

Category: Community Participation

Photographer: Fabien Lapouge

Title: Men, blackboards and benches

Fabien Lapouge just returned from North East Democratic Republic of Congo, at the border of South Sudan and Uganda. He has been working there as a coordinator with the French NGO 'Première Urgence', assisting displaced persons through agricultural programs, seeds distribution and multiplication, food and shelter kits distribution and road rehabilitation.

The story behind the photo...

"The picture was taken in Goz Beida, eastern Chad. The Ganachour IDP site was one of the last to be opened in the area at the end of 2007 and beginning of 2008. Heads of displaced and host villages worked together to set up a school structure.

I like people coming together and taking pride in what is going on and to take direct part in it. For most villages, it was the first time that the children had access to a basic classroom and community teachers received training, giving great hope to households and showing example to many semi nomadic communities, unreached yet, in the area."



The first time I held a camera...

"It's been only a few years when I took a photo of a man looking at the horizon in Egypt at the Hapsetchout temple, but the camera wasn't mine and I got my own camera only in 2007, a few months before leaving for Chad."

For the last few years I have been working on...

"I have a master's degree in geopolitics and international relations. I used to work in Montreal in a daily welcoming centre for young people on issues around polytoxicomania, prostitution, and mental health. Then, I spent two years in Chad with the Jesuit Refugee Service, coordinating educational programs (preschool, primary, secondary) in the area of Goz Beida. Later on, I started working with Première Urgence in DRC where I worked until February 2011."

In the next 10 years, I want INEE to take up...

"I think international organizations working in education should think of educational schemes that would focus more on the need of the beneficiaries and their lifestyles. They need to take into account local habits and avoid coming with preconceived programs. I am convinced that we can come up with better guidelines and share experiences and ideas with local actors much better than what is presently done. Discussions and advocacy have to be brought to concerned ministries to set up and redefine their own educational models. Education contents have to be linked to the context and education has to find its own way. I also think that actors should emphasize the importance of education amongst nomadic communities, who feel injustice when talking about access to knowledge and recognition by state structures."