



# Newsletter n° 8 - October 2011

## New school year full of promises and successful start of secondary school



Primary school on October 3rd, day of the new school year



Rissa Mohamadou  
Primary school Director



Mohamed Ahmoudou  
College Director

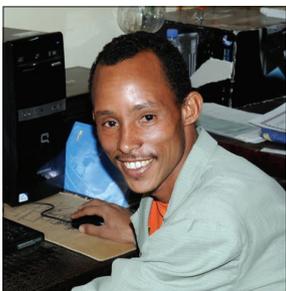
### Motivated Directors

« This third new school year went off quite smoothly and this year we have the pleasure to welcome a mistress among the teaching team. Proof of our good reputation crowds came to register in CI and most of pupils already attending last year would on no account leave the school. Everybody is prepared to work in a school that he is fond of. »

Rissa Mohamadou, Primary school Director

« Here are a few ideas I would like to pass on to these new schoolchildren. I want to create in them a spirit for learning since in my opinion no pupil is naturally lazy. It is necessary to see to it that the pupil may link what he learns at school and what he experiences from his life including about the current affairs. They need a strict but flexible frame. »

Mohamed Ahmoudou, College Director



Mouhamadoune Abdoussamed  
Teacher in TANAT school

### Why I am pleased to teach in Tanat school



*Mouhamadoune Abdoussamed, We are under impression that you feel well in this school. Why ?*

In my teacher work, what I like the most is having the feeling to learn every day something new and to see that the pupils confirm their registration and trust Tanat.

We have the means for working very well in pleasant premises, with appropriate school stationeries and a computer room that has no equivalent in all the district.

*Are there not also difficulties ? ...*

It is inevitable since we are faced with important level differences between the pupils, especially between those who arrive and those who have been there for two years. We must organize some remedial teaching (mostly in reading and pronunciation) after the tuition and even sometimes during the week end. I encourage all the pupils to make educative games with

PC. For the young ones, there are discovery games with letters (they enjoy a lot the game in which letters fall down and they must stop them falling by typing quickly on the proper key). For the older ones, it is mostly games of reasoning.

*Compared to the school that you have experienced, are there many differences?*

I achieved my schooling in a little village in the bush, 20 kms away from Abalak. We had the opportunity not to be numerous per class, but very few girls went to school. When I arrived in the secondary school, it was much harder since we were 60 per class and teachers were frequently absent.

*How do you see the future ?*

I am particularly optimistic for the girls because today they are numerous to study and afterwards they will be able to get a job.

#### Computer Classes for adults

Adult computer classes have been organized during the vacations so that Abalak inhabitants may have the opportunity to benefit from the school computer room. A diploma was granted to the participants who succeeded in the final exam based on Cap B2i. Thanks to this diploma, a person was able to find a job.



Mouhamadoune (on the left) delivers his diploma to a graduate of informatics.

### Sponsor a class or a pupil of Tanat school

Sponsorships are essential to provide scholarship to underprivileged children (pupil sponsorship) or to balance operating expenses ( teachers' wages...) of the school (class sponsorship). Tanat school needs you to receive more sponsorships and supports to offer more children the possibility to take in charge their future.

## Tanfirgan Great Pastoral Celebration

Peuls Niger cattle breeders' traditional general assembly took place from 25th to 30th September in Tanfirgan, in Abalak district.

It is the opportunity to converse and to touch on the numerous difficulties to which these nomad breeders of the area are faced.



Peuls cattle breeders in traditional dress..

It is also the chance, beyond the official speeches, to organize camels races, to play music and to dance around the "Tende" for the Tuaregs.

For Peuls people, these are « Guerroel » where men in traditional dress dance and sing. Made up, grimacing and rolling their eyes, they also participate to a beauty contest where women elect the most beautiful man.



## Abalak strongly stricken by a storm and floods

On last August 23rd, a strong storm gone with heavy rains during more than 24 hours beat down on Abalak. More than 200 houses and fences walls made in "banco" (dry clay brick) collapsed due to the floods.

Many families ended without shelter and were accommodated by their neighbourhood through solidarity. Oil and millet have been distributed to the most stricken victims by the town council. It was fifteen years since such a disaster did not happen .



Abalak houses collapsed after the 23rd August storm and floods

## Medical Visit for the Start of the New School Year

240 pupils and the teaching team have benefited from a medical visit for the start of the new school year. Compared to the previous visit in 2009 (it had not been possible to do it in 2010 due to insecurity), we notice that 25 % of the children suffer from decayed teeth that were never cured. On the contrary, there is a clear improvement in growth retardation

(weight and height) notably thanks to hygiene lessons and to a diet more complete (with a balanced light meal during the 10 o'clock break). The teachers' attention has been drawn to view and hearing problems so that they could take them into account. Some pathologies have been taken in charge (ie chronicle otitis...)

## Baptism Rituals in the Tuareg Tradition

Within Ineslaman Tuaregs, birth rituals take place on the 7th day after birth and are exclusively carried out by women.

1- **The bathing ritual** of the new born baby is a purification and welcome ritual for the new born baby within the believers' community. It is carried out by two blacksmith women linked to the maternal side family of the child. In the bathing water 7 goat droppings, 7 camel droppings, gold necklaces and silver hearings are added. The water so prepared constitutes a good prosperity omen. .

2- **The veil ritual** consists in making the baby turning 7 times in the air within the veils of 7 women whose first born children are boys. The point is to accustom the child to movement, something fundamental in a nomad society. Making the baby turning 7 times symbolises the steps that he will pass during his life .

3- **The charity ritual**, with a veil belonging to an outstanding woman the surround of the hair of the new born child is measured and the mould thus obtained is used as a measure that will be filled with millet. This millet is distributed to the women here present and to the people around. Everyone will chew it and will stick the mixture on the forehead, the cheeks and the nose. The new born baby

is thus recognized as a full member of the family cell .

4- **the ritual of cutting hair and scarification**: three hair tufts are cut off on the right side of the skull. This ritual symbolises the end of the foetal life for the new born child, a necessary cut for his integration into society. Scarifications are made by a blacksmith woman on the right temple. Blacksmith women are the midwives who act in the critical moments of the cycle of life, the mediators between the visible and invisible world .

5- **Naming the baby** : while blood is bleeding on the temple, men cut the throat of an animal and the name of the child is given at this moment sharp.

6- **The decoration** : a bone from a foreleg of the slit animal is crushed and the medulla is squeezed out and then mixed with henna. Afterwards the child's mouth, eyebrows, feet, palms, head and forehead are coated with this mixture.

The 7<sup>th</sup> day women rituals, from the ritual bathing to the hair's sacrifice and scarifications mean a second gestation that obliterates in a way the biological birth so that the child is born in the image of the original myths .

## TANAT School Project

Faced with the condition of the educative system in the Abalak department of Niger, inhabitants gathered within the ONODEP association chaired by the mayor Billou Mohamed Moc-tar, to open and manage a school with the support of the French TANAT association.

The TANAT pedagogic plan is :

- To welcome children, boys and girls, irrespective of social, cultural and religious background.
- To give the young entrusted to Tanat school on top of a sound academic education, human training to prepare them for behaving in life like trustworthy men and women.
- To foster a family atmosphere that allows young people to feel loved, accepted, supported and valued.

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