

ACTIVITY
REPORT

2018



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Dear friends,

You will probably be surprised to discover our new formula in this report. With this design, the committee wanted to offer a space of expression to those who are invested in RAJO or those who benefit from our solidarity initiatives. Beyond an activity report, we offer you here an introduction and an immersion into the heart of our actions.

Programmes such as literacy campaigns, the Galmudug Cultural Club's socio-cultural activities and support for Iftiin Primary Education schools are helping to achieve encouraging objectives. That is why we will renew them in the years to come.

After 2 years of need assessments, we have developed a project to implement a dual vocational training system in the heart of Somalia. The system is now ready to go and we look forward to launching the *Vital Darbellay Training Centre*.

In Valais, the fourth edition of the «Not So Different» Festival was a great success. We are delighted that this friendly, eclectic and unifying event has found its audience.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to our dynamic committee, particularly the unconditional support of Pierre Darbellay. His commitment has not been limited to chairing our association over the past four years, it also led to the establishment, almost a decade ago, of the extraordinary RAJO adventure and the exciting developments it has since taken.

I wish you an enjoyable read and send you, dear friends, my warmest greetings.

Your support is our strength!

Mahamed Abdi

President of RAJO

IN SOMALIA

Literacy campaign

During the 7th edition which took place in six villages during the Summer of 2018, more than 2,000 adults and children learned to read and write.

Support for basic training

A contribution from RAJO allowed Iftiin Education & Development to increase its capacity by opening two new classes equipped with a computer room with 20 computers.

Galmudug Cultural Center

Cultural events, conferences and various activities are continuing in the community hall, which has since become THE main meeting point of the Galmudug region.





IN SOMALIA (CONTINUED)

Partnership with the International Social Service (ISS)

The newly established partnership allowed ISS to take advantage of the RAJO network in central and southern Somalia. During the year, several interventions were carried out in the field under the coordination of Mahamed Abdi.

Birth of the «Vital Darbellay Vocational Training Center» in the Galmugud region

The press conference of March 8th 2018 marked the start of a large-scale project for the introduction of vocational training inspired by the Swiss dual system. On behalf of RAJO, a market analysis was conducted in the field from February to May 2018. In parallel, our association consultants in Switzerland and Africa who constitute various representatives of NGOs let us benefit from their experiences to evaluate partnership opportunities. Based on the results of this preliminary phase, the first milestone will be laid as early as 2019.





IN VALAIS

The «Not so different» Festival

The fourth edition of the «Not So Different» Festival which took place on June 9th at the Ferme-Asile in Sion, Switzerland, was once again a great success. As usual, on this day RAJO promoted sharing, intercultural exchanges, various workshops, dances and concerts, punctuated with gastronomical treats. The Sion Leisure and Meetings Center once again supported the organization of the event. The AVRE association worked on the day by leading a creative workshop. The evening was animated by the concerts of Mize, Voltige, Lamine Konté and Charlotte Parfois.

In2Dance students' show

For the second year in a row, the In2Dance School officials donated to our association the amount collected during the performance of their students.



Catering service

Reinforced by the partnership established in 2017 with the Office of Asylum of Canton of Valais (OASI), the catering service continued at a frantic pace. Like the festival day and the «Fête des 5 Continents» in Martigny, they were also present from October 12th to 14th at the Correspondence Festival (Lettres de la soie) in Mase. Their services are also increasingly solicited by various institutions and in the context of private meetings.



MEET WITH...

Osman Mo'allim Hassan - Volunteer coordinator of RAJO in Somalia



My journey

I was born in 1980 in central Somalia; my family moved to Mogadishu when I was 6 years old. That's where I attended all my classes, before going to Sudan, to complete an undergraduate degree in Economics and Political Science. I then joined relatives in the United Kingdom, where I continued my studies, with a Bachelor's degree in economics and a Master's degree in Development Policy at the School of Oriental and African Studies, affiliated with the University of London.

When I left my native country at the age of 20, the civil war raged there. My older brother had been killed, the population was living in total insecurity, training opportunities did not exist, health clinics and other services in service to the population were paralyzed.

Since that time, I have always thought about my friends, born in the same region as me, but who had no choice but to stay there. The desire to make a contribution to improving their living conditions has never left me. Once established in London, I began to develop, with some friends who were on a similar path to mine, educational projects for vulnerable populations in my country of origin. Thus was born in London, in May 2007, the association Iftiin Education and Development, of which I am one of the founding members, and with which RAJO collaborates closely.

Back in Somalia in 2008 I opened, under Iftiin, a first primary school in the center of the country, where we organized various courses. In this region I found people my age, who lived on a day to day basis, without any projects or plans for the future. Some of them followed my training, then supported me in setting up new schools and launching literacy campaigns.

Today I live in Mogadishu. Living conditions are not easy, everything is chaotic, the political situation is very unstable and the economic future is uncertain. However, I feel useful here, which allows me to overcome the difficulties of everyday life.

I am Vice-Chancellor of the International University of Somalia (SIU), located in Mogadishu, which hosts more than 4000 students in eight faculties.



My commitment to RAJO

The day I met Mahamed Abdi in London in 2009, I immediately decided to support RAJO. Abdi, who had left Somalia at the age of 13, impressed me with his sensitivity towards social issues there, the depth of his concern for the situation in his native country and his determination to help. We talked a lot; I described to him the realities of the field and warned him against actions that might be too ambitious for such a devastated place. He eventually went to see for himself. It has been almost ten years since we have been working closely together. Despite my busy schedule, I am grateful to be able to coordinate the activities of RAJO (and Iftiin). My motivations are multiple;

among them :

- All I can learn from such beautiful collaborations;
- My passion for humanitarian projects that I can lead and follow very closely;
- Mahamed Abdi's determination to help his native country, and the excellent contact we maintain;
- The trust that the RAJO committee places in me, and the volunteer commitment of its members;

The successes achieved by the numerous actions of RAJO (a community hall became THE meeting place of the region, more than 5'000 people learned to read and write during these last 8 years, about forty adults provide for their needs after having followed the sewing training, essential medical equipment is sent to the hospitals, food is brought to the poorest, a sports academy was created and allows the organization of local tournaments, etc. etc.).

In addition, I am deeply touched by the idea that so many noble projects are planned and funded by nationals of Switzerland or elsewhere, ready to help a Somali community that they barely

know, or don't know at all. A community that they do not necessarily share cultural, political or religious values with. I am proud to collaborate with people who have such great hearts, and happy to contribute voluntarily to the activities of RAJO.

MEET WITH...

Ubah Ahmed Warsame - Beneficiary of a RAJO project in Somalia



I am 41 years old, I am a widow and mother of five children. I do not receive any external financial support and must provide for my family's needs alone.

I used to sell tea in the streets of Adado. I had to struggle a lot to give my children the bare necessities. I could not send them to school, dress them or feed them properly. Then in 2013 I had the opportunity to follow the sewing training conducted by RAJO. After completing the course successfully, I was admitted as a member of the RAJO cooperative team. Since then I have been working at the cooperative that makes school uniforms. In addition, as I was able to receive a sewing machine, I opened my own small sewing workshop at home. I am so grateful because I can now care for my family.

MEET WITH...

Yassin Mohammadi – Member of the RAJO Committee

My journey

I must have been born around 2001 in Garmab, a small village in Ghor province in central Afghanistan. At home we do not take note of the date of birth. My local authorities estimated my age when my parents had a tazkera (identity document) issued in my name. As soon as I reached the age of 7, I went to school in the morning and worked every afternoon with my two brothers in the small business founded by our father, who was a commander in the army and often absent. I have a sister, but I do not really know her. She is much older than me and is married and living in Iran. Like all the children of the village, I had to work a lot, but things felt like they were going well with my mother, my brothers and our father who joined us between missions.

Suddenly the safety of our family became threatened. My father's attempts to send us to live in a safer part of Afghanistan were not successful. My loved ones were slaughtered, my life became broken. As a young teenager, I did not know where I was going but I knew I was leaving, alone. Overwhelmed by fear, my survival instinct guided me through the hell of migration. I will never forget March 8th 2016, the date of my «second birth»: we were about 45 people in the open Aegean Sea, in a small boat that we had to inflate ourselves and on which we had embarked scared. There was a bad storm and the engine suddenly stopped working. We were all convinced that this was the end... until a lifeboat spotted us and helped us get to an island. Four months later, in June 2016, after many events, I arrived in Geneva, then in Vallorbe and finally in Sion, at Rados. I did not speak a word of French yet but I constantly watched YouTube channels to learn the local language. At the end of August, I integrated a class of reception and integration (SCAI). This first year of schooling in Valais was followed by pre-vocational training (EPP) until the Summer of 2018, when I started an apprenticeship as a commercial employee at the Valais State contributions' departement. This training interests me a lot, I'm learning a lot, I just finished my first year and I'm already looking forward to getting my CFC in two years.



My commitment to RAJO

In the spring of 2017, the president of RAJO, who knew my passion for photography, invited me to take part in the «Not so different» festival to make a series of pictures. This experience excited me, I immediately felt at ease with the team, and made myself available for other commitments in favor of the association. I gave a helping hand to Pauline to monitor RAJO on social media networks, I participated in various actions and, little by little, I began some administrative tasks.

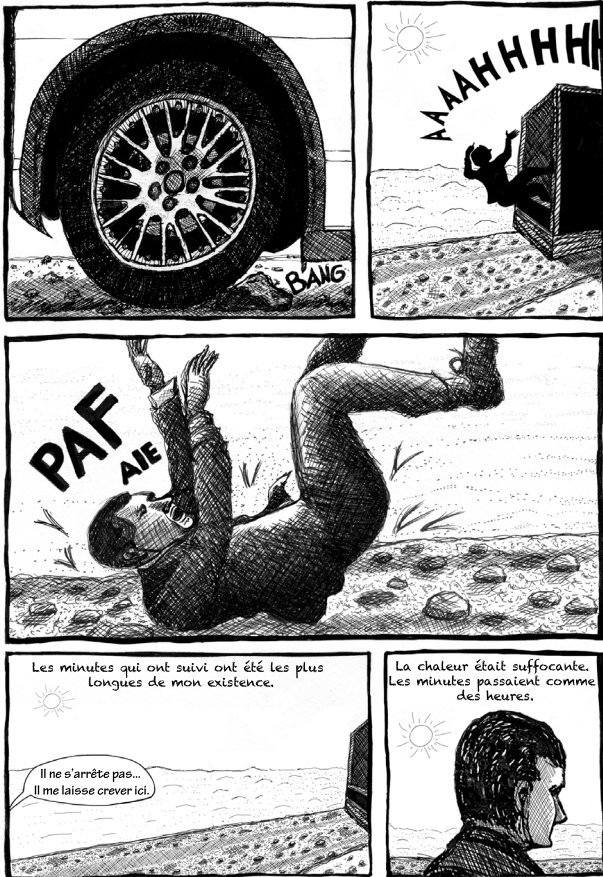
When I was asked to join the committee, I accepted with great pleasure. For professional reasons, I unfortunately could not participate in the 2018 General Assembly. But it is with gratitude and a certain pride that I learned the next day that the GA gave me a vote of confidence by appointing me to the committee.

Since then, I manage the accounting of RAJO: It is me who picks up the mail and gives it to the people concerned, I have the invoices validated, I take care of sending the gift certificates and the thank you letters, I collect the numerous receipts and draw up the countdowns at different events, whether it be the «Not so different» festival, the «Fête des 5 Continents» and / or other multiple commitments, including those of the catering service of RAJO : in August 2019 for example, at the show «Don Quixote», played several evenings a week by the troupe Nova Malacuria. I was present at each performance, renewed the funds if necessary and took note of all expenses.

My motivation

I am often asked why I am investing so much for RAJO, when the association is committed primarily to a population in the Horn of Africa, far from my homeland. It is true that my training as a commercial employee leaves me little free time that I could devote to other hobbies, like most of my colleagues do.

But my answer is immediate: Throughout my migration to Switzerland I was alone, I knew where I was leaving but I did not know where my steps would lead me. In my distress, I received a lot of spontaneous help from people who did not know me but trusted me, regardless of my background... without their support and all these kind gestures, I would not be not where I am. So now it's my turn to give what I can give to help vulnerable people, no matter where they live.



Les minutes qui ont suivi ont été les plus longues de mon existence.

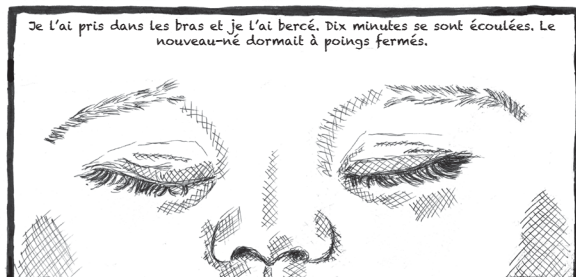
La chaleur était suffocante. Les minutes passaient comme des heures.



L'ATTENTE Terrés 26 heures dans une cave



Nous étions trente hommes, femmes et enfants à vouloir franchir la frontière entre l'Iran et la Turquie. J'avais quitté Téhéran il y a dix jours. Un passeur nous avait cachés dans une cave, en attendant que la voie se libère. Un camion nous attendait de l'autre côté. Cela faisait 26 heures que nous nous terrions.



Je l'ai pris dans les bras et je l'ai bercé. Dix minutes se sont écoulées. Le nouveau-né dormait à poings fermés.

Extracts from

«Testimony of a young Afghan»

Texts and illustrations: Olivia Zufferey

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THANKS

The RAJO team is infinitely grateful to have the commitment of their local coordinator and is strengthened by the many testimonials of project beneficiaries. The team is determined to continue its commitment to improving central Somalia.

Without the invaluable support of many volunteers, as well as all members and donors, the actions of RAJO would be unachievable. Every gesture, every gift, every action helps to revive the glow of the Somali star of hope:

A huge THANK YOU to all! THANK YOU our dear volunteers for your boundless commitment whatever the day or the hour. Thanks to you the activities deployed by RAJO in Valais have taken a huge leap in recent months. Also thanks to you the circle of our partners and supporters has expanded.

THANK YOU finally to you, our dear members and donors. Without you, the projects described above would not be possible. A special THANK YOU to:

La Ferme-Asile, Valais Solidaire, The Botza Training Center, IDE Children's Rights Institute, VF Dehumidification SA, FIDL Fiduciary, all the speakers and the volunteers of the «Not so different» festival 2018 .

