



BEYOND THE HEADLINES

AN OVERVIEW OF MIGRATION IN CHAD



IOM strongly believes that human and orderly migration is beneficial for migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM works with its partners in the international community to help resolve operational issues of migration; to increase understanding of the challenges; to encourage economic and social development through migration; and to preserve the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

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WHY GO “BEYOND THE HEADLINES” ?

Aware that visibility on migration in Chad remains low, and the growing association of migrants being only those crossing the Mediterranean as it consumes headlines around the world, IOM in Chad launched an initiative to shed light on different forms of migration in collaboration with a team of 8 young Chadian photographers and journalists.

“Beyond the Headlines” aims to give migrants in Chad an opportunity to tell their stories and share their experiences, demonstrating the multidimensional reality of migration in the country and its benefits when done in an humane and orderly manner.

Discover in this book firsthand accounts and stories from entrepreneurs, students, returnees, refugees, internally displaced persons, activists, ministers and people who have suffered from irregular migration, to see how migration has played a role in all of their lives.



DETERMINATION

A NEW LIFE IN CHAD

After arriving to Chad in January 2014, following the crisis in the Central African Republic, Malik, of Muslim obedience has just obtained a degree in management sciences at the private Emi-Koussi University in N'Djamena. For him, after obtaining the BAC in 2013, he did not expect to leave his country in such tragic circumstances: the war. After militias invaded his neighborhood, his house being destroyed and feeling complete desolation, he knew he had to save his life at any cost, prompting him to flee.

"Multiple diplomatic representations began to repatriate their nationals, I went to the embassies of other nationalities, but they rejected me. I spent two days at the airport and met people who spent weeks there because it was impossible to backtrack. The day I showed up in front of the area where Chadians registered, by a miracle the interviewer observed me for a few minutes and told the others who were with him to let me go along with the other youth since there were a lot of people there. This is how I began my journey to N'Djamena, Chad. Yet there were several questions bothering me, what would I do once there? Where would I sleep and eat?

Once we arrived in N'Djamena, we were taken to a social center where I spent three months. The number of people staying there was plethoric and one day they told us we had to leave and would be taken to the Gaoui refugee camp (northeast of N'Djamena). The conditions there were difficult, ten of us sleeping under a small tent, and theft occurring often. Unable to cope with this situation, seven of my friends and I left the camp to return to the social center that had initially welcomed us, where we met a UNHCR team that registered refugees. Here again we faced another test, having to either speak the SANGO language (official language of the Central African Republic) or present papers that proved we were really Central Africans.

After registration, I was taken to another social center and then to a refugee camp in Goré, in the South of Chad. Even though the atmosphere was cordial, I missed my family incredibly and learned my mother was murdered by militias, and my sister and cousin were missing, this was in 2015. Although I felt discouraged, I could not give up because I had to rebuild my life.

After some time, some individuals arrived at the camp to inform us of the DAFI scholarship program for students. Previously, in Bangui I was working on my BAC and had the papers with me which I used to apply for the scholarship. There were only six places offered for more than 80 students at various levels. After several tests, I successfully passed, and enrolled at the University of Moundou with other friends in the department of Accounting and Finance. It was not easy, we were behind academically and needed to catch up with classes to prepare for exams. Despite this difficulty and the strikes that arose, I received my license in Accounting and Finance.

I lived with a friend, with whom I built a very strong friendship. Unfortunately, he eventually died of illness after he decided to return to his parents at the camp in Goré for the end of year celebrations. It was a blow for me, I was demoralized. My journey continued for 4 more years, in which during this time many of us had to abandon the courses.

I really needed to finish my studies and as I still benefited from this scholarship for an academic year, I enrolled at Emi-Koussi University in N'Djamena through the same organization. I chose to pursue a degree in management sciences. My scholarship contract has just finished and although I applied to several companies and organizations for internships, nothing is on the horizon.

[The thing that really touched me was the generosity of the Chadians; in Africa we are united and sociable.](#) In all the centers and camps I passed through, kind-hearted people would bring us food, and even sometimes at the market traders who realized that we were refugees would give us items for free.

Chad is my destiny; the events that took place in the Central African Republic caused many young people to flee to Europe, as they thought there they could do better (I cannot judge them), but [I believe in Africa](#). It is enough that there is stability and peace as well as the creation of job opportunities to limit the drain of skills, from the able arms of Africa to Europe. I only hope to find a small job to support myself and if possible contribute my stone to the construction of Chad. I do not think I'm going back to Central Africa because my own rejected me. Militias would shout in the neighborhoods “go home” referring to us, the Muslims. For me it is a grace to live in Chad and I will always be indebted to this country.

Story: [Harmony Bealoum Matibeye](#) (Journalism Student)
Photo: [Eric Djimtoloum](#) (Independant Photographer)

DJAMILA
CHADIAN

A DREAM TO WORK AS A HUMANITARIAN

Djamilla is a resilient and dedicated Chadian working with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as a part of the response to the Maiduguri crisis in Nigeria.

A veterinarian by training, she always had the hope of working in the humanitarian world. Yet, when she was rejected for a job with a UN agency due to her lack of English, she decided to go to Accra to learn the language. After some time in Ghana, she discovered a position working with the resettlement program for refugees in Chad, financed by the United States and managed by IOM Ghana. Given that she spoke French, Sudanese Arabic and now English, something triggered in her mind: “this post is for me!”. After applying, and completing an interview in English and French, she managed to obtain her first job with IOM in Chad as an Operations Assistant.

On the way to commence the new position, she was confronted with her first test. After missing her scheduled bus for Goré, she found a place on another, full of travelers where she had no choice but to sit in the back. A few hours later, she was awakened by the sound of cries and flames; the bus had an accident that killed 12 people; in which her life was saved due to her position in the back. Wounded, traumatized and lost, but determined, she continued on her path, and reported without delay to her first day.

After 8 years of aiding returnees, displaced persons, and other migrants in various situations with passion and altruism, she finally landed an international position in Maiduguri where she has been working for the past two years as a Project Manager for the distribution of non-food items (NFI) and Area Coordinator for Bama, in the state of Borno. When asked why she agreed to migrate for work, especially in such a challenging context, she responds “I always dreamed of working in the humanitarian world, to serve vulnerable people and the mandate of IOM has always fascinated me”. For Djamilla, to pursue an international career is certainly a feat, but [leaving her country to help those in need is what she is proud of and her greatest achievement](#). To work away from family, in a context with great instability, where “we always have our hands on our hearts” she says, is not easy but her work is not finished “I still have more to do for these people”.

Story: Kimani DeShields-Williams (Program Support Officer) & Adeline Tannone (Program Support Assistant)
Photo: Kimani DeShields-Williams



MARIE

CHADIAN

TO STUDY OUTSIDE OF YOUR COUNTRY....

“ My name is Marie, a young Chadian originally from the department of la Kabbia, in Mayo-Kebbi Est. I am a student at the University in N'gaoundéré, Cameroon in the department of Law and a member of the national women's football team, Sao of Chad. When I arrived to N'gaoundéré, everything seemed complicated and it was very hard for me to integrate into the new society. It rained all the time in Cameroon, and if it was not for the fact that there were many ongoing strikes in the Universities in Chad, I would not have gone there to study.

Yet, I persevered for a few more months, and eventually integrating became easier. I began to realize that I had the opportunity to [discover a new country, a new city and even new people, an experience that would be priceless for my personal development](#). I can say that today, thanks to my experience as a migrant, being a student studying in Cameroon, I have learned so many things, and built many new friendships.”

Story/Photo: Minnamou Djoubso Ezechiel (Journalism Student)



BUSINESS MINDED

CHAD, THE COUNTRY NEXT DOOR

Mama Jackie, as her friends and family affectionately call her, is the owner of a restaurant called “La Tortue” in the Moursal district of N'Djamena.

She is a trained designer and restaurateur, married and mother of 2 who has lived in Chad for 27 years. She arrived in Chad in the early 90's initially for a family visit as her niece is half Chadian, yet she also discovered the country and its economic potential for the restaurant business, something she could easily do after having lived for more than 15 years in France and where she learned an immense about the sector.

After her family visit, which lasted only a few weeks, she went back to Cameroon and then returned later to settle down and start her business with the support of her husband.

What comes to mind when she hears the word migration? She responds : “the desire to go to Europe in the quest for well-being, regardless of the sacrifices that must be made.” “But the West is not an Eldorado”, she adds.

For having lived over a decade in Europe, Mama Jackie says that “you can live better in Africa. One can undertake in one's country with the limited means at one's disposal.” Although it is difficult, sometimes with the energy problems that arise and sometimes impact her activities, she expressed that only [perseverance and a job well done pays off](#).

Africa is rich, its culture even richer and her restaurant is a crossroads of different African cuisines. At the restaurant “La Tortue”, she employs more than 5 young people who work among others, as servers and cooks, and from time to time, she shares her experience, giving small trainings to youth who wish to pursue a career in the restaurant sector.



Story: [Harmony Bealoum Matibeye \(Journalism Student\)](#)
Photo: [Eric Djimtolou \(Independent Photographer\)](#)



PIERRE

BURKINABÉ



WE ARE NEVER BETTER THAN AT HOME

Married and father of 6, Pierre, 45, is a stylist, designer and owner of “Balmaya Couture”, a complex encompassing a sewing shop and a boutique that focuses on African clothing in general, especially from Burkina Faso. For him, this is an opportunity to allow Chadians to get to know the culture with his famous “Danfani” cloth.

From a young age, he was fascinated by the history of Chad, but lived in total confusion. On one hand, his father continuously told him Chad and Burkina-Faso are two countries, brothers and friends with their legendary hospitality. On the contrary, his friends shared that Chad is synonymous with desert and war. Curious and having a love for art, in particular fabric, he found the opportunity to visit and discover the country at a craft fair in 2003 where he was invited to do an exhibition, however the pleasure was short-lived. Upon return to Burkina, following the exhibition, he guarded his aspiration to one day live in Chad. After being invited a second time for a craft fair in 2011, he finally decided to stay in what he now considers [his second homeland](#). “Balmaya Couture” was launched in the same year, with the support of his “Chadian brothers” as he calls them.

When asked what is the first image that comes to mind when talking about migration, Pierre expressed that he is amazed to see African youngsters crossing the desert and the sea to Europe at their own risk, just because they are looking for a better life. Some survivors arrive safely and discover another reality on the spot, others lose their lives as a result of the extreme travel conditions; he says, “happiness is not only in Europe.”

For Pierre, one cannot live better than at home, and with “Balmaya Couture”, he has given a second chance to some of his brothers who attempted the adventure to Europe. However, since 2016, turnover has dropped drastically, and some have left for Burkina Faso to return to their families after a few years of work in Chad. Despite this situation, which almost contributed to the closure of the small business that employs nearly 10 people including young Chadians, Burkinabes and Ivorians, [he perseveres](#). Pierre urges African policymakers to implement youth employment policies so that they can stay home and contribute to Africa’s development.

Story: Beauloum Matibeye Harmony (Journalism Student)

Photo: Eric Djimtoloum (Independent Photographer)



AHMADOU

CHADIAN

RETURN AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT

TRANSPORT FOR THE COMMUNITY

"I am a transporter, that is, a driver by profession since my time in the Central African Republic (CAR). I returned to Chad following the armed conflict in 2014 and am currently living in the Kobiteye site for returnees where I am the current Vice President.

When we left CAR, my family and I left with my Toyota brand van and it is thanks to this means of transportation that we have been able to take care of ourselves for years.

Once we arrived in Chad, we started with transporting people from Goré to Yamodo, Beboungai and Moundou. With this truck, I support my family of 9 children and can contribute in one way or another by giving access to the sites of returnees, villages and surrounding cities."

Story: Minnamou, Djoubou Ezéchiél (Journalism Student)
Photo: Rhovys Mardochée (Communications Officer, ADES)

TO BE A MIGRANT, FOR ME, MEANS...

“To be a migrant is not synonymous with someone who is waiting for the help of others. It is true, that forced migration, such as ours puts us in a precarious situation and dependent on others. However, for me, to be a migrant means to work to support my needs and contribute in any way I can to the development of the country that has hosted us, which happens to be our own country, Chad.

I am a Chadian, returned from Bozoum a city in the Central African Republic (CAR). When I was in CAR, I worked in diamond mining, but fled in 2014. After settling in the Kobiteye site in Chad in 2014, I started farming by renting the fields from the host villages because I had no other option and had to adapt to another life. I grow millet and sesame every year and am able to harvest enough. For example, in 2018, I had 36 bags of millet and shared about 7 bags with my brothers and neighbors who were unable to cultivate, and the rest allowed me to take care of my family. I count myself among those who work to feed others because the sale of my cereals at Goré market is another contribution to the economy of the country.”

Story: Minnamou, Djoubsou Ezechiel (Journalism Student)
Photo: Rhovys Mardochee (Communications Officer, ADES)





FANÉ
CHADIAN

AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET TO KNOW HER COUNTRY



“My parents migrated to the Central African Republic (CAR) in the 70s after leaving Am-Timan (Chad) due to the armed conflict that would not allow them to live in peace. We lived in the capital, Bangui, and were citizens, Central Africans. The war that broke out in CAR in 2013 forced us to migrate to Chad, as we are of Chadian origin.

In CAR, I was a shopkeeper, and had everything I needed. After coming to Chad and settling in Danamadja, I thought it would be useful to start my business again here. Today, thanks to my small shop, I am able to take care of my family of 9, including my 18-year old daughter who has been sick for the last year. For me, [migration has been a way for my children and I to discover our country, Chad](#), and to make our contribution to its development.”

Story: Ezéchiel Djoubou Minnamou (Journalism Student)

Photo: Rhovys Mardochée (Communications Officer)

EVERYTHING BURNED

Famata has lived at the Foulatari displacement site in the Lake Chad region for 4 years, after fleeing her native island of Choukouli following an attack by Boko Haram. She is the mother of 8 children.

“Boko Haram arrived during the night and quickly started burning everything”, she explains, “all everyone could think to do was take the hands of their children and run, without thinking, without looking back, just try to escape, [if you did not flee, they would kill you](#)” she said.

On foot, she fled with her family to what is now Foulatari, along with other friends and neighbors who escaped the attack. They all had only the clothes on their back, thinking they would one day be able to go back and gather their belongings, some money, anything from the life they knew. Yet, when she returned just to grab a few items, her husband had been killed and everything was burned, all her animals, house, every piece of her life “[they burned everything, nothing remained](#)” she expressed.

Famata has now found her place at Foulatari, being one of the strong voices for the community and playing a major role in the preparation for community events. She takes pride in her role, smiling when others enjoy the feasts that she prepares, and also in resolving community conflicts that arise. She emphasized the continued need for support, especially for the youth of the community, as poverty is rampant, access to water is becoming increasingly challenging and they are struggling day to day to meet their basic needs. Yet despite the adversity she faces, Famata remains positive, motivated and determined to make the best of her situation, not only for herself but for her community.

Story/Photo: Kimani DeShields-Williams (Program Support Officer)



FAMATA

CHADIAN



MAHAMADOU

BURKINABÈ

DARK ADVENTURES

“IT WAS SLAVERY”

“I am Mahamadou, from the village of Ngarangou in Burkina Faso. I came to Faya in search of work, after a friend, who lied to me, said I could easily find it in Chad.

I was a docker in my country when I told myself, why not try a new adventure? That is when I decided to leave for Europe. Initially, I tried going to Cameroon and after Gabon, but it was not successful. So I returned home and sold my land for 700,000 FCFA and set out for Niger to reach Libya.

[I spent 5 years in Libya, where I discovered hell on earth. I was tortured and I lost half of my teeth.](#) I could no longer continue to Europe. Yet, I learned a new trade, masonry, during my time there working on construction sites. While I was working on a site, I met a Chadian who told me he had an uncle who was looking for workers to construct a villa. So along with some others, I set out for Faya. To our surprise, it was not what we hoped for; it was pure slavery and very difficult.

We finished the villa, but the owner refused to pay us and said we had to build another before being paid. We informed the police, but no one helped. Faced with the situation, we knew we could not do anything and accepted it. All I want is to go back home and start a new life, even if all I have to show for this journey is a new skill, I can get my life back with that.”

Story: Saturnin Asnan Non-Doum (Journalism Student)
Photo: Eden Oulatar Thomas (Independent Photographer)

TAKING HIS CHANCE

“I am originally from Kornon, a small town in Sudan. I abandoned my studies after level CM1, due to a lack of financial resources; my parents are from the countryside and their financial situation could not permit me to continue my education. Many of my friends spoke about the gold mines in Chad, so I thought to myself it would be good to at least take a chance. So, I crossed the border by foot to work in the mines. Despite the harsh conditions, I persevered because my future depended on it.

After two weeks , the military arrived and told us we must disperse, and I returned empty handed. Now, I hope to restart my studies, and one day become a nurse to save lives.”

Story: Saturnin Asnan Non-Doum (Journalism Student)

Photo: Eden Oulatar Thomas (Independent)



TIDJANI

SUDANESE

A photograph of a woman wearing a light green headscarf and a blue headband, looking off to the side with a serious expression. She is holding a young child in her arms. Another child is partially visible in the background. The setting appears to be outdoors with a textured, light-colored wall.

SOÏBA

NIGERIEN

HOPE TO RETURN

“I am a Nigerien, married with 4 children from Zongondachi. After my marriage, it was very difficult to take care of my children, although my husband tried to do small things, they just did not produce enough earnings to support our family. The anger and frustration forced me to leave for Faya, where I hoped to eventually make it to Europe. Here in Faya, I go door to door looking for clothes to wash, a small way to make a little bit of money. The two years that have passed in Faya, my life has not changed, thus [I have decided to return to the family I left behind.](#)”

Story: Saturnin Asnan Non-Doum (Journalism Student)
Photo: Eden Oulatar Thomas (Independent Photographer)

ANOTHER REALITY

"I was born in Ngarangou in Burkina Faso and my name is Seni. It was the adventure that led me to Chad while I was in Libya trying to reach Europe. I am a public works engineer, but finding a job is a real problem, this is why I embarked on the journey that first brought me to Libya.

Before the Arab Spring I made my living easily in Libya without dreaming of going to Europe or arriving one day in Faya (Chad), since I worked with an Egyptian who treated me well. After the fall of Gaddafi, chaos ruptured; life was not the same anymore. [I was kidnapped many times and shot 4 times](#); there everyone has a weapon even foreigners. Among the chaos, a Chadian told me that his uncle wanted to build a house. I thought that in Chad, the situation would be better, and I would be able to eventually go home; I was sick of the life I was living in Libya. We agreed on an amount of 5,653,000FCFA (USD 9,592) for a villa. Curiously, once we arrived in Faya things changed, and I paid the price. We have experienced suffering of all kinds and death threats. We have tried to contact the local authorities but to no avail. So I have to explain the situation to my friends. [My only ambition is to go back to see my family](#). I lost everything and I will never start such an adventure again."

Story: Saturnin Asnan Non-Doum (Journalism Student)
Photo: Eden Oulatar Thomas (Independent Photographer)

**Please note, all migrants interviewed in this section were assisted by IOM*



SENI

BURKINABÈ

SERVING OTHERS

FROM LEBANON WITH LOVE

“I really appreciate Chadians, for their piety and hospitality whether Christian or Muslim, it is thanks to my migration to Chad, that I discovered this virtue.

I am Aida, a religious sister, Lebanese migrant of the Sisters of the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary , and Director of the Centre Al-Mouna, an institution birthed from migration. I am originally from Mont Liban, of Jdeidet El Metn next to the capital of Beirut. Professionally, I am a social worker and community organizer. Before coming to Chad, I worked 22 years as a University professor and worked with CARITAS International in Lebanon with the Palestinian migrants displaced by the wars in the South of the country.

For me, migration is a good thing, it allows us to change up the routine, discover new things and learn lessons, if we know how to take advantage of it. Also, at Centre Al-Mouna, we are an association that accepts everyone, without exception. Personally, I am pushing for Chadians to reach a level where ethnic and religious barriers don't stop us from accepting each other. My contribution, as a migrant, is to accept other migrants, as Chadians have accepted me, so we can live in love and pacifically, this is very important.”

Story/Photo: Ezechiel Minnamou Djoubou (Journalism Student)



SISTER AIDA

LEBANESE



HERVÉ

IVORIAN

WHAT IF WE STAY?

Passionate, devoted, energetic and motivated, these are words that describe Hervé, a young migrant from Burkina Faso whose mission is to raise awareness on the harsh reality of irregular migration.

After losing multiple friends to the dangerous journey to Europe, he created “Mably Inter” an association which utilizes his own talents as an artist to spread messages on the reality of what really happens when trying to reach Europe.

“When we are young, we are taught everything is better in Europe, do your best so one day you can make it to Europe, the idea of migration is put in our mind as children” he expresses when explaining factors that contribute to African youth taking the chance to embark on the journey.

In recognition of the phenomenon, claiming the lives of many, he promotes the message “[And what if I Stay](#)” four powerful words that encourage youth in particular to think twice before taking the dangerous risk. Today, his efforts have developed a network of like-minded individuals working to spread the message in Cameroon, the Ivory Coast and Morocco. Hervé hopes to expand the network throughout Africa, to raise awareness among the youth that Europe is not their only option to be successful.

Story/Photo: Kimani DeShields-Williams (Program Support Officer)



ALIXE

CHADIAN

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

ANOTHER UNIVERSE

"I was born in China and two years after my birth, due to my parent's job, we moved to Algeria. From there, it was France where I completed my primary studies. Eventually, I lived a year in Belgium, then much later, studied in Germany and Italy and again in France.

After obtaining my baccalaureate in Chad, I learned German while staying in Germany, and then did a linguistic stay in Italy before starting my studies in Valenciennes, France, where I obtained my master's degree in Applied Foreign Languages (LEA) in Law and International Affairs (English-German), after which I registered in DESS Trilingual Negotiator of International Trade. In Valenciennes, I had to adapt to a different education system, that required me to be very independent. In addition, not being a scholarship holder, I had to find a job to support myself and meet various expenses such as rent, transportation, study fees, etc. I eventually managed to balance three jobs during the day in addition to my courses. Yet, this is the life of many foreign students, so the situation was nothing extraordinary.

My diploma in my pocket, during my years of searching for employment, I was able to multiply my professional experiences, before finding the opportunity to return to Chad with a promise of employment won during a recruitment forum in Paris. However, it did not go as planned, but I persevered and found a job at the German Embassy as an administrative assistant, launched my free advertising newspaper and created my first marketing and training consulting firm.

Eventually I left the country and five years later, with my training in communication to my credit and having taken a liking to self-entrepreneurship, I returned. The desire to return to work in Chad or, even in Africa, in addition to the fact that it corresponds to my professional project, has been reinforced by the sentiment during my career that, « what we can do elsewhere, may perhaps only be a drop of water in the sea, while at home, it can represent a significant contribution. »

Former Minister of Posts and New Technologies of Information and Communication, I am now involved in the private sector at different levels and am also a member of the Executive Office of the Network of African Women Ministers and Parliamentarians in Chad (REFAMP / T), responsible for Commissions. I also support young entrepreneurs in their initiatives. [Regarding migration, I think that being able to travel or even migrate, when the basic conditions are met, is an advantage because the journey trains and educates you.](#) On a personal level, that's the benefit I think I've received. Yet, before embarking on any travel , [you must know why and how you are going; choose your destination based on your objective by being informed;](#) know what you want to do there and make sure that the chosen destination will make it possible to carry out your goal because it is easy to get lost on the way or to be the victim of others with bad intentions. Leaving home is never easy and you have to prepare yourself to face many difficulties, including material and psychological ones. A person who leaves is not lost, but an asset, as long as he does so under suitable conditions, safely, is able to accept the possible failure of the experience and has the courage to return at any time and rebuild.

Story: [Alix D. Naimbaye Ndolénodji](#)
Photo: [Kimani DeShields-Williams \(Program Support Officer\)](#)



THE LAND OF THE TOUMAI, THE CRADLE OF HUMANITY

Madam Madeline Alingue is the current Minister of Touristic Development, Culture and Arts, a dynamic woman who has traveled the world, and established a research center; but along the way always kept one thing; the love for her country.

Daughter of a former Ambassador, the idea of traveling was not something new, which may explain her love for cultures.

When she was 6-years old, her family crossed the Atlantic Ocean to live in the United States and 4 years later they moved to France. Although she easily integrated into the French lifestyle, and successfully completed her degree in Linguistics, she never felt that the country was where she would settle.

After applying and receiving a scholarship to study in China, she experienced as she describes a “rupture” upon discovering a love for China. Although traveling required her to leave the life she knew, she wanted to discover the world. In China, she found their lifestyle ironically similar to the African culture, and she took every opportunity to discover other countries including Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Indonesia and others. In the mid-1990s, she returned to Chad in hopes of finding employment. Yet, that plan did not work out and she decided to join her family in France. However, life pushed her to take a different turn, this time to Latin America; Bogota, Colombia with her husband, where she became a mother and created her own path.

Yearning to improve her Spanish, she quickly enrolled and started to study International Relations. However, there was a major gap, as there were no courses related to her own continent of Africa; this is where opportunity presented itself and she did not shy away. With just a few students interested in listening to her teachings about Africa, she became a professor, creating her own curriculum and eventually a research program. After 23 years of living, learning and breaking barriers in Latin America, she returned to Chad during the 2011 Libyan crisis, where she started working with IOM, aiding the return of Chadian migrants stranded in Libya. Yet, it did not take long for her to start climbing the political ladder to the point she was [nominated as a representative of the permanent mission of Chad for the United Nations Security Council](#), the only woman on a team of 12. “We worked 24 hours, 7 days a week”, she expressed reflecting on her role as the Political Coordinator for 2 years.

A career that includes Director of the Cabinet adjoint, Secretary of State for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Communications, Minister of Telecommunications, Professor, humanitarian and a woman with the curiosity to discover the world, she has a unique perspective on migration; “[Migration is natural](#)” she expressed, “[It opens your mind, body and soul](#). It can be a response to crisis, it allows people to overcome”. Yet, her love for her country is evident “We are the land of the Toumai, the cradle of humanity. Chad is a passage way, a refuge, a country of potential.”

Story: Kimani DeShields-Williams (Program Support Officer) & Adeline Tannone (Program Support Assistant)
Photo: Kimani DeShields-Williams



PHOTOS

Minnamou, Djoubssou Ezechiel
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