

UACES Scholarship 2010

Sara BELLEIL, *University of Lille*

Outline of project

The research trip involves working with the "Urgence, Réhabilitation, Développement" (URD) organization. This organization launched in 2009 a collective learning program in Chad, funded by the European Commission: the Observatory of Humanitarian Practices in Chad. The objective is to support collective learning and improve the quality of the humanitarian response in the region.

The thesis project, about performance assessment and quality control in European humanitarian aid policy, involves three levels of observation:

First, observing the requests of European donors in terms of evaluating the humanitarian aid organizations (NGOs) and national research groups. Second, analyzing how evaluators apply concrete methods of performance assessment and quality controls on the field. Finally, analyzing how NGOs and final beneficiaries (in Chad) perceive the evaluation of their programs.

Academic achievements and planned activities

The research protocol means to call out different inquiries methods:

- Documentary analysis of methodological resources, of NGO's internal and external evaluation reports,
- Interviews with humanitarian actors in Chad, refugees and internally displaced people
- Direct observations and participation in all meetings of NGOs Coordination Comity, United Nations Agencies, etc.

I started a 5 months study about the impacts that performance assessment and quality control have on NGOs practices. In parallel, a second observation phase starts in September 2010. I was recruited as junior evaluator for two missions of separate internal evaluation processes: Those studies are run by two different consultant's teams, which makes it easier to compare different sets of criteria and methods. Observing the evaluators carrying out their daily work is not only an opportunity to observe their techniques and methods but also to comprehend their informal professional routines, the thorough standards and codes.

Use made of resources

The scholarship money has been used to travel to and from France to Chad, for accommodation, food and local transport in N'Djamena. This budget is for a 5 months (150 days) field trip to Chad with fieldwork in the capital N'Djamena and the regional town Abéché (refugee camps).

Positive and negative aspects

The adaptation is not that much easy for a white French woman in a traditional and Muslim country, who used to be a French colony. It was very important to expend determination and patience to adapt to the local culture. From materials point, many power cuts and low internet connection may provoke irritation sometimes.

But being in Chad, close to humanitarian actor's projects, is an opportunity to interview NGO representatives, to analyze how they participate in the development of performance and quality standards and how they perceive different evaluation methods. The information's headwaters are directly reachable but the most important thing is the possibility to check it out information and have the power to compared collected data.