



The Central African Republic is going through protracted and complex humanitarian crisis with continuous insecurity, volatility and logistical constraints. Analyses conducted by the humanitarian community show that 2.5 million or 54% of Central Africans will need humanitarian assistance in 2018 (OCHA, 2017). Despite the hopes raised by Pope Francis' visit, the December 2015 legislative and presidential elections and the presence of the MINUSCA peacekeeping forces, the stabilisation efforts are undermined by the resurgence of on-going violence and continuous displacement of populations. However, if the need for emergency assistance increases, rehabilitation and conflict transformation initiatives will have to be modulated according to the actual needs of the affected population.

In order to meet these needs and to establish long-term responses that take into account the specificities of local contexts, the exceptional knowledge of national NGOs based on extensive and rich field experiences is paramount. To make this essential knowledge visible, valued and shared in accordance with internationally recognised criteria and methods, Caritas Centrafrique and Oxford Brookes University (more specifically CENDEP) decided to work together. This collaboration involves the development, training and dissemination of educational materials, and simple and practical toolkits on various aspects of data and knowledge management required for project development, effective and efficient implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as accountability of the organisation.



*“ One never keeps to oneself  
the acquired knowledge,  
it would be selfish ”*

(Participant of the November 2017 training)



It is recognised that reliable data and contextual information are an essential part of humanitarian action on ground. Without this data, aid is at best ineffective and at worst undermines stabilisation or reconstruction processes. Many debates and researches have emerged on the importance of 'evidence-based' and rigorous data for needs and impact assessments or for the associations' accountability. Others concern the integration of 'big data' in humanitarian action and new technologies in program development.

Yet, while the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul advocated the importance of localising aid and integrating systematically local actors and knowledge, the implicit knowledge gained on ground by local workers and communities remains invisible in field assessments and analyses. A localisation process can only be achieved by respect and full recognition of local expertise, and by strengthening skills and capacities of the local actors.



In order to draw from these experiences and to sustain the on-going efforts, Caritas Centrafrique and CENDEP continue their collaboration by setting up long-term support, sometimes individualised, mentoring scheme at national, regional and local levels, calling for changes in the institutional culture and individual behaviours. Self-reflection is also carried out in order to standardise the lessons learned and to compare them with the opinions and experiences of international experts. This will take place during a pilot workshop in Oxford in June 2018. This will lead to new initiatives on current issues, such as conflict-sensitive planning or long-term work based on transformative resilience, for which local NGOs, thanks to their presence in the field, are particularly well equipped.

**“  
I was doing data management  
without knowing it and  
it was in complete disarray”**

(Participant of the November 2017 training)

Since July 2017 and following this collaboration, a cycle of three trainings have been delivered, a practical pilot toolkit on research and data management methods has been created, and a mentoring scheme for 25 program officers from regional and national Caritas offices has been developed. Responding to the needs of localisation and contextualisation of humanitarian action, the team at the national office of Caritas Centrafrique led by F. Luk Delft, National Executive Secretary and CENDEP researchers under the direction of Dr. Brigitte Piquard, Reader in Humanitarianism and Conflict, are currently working on a training guide in reporting and data management and the creation of advanced tools specific to the project management cycle.

**“  
Effective humanitarian  
responses depend as much on  
knowledge as they do on  
funding or logistics”**

Knox Clarke, P. and Darcy, J. (2014) Insufficient evidence? The quality and use of evidence in humanitarian action. ALNAP Study. London: ALNAP/ODI.

## CENDEP / Oxford Brookes University

Founded in 1985, the Centre for Development and Emergency Practice (CENDEP) is a multidisciplinary centre bringing together humanitarian workers that want to improve their practices and academics developing practice-based approaches on topics such as transformative resilience, conflict transformation, adaptation of research methods and refugee studies.

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## Caritas Centrafrique

Founded in 1960, Caritas Centrafrique supports people whose fundamental rights have been violated. Caritas seeks to promote a world in which solidarity, social justice and the integral development of the human person prevails. Thanks to its presence in all dioceses and in more than 120 parishes, Caritas is able to assess, support and distribute the necessary assistance to the most vulnerable in the most remote areas of the country.



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