects and discuss new ones. There have been trying moments and discouraging moments. Then this morning we met with a group of vulnerable refugees in the camp of Gondje. Among them were about 7 severely disabled children. Some were paralyzed probably as the result of polio. Others were born with birth defects, may be due to the unregulated use of medication or traditional herbs during pregnancy. Yet others have life long handicaps simply due to the lack of medical and orthopedic care at birth. Simple conditions, such as a folded foot due to compression during pregnancy are easily treated in the United States. There are not here. These children do not have crutches; they do not have wheelchairs. They are reduced to crawl on their knees to go to school unless they are carried by someone. This is the kind of situation where direct and immediate intervention makes a tremendous difference.

Tonight, Ali invited us to dinner at his compound: a house made of concrete, other adobe buildings, the kitchen, the latrines, additional bedrooms dispersed around a large courtyard with trees and a well surrounded by a wall made of mud bricks. It was a perfect night to be out. The temperature, while still very warm, had cooled down from the day. There is no electricity in the compound. It was not completely dark because of the halo from the streetlights outside and a television hooked up to the streetlight grid and a satellite dish. There were about 10 children as well as some adults, all neighbors, watching a Chadian version of Jeopardy.

Ali's wife and the other women of the house set out the various dishes on a wooden table: grilled chicken, couscous with a vegetable tomato sauce, potato fries, salad with tomatoes and onions and a dish of mixed vegetables. There was cold beer which was a treat as it was so hot today. (The warm season is approaching

quickly; starting in March-April the temperature may reach as high as 110, even 115.) There were other guests: the physician from CSSI, Muller from HCR. Before eating, Ali's eldest son passed around a teapot, blue with white stripes with water (used everywhere in Chad especially by Muslims to wash before prayer) and a basin so we could wash our hands. We (the guests) and Ali ate first. The women, including Ali's wife, and the other people presents did not join us. They ate afterwards.

As we left the compound, there were three young men huddled under a streetlight. One of them was reading a book aloud to the others. This is one of the main benefits of the lights: the villagers can use them to read, the students to study, the children to play after dark. The kids were laughing and singing in the street.

I am now back in the compound and ready to go to bed. It is almost 11:30 p.m. here, 2:30 p.m. California time. I have an uninvited visitor tonight: a lizard that I have been unable to expel from my room. I guess we will have to cohabitate. On Monday night, I had a much more unpleasant encounter with Chadian wildlife: a spider in my pants!

Feb. 22. We first met with the Comité de Entraide (Assistance) at Amboko camp. Our discussion required translation from English to French to Sango and vice versa. We asked how to keep the tricycles in useable condition. They reported that most were now in working condition, but that the ones originally furnished by Johanniter (12 in number) had base plates that were too low to the ground and ought to be replaced (the plates, not the tricycles). Replacement parts, however, had all been used.

They had conducted a census of people with special needs. The total of 145 included those who were blind, disabled and aged. Some 15 required "haystacks" to build or repair roofs before the rains begin in May. Apparently neither CARE nor HCR have any funds to provide these materials. HCR is trying to get the refugee community to pitch in. Next year bricks may be available.

They recited two other needs. They need a better warehouse in which to store materials and to repair carts that are used to move the materials to where they are needed. And they need microloans for income generating activities such as small stores and bread making. The tragedy is that there is not enough emergency aid available and no apparent capacity to do what CARE/HCR fail to do.

The Kathy Kemp deal (part of the HCR subvention to camp committees would be used to maintain tricycles) never materialized. Our position will probably be that the committee, HCR & CARE (working with Ali) should come up with a long-term solution to the maintenance problem and then propose it to us. The committee is to provide a list to Ali of the current & future tricycle needs.

There was some vague talk about a 2013-14 insurance system that would make distributions for special needs.

We then visited the Beureuh secondary school, football field and health center. At the school we were given a statement describing the school population, the materials available and their condition and the recommendations of a general assembly that met in September 2011. Highlights: 21% of the refugee students and 17% of the locals are girls. In the highest grade it is 9% and 17% (note the fall off is for refugee girls only). The number of girls staying in school is improving. ACRA is going from class to class to provide encouragement. 110 of the 160 desks are in bad condition. There are virtually NO books available. A budget deficit of 341,000 CFA (\$700) was projected.

On physical inspection of the school we found the floors to be filthy (the administrator's explanation was that the doors were open and trash was blown in by the wind). Two of the 4 classrooms in "our" school were empty because there were not enough teachers. The result – 120 students in a class. The desks were broken because the necessary screws were missing (had been stolen). Neither the school administrator (our nemesis from the football uniforms debacle) nor the treasurer of the APE would take any responsibility for repairing the desks,

alleging there were no funds to do so. The football field was in good condition, but not used according to the school administrator because there were no balls.

We next met with the Comité de Entraide (Assistance) in Gondje. Same story; all out of parts. Seven new tricycles are required for disabled children. We were told the story of a boy who drags himself to school (300 meters) and back each day.

In the late afternoon we met with Rachel, Yvette and Elvira of the **Girl Guides**. The Protection Project is finished. The results – women have a more enlightened attitude about the resources available to them, children learned that they had rights and responsibilities and that it was important to go to school and to help older people, that they were entitled to be fed before going to school and to be treated when they were sick, and there is an increased awareness within families that women and men should work together. The most rewarding result was to see girls doing things for themselves rather than waiting for HCR to do it all. Yvette apparently waged a successful battle to keep a young Muslim girl from a forced marriage she did not want. They also trained women in Amboko to use sewing and knitting machines and to sell the product at the market. We asked for a final report. To produce it they have to get together with people at the national level.

They have proposed that CRF fund a very ambitious and expensive women's literacy program. Rachel's field is literacy education: she has run a program in Moundou. The program would group women according to their existing abilities. They would start in the native language & then switch to French (must be a challenge to teach people to read in a language they do not speak). There would be no more than 25 students per group that meets for 2 hours three times a week. Math would be taught as well as literacy. We urged them instead to propose a pilot project which they should work out with Ali, an experienced teacher.

Their UK funded project is over. They will only be able to stay in Goré if they continue to receive IMS support.

Feb. 23. BF and CS skipped a meeting with the Comité at Dosseye after a little health crisis. Ali went instead. The situation there is the same as at the other Goré camps. He also met with the women teachers who have a proposal to keep girls occupied over the summer vacation. In the afternoon we had a de-briefing meeting with Muller. HCR with Ali's cooperation is to devise a proposal for the Amboko, Gondje and Dosseye committees encompassing crutches, spare parts and new tricycles that *includes a plan to make maintenance self-perpetuating*. CRF is to deal with Gabin at EchoBank, introducing Ali into the equation.

We next met with the captains of the men's and women's football teams and with league officials. With the exception of a pick up game in June 2011, our field has not been used since May 2011 (presumably it was not useable during the rainy season, June to October). They did not provide much of an explanation – the Catholic church cleaned up their field after the rains so they used it despite the fees, but the league did not clean up ours (theirs). However they will. Ali is to check on this. BF was worried that the location of our field might be problematic. We were assured that it was not. They received the equipment included in the girl's shoes project on Feb. 9: Ali will send us photographs. They complained that we had funneled the shoes' money through CSSI who bought the products. We said that is the way we will continue to operate (for obvious reasons, Chad being Chad).

Finally, we met with Issa Doubragne, the coordinator of projects for Africare, whom we had met in 2008. They do environmental protection, agriculture and microloans. They asked us to fund recreational activities including football fields. We told Issa that we henceforth were concentrating only on health and education.

Feb. 24. We drove to Moundou, had a flat a few miles from the airport, got a ride from another NGO SUV and arrived at the airport as the plane was landing. In N'Djamena we went to ground at the Meridien until it was time to go to the airport for the flight to Paris.

Friday, February 24

The end of our stay in Chad is approaching. I always have mixed feelings at the end of our trips. On the one hand, I am happy at the thought of seeing you all and returning to the comfort of Western life. On the other hand, I have come to love Chad and its people; I always wonder whether this will be the last visit or if I will return again.

This trip certainly was an eye opener on many levels. We are so fortunate to have connected with Ali Gane. He is doing a terrific job on our behalf and, but for him, I don't know that we would be able to continue our efforts in South Chad as so much has changed since our first visit.

Now the prospect of the trip back: a car ride to Moudou, a stop at the Club de Logone for breakfast, a plane ride to N'Djamena. Then the plane to Paris and Los Angeles. Lots of hours in planes and airports.

A la prochain fois