
**Thinking and Anticipating the Socio-Economic
Impacts of the Humanitarian Response
in the Central African Republic**

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Introduction

Nowadays, the Central African Republic (CAR) is a country dependent on international aid. Since the coup d'état orchestrated by Michel Djotodia in March 2013 to overthrow the former CAR President, François Bozizé, in power since 2003, the Central African Republic has become a classic example of a failed state. Insecurity prevails in most of the provinces which are under the control of increasingly different and varied armed groups which stem from two sources: the anti-balaka and Seleka. The transitional government's authority is largely hypothetical, and it does not even fully control the capital city, Bangui. The state apparatus is skeletal and the only security providers are the international forces operating under an international mandate. Out of an estimated population of 4.6 million people, over 2.5 million people depend on humanitarian aid. In addition, there are around 430,000 internally displaced people and nearly 424,000 people have left the country and have gone to seek refuge mainly in Chad and Cameroon¹. According to the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance, the Central African Republic is ranked in 51st place out of a total of 52 countries – just in front of Somalia – and, according to the UNDP, the Central African Republic was in 185th place out of 187 countries in 2013 in terms of human development.²

The international community is keeping the CAR afloat: it provides legitimacy and security to the authorities in Bangui and food and medical aid to the population. The crisis, which began in December 2012, is the worst in the history of the CAR, which has experienced numerous coups since its independence in 1960. By taking Bangui, the Seleka brought insecurity, which already prevailed in a large part of the country. Thus it put an end to the last stronghold of a central government which failed to exert territorial control for several years. In 2013, the initial reaction of the international community to the state of widespread anarchy was to wait and see. While the Seleka troops were engaged in looting, the NGOs were

1. United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) "CAR: Humanitarian Dashboard (as of 8 December 2014)", December 2014, p. 1; "UNHCR Regional Update 57. 16 May-5 June 2015", UNHCR, 5 June 2015.

2. United Nations Development Programme, "Pérenniser le progrès humain: réduire les vulnérabilités et renforcer la résilience", *Rapport sur le développement humain 2014*, 2014.

forced to reduce their activities, and institutional support from large donors was frozen.

The military intervention by France in December 2013, and the announcement of peacekeeping missions by the African Union and the United Nations, started the redeployment of (and increase in the number of) humanitarian aid organisations.

After a year of insecurity and humanitarian crisis, this article examines the impacts of the humanitarian response in a country characterised by extreme poverty and by traditionally low donor interest. For those who knew the CAR before the crisis, the contrast in terms of the presence and international activity nowadays is striking. Such a major and quick change cannot fail to have substantial and possibly destabilising impacts for a country previously considered as an "aid orphan". This study is the result of a series of interviews conducted in Bangui and Paris in 2014 with leaders of the main French NGOs, as well as with donors and CAR and foreign business people.

Nature and forms of international intervention

The multitude of peacekeeping forces

For the visitors who land at M'Poko airport, the most visible forms of international presence in the CAR are the foreign military forces under international mandate, and the humanitarian NGOs. The military forces ensure the security of the airport, while the NGOs "manage" the adjacent displaced persons camp. In the wake of the massacres of 5 December 2013, and after approval by the United Nations Security Council (resolution 2127), France initiated Operation Sangaris and deployed more than 2 000 soldiers on the ground.³ Sangaris, part of whose troops have already begun their withdrawal, represents the seventh French mission in the CAR and its cost is estimated at nearly 200 million euros per year⁴. In addition, the United Nations has authorised a new mission – MINUSCA, Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic – which is the 13th mission implemented by the international community in the Central African Republic. With a budget of 313 million dollars, or nearly 251 million euros, from April to December 2014⁵, this mission followed another African Union mission, MISCA. Currently, MINUSCA is approaching full capacity – with 10,750 soldiers and 2,080 police officers and gendarmes. At the same time, from April 2014, the European Union deployed a mission of 800 men (EUFOR-CAR) with an initial budget of 25.9 million euros⁶ to secure the area surrounding Bangui airport and the third and fifth districts. This mission ended in March 2015. According to the "Russian doll principle", each peacekeeping mission is absorbed by the next in order to increase personnel: MICOPAX (2,000 personnel) became

3. "Sangaris: Point de situation du 23 octobre", Ministry of Defence, October 2014. Available at:

www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/international/sangaris-point-de-situation-du-23-octobre.

4. "Sangaris coûterait 200 millions d'euros en année pleine", Reuters, 26 February 2014.

5. General Assembly (Sixty-eighth session), "Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 30 June 2014", 11 August 2014, p 2.

6. "Décision 2014/775/PESC du Conseil prorogeant la décision 2014/73/PESC relative à une opération militaire de l'Union européenne en République centrafricaine (EUFOR RCA)", Council of the European Union, 7 November 2014.

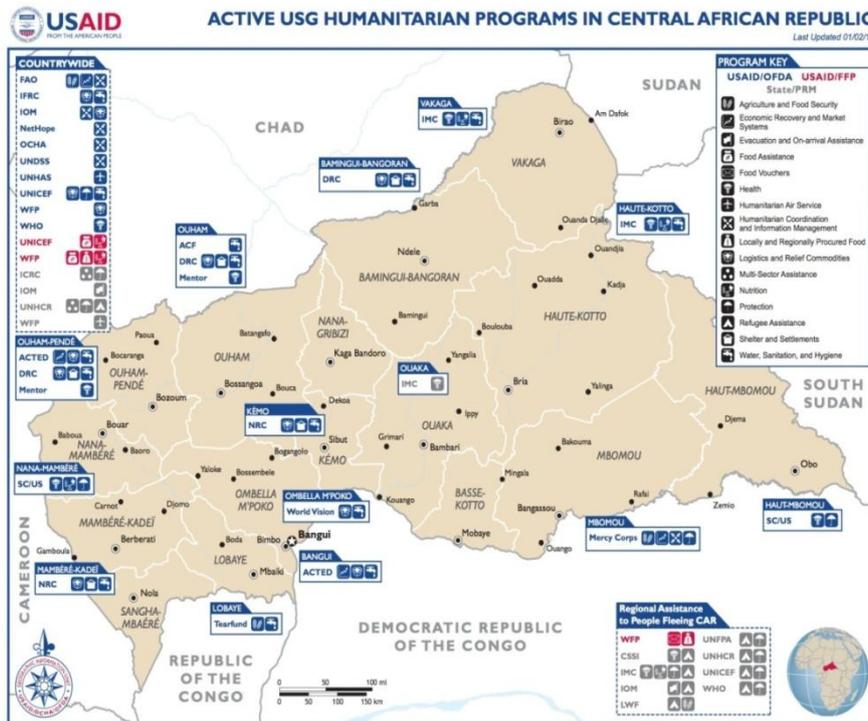
MISCA (6,000 military and police officers) which became MINUSCA (around 12,000 personnel). All missions taken together, at the start of 2015, comprised around 10,000 foreign soldiers in the CAR whose daily needs have to be met (housing, food, transport, communication, etc.)⁷.

However, the armed forces have their own logistics and a lifestyle away from the field of operation which considerably restricts their area of social and economic interaction with the local community. On the other hand, the international humanitarian organisations have a much greater interaction with the local community. Therefore, this study on the impact of international engagement is focused on these organisations, and their respective impacts.

The standard scenario of humanitarian crisis

Secours Catholique has been present in the CAR since the end of the 1960s. The first intervention by Médecins du Monde (MdM) [Doctors of the World] dates back to the end of the 1990s. The French section of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) [Doctors without Borders] established its first base at Carnot in 1997 and other French NGOs, such as ACTED, Triangle, Première Urgence, Action contre la Faim France [Action against Hunger] or Solidarités International arrived in the CAR between 2006 and 2008. Following a reduction in activities due to the violent anarchy which the Seleka unleashed in 2013, the international NGOs quickly reinvested in the CAR at the start of 2014.

7. This calculation does not take into account the US-Ugandan military presence in the south-east of the country which preceded the CAR crisis and is conducting a manhunt for Joseph Kony. "L'Armée de résistance du Seigneur: échec et mat?", Rapport Afrique No. 182, 17 November 2011.



Source: ReliefWeb

The arrival of international forces – with the French leading – has made it possible to deploy the "humanitarian machinery" necessary to help populations in danger. In a humanitarian crisis, the normal areas of intervention by humanitarian organisations are health, food security and so-called WASH programmes – “water, sanitation, and hygiene”. The medical NGOs are responsible for health care in a large part of the towns in the region. More than 400,000 people are living on humanitarian aid, i.e. distributions of foodstuffs, blankets, medication, etc. A handful of medical NGOs fill a large void in providing national health services. For example, MSF France runs seven emergency projects in the CAR and has set up a mobile clinic to reach the most isolated displaced persons' camps. Much like MdM, another of their emergency projects consists of rehabilitating health centres, under the leadership of the CAR Health Ministry, mainly in Bangui. The 5th and 8th districts are places of possible return for displaced people, and the health centres of these areas have been rehabilitated as a priority, like that of PK12. Some NGOs like ACTED, *World Vision*, *ACF*, *Premières Urgences*, *Danish Refugee Council*, *CARE* or the *Norwegian Refugee Council* also provide humanitarian aid, care and basic services in refugee camps in the neighbouring countries, in southern Chad and eastern Cameroon. Nutrition programmes and support for agricultural

recovery is another key component of NGO work in a country, where subsistence farming collapsed with the crisis.

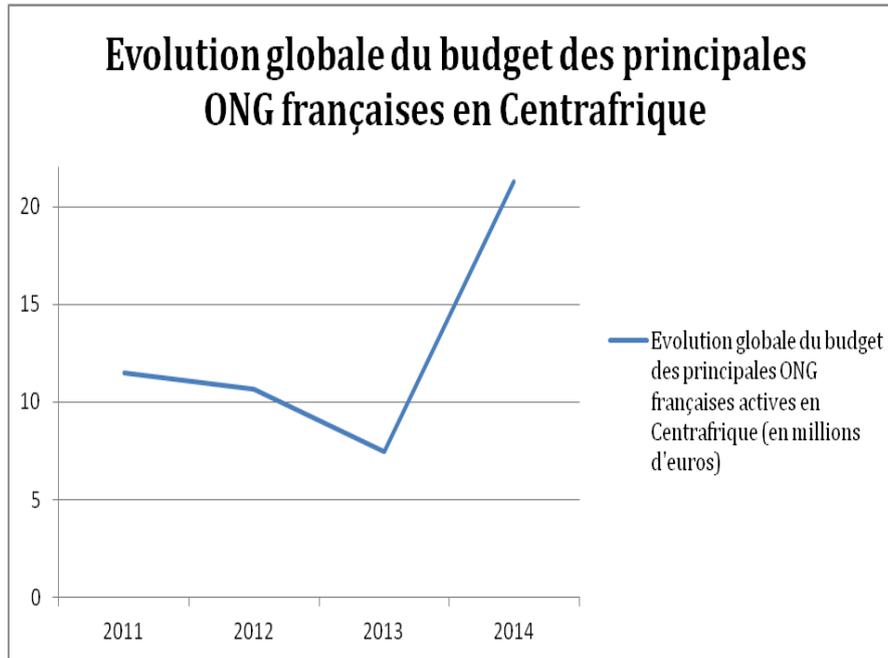
The collapse of the agricultural sector has attracted new humanitarian funding, making it possible to increase the number of expatriate and national workers in the CAR. The number of national employees, depending on the NGOs, has in some cases tripled. It seems French and international NGOs are always looking for staff to deal with a crisis that is looking likely to persist. In addition to aid workers, the UN agencies have increased their teams in the CAR and represent some hundreds of international staff. The budgets for the CAR are also experiencing a sudden and unprecedented increase. The MSF budget for 2014, including all MSF sections, reached a total of 50 million dollars. The budget for the French section of MSF alone has doubled from 2013 to 2014 to reach 14 million euros. Action contre la faim has nearly doubled its budget compared to the previous two years, and Solidarités International has tripled its budget from 2013 to 2014⁸.

NGOs' emergency programmes are largely financed by the European Union through its humanitarian agency ECHO⁹ and a fund created for the event (Békou)¹⁰, the UN agencies – UNICEF, UNHCR, OCHA, UNPD, WFP – and government donors (France, USA, Switzerland, etc.).

8. Interviews with NGO staff, Paris and Bangui, 2014 and 2015.

9. In the context of the CAR crisis, just over 128 million euros in humanitarian aid was granted by the European Union in 2014. European Commission, "République centrafricaine: fiche info ECHO", December 2014.

10. This new financial instrument is provided with an initial budget of 64 million euros and is financed by the European Commission, France, Germany and the Netherlands. Békou means "hope" in the Sango language. For further information: <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/subsites/trust-fund-bekou_en>.



Source: data gathered during interviews and from operating reports of the main French NGOs in the CAR. Graph prepared by the author.

The emergency aid requirements are summarised in the CAR 2015 Strategic Response Plan (SRP) whose strategy is broken down into four areas: providing humanitarian aid to displaced people, protecting civilians in areas affected by armed violence, guaranteeing access to basic services and means of subsistence, and promoting conditions for inter-community resilience, particularly for refugees and displaced people¹¹. However, the funding still falls short of the needed amount. In total by December 2014, the CAR crisis emergency strategic plan received \$369 million in financial support, or 66% of the aid required¹². It is still experiencing difficulty in raising the additional 186 million dollars required to achieve the objectives of the strategic plan. The food aid sector, which affects more than 1.6 million individuals or 35% of the population, was the most highly endowed, with \$103.9 million in December 2014. However, in order to meet the requirements of all of the CAR population facing food insecurity, \$177.3 million would be needed¹³.

11. United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Human Affairs (OCHA), "Plan de réponse stratégique 2015. République Centrafricaine", December 2014.

12. United Nations' Office for the Co-ordination of Human Affairs (OCHA) "CAR: Humanitarian Dashboard (as of 8 December 2014)", December 2014, op cit, p 1.

13. United Nations' Office for the Co-ordination of Human Affairs (OCHA), December 2014, Ibidem, p. 1.

After a year of humanitarian intervention, three findings can be asserted:

- International solidarity took relevant action for the CAR crisis. The humanitarian machinery reacted promptly and this has resulted in a quick and massive influx of NGO support. While there were only about 20 NGOs in the CAR in 2012, currently there are over 100¹⁴. This influx has changed their composition: the French NGOs are now a minority.
- The geography of the intervention is concentrated around Bangui and the west of the country. This geographical imbalance is explained by three factors: security (the deployment of the international forces started with the west and the capital), the channels of communication (the country's main road links the capital to Cameroon), and the population density (the centre and west of the country comprise "useful CAR" with the main urban centres and the majority of the population).
- Aid workers are not spared from violence; and expatriates are increasingly appearing as an economic target for the armed groups, now turning to crime, considering kidnapping a new source of income¹⁵.

14. United Nations' Office for the Co-ordination of Human Affairs (OCHA), December 2014, Ibidem, p. 1.

15. An MSF-Holland team was attacked in April 2014 at Boguila and was forced to end its project in the region. An expatriate working for a religious charity organisation was kidnapped by the anti-balaka at Bangui. Sources: "Centrafrique: après l'attaque de Boguila, MSF suspend ses activités", *RFI*, 29 April 2014; Médecins Sans Frontières France, "République centrafricaine (RCA): L'insécurité et la violence remettent en question la capacité de MSF à acheminer son assistance dans le pays", 11 November 2014. "Centrafrique: une Française en mission humanitaire enlevée à Bangui", *AFP*, 20 January 2015.

The multi-dimensional interactions between humanitarian response and the local economy

In the field, international humanitarian aid organisations are providers of hope as they bring real and tangible assistance to populations affected by the crisis. However, they are also critical to the country's socio-economic fabric, by producing and consuming goods and services, invigorating parts of the economy against the backdrop of extreme poverty. This aspect of the humanitarian response has been ignored, but continues to influence both the perceptions of the local populations.

The production of aid organisations

NGOs and aid agencies generate direct and indirect employment. For their daily operation, they employ national staff – cooks, drivers, cleaners, etc. – or resort to sub-contracting, i.e. companies who in turn employ staff. Direct employment created by the aid organisations is local (for its daily operation, a NGO employs national staff) and at a significant salary level in the CAR context. If the salary of the national employees is lower than that of foreign workers, the fact remains that it is aligned to the average cost of living and is subject to readjustments. In terms of operation, the ratio of local job creation is sometimes 1 to 10. So, in all sections, MSF has about 200 expatriates for about 2,000 local employees (80 expatriates and 850 local staff for MSF France)¹⁶. This makes MSF the leading healthcare provider and the leading non-state employer in the healthcare sector in the CAR.

The NGOs also implement job creation programmes known as “*cash for work*”. In Bangui, these labour-intensive programmes consist of paying Central Africans to perform work that benefits the community, such as cleaning the streets, cleaning the sewage network before the rainy season, etc.¹⁷. High labour-intensive sites include modernisation

16. Interview, NGO, Bangui, July 2014.

17. The three main institutional donors are the World Bank, the European Union and the French Development Agency which are funding all the high labour-intensive sites. In 2014, the French Development Agency directed several projects with local

works at Bangui airport¹⁸ and the rebuilding of the most destroyed areas in the capital are all projects that create local employment even if these contracts are not awarded to CAR companies¹⁹. Indeed, some Cameroonian construction and public works companies, aware of future rebuilding sites, are already prospecting in Bangui. The "cash for work" programmes have a short-term net positive effect through the payment of local populations and the resulting improvement in household budgets. In a country where even in times of peace, employment was scarce, this is valuable²⁰.

Nevertheless, local employment gains are thwarted by the lack of training and the departure of qualified human resource capacity. Indeed, the medical NGOs report a lack of local health workers for their core operations, i.e. running the health centres. According to them, a third of the 160 CAR doctors have left because of the crisis and core staff (nurses) is also lacking. In order to compensate for this lack of staff, they have accelerated training programs. In addition, the targeting of Muslims in Bangui and in the west of the country, which occurred in early 2014, has resulted in a massive exodus of business people, such as carriers (mostly Muslims)²¹.

partners and humanitarian NGOs. The European Union launched a rebuilding project of some disadvantaged districts in the capital through the setting up high labour-intensive (HLI) sites. The World Bank also launched a project to rehabilitate basic infrastructure in the capital based on HLI with a total budget of 8 million dollars. This project could create more than 4 000 jobs. French Development Agency, "L'AFD relance ses activités en République Centrafricaine", 26 February 2014; European Union, "Békou: Le nouveau fonds fiduciaire européen pour la République centrafricaine.", Bangui, 13 November 2014; "Centrafrique: la Banque mondiale réhabilite les infrastructures de base", *African Press Agency (APA)*, 20 August 2014.

18. "Neuf millions d'euros pour la rénovation de l'aéroport de Bangui", *Journal de Bangui and APA*, 10 November 2014.

19. "Le FMI en Centrafrique pour boucler le budget", *RFI*, 11 November 2014.

20. The real GDP growth rate in the CAR is constantly below the African average and is increasing less quickly than the real GDP growth rate in central Africa. The year 2013 was synonymous with strong economic decline in the Central African Republic. AfDB, OECD, UNPD, "République centrafricaine 2014", *Perspectives économiques en Afrique*, 2014, p 3.

21. "Fuite des musulmans: l'inquiétante hémorragie de la Centrafrique", *France 24*, 21 July 2014.

The consumption of aid organisations

The NGOs and aid agencies are also direct and indirect consumers. Direct when they apply a local purchasing policy to implement their programmes. Hence, the NGOs were buying seeds for their agricultural recovery programmes before the crisis and during the CAR's agricultural collapse (they now import them from Cameroon and Nigeria). The NGOs supporting health centres currently buy part of the patients' food from local markets (for example, local flours are added to the enriched flours distributed in the nutrition programmes). However, the collapse of agricultural production and transport problems has considerably reduced the opportunities for local sourcing and food aid is almost entirely imported. Another case of local sourcing: many building rehabilitations undertaken by the NGOs require building materials which are purchased from wholesalers in Bangui.

In addition, the humanitarian aid organisations are consumers of local services such as transport – car and truck hire –, housing and security. Many NGOs rely on local private security companies to secure their storage warehouses and main residences against looting and burglaries. The construction and property sector is also benefitting from the increased international presence. In Bangui, it is estimated that the housing supply will soon reach saturation, as a result of an increasing demand. The NGOs are increasingly relying on building craftsmen and professionals to restore their residencies to comply with safety standards, and to even build new bases. In addition, each foreign aid worker has a monthly *per diem* allowance covering their daily expenses which range from prepaid phone cards to vehicle hire via meals, cigarettes, etc. A quick recovery in trade and economic activities related to the presence of an expatriate community was observed in Bangui: cigarette and phone card vendors in the street – an activity reserved for adolescents – are becoming increasingly numerous; a concentrated clientele mobbing mobile phone companies throughout the day²²; supermarkets owned by the Lebanese community in Bangui are seeing high turnover; market gardeners are coming from further and further away to sell their fruits and vegetables at the capital's markets; patronage of restaurants and hotels in Bangui is increasing, as well as the demand for internet connections.

22. With the influx of high-value clients (expatriates), one of the existing operators hopes to increase their turnover from 2013 to 2015 by 50%.

Two consequences result from this consumer economy centred on Bangui:

- Economic recovery benefits a few sectors: telephony, trade, carriers and freight forwarders²³, housing, restaurants, and security. These sectors are the ones which thrive in the crisis economy and recruit on the Bangui labour market, which helps to standardise and improve the capital's socio-economic situation.
- The structure of the GDP changes to the benefit of the tertiary sector. In 2013, 14.1% of the national GDP was based on the activity of hotels, restaurants and wholesalers as opposed to 12.9% in 2008²⁴. While agriculture is at a standstill and the country's few factories have been looted, it is highly likely that the tertiarisation of the CAR's economy which was already in progress, will rapidly intensify in the capital.

A fiscal contributor

There is now a significant recovery in tax revenues – a recovery which is not unrelated to the influx of foreign NGOs. When a NGO wishes to operate in the Central African Republic, it has to obtain government authorisation and pay certain taxes. Humanitarian NGOs are also subject to taxes on rental properties and on salaries. Each NGO employing a CAR national pays the Treasury a tax equivalent to 8% of the gross salary²⁵ and social security contributions. However, they also benefit from tax exemption for customs duties if importing certain goods. Hence, NGOs which resorted to importing medical equipment or nutritional products for example did not pay or paid very little customs duty. Most of the CAR taxes are customs duties, and in October 2014 the transitional government tried to challenge this exemption by suspending any tax or customs benefit for international NGOs²⁶. This suspension would certainly have contributed to an increase in customs revenues, but by penalising the organisations who supply humanitarian assistance to the CAR population that the

23. The United Nations and the international NGOs represent about 80% of freight forwarders' operations in Bangui. Interview, freight forwarder, Bangui, July 2014.

24. Interview, head of the CAR programme at a NGO, Paris, 15 September 2014.

25. Interview, Head for the CAR in a NGO, telephone conversation, 22 December 2014.

26. Central African Ministry of Finances and Budget, "Arrêté portant suspension des avantages douaniers et fiscaux accordés aux Organisations Non Gouvernementales (O.N.G)", *Arrêté ministériel n° 407/14/ MFB/ DrR-CAB/ DGDDT*, 10 October 2014.

current authorities are not capable of providing. An intervention by the French embassy in Bangui maintained the exemption which humanitarian organisations continue to benefit from.

It must be acknowledged that the increased humanitarian presence produces positive socio-economic impacts, particularly experienced in Bangui, by stimulating demand through local procurement and job creation.

Behind the scenes: counter-productive effects

Inflationary growth

Estimated at 5.9% in 2013²⁷, the inflation rate for 2014 was estimated at approximately 11.6% on average²⁸. In 2014, cereal production declined by over 50% compared to 2013, and prices of millet and groundnuts have risen sharply in the capital, varying between 30 and 70%²⁹. In Bambari, between March and July 2014, the price of tomatoes sold in shops increased by 127%, the price of petrol and diesel from Chad doubled, and the price of coffee sold on the city's markets went from 600 to 2,000 CFA Francs. More generally, the price of products sold in shops in Bambari increased by 50%, the price of Chadian and Sudanese oil products by 80%, and finally the price on the produce markets by 46%³⁰. The increase in prices in the CAR is due to several factors including the international presence. On the one hand, there is seasonal inflation linked to the rainy period which makes many of the country's roads impassable and the production or supply of some commodities becomes scarce. On the other hand, since the crisis there has been an additional security cost. The looting, murder of Muslim carriers³¹ and the increase in passage fees demanded by armed groups on the main roads, as well as the closure of the border with Chad³² has increased transport costs which have impacted the sale prices of imported goods. Likewise, the departure of many Muslim traders from western cities in the CAR is

27. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Présentation de la République centrafricaine", *France Diplomatie*, 27 March 2014.

28. International Monetary Fund, "Une mission du FMI et la République centrafricaine s'entendent sur une aide financière au titre de la facilité de crédit rapide", Communiqué de presse n°14/529(F), 19 November 2014.

29. Increase recorded between February and August 2014. World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, "Rapport spécial: Mission FAO/PAM d'évaluation de la sécurité alimentaire en République centrafricaine", *Ibid*, p 5.

30. This data is from a quantitative study conducted by the NGO Triangle between March and July 2014 in Bambari.

31. In fact, the drivers are very often Muslim and several of them have been assassinated by anti-balaka militias, which resulted in strikes and an increase in salaries.

32. The Chadian president, M. Idriss Deby, took the decision to close the border between Chad and the Central African Republic in May 2014. This decision aimed to minimise infiltrations by CAR armed combatants in Chad. "Tchad-Centrafrrique : frontière fermée", *BBC Afrique*, 12 May 2014.

reflected in the scarcity of imported products such as oil³³. Therefore, it is difficult to isolate the "international presence" factor in this inflation.

However, there is a correlation between an increased international presence and price variations. In Bria and Bambari, cities which are a strategic location for a number of international organisations, prices are increasing more quickly than in rural areas. In Bangui, where most expatriates are concentrated, rent prices tripled from 2013 to 2014. Conversely, in Birao where very few NGOs are located, price increases have been minimal. In cities where the cost of living increases, a growing part of the local population becomes vulnerable. To address this, humanitarian and international organisations are recalculating the *per diem* allowance granted to all their employees – on average \$500. Meanwhile, the CAR population has no way of dealing with the price increases. It must paradoxically rely on an increase in food aid distributed by NGOs or UN agencies.

From employment to human capital: the missing link

The jobs created directly or indirectly by humanitarian aid organisations are insecure jobs, such as casual labour or street jobs (phone card vendors), and those who benefit for a few weeks from "cash for work" programmes. Due to this, these activities depend on the lifetime of the international organisation's project and/or the expatriate economy. In addition, the sudden increase in international aid in the Central African Republic may also have unintended effects on the employment market. Some CAR civil servants, often the most qualified, suffering from several months of salary arrears, are using their skills to benefit many international organisations. The arrival of new international employers, thus distorts the labour market. If the crisis prolongs, the movement of CAR civil servants to international employers will have lasting consequences for institutional capacity-building efforts by the EU, World Bank and France to jump-start the CAR government.

33. Analysis of the Bossangoa sub-prefecture market system, ACF, January 2015.

Moreover, some grievances are already being heard in Bangui against international NGOs who are neglecting the CAR workforce and employing other foreign humanitarian workers, including other Africans. This resentment is indicative of both the crisis of employment by an NGO, and the insufficient skills of the CAR staff/brain drain of the economy. The private sector is not immune to this problem, since in order to compensate for the lack of skilled CAR staff, foreign companies employ foreign African managers. Skilled labour is sorely lacking in this country where approximately one person in five has left their original town or found refuge beyond the borders, and where the education system has been neglected for several decades by successive governments. To address the unavailability of basic health services (including nurses), some medical NGOs are providing training *in situ*. However, this situation is a stop-gap which does sufficiently compensate for the striking lack of staff in the healthcare centres. In some cases, it has the opposite effect, with the departure newly trained nurses from the provinces to the capital in search of better employment. These training efforts correspond to the search for a quick solution to an immediate need. If NGOs create employment, they still do not create human capital, i.e. a workforce with sound vocational skills, which is sorely lacking in the CAR.

Conclusion

Emergency humanitarian aid is a necessity in the CAR and no one can currently predict when the country will be stable enough to become less dependent. However, emergency humanitarian work should not, in any event, make international organisations and NGOs blind to the complexity of the impacts of their intervention. Unfortunately, in any crisis, action and reflection are required. Now more than a year from start of international intervention in the CAR, the time for feedback is necessary, especially as many international organisations are planning for the future in this country and long-term post-conflict reconstruction. To this effect, several avenues of thought may be explored in light of the adverse effects documented in CAR.

Above all, faced with inflation, among other things, by the increased international presence, careful monitoring of the economic trends is necessary. A study should be conducted, not by the NGOs, but by the donors or consulting firms that have the necessary resources and distance. A comparative analysis of the economic forces and the nature of the inflation can be conducted by superimposing the economic data collected in the cities with the different levels of international presence. A comparison of price increases in different cities – Bangui (centre of the foreign presence), Bria (the second city where several NGOs are located), and Birao (where this is only one NGO) – would provide an overall idea of the actual impact of the international presence on inflation.

The question of employment and its continuity is more complex. However, it should be dealt with to avoid an employment crisis (particularly for permanent employment opportunities), which ties employment to the continued presence of the expatriate community. As soon as the international intervention is increased, vocational training programmes should be included in the NGOs' and donors' action plans. Some training courses which currently exist would thus be expanded. This would help to improve the employability of the CAR workforce and to move from the creation of insecure jobs to the creation of human capital. As a second step, the donors should think about funding the restoration of vocational training Organisations in Bangui, by targeting technical trades

(plumbers, electricians, masons, carpenters, etc.) who are currently in very high demand. Such training should be placed at the centre of the CAR's reconstruction strategy that still has not been outlined, but which will be a requirement for the future.

The transfer of skills should already be considered by the international NGOs (INGOs) in relation to this issue. INGOs should focus on forging partnerships with CAR NGOs to gradually transfer their expertise. This partnership may progress from learning to remote monitoring. While many international NGOs have no exit strategy, this type of programme would represent an exit strategy which would outline a certain continuity of the work accomplished in the nutritional, agricultural or other areas and avoid the trap of substitution. Too often, NGOs take care of the provision of a service of collective benefit without considering the handover to a CAR organisation. This transfer of skills should be expanded to eventually allow a "central africanisation" of aid, i.e. greater ownership of aid schemes by local organisations.

Finally, if initially tax revenues must be used to guarantee the proper functioning of the state apparatus through the payment of civil servants' salaries, later a potential fiscal surplus (from the point of view of progressive stabilisation and a resumption of economic activity) should be used to support job creation in the form of public procurement contracts.

It is undeniable that the search for immediate results may plunge the international community into short-termism. There are few opportunities in the midst of intervention for humanitarian aid organisations to discuss and share their methods and lessons learned. Even rarer is the opportunity to compile this data for the purpose of having an overall, but accurate vision of the success and failures of international action. Yet, it is through this type of work that the international community will manage to improve its intervention framework. This study is an initial step to encourage this work, to provide some avenues, and to integrate anticipation and assessment in the approach to intervention.

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